

## **ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT, THABO MBEKI, AT THE OPENING OF THE 51st NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

Stellenbosch, 16 December 2002

Comrade Chairperson,  
Leaders of our movement,  
Delegates and veterans,  
Distinguished guests,  
Comrades and friends,  
Fellow South Africans:

I am honoured to welcome you to this 51st National Congress of the African people. We have gathered here as delegates elected by the branches of our movement, the African National Congress.

We take this opportunity to pay tribute to those of our leaders and activists, as well as our comrades-in-arms from the rest of the world who have passed away since the 50th National Conference.

These include Comrades Govan Mbeki, Alfred Nzo, Joe Modise, Steve Tshwete, Curnick Ndlovu, Peter Mokaba, Parks Mankahlana, Ntsoaki Mxadana and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. To them all and others, we say thank you for everything you did to advance the cause of the people. The ANC makes a solemn commitment that it will never betray the cause to which you dedicated your lives.

We have among our distinguished guests Professor Chris Brink, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Stellenbosch. I am very pleased to extend a special word of welcome to him - surely not a welcome to the University, but to the 51st National Conference of the African National Congress.

The names Stellenbosch and D.F. Malan represent particular periods in the history of our country. That the ANC is meeting here today sends out a powerful message to all our people and the peoples of the world.

That message says that the people of South Africa have made the common determination that our country belongs to all who live in it, black and white. It says that the people of South Africa, black and white, are committed to live up to the pledge they made to themselves, to refuse to be enslaved by the divisions and antagonisms of the past.

That message also says !Ke e: /xarra //ke - people that are different come together! The descendants of the Khoisan, Sarah Baartman, sit here today in conditions of freedom and peace in a city named after Simon van der Stel. The successors to Moses Kotane and those killed in the Alexandra Stay-at-Home of 1950 sit here today in conditions of freedom and peace in a hall named after D.F. Malan.

The fact that we have gathered here together as compatriots, in conditions of freedom and peace, the descendants of Sarah Baartman and Simon van der Stel, the products of the struggle in which Moses Kotane and D.F. Malan engaged, speaks louder than the bombs that some in our country decided to detonate among our people.

Those who are meeting here this morning represent the beautiful future South Africa that is being born. The bombs are but a delayed echo of a desperate struggle that failed, which sought to perpetuate a social order that was doomed to extinction.

To Professor Brink, the rest of the leadership, the teaching staff, researchers, students and workers of the University of Stellenbosch, we say thank you for creating this historic circumstance that allows us together to make the statement that all South Africa has embarked on an unstoppable journey towards its

rebirth. Thank you for permitting this 51st National Conference of the African National Congress to convene at this important centre of learning and research, which is part of our common heritage.

Aan Prof. Brink, die lectors, personeel, navorsers, studente en werknemers aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch, graag bedank ons u vir hierdie historiese omstandighede wat deur u geskep is waardeur ons saam 'n standpunt kan inneem dat alle Suid-Afrikaners op die pad is van 'n onstopbare reis na ons wedergeboorte. Graag bedank ons u ook vir die voorreg om die een en vyftigste Nasionale Konverensie van die 'ANC' te laat plaasvind by hierdie belangrike sentrum vir leerderskap en navorsing, wat deel vorm van ons algemene herkoms.

Fully to appreciate the tasks that fall on our shoulders as we meet here, the delegates must understand that this National Conference has convened to discuss not merely the fortunes of the African National Congress, but the future of our country and people over the next five years and beyond.

From its foundation, the African National Congress has served as the parliament of our people and an agent for the unity of the African people. To this day, it continues to occupy the honoured and responsible position as the true representative of the interests and aspirations of the masses of our people, black and white.

Accordingly, when we meet in Conference, as we have done at this place that occupies a particular place in the history of our country, we gather as this representative of all our people. This places a special obligation on our National Conference to live up to the expectations of our people to address their concerns and aspirations. These are a heroic and noble people. They are wise, humane and dignified. Their love of all humanity tells them that whatever might have been and is, they should never abandon their commitment to the goal of human solidarity. Their respect for themselves as human beings informs them that they should never turn their backs on their native intelligence and their native humour.

What these masses want is peace, not war. They are committed to the democracy and human rights for which they sacrificed and are opposed to dictatorship. They want to see our country achieve the goals of non-racism and non-sexism.

They yearn that we eradicate poverty and underdevelopment as quickly as possible, on the basis of a strong and thriving economy, and to uplift themselves not through charitable handouts but through the dignity of their own labour.

They want to see their continent, Africa, and all Africans take their rightful place among the nations of the world as equals and equal participants in the construction of a new world of peace, justice and equity.

Such a people has every right to realise its aspirations. We who claim to represent these masses have no right to disappoint their expectations. In 1994 and 1999 and the municipal elections up to the year 2000, the masses of our people have our movement the task to lead our country as it strives to realise the goals the people of South Africa have set themselves.

This 51st National Conference of the African National Congress takes place three weeks before the completion of our 90th anniversary, and just over four months ahead of the commencement of our tenth year of liberation.

A little more than 20 days separate us from the beginning of the decade, on January 8th, 2003, which will take our movement and people to that glorious moment when we will celebrate the centenary of the African National Congress.

**ADVANCE IN UNITY TO THE YEAR 2012!**

This Conference must issue the call to all our members and all patriots - Advance in Unity to the Year 2012!

The delegates gathered here, today's advance guard of the movement that has led our people through nine turbulent decades to where our country and people are today, will have to make the commitment that the future will be better than the present and the past.

When we make the call - advance in unity to the year 2012! - that call must serve as our movement's pledge to all our people that as we have done for 90 years, we will continue to serve the people of South Africa, for peace, democracy, a shared sense of nationhood and a shared prosperity!

It must communicate the message that the best patriots among our people have communicated for a century-and-a-half, that the renaissance of Africa and the restoration of the dignity of all Africans is fundamental to our purposes.

When we make the call - Advance in Unity to the Year 2012! - it must constitute our affirmation that we remain committed to our historic objective to contribute to the effort to build a global order that will ensure a better life for all, founded on adherence and loyalty to the principle and practice of human and international solidarity.

Our 50th National Conference in Mafikeng received and considered the Political Report presented by our then President, Comrade Nelson Mandela, covering the period since the 49th National Conference held in Bloemfontein.

We stand here today to present the Political Report dealing with the period since the 1997 50th National Conference.

Hopefully, it will also help the 51st National Conference to make a clear determination of what we need to do to achieve further advances towards the goals we have just mentioned, as we progress to our next National Conference and towards the centenary of our movement.

When the then President of our movement, Comrade Nelson Mandela, presented the Political Report to the 50th National Conference, he listed the areas that the Report had to cover.

We would like to quote what he said because it is directly relevant to what this Political Report must contain. This seeming coincidence is due to the consistency of our policies and the uninterrupted continuity of our struggle to achieve the objectives spelt out in our documents on Strategy and Tactics and our resolutions.

## **THEMES OF THE POLITICAL REPORT**

President Mandela posed the question - what are the matters that had to be dealt with - and answered as follows:

"The first of these is that - the principal result of our revolution, the displacement of the apartheid political order by a democratic system, has become an established fact of South African society.

"Secondly - the majority of our people have chosen the national liberation movement, led by the ANC, as the political force that should lead our country as it goes through its post-apartheid process of reconstruction and development.

