

DECLARATION OF THE 4TH NATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

We, the over 3 000 delegates to the 4th National General Council of the African National Congress, gathered here in Johannesburg in the year of the 60th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, declare for all our country and the world to know that the struggle for the socio-economic liberation of all our people remains on course.

Over the last three days; we undertook a critical review of our work towards the realisation of the vision of the Freedom Charter, evaluated progress in implementing resolutions of the 53rd National Conference and how we give effect to the commitments we made in our 2014 Manifesto.

This National General Council is the culmination of a process of engagement by ANC structures, Alliance partners and other sectors of society that reinforced the culture of debate and introspection. Consistent with the traditions of our movement, we have frankly and honestly, within our established traditions of criticism and self-criticism, interrogated our strengths and weakness, our achievements and our shortcomings.

We have affirmed our determination to defend the essential character of the ANC as a progressive revolutionary movement that is rooted among the people. Practices and tendencies inconsistent with the values of the African National Congress threaten the effectiveness of our movement as an instrument for liberation.

This is a critical moment for the National Democratic Revolution, containing both great possibilities for decisive advances and a significant risk of reversal. All people and sectors must harness their collective will and efforts towards creating a better life for all.

Therefore, we reaffirm our resolve to root out corruption, factionalism, buying of members and gate keeping. We agreed to reinforce measures to inculcate within our cadreship the values of service, selflessness, integrity and discipline.

This NGC paid particular attention to the standing, capacity and powers of the Integrity Commission established following a resolution of the 53rd National Conference. We agreed that the decisions of the Integrity Commission are binding and the Commission should be better- resourced to fulfill its mandate.

To confront the practice of factionalism in leadership elections, we agreed that the formalisation of lobby groups and the promotion of slates should be disciplinary offences.

Branch delegates should vote according to their branch mandate at elective conferences and the practice of consolidating preferences at regional or provincial level must end. The ANC branch is at the centre of our work, and must ensure that members are actively engaged in political work and communities are mobilised to effect change in their lives.

We agreed that the archives are of immense importance and we must dedicate more resources to capture our history and preserve our records. Therefore, the Liberation Heritage Institute should become a national resource, located in the state, to provide South African society with significant insight into the struggle against colonialism and apartheid.

The NGC recognises the advances our movement and government have made towards the emancipation of women and promotion of gender equality. Nevertheless, we commit to intensifying efforts for the total liberation and empowerment of women.

We emerge from this National General Council with a clear sense of the tasks we must undertake to advance the struggle for economic freedom, recognising that we do so under difficult international and domestic economic conditions.

The global economic crisis continues to negatively impact on the economies of developing countries, with low global growth and depressed commodity prices being the emerging challenges. We have accordingly agreed to accelerate efforts to mitigate job losses in vulnerable sectors and create new opportunities in potentially job-creating areas.

Uniting all South Africans around the National Development Plan (NDP) to promote inclusive growth and development, and eradicate the triple scourge of unemployment, poverty and inequality is imperative.

We agreed to address weaknesses that exist in several agencies of the state.

The capacity of the democratic developmental state to coordinate implementation of policy is critical for optimal utilisation of human and material resources, in order to maximise the impact of our programmes and projects. We must intensify increased job creation and employment opportunities through mechanisms such as localisation, SMME and cooperatives support and instruments like the procurement set-asides and increased ownership and participation by black people in the economy, with a particular focus on the youth and women and people with disability

Ownership of land is an integral part of economic transformation. We support current proposed ceilings on different forms of land ownership and use, and these should find expression through the introduction of legislation. We must consider legal options with regard to land currently owned by foreign nationals within the context of what the constitution provides. We must review agricultural financing in order to ensure that financing models are favourable to developing farmers.

The NGC welcomes measures to make quality education more accessible to all. We should increase the number of young people in post-graduate programmes.

The NGC noted that overall crime continues to decline. However, rates of violent crime remain

stubbornly high despite the initiatives aimed at crimes such as murder and armed robbery. We call on all our people to join hands in the fight against crime. We shall take particular steps to combat the killing of police. Gender based violence and safety of people from contact crimes is a societal responsibility that we must address. Government must move with speed on an integrated response through the criminal justice system.

The ANC, together with its alliance partners, must work with communities to mobilise against alcohol and substance abuse.

We agreed that the ANC must intensify its involvement in the battle of ideas. Further, we should accelerate the radical transformation of the ICTs as a means to contribute to economic growth and development. The corporate governance challenges facing the SABC should be resolved speedily so that the institution can fulfill its public responsibility. We reaffirm the urgent need for media transformation, accountability and diversity and this includes the parliamentary enquiry on the feasibility and desirability of a Media Appeals Tribunal in line with the Constitution.

We remain seized of the task of building a better Africa and a better world.

The ANC reiterates our support for regional integration and Agenda 2063, the AU's developmental programme.

The ANC remains committed to internationalism and we support the struggles for national self-determination and a multilateral approach to the management of global issues. We reiterate our solidarity with the people of Palestine and support the isolation of businesses in the UN List that operate in the occupied territories in Palestine. We advocate for the self-determination, freedom and independence of Western Sahara. We support the call by Cuba for the return of Guantanamo Bay and the lifting of the USA economic embargo against Cuba.

The NGC noted the processes underway, under the auspices of the AU, (including South Africa) to review Africa's participation in the International Criminal Court.

We welcome the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals by the UN General Assembly as a firm global covenant to bring about a more equitable, sustainable and just world.

The NGC recognises that for the ANC to continue the process of transforming our society and to realise the objectives of this phase of our struggle it is imperative that we retain our decisive mandate from the people.

We will therefore work hard to ensure that we gain an overwhelming majority in the upcoming local government elections, through consolidating our support base and winning new constituencies.

The Back to Basics programme should be at the core of building an effective and efficient local government. Reversing the apartheid geography by ensuring spatial integration and accelerating access to basic services is achievable through strengthening integrated planning and delivery mechanism across all spheres of government. We should fast track the implementation of the Presidential Commission review of provinces.

We thank our sister parties from the Former Liberation Movements for their support and participation during the NGC.

The ANC continues to reflect the hope and embody the aspirations of our people.

Our movement remains the most effective instrument for the achievement of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa.

We close this National General Council conscious of the great responsibility on our shoulders, individually and collectively, to strive for, and achieve, a better South Africa, a better Africa and a better world. We should move with urgency, conscientiousness and consciousness.

As we leave here, we recall the closing statement of the 3,000 delegates who gathered at the Congress of the People in Kliptown on 26 June 1955:

“Let all those 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.”

11 October 2015