

## **Keynote Address to the National General Council**

Port Elizabeth July 12 2000

Comrade Chairperson,  
Members of the NEC,  
Comrades delegates,  
Distinguished veterans,

Your Excellencies, Members of the diplomatic corps and guests, Members of the media:

I would like to join our Chairperson in welcoming you to this National General Council of the ANC.

I am confident that over the next few days we will have frank and open discussions among ourselves as we address the central and important theme of this General Council.

I would also like to congratulate all our branches, regions and provinces for the large amount of work that has been done to prepare for this Council.

The National Executive Committee is very pleased with the seriousness with which all our structures took the work of preparing for the General Council.

As the delegates are aware, we are meeting here to fulfil a constitutional obligation that we should meet in General Council in between our National Conferences.

One of the great advantages we have is that we can focus seriously on matters that have to do with ensuring that as a movement, we discharge our responsibilities to our country and all its people. I say this because we are not meeting to elect a new National Executive Committee. Accordingly, none of us will have to spend time lobbying for particular candidates and positions.

As comrades are aware, much too often, whenever we meet in conference to elect our executive committees, from the branch executive committees upwards, many comrades spend large amounts of time canvassing, lobbying and making deals to have their favourites elected into executive positions.

Even during discussions, some of the delegates will stand up and speak, not because they have anything to say, but because they want the delegates to see them and hear their revolutionary speeches, even if these speeches have nothing to do with what is under discussion.

The guiding theme of our General Council is the extremely important question of the ANC as an agent of change.

I am certain that the discussion documents the membership as a whole has been discussing and the outcome of those discussions, have given us a firm base for a rich and constructive discussion at our Council.

We are fortunate that we meet in this city, Port Elizabeth --eBhayi. For many years, to this day, this city has been a strong and unwavering base of our movement.

At the most difficult moments of our struggle, Port Elizabeth and the Eastern Cape stood firm in the determination to ensure that our democratic revolution succeeds, whatever the sacrifices the struggle demanded should be made.

The fact that we meet here should therefore serve as an inspiration to all of us to respond as true members of the ANC to the new tasks arising out of the victories we have scored as a result of the price that was paid by the heroes and heroines from this city and province and elsewhere in our country.

The very fact that we meet here itself constitutes a salute to the patriots of this city and province, including those, such as Vuyisile Mini and Wilson Khayingo, who were reburied at the dignified memorial site at Emlotheni.

We meet two-and-a-half years after our 50th National Conference in Mafikeng.

The Secretary General will report to Council on what we have done during these last 30 months to carry out the decisions taken at that important National Conference.

The National Executive Committee has directed me to deal with some of the issues raised in the discussion documents as part of our preparations for the General Council, as well some matters raised by President Mandela in his Political Report to our 50th National Conference.

A week ago a decision was taken in Zurich, Switzerland which shattered the hopes of our people and the peoples of Africa. The delegates all know to what I refer.

One of the members of our Bid Committee who was in Zurich told me that after the result was announced, a public comment was made in an attempt to explain the unexpected decision, that Africa was not ready to host the finals of the Soccer World Cup.

Condescendingly, the speaker said that, undoubtedly, Africa would be ready to play such a role in future.

Our Bid Committee had a possibility to respond to these comments only when they returned to our country.

Their response, with which I agree fully, was -- as authenticated by the FIFA Technical Committee -- that South Africa and Africa were fully ready to host the Soccer World Cup Finals.

The point they made, with which again I fully agree, was that the issue was not Africa's readiness.

The real question is when will some in Europe be ready to accept that Africa is part of the global human family, and not an irrelevant appendage whose marginalisation is, to some in developed Europe, an acceptable outcome.

Our country is fully, an integral part of this Africa.

In the very near past, the dominant political and economic forces in our own country considered the indigenous African part of our population as an appendage, whose marginalisation had to be achieved as a matter of policy.

As the ANC, we therefore understand very well what is meant by what one writer has described as the globalisation of apartheid.

Accordingly, when we decided to address the critical question of the ANC as an agent of change, the central subject of this NGC, we sought to examine ourselves as an agent of change to end the apartheid legacy in our own country.