"Thirdly - the challenges of creating a people-centred society, of living up to the vision contained in the Freedom Charter, requires that all elements of South African society be subjected to genuine reconstruction and development.

"Fourth - that process of reconstruction and development will also have to encompass the spiritual life of the nation, bearing on the moral renewal of individuals and institutions, as well as the ideas and practice of a new patriotism.

"Fifth - the success of our process of reconstruction and development will, to a good extent, depend on the peoples of our region of Southern Africa and Africa as a whole themselves achieving the same goals that we pursue, of democracy, peace, prosperity and social progress, within the context of an African Renaissance.

"Sixth - we have to succeed in our objectives in the context of an accelerated process of globalisation which is leading to a greater integration of the nations of the world, the limitation of the sovereignty of states and the enhancement of the disparities between the rich and the poor.

"Seventh - we have to construct our system of international relations in a manner consistent with our domestic programme of reconstruction and development and our vision of a world of democracy, peace, prosperity and social progress for all.

"Eighth - the objective of reconstruction and development cannot be achieved unless the ANC and the rest of the progressive movement of our country are strong and united around the realisation of clear policy objectives which actually result in reconstruction and development."

## **CONSOLIDATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC ORDER**

Eight years and eight months since our transition to democracy, we would like to reiterate the conclusion that - the principal result of our revolution, the displacement of the apartheid political order by a democratic system, has become an established fact of South African society.

In the period since our 50th National Conference, our people have participated in two major elections. One of these was the 1999 General Election, and the other, the year 2000 Local Government Elections.

Both elections were carried out in conditions of peace and stability indicating the further entrenchment of our democratic system. As a consequence of all this, nobody anywhere can challenge or has challenged the legitimacy of the legislatures and executives that came into being as a result of the popular mandates obtained in the 1999 and 2000 elections.

As part of the process of the evolution of our democratic process, and as mandated by our Constitution, our national parliament also approved legislation that allowed for elected representatives to change their political affiliation by "crossing the floor".

The circumstances leading to the formation and failure of the Democratic Alliance, the DA, had indicated that significant numbers of our people, as well as those they had elected as public representatives, were reassessing their political positions.

This suggested that the time had come that our democratic system should create the space for the attendant adjustment in our legislatures to take place.

The approach of the ANC to this matter derives from the premise that we should allow public representatives, in cases where there has been a major shift in political alignment among constituencies and within parties, to "cross the floor" without losing their seats.

Indeed, when the country's constitution was being finalised, those who today cry wolf and attribute all kinds of strange motives to the ANC, argued for this to be allowed. In turn, we insisted that any changes in the law and constitution should prevent destabilising and unprincipled movements of people between parties, that have little to do with the politics of society as a whole.

As we progress further away from the period of apartheid, the political views of our many of our people will change. Our legal and constitutional framework should not block this natural political process. Only those afraid of change because they want to cling to the mindsets of the past argue otherwise.

Hopefully, the new proposed legislation will address the technical matters raised by the Constitutional Court, to give the possibility for our democratic system to evolve further, remaining responsive to the will of the people of our country.

These proceedings have also emphasised both the constitutional role of the judiciary in our democratic process, and the obligations of the legislative and executive authorities to respect the decisions made by the judiciary in the discharge of its constitutional responsibilities. These are important elements of our democratic system.

As part of the effort to deepen our democratic system, the legislatures have sought to extend and intensify their interaction with the electorate, to give further effect to the perspective that the people shall govern.

This has been done through the encouragement of public debate of proposed legislation, visits of parliamentarians to various localities throughout the country to bring the legislatures to the people, and public broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings.

The executive authorities have also engaged in similar processes, with Imbizo outreach programmes carried out by both the provincial and national governments. This has enabled the ordinary masses of our people to interact directly with the governments they elected, giving further effect to our perspective of a participatory system of governance.

The imbizo programme helps us to address the concern that our movement has raised of the development of what has been called social distance between our elected representatives and the masses who elected them.

Our structures, from the branch upwards, have a responsibility to ensure that our elected representatives maintain close contact with the people.

Our local government legislation, which has resulted in the radical restructuring of our system of local government, specifically provides for the establishment of ward committees.

This imposes a statutory obligation on the elected municipal representatives regularly to interact with their electorate to give real meaning to the democratic process and to bring government ever closer to the people, especially with regard to the sphere of government that is most directly in contact with these masses.

We must ensure that our mayors and councillors are empowered to discharge this responsibility.

Despite our outstanding achievements in the area of the entrenchment of the democratic system, there are still some in our society who continue to threaten resort to force if their demands are not met. These are people who do not accept and have no respect for the democratic process.

They continue to believe that brute force is a more reliable and preferred instrument of change than the voice of the people. They proceed from the position that they have a right to impose their will on the people.

Our movement was the principal combatant for democracy in our country, whose sustained struggle for democracy through many decades, during which its members and leaders paid a high price, led to the defeat of white minority rule. Similarly, our movement is the principal architect and defender of democracy in our country.

The state organs will carry out their responsibilities in this regard, both to protect our people from all criminal violence and to defend the constitutional order from all unconstitutional acts, regardless of who the perpetrators of such acts might be.

At the same time, we have an obligation as our country's premier component of the forces of democracy to take all necessary action to mobilise the masses of our people to act in defence of one of the principal gains of the revolutionary struggle they waged, the birth of our democratic system of government.

We have an obligation to the great masses we represent to work systematically for the further entrenchment and consolidation of democracy in our country and continuously to find the ways that help us to realise the objective that the people shall govern.

We have therefore supported the current review of our electoral law, which seeks to establish whether we need to change our electoral system, among other things to enhance the accountability of our elected representatives to the electorate. In this regard, we have already stated our view that we see no reason to change the system governing the election of our local, provincial and national legislatures.

Among other things, this system has demonstrated practical respect for the multiparty system of government required by our Constitution. It has also created the possibility for minority opinion in our country to be represented in our legislatures, leading to a more inclusive and participatory democratic order.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF THE JUDICIARY**

As part of the task we face further to entrench our democratic system, we also need to discuss the issue of the ongoing work to transform the judiciary, including the realisation of the objective of equitable representation of both black people and women.

This is highlighted by the disturbing view that is gaining ground, that whereas, by definition, obvious progress has been with the transformation of the legislatures and the executive bodies, the same cannot be said of the judiciary.

However, we must also keep in sharp focus the fact that we are discussing a society and a democratic system that are still in their infancy. What we seek to achieve in this context is spelt out in our Constitution.

The challenge we face is to ensure that these South Africans act to implement the letter and the spirit of our Constitution and laws impartially, and without fear or favour. The adage remains relevant, that justice must not only be done, but it must also be seen to be done.

It seems obvious that one of the issues we should discuss is the building of a pool of potential black and women candidates for the judiciary and magistracy. The objective situation suggests that we must attend to this challenge in a conscious and consistent manner. If we fail to do this, the historic discrimination

referred to in our Constitution will guarantee that the racial and gender imbalances will, for the foreseeable future, remain unchanged.

We can neither afford nor allow the situation that our judicial system loses credibility with our people as a whole, arising out of our failure openly to consider the challenges that face the judiciary and the magistracy in the context of the national transformation process.

At the same time, we must state this firmly that the ANC remains firm in its belief in the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary as set out in the Constitution, as well as the respective roles of the legislative and executive authorities.

