

**Political Report of the President of the African National Congress Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma to the National General Council**

9 October 2015, Gallagher Estate, Midrand,

National Chairperson,

Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa,

ANC Officials and Members of the National Executive Committee,

Izithwalandwe and veterans of the Movement,

Our Alliance partners and other representatives of the Mass Democratic Movement,

Leaders of fraternal organisations,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps and other international guests,

Traditional leaders and religious leaders,

Comrades Delegates,

Comrades and friends,

Media representatives,

We welcome all of you to this National General Council (NGC), the mid-term review of our glorious movement.

The ANC constitution prescribes that we must convene no later than thirty months after the national conference, to review the implementation of policies that we adopted at the national conference.

We are also mindful of the fact that ANC conferences are important beyond the confines of our movement, because the ANC leads society and ANC policies affect millions of South Africans.

The NGC meets as we celebrate the life and selfless contribution of Comrade President Oliver Reginald Tambo, the longest serving President of the ANC who held the movement together during a difficult period.

We also meet during the 60th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, the fundamental policy document of our movement.

The inspirational Preamble of the Freedom Charter captures the aspirations of our people.

"We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people;

That our people have been robbed of their birth right to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;

That our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

That only a democratic state, based on the will of the people, can secure to all their birth right without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And therefore, we, the people of South Africa, black and white, together - equals, countrymen and brothers - adopt this Freedom Charter;

And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won".

The Freedom Charter also articulates unity of purpose by our people then, in their determination to defeat apartheid colonialism.

It says; "Let all people who love their people and their country now say, as we say here. These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty".

The Freedom Charter remains the foundation of our democratic and non-racial value system and informed the progressive Constitution of a democratic South Africa.

Informed by the Freedom Charter and the Constitution, the ANC has succeeded in building a nation which recognises the freedoms, equality and rights of all regardless of race, colour, creed or sexual orientation.

Guided by the Constitution we continue to build a society that is totally free of racism. We should thus remain vigilant and fight any attempt to resurrect the demon of racism from the apartheid grave and to glorify a system of government that was declared a crime against humanity.

We must also bury the demons of tribalism and regionalism and not allow these to rear their ugly heads.

Pixley ka Isaka Seme spoke eloquently against tribalism and racism ahead of the establishment of the ANC in 1911 in his piece the Native Union.

He said:

"The demon of racialism, the aberrations of the Xhosa-Fingo (Mfengu) feud, the animosity that exists between the Zulus and the Tongas, between the Basutho and every other Native must be buried and forgotten; it has shed among us sufficient blood! We are one people".

The ANC thus remains unwavering in its commitment to the vision expressed in the Freedom Charter to build a South Africa that is truly united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous.

## Organisation Building and Renewal

The ANC provides hope to millions of our people, especially the poor and the working class.

Our people continue to put their faith in this movement because they know that it is the only political formation in the country which has an unmatched experience, capacity and political will to consolidate democracy and lead South Africa into a better future.

The ANC went through a turbulent period in the past few years from around 2002 till the Polokwane national conference.

The internal divisions within the movement had unfortunately exploded into the public arena, due to problems that had not been attended to over a period of time.

The 52nd national conference in Polokwane in 2007 became an unfortunate public spectacle of tensions within our glorious movement.

However, the conference was also an important turning point as it forced us to begin looking seriously at the need for organisational healing, building and renewal.

The conference also affirmed the centrality and authority of the branches and internal democracy within the ANC.

The work done to rebuild the organisation and promote healing after Polokwane culminated in successful national conference in Mangaung during the centenary year of the ANC, 2012.

The Mangaung conference emphasised the need for organisational renewal and underlined the need for cadre development as part of building the organisation.

The Polokwane conference had produced an economic transformation path which was developed further in Mangaung.

The Mangaung conference called for a radical socio-economic transformation in what it termed the second phase of the transition. Following the extensive organisational work done over the years, we can now say that there is substantial stability in the ANC.

The ANC remains strong, functional and vibrant. It lives, and it leads.

However, a lot of work must be done to rid our movement of certain tendencies that still exist, which may undermine the gains we have made if not attended to.

Organisational renewal thus remains a critical component of our organisational work.

It is even more important when we need an effective ANC machinery to prepare for elections and take transformation forward.

The ANC has continuously received an overwhelming majority during each national general election.

We thank the millions of our people who voted for the ANC in last year's elections and acknowledge the hard work of all our volunteers and structures. It was a difficult election, as will be explained in the Organisational Report.