We also sought to examine the question of what contribution we could make to the struggle to end apartheid globally.

As we make that examination, we will have to take into account the two facts that:

first, we are a mass organisation dedicated to the mobilisation of our people for their national and social emancipation; and, second, these masses have elected us as the governing party of our country.

As an agent of change, we have to discharge our responsibilities both as a movement for national liberation and a governing party.

What, then, are these responsibilities!

We are unequivocally committed to transform South Africa into a non-racial country, non-racial in all elements of human activity. At the end, we must overcome the heritage of a millennium which has defined Africans as the despised among the peoples of the world.

We are equally firmly determined to end sexism in this country, to transform ours into a society characterised by real gender equality. We must break down and destroy the historic social mould that has sought to define women as underlings.

We constitute the forward echelon in the struggle further to entrench and deepen democracy in our country and ensure that the conditions exist such that none should resort to force to solve any social problem we might confront as a people.

We are committed to conduct a sustained campaign to end poverty and ensure a decent and continuously improving standard of living for all our people without discrimination. This must include the complete deracialisation of our economy in the interest of all our people and not just a few, whatever their colour or race. It entails, also, the transformation of ours into a modern, dynamic and competitive economy.

We are similarly determined to work for the construction of a caring society, sensitive to the needs of the most vulnerable, including children, the youth and the disabled. This society must be distinguished, among other things, by the prevalence of a new patriotism, respect for the cultural and linguistic diversity of our nation, and a new social morality radically different from the morality we have inherited from centuries of colonialism and apartheid.

We shall continue to place ourselves among the forces in Africa and act together with these forces, for peace, democracy and the reconstruction and development of our Continent so that it takes its rightful place as an equal player among all the continents of our globe.

Similarly, we will continue to act together with all other like-minded forces to impact on the process of globalisation so that this process and the institutions of global governance that accompany this process work to end poverty and underdevelopment which characterise the lives of the overwhelming majority of humanity.

I would like to believe that these objectives are commonly understood and accepted by all of us as members of the ANC.

I would also like to believe that all of us who are present here as delegates to this National General Council, joined and have remained members of the ANC because we understand, accept and support the achievement of these objectives.

To put this matter in another way, those who do not accept and are not committed to engage in struggle for the realisation of these aims have no reason to be members of the ANC.

They should leave this almost ninety-year-old organisation of the people because their political home is elsewhere.

The two features of the ANC, as a mass movement for social change and a governing party has produced a result with which we must contend and which Comrade Nelson Mandela dealt with when he presented the Political Report at our last National Conference.

The result I am talking about is that we have attracted into and continue to retain opportunists and careerists within our ranks. These are the people who join the movement not because they respect or support any of the strategic objectives I have mentioned.

They join with the great ease that our procedures as a mass movement permit, with the sole aim of furthering their personal careers and using the access to state power we have as a ruling party, to enrich themselves.

Another matter which Nelson Mandela addressed when he spoke in Mafikeng was the need for us, as part of our revolutionary duty, to work to change the social morality in our society.

I am certain that many among us followed the media as the former captain of our national cricket team, the Proteas, Hansie Cronje, gave evidence at the King Commission.

One of the most outstanding things about the evidence that Hansie Cronje gave was how vividly it illustrated the point Nelson Mandela made about the dominance in our society of a value system based on the pursuit of personal wealth, at all costs.

It is out of this society that all of us emanate. It is this society that has conditioned us by the time we decide to join the ANC.

We must therefore expect that some will, indeed, see membership of the ANC as a vehicle facilitating their access to personal wealth, an overriding value they would have learnt from the society in which they grew up and in which they live.

As I make these remarks, some who are mischievous or ill-informed will suggest that what the leadership of the ANC is proposing is that those who join the ANC should be ready to submit themselves to the lowest subsistence standards of living.

This has nothing to do with the truth.

The most important component part of our constituency, of the masses we lead, are the working people of our country. Among these are the very poor and the truly marginalised.

Our first obligation is to serve the interests of these masses as well as join with others throughout the world to champion the interests of the billions in Africa and elsewhere in the world, who are also poor and marginalised.