The period since our 50th National Conference has confirmed the conclusion that national congress of the South African people reached, that the displacement of the apartheid political order by a democratic system, has become an established fact of South African society.

Furthermore, we are proud of the role that our movement has played in the last five years further to entrench this democratic system in the ways we have indicated.

What we have achieved represents an outstanding victory for democracy. It constitutes an invaluable part of the new heritage that has accrued to our people as a result of the struggle they waged, and the vigilance they have maintained to defend the gains of the democratic revolution.

With regard to the strategic objective to build our democratic order, the historic Congress of our people, together with the masses it represents and leads, have scored 10 marks out of 10. We must both celebrate this outstanding success and build on it further to advance towards the greatest possible expression of the strategic perspective that the people shall govern.

## **THE ANC LEADS**

In his Political Report of 1997, Comrade Nelson Mandela pointed out that since 1994, the majority of our people had chosen the national liberation movement, led by the ANC, as the political force that should lead our country as it goes through its post-apartheid process of reconstruction and development.

The correctness of this conclusion has been confirmed during the eventful period since the 50th National Conference. The General Elections of 1999 returned the ANC to power with a larger majority than that obtained in the 1994 election. The year 2000 local government elections confirmed this level of confidence of our people in their movement.

The iimbizo have consistently confirmed the support that our movement enjoys among the masses of our people, as represented by the elections of 1999 and 2000. Even when the movement has come under attack from various quarters, the masses of our people have stood firmly behind their organisation and its leadership.

The analysis of the 1999 and 2000 elections shows that the heart of our constituency continues to be the ordinary black working people of our country. These are the poor in our society, those worst affected by the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. They were the backbone of the mass army of revolution that defeated apartheid tyranny.

These masses are both very clear about their goals and aspirations and have no doubts about who stood side-by-side with and led them as they hammered down the ramparts of white minority rule. They know that the movement that led them, the ANC, is the only tried and tested political formation that will sustain the struggle for the fulfilment of their aspirations.

It is for these reasons that these masses refuse to be separated from, and turned against their movement. These masses include black and white people drawn from the middle strata that have benefited and will benefit from the transformation of our country into a non-racial and non-sexist democracy.

These sections of the middle strata are also far-sighted enough to understand that their own future lies in entering into an alliance with the working people and supporting the process of the fundamental transformation of our country.

The confidence of the people in the ANC puts a sacred obligation on all of us who have convened here as delegates to the 51st National Conference to respect and live up to the expectations of the masses of our people.

## **RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

The third issue to which Comrade Nelson Mandela drew attention was the need for us to continue to focus on the challenge of the reconstruction and development of our country, encompassing all elements of South African society. We must therefore report on what we have done in this regard during the past five years.

In this regard, we must acknowledge and salute the important work we did during the period of our first democratic parliament, from 1994 to 1999, to elaborate and put in place the transformation policies we needed and need to address the challenge of reconstruction and development of which Comrade Nelson Mandela spoke at our 50th National Conference.

Given the progress we have made since 1994, some might forget that when we took the reigns of political power eight years ago, we inherited an apartheid statutory framework, born of the colonial and apartheid policies pursued by successive white minority regimes for a number of centuries.

Accordingly, our first task was to elaborate the necessary reconstruction and development policies, publish them in Green and White Papers, and enact the relevant legislation that would give legal force to these policies. As we met during the 50th National Conference, both our movement and our legislatures were deeply immersed in the struggle to achieve these objectives.

In this context, the 51st National Conference needs to pay tribute to our comrades who served in our first democratic national parliament in particular. The work they did during the first five years of our liberation, including those who served as presiding officers, whips and leaders of our caucus, provided our country with the legal framework for the vigorous pursuit of the central goal of reconstruction and development.

The work they did was recognised by our National Policy Conference earlier this year, as well as our structures from our branches upwards, which concluded that we had substantially met our goal of formulating the necessary policies and giving them legal force. This included the policies we adopted at the 50th National Conference.

For this reason, the Policy Conference, whose conclusions we will consider, resolved that the strategic challenge we now face is the effective implementation of the national transformation policies adopted by our country under the leadership of our movement.

Indeed, we can say that one of the outstanding outcomes of the 51st National Conference must be the adoption of a document containing an Implementation Commitment that will tie all our structures to take the necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation of our policies.

This will be our own performance contract which will bind all our cadres and structures, and which our movement would use to oversee our activities relating to matters of governance.

The policies we must implement are focused on the achievement of the historic goals of our movement, the transformation of South Africa into a democratic, united, peaceful, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous country.

The questions we must answer is whether we have made progress in the struggle to achieve these goals, and what we need to do to realise the advances that are critical to the transformation of our society and meeting the objective of a better life for all.

We have already mentioned some of the advances we have made with regard to the challenge of the further entrenchment of our system of democracy. We will refer to a few additional matters.

## **STRENGTHEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

One of these is the establishment of the new system of local government. The restructuring process has greatly increased the capacity and role of this sphere of our system of governance. The intention and result of this is to give effect to our movement's perspective of bringing government as close as possible to the people, of ensuring that the people shall govern. To guarantee that our system of local government responds fully to its increased responsibilities, we will have to attend to a number of issues. These were addressed during the National Policy Conference.

One of these relates to ensuring that our leaders in local government, the mayors and councillors are properly empowered to discharge their responsibility of leading the municipalities. We have to understand that many of our policies are implemented at the local level. Accordingly, we must defeat the concept that service in local government means "catching the last coach of the gravy train."

We must treat local government as the front desk in our system of governance, the point at which we achieve customer satisfaction. Our mayors and councillors must therefore be the face of government with regard to the masses of our people. They must be empowered to carry out this responsibility successfully.

Another important element of local government relates to the critical need for us to ensure that this level of government has the necessary qualified personnel to carry out all its tasks. This includes important managerial, engineering and other tasks.

Given the advances being made in the area of technology, especially information and communication technology, local government must become a special area of focus with regard to e-government, to give it the necessary technical capacity to improve service delivery.

All this raises the challenging issue of local government finances. This matter will have to be addressed seriously to ensure that this sphere of government has the capacity to carry out its responsibilities. This must relate, in particular, to our obligations to the poorest among our people.

These sections of our people have the least possibility to contribute to the finances of local government and the most pressing need for local government services and support, including free basic services and indigent support. And yet the municipalities in which they reside, including the rural municipalities and those based on and around rural towns, have the least possibility to respond to these important challenges.

All these matters affecting local government relate both to the challenge of meeting our obligations with regard to the task of ensuring a better life for all, as well as the important responsibility of our movement

to consolidate our democratic system, ensuring that it gives concrete expression to our strategic vision of people-driven processes of change.

## **THE INSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL GOVERNMENT**

The Ministry of Provincial and Local Government has issued the long-awaited White Paper on Traditional Government. We must ensure that the inclusive discussion that is taking place leads to a final resolution of the issue of the role and place of the institutions of traditional government within our system of governance.

In this regard, we must express our appreciation for the posture adopted by many of our traditional leaders to respect our Constitution and the democratic order, working hard to play their role as builders of the new South Africa as a peaceful, republican democracy.

Another matter important to our continuing struggle to give meaning to our democratic system relates to the work our movement has done and is doing to build a broad political front for reconstruction and development.

When we convened at the 50th National Conference, the ANC and the IFP were the only political formations with members serving in our national government. The NNP had voluntarily left the Government of National Unity.