While celebrating our 2014 electoral victory, we also acknowledge the fact that our majority has not been growing during each election.

Some of our traditional voters have in recent years become dissatisfied and some have chosen to abstain during elections, demonstrating their displeasure while still remaining loyal to the ANC.

We must not take this support and loyalty for granted nor think it will be there forever.

The NGC needs to undertake a frank assessment of the state of the organisation and identify those issues that make our traditional support base unhappy.

In previous ANC conferences we have identified certain negative tendencies which undermine our credibility.

These tendencies create a public perception that the ANC has become a self-serving organisation or one that at times deviates from its core values.

The core values of our movement are unity, selflessness, sacrifice, collective leadership, humility, honesty, discipline, hard work, internal debates, constructive criticism, self-criticism and mutual respect.

While we have identified negative tendencies in the past, it appears that new ones have also emerged or the existing ones are becoming entrenched.

One of the complaints raised by our people is the impression of lack of discipline within the organisation and that people do as they please and undermine the authority of the ANC with impunity.

The ANC must not tolerate ill-discipline, hooliganism, violence and other negative behaviour. The recent expulsion and suspensions of members who engage in such activities has demonstrated that the movement will not hesitate to act to protect its integrity.

To deal with some of the negative tendencies, including the systematic sowing of divisions, we need to strengthen and empower ANC branches.

Most ANC branches function well. Others are facing difficulties and need to be freed from tendencies such as manipulation, gate-keeping or the bulk buying of membership.

A new form of gate-keeping has also crept in, through which ANC branches are blocked from growing bigger than the mandatory 100 members per branch.

In this manner people who want to join the ANC are unable to do so, while those who have joined find themselves being used as voting fodder or to rubber stamp decisions of those who control the affected branches.

Such a state of affairs and other challenges with our membership system, could be the reason why our membership has dropped from more than a million members during the centenary in 2012 to seven hundred and sixty nine, eight hundred and seventy thousand (769 870) members.

The ANC belongs to the people and no branch should block those who qualify from joining the movement.

Another phenomenon that has been identified as a problem is that of members who belong to other members. Their actions are determined by the people they look up to or who "own" them.

As a result such members defect when the people they followed into the ANC are expelled or become unhappy and leave.

Another serious cancer that needs eradication in our movement is the existence of factions.

Some of these factions are not based on ideological differences.

They exist because of greed and the hunger for power which, once obtained, is abused to take control of state resources and to further business interests.

The existence of factions and other tendencies tends to intensify in periods leading up to elective conferences.

It should be remembered that the ANC is a broad church with many ideological strands.

It is thus inevitable that we will at times have differences regarding leadership preferences, our ideological posture, the strategic direction of the movement and the tactical approach to be adopted in pursuance of such a direction.

These differences must be principled and not personal. Once they become personal they become a problem for the organisation.

And once people begin to form factions to push their positions, it also becomes a problem.

To manage differences, our movement abides by the principle of democratic centralism which dictates that once a decision is taken, either by persuasion or a vote, such a decision is binding on all members, including those who initially opposed it.



We also need to address the reported existence of the so-called kingmakers in the ANC.

There is no structure or League of the ANC that has been accorded the status of being a kingmaker.

This notion undermines internal democracy and the authority and centrality of the branches of the ANC.

Our electoral processes are well documented in documents such as Through the Eye of the Needle.

They are designed to help the branches to produce the best quality of leaders in whom our entire membership and country in general can have confidence.

While the ANC also does not discourage healthy competition for positions of leadership and responsibility, such competition must not take away the fundamental right of branches to decide on the leadership of the ANC.

In this regard, tendencies such as the use of money in order to manipulate the outcomes of electoral process in the organization are totally unacceptable.

An effective weapon of dealing with the negative tendencies is for political education to be enhanced and institutionalised within the organisation.

In this way the membership will not fall prey to factions and interest groups as they would know and understand their movement and be able to resist manipulation.

The strengthening of the Leagues of the ANC forms part of the organisation building tasks of the movement.

Politically and organisationally, the Leagues are an integral part of the ANC. They are structures of the ANC, and are subject to ANC discipline.

Progress has been made in finalising the revival of the ANC Youth League following a difficult period.

High levels of ill-discipline of the former leadership of the Youth League led to the difficult but necessary decision of expelling and suspending some leaders of the League in 2012.

In March 2013, the ANC NEC formally disbanded the ANC Youth League National Executive Committee.

A coordinating structure, the National Task Team was established to lead the process of rebuilding the ANC Youth League afresh, from branch level until it was ready to hold its national congress.