Accordingly, we cannot afford to have a membership that is driven by a value system, a morality, centred on the promotion of the interests of these members at the expense of the fundamental and urgent interests of the millions who have twice, in 1994 and 1999, expressed the fullest confidence in the ANC.

Such a membership would necessarily betray the interests of the masses we represent and in the process destroy the ANC, reducing it into the opposite of what it has been for the almost 90 years of its existence.

An important part of our struggle for Africa's renaissance is the struggle against corruption.

As we have already seen in our own country and learnt from sister African countries that have enjoyed longer periods of liberation, it is not difficult for corrupt practice to become an entrenched social phenomenon.

Our experience in the last six years tells us that there is absolutely no reason why we should assume that we ourselves stand no danger of becoming victim to the widespread corruption we have seen in other countries in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

In all instances, it is the masses of the people who get robbed and condemned to perpetual poverty, while a small elite flourishes on the basis of its ill-gotten gains.

There are at least three elements that create the possibility for the triumph of corrupt practice in our societies. These are social factors and not biological and are:

- the scramble for access to scarce resources;
- the absence of a truly popular political movement loyal to the interests of the working people; and,
- the demobilisation of the masses so that they become passive objects of policy rather than activists for their own social emancipation.

As an agent for change in our own country and frontline fighters against corruption in our society, we must guard against the latter two tendencies -- the corruption of the ANC itself and the demobilisation of the masses of our people.

It is therefore clear that we have to pay very close attention to a matter we discuss constantly and about which we passed resolutions at our National Conference.

This is the critically important question of cadre development, which is also dealt with in our discussion documents. I trust that the delegates will discuss this matter with all the necessary seriousness, reflecting on our experience to date.

We must answer the question what else we should do to ensure that our cadre development programme produces the results we need.

I would also suggest that the delegates also discuss our recruitment and admission procedures to improve our rate of success in attracting the best patriots into the movement.

Once again, I would like to remind the delegates of the comments that President Nelson Mandela made at our National Conference about the reasons for, the nature and extent of corruption in our country, deriving directly from the existence in our country, over a protracted period of time, of an illegitimate system of white minority rule.

If we understand his comments correctly, and therefore appreciate properly the extent of corruption we inherited, then will we better understand the challenge we face of ensuring that the ANC remains the kind of organisation we want it to be.

Having said all these things, it is also important that we state this firmly, that during the last six years, our movement and its supporters have, in fact, remained among the front ranks of those who have been fighting against corruption.

Many of those who have blown the whistle have come from among the ranks of our movement, as well as others committed to our success as a non-racial democracy. Our challenge is to ensure that we sustain and deepen this tradition.

So far we have not succeeded to ensure that our branches are properly engaged in continuous productive activity, a problem we identified soon after the victory of the democratic revolution in 1994.

Accordingly, as reflected, among others, in the Mid-term Report the Secretary General will present, our membership and branches fluctuate continuously.

As we all know, they build up rapidly whenever we are going to hold our Conferences to elect our leadership and in the run-up and during the general and local government elections.

Clearly, this must alert us to the danger that the movement can degenerate into an election machine which sees its task as being merely ensuring that we remain the governing party at local, provincial and national levels.

Obviously, this is a very important task which we must carry out with the same determination and enthusiasm we showed last year, resulting in the increase of our majority. We will also have to approach the forthcoming local government elections with the same spirit and determination.

Nevertheless, it is also of central importance that we recognise and live up to the objective of ensuring that we continuously mobilise the masses of our people to achieve the aim of people-driven processes of change.

This requires that we ensure that our branches remain in close contact with the people. We must, at all times, be familiar with the thinking and feelings of the masses of our people in all the communities among which our branches are based.

Similarly, we must mobilise the people to act to advance their interests and ourselves engage in action with these masses, drawing in all other community based organisations in a non-sectarian manner.

All of us are familiar with the criticisms made by the people of many of our local government councillors, especially about the failure of these councillors to report back to those who elected them.

What the people are correctly reminding us of is that we have an obligation not to treat them as merely an electoral base. They are saying that we must remain true to the objectives of our movement of ensuring that the people themselves remain their own liberators, the motive force for the fundamental social transformation of our country.