Both of these minority parties had served or were serving in the national government by virtue of the constitutional requirement that parties had to be represented in the national and provincial governments on the basis of the size of their electoral support.

This sunset clause became inoperative with effect from the 1999 elections. In addition, in these elections our movement secured an almost two-thirds majority of the electorate. Accordingly, both from a political and a constitutional point of view, we could govern the country on our own.

## **A BROAD FRONT FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

The reality however is that despite this freedom to act in a self-centred manner, as we meet in the 51st National Conference, our national government includes members drawn from four political formations. These are the ANC, the IFP, AZAPO and the NNP. In the national and other legislatures, the ANC works with the Minority Front within a permanent cooperation framework.

One of the challenges we face is further to expand this broad front for reconstruction and development. This requires that we do everything in our power to rebuild the mass democratic movement and revitalise our links especially with the community-based organisations that are focusing on community development and the improvement of the lives of our people.

We will also have to work consistently to ensure that the broad front for reconstruction and development itself Advances in Unity to the Year 2012!

In this context, hopefully Conference will also take a close look at the functioning and effectiveness of such state institutions as the National Development Agency, the Umsobomvu Fund, the relevant DTI institutions, and the variety of important government programmes that include the Urban Renewal and Rural Development Programmes, poverty alleviation, school feeding, and other initiatives.

It is clear that our success with regard to various initiatives derived from these institutions and programmes will depend on how well our government works with genuine developmental non-governmental and community-based organisations.

## **THE MDM & THE NGOS**

The matter of the revitalisation of the mass democratic movement (MDM), and the improvement of our links with the non-governmental development community, or the so-called civil society organisations (CSO), also relates to the need for us not to allow the emergence and consolidation of a rift between genuine mass and transformation organisations and our organisation.

We must admit that some of the negative developments with regard to both these sectors have arisen from our own failure to maintain the necessary continuous contact with them as well as the weakened participation of our members in these various structures. We have to attend to this deficiency.

In his Political Report to our 50th National Conference, Comrade Nelson Mandela drew attention to this danger. In the period since then, the effort has continued to turn some of individual formations of both the MDM and CSO's, into so-called "watchdogs" over both our movement and government.

We must make the point in this regard, that this does not refer to all organisations of the mass democratic movement and civil society organisations. There are many activists in these organised sectors who are working honestly and selflessly to make a contribution to the national goals of pushing back the frontiers of poverty, and expanding access to a better life for all.

We must reinforce these efforts further to strengthen the broad front for reconstruction and development.

The period since our 50th National Conference has demonstrated that this broad front will not emerge of its own, but will come about as a result of consistent effort on our part, which will entail a complex ideological, political and organisational struggle. In this struggle, we must communicate the message and, in practice, ensure that the ANC is and acts as a national liberation movement, true to its revolutionary traditions, reflected in its commitment to the aspirations of the poor.

## **THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE**

The ideological currents against which we need to define ourselves are spelt out in the Preface to our Strategy and Tactics document, which we will debate. This Preface deals both with neo-liberalism and the ultra-left. Among other things, it says:

"To us, and indeed all genuine revolutionaries, the historical task of national liberation is not a fleeting convenience or an ephemeral tactic. It is an objective requirement to eliminate the historical contradictions arising out of a system constructed over centuries of colonial domination.

"But ours is more than just a national liberation struggle, because it places the interests of the poor and the role of the working class at the centre of its theory and practice. The ANC, as the leader of the national democratic struggle, is a disciplined force of the left, organised to conduct consistent struggle in pursuit of the interests of the poor."

We have raised the preceding questions about the various political organisations in our country, some organisations within the MDM and the CSO's, to discuss the challenges we face with regard to the continuing task of reconstruction and development.

The National Conference will have the possibility to consider the detailed sector reports of the advances, reverses and problems that characterise our reality during the last five years with regard to the central issue of reconstruction and development. The Political Report will therefore refer only to the fundamental objectives of our reconstruction and development process.

These are:

- the building of a non-racial society;
- the creation of a non-sexist society;
- the building of a prosperous society;
- the construction of a state machinery committed to and capable of serving the people of South Africa;
- the moral renewal of our society; and,
- the unification of our people around a new patriotism.

Our comment on these matters will also cover the fourth subject of this Political Report relating to what the Political Report to the 50th National Conference referred to as "the spiritual life of the nation, bearing on the moral renewal of individuals and institutions, as well as the ideas and practice of a new patriotism."

## **THE CHALLENGE OF NON-RACISM & A NEW PATRIOTISM**

We must admit that, in many critical respects, we still have a long way to go before we achieve the goal of creating a non-racial society.

The bulk of our economy, including the land, remains predominantly white-owned. Wealth, income, opportunity and skills continue to be distributed according to racial patterns. Accordingly, the overwhelming majority of the poor and the unemployed, even on a per capita basis, are black people.

Naturally, the incidence of disease and death, of morbidity and mortality, reflects these racial imbalances. These include the incidence of tuberculosis, AIDS, infectious diseases as a whole, and diseases of poverty which we must continue to fight vigorously.

The same can be said about the pattern of human settlements. These continue to reflect what was created in the past in both urban and rural areas. This also relates to levels of development with regard to such issues as the social and economic infrastructure. Accordingly, these persisting patterns of human settlement signify a continuing imbalance in terms of access to social delivery in all its elements.

The pervasive impact of the past on the present means that in all other areas of social activity, whether they relate to the composition of the professions, participation in different sports codes, environmental questions, or access to public hearings in our legislatures, we will find the same racial imbalances as in all areas of our national life.

None of the foregoing will surprise the National Conference. We have always said that it will take us time to eradicate the legacy of colonialism and apartheid.

The central challenge has been, and will continue to be, that we attend to this task with the necessary vigour, informed by the goals spelt out in the Freedom Charter, acting within the context of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, implementing the decisions taken by the constitutional structures of our movement. These include the National Conference, the National General Council and the National Executive Committee.

I am proud to report that this is exactly how we have acted over the last five years. Without doubt, we have made progress to advance the strategic goal of our movement to create a non-racial society. The National Conference will have access to various reports detailing the advances we have made in various areas.

These will range from issues of increased black ownership of productive property, larger numbers of black people joining the middle strata, changes in the composition of the social sector made up of professionals, managers, skilled people, students and trainees within the universities and technikons, institutions for further education and technical colleges, and the intelligentsia in general.

Uneven as this progress is, nevertheless it makes the statement that our policies and our actions to implement these policies, are producing the results visualised in the Strategy and Tactics document and the resolutions adopted at the 50th National Conference.

As a movement, we must never lose sight of the fact that the historic task of creating a non-racial society is central to the objectives of the national democratic revolution.

The struggle for a non-racial society entails the fundamental transformation of our society. Its achievement will make a decisive contribution to the efforts of the peoples of the world to build equitable and successful multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-faith societies.

In this regard, we will have to act more vigorously to address such critical areas as poverty eradication, the development of the historically black areas, the restructuring of the system of property relations and therefore the deracialisation of the economy, increasing the black skills levels, and deracialising our human habitat.

What we have to do in these and other areas is reflected in the resolutions from the National Policy Conference that the National Conference will discuss.