The ANC NEC in its wisdom changed a planned elective congress of the ANC Youth League in June this year into a consultative one to enable better preparation.

The preparatory process culminated in the successful holding of the national Congress in September 2015 which elected the current ANC Youth League leadership.

The process of healing is important given the recent turmoil in the League. The leadership must work hard to unite all young people including those whose leadership preferences were different.

The ANC Youth League should also take up issues affecting the youth such as funding for tertiary education, job creation and access to entrepreneurship opportunities.

The ANC Women's League also held a successful conference in September and elected new leadership, a few years late as the League last went to conference in 2008.

The Women's League should unite women behind the ANC and continue advancing the interests of women from all walks of life.

We are also mindful of the wisdom of President Tambo who said the advancement of women is the task of all in the ANC, men and women. The Women's League must thus obtain support from all in the movement.

Building on the successes of these two conferences, the movement must also assist the ANC Veterans League to overcome its present challenges and hold its own conference. It needs to play its rightful role of being the torchbearers of our movement.

The uMkhonto WeSizwe Military Veterans Association plays an important role in the movement, representing men and women who were ready to take up arms for South Africa to be free of apartheid colonialism and institutionalised racism.

Support to our veterans is undertaken by the Department of Military Veterans which was established following a conference resolution in 2007.

### Strengthening the Alliance

The ANC also advances its programmes with the support of the Alliance. All components of the Alliance, plus SANCO, play important roles in advancing the goals of the NDR.

The ANC, the leader of the Alliance, is a multi-class National Liberation Movement advancing the National Democratic Revolution, the primary objective of which is the establishment of the National Democratic Society which is united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous.

The SACP is the vanguard party of the working class, with the objective of advancing a socialist revolution aimed at creating a communist society underpinned by a classless society.

COSATU is a progressive trade union federation whose core objective is to fight for and defend the rights of workers and to protect workers from the super-exploitation of the capitalist class.

SANCO is a civic movement and a critical component of civil society which mobilizes and organizes communities around bread and butter issues.

The Alliance has faced challenges given the difficulties that were faced by COSATU. The ANC has played its role as the leader of the Alliance to provide support and will continue to do so. A stronger united COSATU is important for the country and for the Alliance.

Implementation of ANC programme of action/governance

The NGC will take stock of the implementation of policies that we adopted in 2012 and the achievements and challenges.

We have done well in implementing the clauses of the Freedom Charter and substantial progress has been made.

Our current primary focus is economic transformation and land reform which tend to lag behind given the complexities.

The clauses of the Freedom Charter are as follows:

The People Shall Govern!

All National Groups Shall have Equal Rights!

The People Shall Share in the Country`s Wealth!

The Land Shall be Shared Among Those Who Work It!

All Shall be Equal Before the Law!

All Shall Enjoy Equal Human Rights!

There Shall be Work and Security!

The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened!

There Shall be Houses, Security and Comfort!

There Shall be Peace and Friendship!

a. Economic transformation

We made an undertaking that we would over the next five years, take decisive and resolute action to overcome the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, which are at the heart of South Africa's socio-economic challenges.

We indicated the intention to transform the structure of the economy through industrialisation, broad-based black economic empowerment, addressing the basic needs of our people, including women and youth, strengthening and expanding the role of the state and the role of state owned enterprises.

We reiterate as well that our most effective weapon in the campaign against poverty remains the creation of decent work and inclusive growth.

For us to achieve inclusive growth and create jobs, the economy must grow at faster rates.

In both the National Development Plan and the New Growth Path, we set target growth rates of above 5 per cent a year and identified specific actions that needed to be taken to grow the economy faster.

Despite our efforts, GDP growth has been slowing down over the last three years.

The second quarter of 2015 saw GDP contracting by 1.3 per cent.

This was after positive but small growth of 1.3 per cent in the previous quarter. 1

The NGC must reflect frankly on why our economy is not expanding as fast as we desire.

Secondly we will look at which of the steps we agreed to take have been implemented effectively and which ones have not been implemented, and why.

A significant part of the reason our economy is slowing down is because many economies that we trade with are either slowing down or contracting.

In addition to the slow global growth, we also have several domestic obstacles to economic growth. These include energy, falling commodity prices and the sometimes unstable labour relations environment.

On energy we are making good progress through expanding renewables, extending cogeneration contracts and improving maintenance and stabilising Eskom.

We are also in the long term developing an energy security plan based on producing a reliable energy mix for the country.