There are many instances in Africa and elsewhere in the world which show what happens when, on becoming a ruling party, a genuinely popular national liberation movement, such as ours, loses contact with the people and its leaders transform themselves into a self-centred ruling elite.

We have seen how this has, in some instances, led to military coups and in others, opened the space for the peaceful capture of political power by reactionary forces that have taken advantage of the genuine grievances of the people.

In our discussions we will therefore have to pay the necessary attention to the issue of what we do to ensure that, at all times, we have dynamic programmes of action, relevant to the tasks we have to carry out to respond to our tactical and strategic challenges.

We will have to discuss what we need to do to ensure that all our members are indeed actively involved in the implementation of these programmes of action.

We have put before our people prominently and consistently, the call -- let us act together to achieve the objective of a better life for all! The comrades know the freedom song very well which says -- asinamona, asinanzondo: siyayidumisa i-ANC!

This is a song I believe we should all sing with joy and conviction. We are jealous of no one; we bear no grudge against anyone; all we are doing is to salute the ANC!

I say this because I believe that in the last six years and the last two-and-half-years we have, as a movement, done everything we could to live up to the challenge to fight for a better life for all our people.

As is their right, our opponents criticise us and will continue to criticise us, charging that we are doing nothing for the people. On June 2nd last year, our people told them in action that they do not believe the stories they are telling about us.

These masses told our critics that the actual life experience of the people says that despite the enormous constraints we face and the mistakes we make and will make because we are doing something, we are nevertheless making visible progress.

We all know that there are even some among our own ranks, opponents of the movement working within the movement, who also make the same claims as those made by our opponents, that as a movement we are not doing anything to address the interests of the people.

These are people who seek to gain cheap popularity for themselves for whatever reason, and underestimate the intelligence of the masses of our people.

On behalf of the National Executive Committee, I would like to congratulate all the members and supporters of our organisation, including the delegates to the General Council, for the work that has been done to address the challenge of helping to provide a better life for all our people.

Whatever anybody says, through our practical actions, we have succeeded to sustain the knowledge and confidence of the overwhelming majority of our people that today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will be better than today.

Whatever anybody says, the peoples of the world continue to be inspired by what we are doing to transform ourselves into a winning nation and see our country as one of the places on our globe that give hope to all humanity.

This is despite the determined attempt by some of our own compatriots to paint our country in the worst possible light falsely charging, for instance, that we are 'the crime capital of the world', that we are a nation of rapists, that we are world leaders in corruption and that we lead humanity in deaths from AIDS.

Our own struggle to defeat the evil system of apartheid tells us that however powerful the propaganda and however well organised, in the end, the truth will prevail!

Asinamona; asinanzondo; siyayidumisa i-ANC!

The obligation that falls on our collective shoulder to ensure that we continue to act together with all our people to accelerate the process of achieving a better life for all requires that we pay particular attention to the issue of the economy, as we have already indicated.

In this regard, we must make the point very firmly that as an agent of change, we must make every effort to ensure that as many of our members as possible, and as a movement, understand the economy and economic questions.

Throughout the long years when we fought against the apartheid system all of us knew it without question that we had an obligation to understand politics and issues of strategy and tactics relating to our political struggle aimed at ensuring the transfer of power to the people.

Since our victory in 1994, none of us have had any doubt that we need to study the political situation continuously to ensure that, among other things, we act correctly to defend the democratic order.

Accordingly, we also need to understand economic questions, given the responsibility we have to use the political power we have gained to ensure that we create and expand the material base without which we cannot achieve the goal of a better life for all.

It is only on the basis of a material base, a strong economy, that we can address the objectives we pursue such as ending poverty and unemployment, providing decent housing, clean water, schools, clinics and rural roads, ensuring that children, the elderly and disabled enjoy the social support due to them, and so on.

Since the building of a strong and vibrant economy is one of the strategic tasks of the continuing democratic revolution that we lead, it must follow that we have to deepen our understanding of the economy and economic questions.

Our cadre development programme will therefore have to attend to this objective as well.

To discuss this matter further, let me now mention that big, and some think, ugly word - globalisation.