On the subjective plane, once more we can take pride at what we have achieved in the period since the 50th National Conference. As with reference to the objective sphere, we can state this firmly, that, at the subjective level, during the last five years, the national commitment to a non-racial future for our country has gained even greater acceptance and further entrenched itself as a distinguished feature of our process of reconstruction and development.

In this regard, we must mention two conventions of seminal importance. One of these was the National Conference against Racism held in 2000, under the auspices of the Human Rights Commission. The other was the 2001 UN International Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances. The decisions taken at these conferences represented new advances in the national and international struggle to defeat the demon of racism.

Our movement played a central role with regard to both these important conventions. This also means that we have a continuing obligation to ensure that we promote the implementation of the national and international decisions adopted by these important gatherings.

Within our country, it is clear that the forces of extreme racism have no possibility to capture state power or to play a decisive role in our national life. This is despite their bombing campaign in the recent past. The very resort to violence indicates the realisation of these forces that they have no possibility to achieve their goals by peaceful, democratic means.

Of importance in this regard, is the critically important fact that the black majority has refused to be provoked by these white rightwing actions to carry out reprisals against our white population in general. This also refers to other acts of racism that we have experienced, as has happened on the farms, schools and other places, some of which have resulted in death.

This confirms the political maturity of our people and our influence over these masses, who both understand the desperation of the forces of extreme racism, and the imperatives for us to persist in our long-established policies of non-racism and national reconciliation. These masses also understand that we must defend the peace that democracy has ushered in, with all our might, because on it rests the full realisation of our freedom, human rights and prosperity.

We must take pride in both these achievements. None of them would have been possible without the direct interventions and leadership of our movement, the principal combatant in our country for the construction of a non-racial society.

These victories are especially important given where our country comes from, the fact that our democracy is less than a decade old, and the actuality that our society continues to be defined by our racist past. Many in our country seem to forget these realities, pretending that racism in our country is a matter of the distant past.

Despite everything we have said, we must also recognise the objective reality that the behaviour of many in our country continues to be informed by ideas of racism. This relates to many areas, including places of work, access to the professions and management positions, the educational institutions, and the media.

It has also slowed down the growth of a new and common patriotism that would unite all our people. A manifestation of this has been the persistent practice among some of our people to bad-mouth our country as loudly and as often as they can.

These are people who are determined to present our country in as negative a light as possible. Among them are many who sustain a racist stereotype of the black people of our country, which informs their actions and their attitude towards everything we are trying to do.

## **THE NATIONAL QUESTION & MULTI-LINGUALISM**

We are also confronted by the persistent concern raised by some of our Afrikaner compatriots about the future of the Afrikaans language. We have to deal with this matter with the necessary sensitivity, as we must do with all other languages. We must also reaffirm our pride in the role played by the Afrikaans-speaking section of our population in the reconstruction and development of our country.

Our language policies are an integral part of our policies to address the national question. They have to address all our languages, and not just some, including those not identified as official languages. Our policies have to recognise the reality that one of our objectives is to redress the language imbalance and discrimination created during the long period of colonialism and apartheid.

These language policies originate from what the Freedom Charter said, that: "All National Groups shall have Equal Rights. All people shall have an equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs."

We should work with all our national groups to encourage them to engage this challenge, and not concentrate on their own language. Hopefully the Commission of Language, Cultural and Religious Rights will help us to resolve the outstanding questions that bear on the equitable treatment of all our languages, including Afrikaans.

With regard to the matter of alleged white marginalisation, the truth is that our white compatriots have been among the leading beneficiaries of the democratic order in all respects. Even in terms of employment and promotion, the professions, the management echelon and the component of skilled workers continue to be dominated by the white section of our population.

We must respond to all this by sustaining and intensifying our struggle to build a non-racial society. We must continue to focus on the transformation of our social reality, to deracialise our country. Similarly, we must intensify our offensive on the subjective plane, relating to ideology and politics.

Among other things, we must encourage all our people, both black and white, to fight racism at the immediate and local levels, building a true mass movement against racism. As we conduct this struggle,

we must be conscious of the fact that the defenders of racist ideas and practice will try to defend themselves by accusing those who fight racism of "playing the race card".

Nevertheless, the centrality to the national democratic revolution of our victory over racism demands that we should not relent in our offensive to create the non-racial society visualised in the national Constitution. This is one of the transformation tasks on which we must focus in the period up to our next National Conference.

At the same time, we must continue to work hard for the success of our work for national reconciliation. As we have said in the past, we must act on the basis of the interconnection between fundamental social transformation and national reconciliation.

In this regard, we must work to defeat the ideas that the transformation of our country constitutes the opposite of and is inimical to national reconciliation, and vice versa. These processes are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

We need the fundamental transformation of our country to eradicate the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, in the mutual interest of all our people. We need national reconciliation to end the legacy of racism, establish a non-racial society and maintain the unity of our diverse society, once again in the mutual interest. The accomplishment of both these tasks requires the united action of all our people.

Among the critical organisational challenges that the ANC and the revolutionary trade union movement, COSATU, need to address, is the building of solidarity and common purpose among workers of all colours, through patient and painstaking hard work. The ANC must, accordingly, intensify its contact and interaction with NACTU and FEDUSA.

We must continue our work to develop a common sense of nationhood and encourage the development of a new and inclusive patriotism out of the deferent nationalisms that have characterised our past. This should make it possible for all our people to be proudly South African, and together to proclaim that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.

Without seeking to exaggerate our advances in this regard, we must nevertheless note a number of important developments that have contributed to our progress towards the acceptance of a new patriotism by the largest number of our people.

## **VOLUNTEERS FOR RECONSTRUCTION & DEVELOPMENT**

The response to our movement's Volunteer Campaign during the year of our 90th anniversary, has demonstrated that indeed many of our people are prepared to identify themselves with the new patriotism. This includes many of our white compatriots who are offering their skills and resources in the common effort to address the challenges we face of overcoming the legacy of racism and providing a better life for all.

We have a continuing task to engage all our people in practical programmes that unite them around a common effort to give birth to the new South Africa towards which our people aspire.

## **NATIONAL SYMBOLS**

International experience as well as our own confirms the importance of national symbols in the consolidation of a common sense of nationhood. In the period since our 50th National Conference, our country has acquired a new National Coat of Arms and new National Orders. Together with our National Anthem and National Flag, these new national symbols will play an important role in rallying our people to the call for a new patriotism.

This year we launched what will probably become our most important national monument. This is our Freedom Park. It will give us the possibility not only to honour our heroes and heroines. It will also help to position our country correctly with regard to the very evolution of life and the evolution of humanity itself. I am certain that, as we have done with our national symbols, Freedom Park will break new ground in the design of national monuments, serving for all time as a source of pride and inspiration to all our people.

Certainly one of the most important and memorable moments for our country in the period since our last National Conference was the return from France and interment of the remains of Sarah Baartman.

This helped somewhat to redress the terrible crime of genocide committed against the Khoisan people by the early European settlers in our country. It helped to reassert the dignity of these fellow South Africans, who had the possibility to lead the nation in the dignified return and reburial of our grandmother, Sarah Baartman.

For us, the return of Sarah Baartman provided us with an outstanding opportunity to make an important statement about our commitment to non-racism and non-sexism and the restoration of the dignity of all Africans, victims over many centuries, of slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism and racist tyranny.

Our movement has long recognized that the emancipation of women stands at the heart both of the practice of democracy in our country and its fundamental social transformation. None of these can be achieved outside of the goal of accomplishing the objective of gender equality.