There are also positive signs in the economic environment despite the challenges. There are signs that the weakening of the rand is helping exports while the current account deficit has narrowed.

Government and state owned companies have sustained investment spending and this creates a platform for higher private investment when the cycle turns favourable. For example, more than one trillion rand has been invested in national infrastructure projects, compared with 451 billion rand in the previous five years.

The country also continues to attract foreign direct investment in spite of the global economic situation. This was worth 43 billion rand in the 2014/15 financial year and 3.31 billion US dollars from January 2015 to July 2015.

The United Kingdom, United States of America, Germany, Australia and India were the key FDI sources for South Africa.

South Africa also invests in other economies. The top five destination countries for FDI outflows from South Africa include the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia and United States.

Since 1994, trade with sister countries in the continent has increased 35-fold to about 400 billion rand, thus promoting intra-Africa trade.

As part of implementing the National Development, the ANC government this year adopted a Nine Point Plan which is being implemented currently. It involves investment in the sectors of agriculture, mining, the ocean economy, energy, industrialisation, small business development, boosting state owned and rural enterprises and others.

The ANC government continues to uphold broad-based black economic empowerment as well as affirmative action in order to further speedily transform the ownership, management and control of the economy.

Land is an integral part of economic transformation.

Achievements include nearly 5,000 farms, comprising 4.2 million hectares, that have been transferred to black people, benefiting over 200,000 families.

In addition, nearly eighty thousand land claims, totaling 3.4 million hectares, have been settled and 1.8 million people have benefited.

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But the process remains slow hence the development of new policies as outlined in Mangaung.

Following the decision of conference to reopen the land claims lodgement date, one hundred and four thousand two hundred and forty eight (104 248) new claims have been lodged.

The decision to grant exceptions to the land claim cut-off date of 1913 so as to accommodate the Khoi and San descendants, heritage sites and historical landmarks is also being implemented.

To ensure more effective radical economic transformation, we have to build a more capable and effective state, which has the technical and political capacity to lead development and transform the economy.

b. Social transformation



During the 2014 general elections our people agreed with us when we said we had a good story to tell, and that South Africa was a much better place to live in than before 1994.

Indeed a lot has been achieved. A detailed report is provided in the organizational report.

More of our people have been lifted out of extreme poverty.

More than 16 million people especially older persons, vulnerable children and persons with disability receive much needed social grants to alleviate poverty.

The Public Works and Community Work programmes had created six million work opportunities for unemployed people, 40% of them young people, by 2014.

Over 3.3 million free houses have been built, benefiting more than 16 million people.

Nearly 500 informal settlements have been replaced with quality housing and basic services.

About 12 million households have access to electricity, seven million more than in 1994.

Around 92% of South Africans had access to potable water last year, compared to 60% in 1996.

In 2014 we launched the Local Government Back to Basics programme to improve the functioning of local government.

Such interventions are critical as we prepare for local government elections.

We continue to invest in our children's education which is an investment into the future.

Over seven million learners from poor households do not pay school fees. Over seven million receive free meals at school.

A key new achievement is the fact that every province in our country now has a university.

Over the past two years we have added three new universities, Sol Plaatje University in the Northern Cape, the University of Mpumalanga and Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University in Gauteng.

Funding for students from poor families through the National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), has increased from 441 million rand in 1997 to over 9.5 billion rand in 2015 but remains inadequate given the increasing numbers of students. Programmes are being implemented to improve the disbursement of funds, to root out fraud in NSFAS, as well as to source additional funding.

The frustrations relating to the slow pace of transformation on campuses have also been sharply expressed by students and this is a reality. Academic staff remains predominantly white and male.

New academic posts targeting young black academics and women are being created to address transformation.

While some of the issues raised by students need attention, recent acts of violence and vandalism on campuses is unacceptable and action should be taken against students who break the law.

Dramatic progress has been made on health care especially in the fight HIV and AIDS since the announcement of a turnaround strategy in 2009.

South Africa now funds the largest Anti-retroviral treatment programme in the world, with 3.1 million South Africans being on life saving medication. This has caused an increase in life expectancy as persons living with HIV are living healthier lives.

In addition more babies are born without HIV due to a successful prevention of mother to child transmission programme.

All these and other achievements must be sustained through the introduction of universal health coverage through National Health Insurance.

Peace and stability

The latest crime statistics indicate that we have over the past ten years substantially decreased the levels of certain categories of serious crime. But more needs to be done to make our people to feel safer.