This is one of the contemporary phenomena we will have to ensure we understand. We will have to understand this because whether we like it or not, we are part of the world economy. It would neither be possible nor desirable that we cut ourselves off from that world economy so that the process of globalisation becomes a matter irrelevant to our country and people.

We also have to understand that there is nobody in the world who formed a secret committee to conspire to impose globalisation on a unsuspecting humanity.

The process of globalisation is an objective outcome of the development of the productive forces that create wealth, including their continuous improvement and expansion through the impact of on them of advances in science, technology and engineering.

Those among us who consider themselves Marxists or students of Marx and Engels will tell us that because these German scholars and revolutionaries understood what I have just said, as early as the 19th century, they make the famous call -- workers of the world unite!

They made that call because their studies showed them that capital and commodity markets had become and were becoming global.

Accordingly, they argued that since workers in England, South Africa and India were exploited by the same capitalists, it was necessary that they unite regardless of nationality, to win their demands against a common adversary.

The tendency that Marx and Engels observed when they wrote the Communist Manifesto 150 years ago has, of course, expanded and accelerated.

This has resulted in a process of globalisation that is both quantitatively and qualitatively different from the process of globalisation they sought to understand and analyse.

It is this process that we have to understand, with all its features of the rapid and continuous integration of the world economy, the fundamental impact of information technology on the economy and society, the growth of the global system of governance and the reduction of state sovereignty.

We must understand these issues because they are critical to our success in ensuring the reconstruction and development of our economy so that it meets the needs of our people at the same time as it gets further integrated into the world economy.

In this regard, let me mention some matters I believe are relevant to the continuing economic discussion within our ranks.

All of us are aware and proud of the fact that our country, as well as the rest of our continent, disposes of various and considerable natural resources.

I believe that we would not be wrong if we asserted that as a country and a continent, strategically we constitute a very important part of the resource base of the world economy and therefore of all humanity, whatever the view of the FIFA Executive Committee.

We know this as a matter of fact, that since the second half of the 19th century, our economy has been built on the basis of the exploitation of that resource base, whatever the level of diversification achieved since then.

Recognising the continuing importance of mining and minerals in our economy, we have supported the National Union of Mineworkers when it has argued that in our country, mining is a sunrise and not a sunset industry!

Evolving as we are out of our history as a colonial economy, the exploitation of our minerals has meant that we were and to some extent still are, relative to the developed world, an exporter of raw materials. This has been an important feature of our integration within the world economy.

You are aware of the fact that a central objective of our economic policy is and has been the expansion and modernisation of the manufacturing sector of our economy and the shifting of our export mix in favour of manufactured goods.

Given our strong resource base, this must mean, among other things, that we add value to the resources we produce, so that we supply highly sophisticated intermediate products to the world industrial economy.

To simplify this proposition, let me cite just one example of a new manufacturing facility that has been established in this city. I refer to a catalytic converter plant which produces such converters which, as you know, are used to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from motor vehicles, to promote a better environment.

Again as you know, these converters use platinum, of which we stand out as one of the world's largest producers.

The catalytic converter plant to which I refer, which is here in Port Elizabeth, was established by a foreign company and is therefore part of the foreign investment we constantly seek to attract to our country.

Its establishment has made an important contribution to the struggle we continue to wage to transform ours into a modern manufacturing economy, with a relative reduction of our dependence on the export of raw materials.

To be economically viable, this plant has to export a large part of its output. It must therefore respond to the world market in a way that ensures that it is able to compete against other plants, wherever they are located in the world, with regard to such factors as consistency in quality, delivery on time and cost.

Among other things, the management must therefore ensure that the staff at the plant has the necessary skills to produce the converters and meet these requirements.

To put the matter plainly, in the event that the plant experiences repeated work stoppages so that it is unable to address these requirements, the motor manufacturing will switch to other plants located outside our country.

Accordingly, the PE plant would then have to close down, with the inevitable job losses and our regression to the larger exports of raw platinum.

An important part of the operation of this plant in the long term will, of course, be that the product will have to keep pace with global developments in motor vehicle manufacture and changes both in technology and environmental standards.

Since, clearly, the manufacturer would not be able to develop and maintain research and development facilities to keep up with these changes, it will be necessary that universities, technicons and specialised public sector bodies, such as Mintek and the CSIR, carry out this function.