In this regard, we must once again pay tribute to the role of the women both with regard to the victory of the democratic revolution and the transformation of our society. Our continuing challenges require that we pay even closer attention to the task of ensuring that the Women's League is as strong as possible, and remains firmly rooted among the masses of the womenfolk.

## **THE STRUGGLE FOR NON-SEXISM**

Many of the issues we have discussed with regard to the task of building a non-racial society and social transformation are intimately related to the goal of constructing a non-sexist society. Everything we do in these struggles must encompass the liberation of women as one of their integral features.

As with the issue of racism, we must tackle the issue of sexism in both its objective and subjective elements. The objective manifestation of sexism expresses itself in discrimination against women in the socio-economic sphere, resulting in the gross discrimination against women so evident in all aspects of our national life. This results in women being the worst victims of the iniquities of our racist legacy.

The struggle against sexism must therefore address the same questions we confront in the struggle against racism. These include poverty and underdevelopment, equitable access to wealth and income, equal rights at the work place, access to the professions, management and skills, and so on.

On the subjective plane, we have to defeat the entrenched ideas in our society, which ascribe an inferior position to women. Rape, sexual abuse and domestic violence are some of the terrible results of these sexist attitudes, in addition to their central contribution to informing and sustaining the gender imbalances in the socio-economic sphere.

Once again, we must note the reality that we have made some important advances in our effort to create a non-sexist society, while recognising the fact that we still have a long way to go before we can say we have broken the back of sexism in our society.

Today, exceeding everything ever achieved in our country's history, there are more women with access education and training, leadership positions in all areas of social activity, medical care, clean water and

sanitation, electricity and telecommunications, improved social benefits, and protection against violence and abuse. All this has come about as a result of policies adopted and implemented by our movement.

## **BUILDING A PROSPEROUS SOUTH AFRICA**

Yet another of our important tasks is the building of a prosperous society, to end poverty and underdevelopment. Yet again, we are proud of our achievements in this regard. Serious efforts have been made to implement the policies we adopted to respond to the challenge of pushing back the frontiers of poverty and expanding access to a better life for all.

Many of our opponents try very hard to minimise the extent and depth of the levels of poverty and underdevelopment that we inherited. Some of them have developed amnesia about the deep-seated crisis of the apartheid economy.

Accordingly, they pretend that our economic problems can be solved in a short time. Nothing could be further from the truth. The reality is that it will take us time to achieve the all-round development of our country and people. The critical point, however, is that we have made a good beginning.

To achieve the prosperity we need to end poverty and provide a better life for all our people, we have to attend to a number of related and important matters. Some of these are:

- high and sustained rates of economic growth;
- ensuring that we build a balanced internationally competitive economy;
- achieving the objectives of black economic empowerment, to deracialise our economy, as well as the development of small and medium business;
- radically reducing the numbers of those who are unemployable and are therefore unemployed because of lack of skills;
- radically reducing the gross racial and gender inequalities in the distribution of wealth and income;
- meeting the social and economic infrastructure needs of both rural and urban areas;
- and ensuring balanced spatial development.

To contribute to the realisation of these objectives, our government has attended to the public finances and the role of the state in the economy as decided by the 50th National Conference and the National General Council, consistent with the vision contained in the RDP.

All objective observers readily acclaim the success we have achieved with regard to the macro-economy. Among other things, this has enabled us to devote more resources both to social spending and investment expenditures, by reducing the amount of public revenues directed at servicing the public debt. We will have to maintain the macro-economic stance that has produced these and other benefits.

The work done with regard to the restructuring of state assets, including the formation of public-private partnerships, has also increased the capacity of these state corporations to contribute to our economic and social development. This includes extension of services to our people at a pace that would otherwise not have been possible.

We must work to implement all outstanding decisions with regard to this restructuring process, informed by the responsibility to ensure that these state owned assets are used to help us achieve our global development goals. We must also bear in mind that these state corporations have already demonstrated their capacity to contribute significantly to the advancement of the goals of NEPAD.

Much work has also been done to restructure our economy, to modernise it and make it more competitive. This has been accompanied by rising rates of investment in our economy.

The results of this are evident in the resilience being shown by our economy during the current period, which is characterised by a global slowdown. This includes the recovery of our currency, the Rand, and the accompanying results of this positive development.

In this context, we must note the negative development at the end of 2001 when the Rand was subject to rapid depreciation. In this regard, we have to acknowledge both the alarm that was sounded by members of the business community and the work that was done by the resultant Commission of Inquiry.

Thanks to the way our cadres deployed in the public sector have managed our fiscal, monetary, industrial and trade policies, we have the possibility in the period leading to the 52nd National Conference to achieve very significant improvements in the growth and development of our economy. This would also make a critical impact on the central questions of job creation, poverty reduction and achievement of greater social equity.

We have to take advantage of these exciting possibilities to make the economic interventions that will turn the possibilities into reality. It may very well be that, in this regard, what we have to do is vigorously to implement the policies we have already decided upon. Conference will have to reflect on this matter seriously.

Having assessed the progress we have made to set our economy on a new course and considered the new challenges we have to meet, we decided that we needed to concentrate on micro-economic reforms.

These would be targeted at improving the efficiency of our economy, increasing its international competitiveness, raising the growth rate, reducing the levels of unemployment, and addressing the constant challenge of equity.

This requires individual focus on specific sectors. We have therefore taken and are implementing various programmes relating to transport, energy and telecommunications, which will reduce the cost of doing business in our country, allowing our economy to develop at significantly higher rates of growth than we have achieved.

We are also focusing on other sectors, such as tourism, agro-industry and automobiles. Once more, our objective is to ensure that these sectors expand and grow, with a positive impact on our rate of growth and the absorption into the economy of those who are unemployed.

Work has also been done to improve our capacity to encourage and support the growth of small, medium and micro enterprises. This is an important part of our micro-economic reforms, which the National Conference will discuss.

At the end of the day, we have to ensure that we act vigorously and effectively further to accelerate the growth of this layer of our economy. This includes the vital matter of the proper handling of the issue of micro-credit to enable people at the grassroots level to participate in productive economic activity without having to depend exclusively on the provision of job opportunities by others.

The social partners have agreed to hold the important Growth and Development Summit early next year. The Summit must take our work forward with regard to the micro-economic interventions we have to make.

It must help us radically to raise our growth rate, increase the rate of investment in our economy, expand the job opportunities we need to reduce unemployment and poverty, and expedite the process of the deracialisation of our economy. It must also help to ensure that our own policies as government are coherent, integrated and coordinated.

Once again, our movement must take pride in the work our cadres have done properly to respond to the economic tasks decided by the 50th National Conference, the National General Council and the National Executive Committee. It is because of the work of these cadres that a recent report of The Bank of New York spoke of the paradox of South Africa, whose economy has grown, even as the global economy tended towards stagnation. Work has also been done to address the critical matter of human resource development. In addition to specific programmes targeted at raising the skills levels of our working people, we have also been engaged in restructuring our educational system to make it relevant to our development needs, including the development of all our people.

Recently, our government, the mining companies and the unions agreed on a Mining Charter that will both contribute to the growth of this industry and address the critically important issue of the transformation of our country. A transformation agreement has also been reached affecting the liquid fuels sector of the energy industry. Discussions about similar Charters are on course relating to other sectors of our economy.