The brazen behaviour of criminals who kill police officers, blow up ATMs or shoot people in highways and shopping malls especially in the build up to the festive season does not make our people feel safe.

There is clearly something more that needs to be done to send a message to criminals that crime does not and will not pay. The NGC will reflect on progress made in crime fighting.

The ANC needs to work harder to reverse the incorrect public perception that the ANC and its government are soft on corruption and that the ANC is a corrupt organisation.

It is thanks to the ANC's anti-corruption programmes and policies since 1994 that the fight against corruption is high up on the country's agenda.

The many instruments that have been established to fight corruption and their output demonstrate the seriousness of the democratic government about fighting corruption.

For an example, the Anti-Corruption Task Team exists which comprises thirteen government departments and institutions aimed at fast-tracking investigations and the prosecution of corruption cases.

There also exist other specialised anti-corruption units within various law enforcement agencies which have made tangible progress.

The ANC government also works with the National Anti-Corruption Forum to coordinate a civil society wide response.

Internally within the ANC we took a decision in Mangaung to establish an Integrity Commission to promote ethical behaviour.

The members are highly regarded elders and stalwarts of our movement. We need to provide them with the necessary support.

Drugs are destroying our youth and many families are suffering. We call upon ANC branches to mobilise community members to stop turning a blind eye towards people who sell drugs in their neighbourhoods.

Domestic violence and violence against women also still requires utmost attention.

The conviction rate relating to sexual offences stood at 71 percent in the first quarter of the current 2015/16 financial year.

Building peace and friendship

The ANC's agenda in the international arena is based on its belief and commitment to progressive internationalism.

During our liberation struggle, we benefitted immensely from international solidarity.

The ANC will continue to work with progressive forces of the world against political systems which undermine global governance and exploit the natural resources of the developing countries, in particular in Africa.

The ANC has successfully engaged former liberation movements in the continent and has consolidated our partnership agenda based on serving the poor in our region and the continent as a whole.

We reiterate our call at the 53rd national conference that when assessing the balance of forces, as they apply to Africa, we need sharpen our understanding of the role of anti-imperialist motive forces in the present world situation. This is even more crucial in the context of the global capitalist crisis.

We should continue to ask a few questions and to find answers.

Who are the motive forces of the African revolution? What is the role and contribution that our revolution is making to the regeneration of Africa?

This calls for stronger cooperation among liberation movements in the region to ensure that the gains of liberation and decolonisation are not reversed.

We also need to be alive to lessons from North Africa, especially the aftermath of the political changes that were referred to as the Arab Spring.

We must carefully analyse foreign interventions that bring about regime change which leave the people leaderless and allow military formations and right wing organizations to lead, as has happened in Libya, causing serious instability in the Sahel region.

We must also continue to support the African Union and African solutions to African problems. We cannot afford a situation where continental initiatives to bring about lasting peace, security and stability on the continent continue to be undermined by powerful foreign forces.

We continue to promote good relations with our partners in the developed North such as the EU, the United States, Japan and others.

We have also teamed up with our partners within the Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa (BRICS) formation.

With regards to global governance, the ANC should continue to pursue the reform of the United Nations and its organs to reflect the current global political and economic configuration.

Further, the impact of the global financial crisis to both developing and developed countries makes a compelling case for the reform of the global financial architecture.

The establishment of the BRICS New Development Bank is a welcome development in this new frontier.

We should continue to advocate for the rights of the people of Palestine and to call for unity amongst Palestinian formations.

We reiterate our support of the people of Western Sahara and urge all our structures to continue supporting their struggle for self-determination, freedom, human rights and dignity.

We also welcome the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States and the release of the Cuban Five.

We reiterate our call for the lifting of the economic and financial embargo to help the Cuban people to gain their economic freedom.

At the historic 70th anniversary of the United Nations last month, the UN General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals which end on 31 December 2015.

The SDGs are intended to usher in a world characterized by greater equity, a world without poverty and a world in which we can live in greater harmony with nature.

We have a lot of work to do at this NGC.

The statement by Comrade Pixley ka Isaka Seme in 1911 motivating the objectives of the founding ANC conference is relevant to this NGC, 104 years later.

He said:

"We shall have come together to bury forever the greatest block to our security, happiness, progress and prosperity as a people.

"We shall have come together truly, as we are, the children of one household to discuss our home problems and the solution of them".

We look forward to frank and robust discussions as branches review and evaluate the implementation of ANC policies.

We wish all delegates successful deliberations.

The ANC lives! The ANC leads!

Amandla!

All Power!