At the same time, to ensure its own maximum efficiency, the plant will have to ensure that it uses modern information technology both within the plant and with regard to its relations with both its own suppliers and its customers.

The story we have told is not a tale of fiction. It describes both what we as a movement, a government and a country are trying to do, and the demands imposed on all of us by the modern, global economy.

Buried in its bowels, as the platinum is buried under the soil in the North West and Northern Provinces, are various matters that are part of our current struggle to transform our economy and society.

These include:

the issue of mineral rights, entailing what our government has said - use it or lose it!;

the beneficiation of such products as diamonds;

the world trading system as negotiated within the WTO; and,

the role of the progressive trade union movement in our country, including the implementation of the decisions of the Mining Summit.

Some of the things this story tells us are that:

we have to identify our global comparative advantages, to assist us in determining the sectors of the economy in which we have to focus;

having done this, and considered all other relevant matters, we have to ensure that we attract the necessary investment into these sectors, without being shy of investigating such incentives as may be needed;

this will have to be done in a manner that ensures that such productive establishments as are established are internationally competitive;

such competitiveness requires that we remain at the cutting edge with regard to science and technology as well as management and work organisation;

we have to guarantee that our working people have the required levels of skill to be able to do the work required and compete with similar workers in other plants located elsewhere in the world; and,

we have to ensure that we are able to get onto the information super-highway with regard to all elements that relate to our effort to ensure that the catalytic converter plant in Port Elizabeth stays a viable economic project for a long time.

We need this knowledge to be able to participate in and lead the process of the fundamental transformation both of our country and the rest of our continent.

Accordingly, I am talking about the need for us to develop new cadres to meet the demands imposed on us by the victories we have scored as we have pursued the objectives of the democratic revolution.

I am talking here of the need for us to implement a programme focused, among other things, on the development of cadres who are truly politically committed to the all-round success of the new democratic South Africa, and properly prepared with regard to the skills our country needs to achieve that success.

The delegates will have to discuss what we can and must do in this regard, as a movement that leads the process of progressive change in our country.

What is also clear, is that this General Council will also have to discuss the critically important question of our interaction with and impact on the student youth, the intelligentsia and the professionals in our country.

All these constitute a critically important resource without which, in the context of the modern globalising economy and society, we cannot meet our objectives to help provide a better life for our people.

We need to ensure that these strata in our society, that either have or will have the specialised skills our country needs, at the same time have the levels of national consciousness and patriotism that will enable our people to count on them as an asset for the development and modernisation of our country, for the benefit of the masses of our people.

As a consequence of this, the delegates cannot avoid examining, very closely, the issue of the functioning and the impact of the Youth and Women's Leagues and the ANC, relative to the student youth and those in our society whose input into society and social development is centred around the contribution of knowledge and ideas.

As a movement, even as we speak, we are engaged in very important and challenging work with regard to this area. This stretches from the streamlining of Curriculum 2005 to the transformation of our institutions of higher learning.

As we discuss this matter, necessarily, we will have to pay due attention to the fact that all our educational institutions, without exception, became victim to the apartheid policy, designed consciously and systematically to drive especially the African majority, into a primitive age of ignorance.

As we strive to meet urgent national needs, we will have to ensure that we do not contribute to the demoralisation and disempowerment particularly of the black intelligentsia and professionals.

In the context of the unavoidable and pressing requirement to increase both black and white 'brain workers', we must take on board the impact of modern communication and information technology on the transformation of modern economies and societies.

It is clear that this technology is making a decisive impact on the transformation of both the economy and society, including the acceleration of the process of globalisation in all its elements.

The danger we face as a country and a continent is that the impact of this technology will further result in further widening the gap between ourselves and the developed world, resulting in our further marginalisation. The fact of this disparity is vividly illustrated by the fact that both Manhattan in New York and Tokyo each have more telephone lines than sub-Saharan Africa put together.

Few of the matters on which we have to focus in this regard are the expansion of our telecommunications infrastructure and the training of the personnel in information technology that we need to ensure that we work urgently to close the digital gap between ourselves and the developed world.