## **BLACK ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

However, it is important that we approach this matter in a more systematic manner, in part to ensure that we avoid the unnecessary investor panic that followed the leakage of the draft Mining Charter.

We will have to work to spread the understanding that black economic empowerment is not a synonym for a less efficient economy, nor for less returns relative to investment made.

Over time, we should engender the understanding that it is natural that an economy in an African country that South Africa is, should, in its ownership, management and skills, reflect the active and meaningful participation of Africans in particular and blacks in general.

In this regard, our National Conference should reaffirm our movement's determination to work for the deracialisation of our economy. This is part of our larger goal of building a non-racial society, representative of the fundamental perspective of our movement that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.

Our handling of this matter from the very first day of our liberation has helped to set our country apart as a country of hope, capable of making a valuable contribution to the global effort to contend with the challenges of diverse societies.

As we carry out this task, we must also ensure that we achieve the growth and development of our economy that is fundamental to the realisation of our goals of eradicating poverty and underdevelopment, and ensuring a better life for all our people. Obviously, it could never be our intention to work towards an equitable distribution of poverty.

We should pursue the two goals of social transformation and economic growth and development, simultaneously, in such a manner that they are mutually reinforcing. At the same time, we have to ensure that both our people and the rest of the world are clear about our objectives. This will help us to avoid the negative speculation that resulted from the leaked draft Mining Charter.

To achieve these objectives, we need to adopt a clear, specific and realistic programme, consistent with the historic strategic objectives of our movement.

To this end, we should adopt a global Transformation Charter that will explain our goals. This will help us to avoid the uncertainty and instability that will inevitably result from a proliferation of transformation initiatives not informed by a central strategic concept.

At the same time, we should encourage the investment community, the private owners of capital, to participate in the accomplishment of the objectives of the transformation Charter. To achieve this result, we will have to provide the necessary incentives to encourage the involvement of this investment community in the process of meeting our transformation goals.

Thirdly, we will have to indicate what we will do to generate the resources that will finance our transformation goals. As the National Conference is aware, this has been a major obstacle with regard to the successful implementation of our movement's objectives relating both to black economic empowerment and the development of small and medium business.

Lastly, we have to ensure that our transformation programme does not merely focus on the redistribution of existing wealth. To combine the objectives of both deracialising our economy and achieving its growth and development, we have to focus on the creation of new wealth and productive capacity.

This means that such resources as we are able to generate to finance the Transformation Charter should not be used to reduce the level of investment in our economy, but to increase it. The reality is that it is on the basis of such new investment that results in the expansion of our economy, that we will realise our objective of its growth and development.

We make the foregoing comments and suggestions because though a beginning has been made, much work remains to be done to address the other challenges we have mentioned, relating to the challenges of reducing the disparities in the distribution of wealth and income, deracialising our economy, and attending to the matter of the gross underdevelopment of especially the black areas of our country.

Our life experience has demonstrated the correctness of the policies decided by our movement. The challenge facing us is to do everything that needs to be done to ensure the effective implementation of these policies.

This is one of the central tasks of this 51st National Conference, to take the necessary decisions that will accelerate our advance towards the economic goals we have set ourselves. We must therefore give the necessary mandate to the incoming National Executive Committee.

## **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT**

The National Conference will also have to attend to the important matter of youth development and empowerment. In this context, we refer to the preparation of our young people fully to participate in the economy. This requires that we attend closely to issues of the relevant education and training of our young people and ensuring that the resources are available to enable them also to set themselves up as entrepreneurs.

Among others, a serious matter of concern that has arisen is the level of unemployment among both matriculants and university and technikon graduates. This is due to the fact that many of these relatively well-educated young people do not have the skills required within our economy. There are of course other matters we need to attend to with regard to our youth. We were concerned at the relatively low level of participation of our young people in the 1999 and 2000 elections. As a movement, we are very interested that the youth should be actively involved in determining the future of our country.

We are therefore opposed to their depoliticisation and demobilisation as an active force for progressive change.

Quite correctly, the Youth League has decided to observe the period leading to the centenary of our movement as a Decade of Youth Action to Seize the Opportunities of Democracy. This comes at a fitting

moment, following the re-burial and the celebration of the life and contribution of the founding President of the Youth League, Anton Lembede.

## **THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE STATE**

Yet another of the tasks to which we have committed ourselves is the construction of a state machinery dedicated to and capable of serving the people of South Africa. This bears directly on the task we set ourselves in the Reconstruction and Development Programme to replace the apartheid state with a democratic state.

We have already addressed some of the matters relevant to this objective, under earlier sections of this Political Report. These relate to the judiciary, local government and the state owned corporations. We will now make some additional observations that are important to the realisation of the goal of the consolidation of the democratic state.

The overwhelming majority of the state executive organs in our country, from the local to the national, fall under the political leadership of our movement. Acting within the parameters of the Constitution and the law, this gives us the opportunity, and imposes the obligation on us, to ensure that the administrations carry out their tasks.

Led by the executive authorities, we have to ensure that these administrations discharge their responsibilities of serving the people through the effective and efficient implementation of the policies decided by our legislatures and executive authorities.

The truth, however, is that during the period since our 50th National Conference, there has been a number of instances of the failure of administrations under our leadership with regard to the implementation of these policies.

The firm message this communicates to us is that we have to strengthen the accountability to our movement of all members of our leadership, wherever they are deployed. This is because this leadership must take its due responsibility for the failures we have mentioned.

Some of these have been most serious indeed. They include failure to distribute social grants to those entitled to these grants, who constitute poorest in our country; failure to ensure that the state institutions and civil servants render the necessary service to the public, including in such areas as health and education; failure to ensure that those contracted and paid to provide services and new infrastructure actually carry out their tasks; and, embezzlement of public funds and resources, facilitated by the failure to institute and sustain the necessary management and control mechanisms.

Clearly, we cannot allow this situation to continue, such that we, on whom the masses of our people depend to lead the struggle for the improvement of their lives, in reality act in a manner that frustrates these expectations. Our National Conference will therefore have to take the necessary decisions to improve the internal accountability of our leadership as a whole.

The second point we would like to make relates to our public service and the unions to which these public service workers belong. Some of these public service workers are responsible for the failures to which we have referred. These are people who serve within the public service but have no commitment to serve the masses of our people.

Many of these are members of trade unions that belong to our country's progressive movement. Yet their conduct at the workplace has nothing whatsoever to do with the furtherance of the objectives of our movement. Instead, it serves to undermine the attainment of these objectives.

To ensure the accomplishment of our task that the democratic state serves the interests of the people, we have to guarantee the effective functioning of the system of public administration. This means that we must have a cadre of public servants committed to their work. To achieve this result, we need the conscious involvement especially of the progressive public sector unions.

We will therefore have to enter into detailed discussions with all the public sector unions to see whether we can build a partnership with them focused on the achievement of the goals of batho pele! Success in this regard can make an important contribution to the task facing us of improving the quality of life of the poorest among our people.

In this regard, we must pay tribute to the work done by the law enforcement agencies to take the war to the criminals. They have responded well to the challenge to improve the safety and security of our people. The progressive trade unions involved in this area of the national effort have a responsibility to play their role in this regard.

The accomplishment of the tasks set out in batho pele! also requires that we re-examine the issue whether we do not need to develop and strengthen the layer of the public service deployed in the field to maintain direct contact with the people at their residential places.