This matter is critical to everything we have to do to ensure that we expand, restructure and modernise our economy further to integrate it in the global economy in a manner that helps to address the central objectives of providing a better life for all.

Let me emphasise this again that as a movement we must attain a deep understanding of this technological revolution so that we are able to take the correct decisions with regard to what we have to do.

Our cadre development must therefore also pay attention to the development of skilled members in this area.

This and other matters also emphasise the critical importance of our work among the professionals and the intelligentsia to ensure that this stratum is also inspired by patriotic sentiments.

As part of the African continent, we have an obligation to work with other progressive forces for Africa's renaissance.

It would seem quite clear that the major tasks facing all these forces together are:

working together to ending conflicts that continue to take lives of the ordinary people;

working together to give direction as to what should be done at last to ensure the recovery of the African economies, leading to their growth and modernisation, and a sustained programme to eliminate poverty;

working together to meet the social needs of the people, affecting such matters as the health crisis, education and human resource development.

It would be fair to assume that all patriotic forces on our continent would agree to such a broad programme. What seems clear however, is that there is a strong desire among these forces to get together in fact to discuss a common programme for Africa's renewal.

As an equal participant with these forces in the process of the renewal of our continent, focused on serving the interests of the ordinary people, it is clear that the ANC will have to move with some speed formally to link up with other healthy political forces on our continent.

This would assist all of these to discuss and agree on a common vision and programme of the tasks of the progressive movement in Africa.

Of necessity, that programme would have to address, among others, such important questions as:

the resolution of the national question in our countries; the emancipation of women;

the defence of the democratic and human rights of the masses of our peoples;

progress towards greater African co-operation, integration and unity; and a common progressive response to the process of globalisation.

We are therefore talking about collective ideological and political struggle for the victory of progressive ideas on our continent.

Of necessity, that struggle must include the mobilisation of the masses of the people to act in furtherance of their interests against those who have sought to use power on the continent to promote the interests of the few.

As the General Council knows, less than a year ago, we were admitted as members of the Socialist International. This is the biggest of the international political associations and contains the most progressive political parties from all countries.

As we would expect, the Socialist International -- the SI --represents a wide spectrum of views on many questions.

As a movement, we will of course bring our own views to contend with the others, enabling our views to have the global impact we would not have if we had stayed out of this important stream of progressive thought.

Other socialist countries in central and Eastern Europe have raised the question of the establishment of a new world order.

Once again, I must therefore mention the phenomenon of globalisation. As we have said, this impacts on the sovereignty of small states such as ours, to take decisions without consideration of the global setting.

Again, as we have said, the process of globalisation is accompanied by the growth of the system of global governance. This is represented by such organisations as the UN, the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO.

The globalisation of the economy resulting among other things in rapid movements of huge volumes of capital across the globe objectively also has the effect of limiting the possibility of states to take unilateral decisions.

Similarly, the rapid communication of information to all corners of the globe increases the capacity of the citizen quickly to form a view about any country in the world and to take such action as he or she may deem fit.

The point I am making is that as a movement, we will have to make our own input into the universal struggle for the establishment of a new world order that must work in the interests of the ordinary working people, including the billions in our country, Africa and the South who are poor and underdeveloped.

I believe that in this context, it will not be possible for us to make the kind of contribution we should make without elaborating a theory of development that deals with such matters as the state and governance, capital and the economy, the environment, culture and national identity and the role of the masses and their organisations.

The historical period in which we live has presented the ANC with the challenge further to define its role as an agent of change in South Africa, in Africa and the world.

It will be the task of the National General Council to provide answers to some of the questions thrown up by this situation.

The test of our success in this regard will be whatever we remain, as we have always been, a people's movement, enjoying the confidence of the masses of our people.

It will rest on whether we do indeed succeed in the process of the social transformation of our country, in the interests of the people, in helping to achieve the renaissance of our continent and the establishment of a new world order that serves the interests of the billions of ordinary people through the world.

The theory is important but it must lead to the correct actions that advance the national and social emancipation of the people.

As we have done in the past, we must carry out this task successfully, inspired by the objective in the first instance to serve the people of South Africa.

On behalf of the National Executive Committee, I wish the National General Council success in its work.