These would be public servants who have been properly prepared to carry out such tasks as community development, other service delivery such as provided by the community health workers, agricultural extension services, adult basic education, and so on.

Necessarily, because of their direct daily contact with the masses of the people, these would have to be the best within our public service, patriotic South Africans who are truly committed to serve their people in keeping with the principles of batho pele!

With regard to all the foregoing, it will be critically important that the central government plays its proper role to ensure the implementation of national policies and programmes. This must entail ensuring that our intergovernmental system of cooperative governance functions effectively, and that all the spheres of government are adequately positioned to carry out their responsibilities.

Once more, the National Conference will have to put in place the proper mechanism to enable the supervision of all our deployees in government and provide for their accountability.

## **THE RDP OF THE SOUL**

We have a continuing responsibility to root out corruption from the public sector. This is a critical factor in our struggle to achieve the goal of good governance, in the context of our effort to build the new democratic state. We will address this matter in the context of the moral renewal of our society.

Our movement has set itself firmly against the further entrenchment of corruption in our country. We fully recognise the fact that we will fail in our task of the reconstruction and development of our country if we give space to the forces of corruption to develop and further entrench themselves.

Once again, to understand the roots of corruption in our country and therefore empower ourselves to deal with it effectively, we have to understand our past. That past encompasses a period of three hundred years of white minority rule, during which the dominant groups pursued the personal accumulation of wealth both as a leading objective, and a central tenet within their value system.

By the time of our liberation, corruption had become an entrenched feature of our society. It affected all social sectors and strata and levels of government, without exception. One of the most specific purposes of this corrupt practice was, as we have said, the personal accumulation of wealth.

In time, during the apartheid years, various cabals developed in our country, at various levels, these being self-serving networks committed to act together to accumulate wealth, relying on corrupt practice.

As we have indicated, these included politicians, business people, civil servants, the law enforcement agencies, professionals such as lawyers and accountants, medical practitioners, media workers, and gangsters operating within organised crime formations.

Accordingly, we have to fight corruption at both the objective and the subjective levels.

At the objective level, we have to ensure that we attack and defeat the networks of corruption built up over many years. This requires detailed understanding of how these networks operate and who their corporate and individual members are.

We have accumulated a significant volume of information in this regard in the period since the 50th National Conference. Nevertheless we must acknowledge the fact that either new networks have emerged since our liberation, or new actors who were brought into the system of governance by the victory of the democratic revolution, have joined the established syndicates.

This adds new complications to our task to gather detailed, accurate and comprehensive information about corrupt practice in our society.

The extent of this problem is illustrated in the 1997 Masterbond Report presented to our government by the judicial commission that was headed by Justice H.C. Nel. Among other things, this Report showed the collusion between the auditing profession, business and the state to engage in and protect corrupt practice.

The issue of corrupt practice within the auditing profession subsequently emerged in a dramatic manner across the Atlantic, in the United States. In essence, the manifestation of this practice in the United States was no different from its modus operandi in our country, as explained by the Nel Commission.

The lesson we should draw from all this is that such corruption is not unique to our country. Rather, it is a systemic feature of all capitalist societies, which pursue the acquisition of wealth as the central objective of all social activity, arguing that without this, society itself would cease to exist.

Accordingly, the view propagated by some that our country occupies a particular and unique international place in terms of the incidence of corruption, is false. It may be that in terms of perceptions, we are paying a price for the fight we are waging against corruption, and our openness and transparency about this matter.

In this regard, we must also make the point that all objective observers acknowledge the fact that the public sector itself is responsible for the overwhelming majority of exposures of corruption in the public sector.

The total volume of information available to us gives a pretty clear picture of the incidence of corruption in our country. This confirms that all sectors of our society are involved in this practice. This includes the public and private sectors, the unions and civil society.

Our National Conference will have to address the question whether the institutions we have established to fight corruption are performing as they should, and what we need to do to ensure that our state organs live up to their responsibilities. We must raise the level of our focus on this matter in the period up to our 52nd National Conference to score a strategic victory against this negative social phenomenon.

On the subjective plane, we have to intensify the campaign for moral renewal, ensuring that we mobilise the masses of our people to engage in a sustained struggle to expose and defeat corruption wherever and whenever it occurs. This struggle cannot be conducted exclusively at the philosophical level. It has to be tied to specific struggles against concrete manifestations of corrupt practice.

In this regard, it is also important that we project the alternative value-system that we want to replace the acquisitive and selfish one to which we are opposed. We cannot avoid pronouncing ourselves on the complex matter of what is right and wrong, in a manner that is easily understood by the masses of our people.

We have to create the situation in which a new social value-system emerges, based not on government injunctions, but on a definition imposed on our country by the people of South Africa themselves. It is the defence and promotion of this new value-system that will turn the masses of our people, at all levels of our society, into active combatants for the realisation of the objective of the RDP of the soul.

Needless to say, this requires an ANC that is itself made up of cadres committed to the best values that should define our society. In this regard, we need to examine ourselves in a self-critical manner, individually and collectively. We must answer the question honestly - whether we are made of the sterner stuff that should characterise genuine cadres for revolutionary, people-centred transformation. How do some of us fare on the scale of humility and respect for ordinary citizens, and even more, on issues of conspicuous consumption and corruption!

These are questions that any genuine ANC cadre would answer in a manner that would affirm the historic role of the ANC as the home and principal defender of the poor and marginalized in our country, the movement that serves the people of South Africa. As such cadres, we should be ready to stand in front of the masses of our people to affirm that none of us has abandoned the principles and practices which have, for decades, inspired confidence among these masses.

## **OUR INTERNATIONAL TASKS**

Earlier we reminded the National Conference that in his Political Report to the 50th National Conference, Comrade Nelson Mandela drew our attention to the international tasks of our movement.

In this regard, he drew our attention to the tasks of the African Renaissance, highlighting the goals of democracy, peace, prosperity and social progress.

He spoke of the global circumstances within which we have to pursue our goals. This related in particular to the accelerated process of globalisation, which he said is leading to a greater integration of the nations of the world, the limitation of the sovereignty of states and the enhancement of the disparities between the rich and the poor.

He said that, nevertheless, we must promote our international goals in a manner consistent with our domestic programme of reconstruction and development.

As the delegates know, the 50th National Conference adopted the necessary resolutions on all these matters. Similarly, our document on Strategy and Tactics, adopted by our Conference, reflected on these matters. These decisions gave our movement a clear direction as to what we need to do internationally.

Again, we can say with pride that our movement, government and country have done everything to translate the decisions of the 50th National Conference into reality.

In the period since our last National Conference, we have hosted a significant number of international conferences, which have focused on the very same issues that constitute an important part of our agenda.

The most important among these include the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, the UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances, (WACA), the founding Summit Meeting of African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government, and the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

These and other conferences have demonstrated the confidence of the world community of nations in our country's commitment to work with the peoples of the world to address urgent global challenges. Their organisation and conduct have also confirmed our capacity to create the necessary conditions for the international community to meet and discuss global problems with no limitations imposed by logistical limitations.

Without adopting an arrogant posture, we must make the observation that the mere success in hosting these important international gatherings has communicated the positive message that the rest of the world must treat Africa as an equal and integral part of our common human universe. This, by itself, constituted an important contribution to the struggle to uplift our continent, on which the 50th National Conference and our National General Council focused.

## **AFRICAN UNITY, RECONSTRUCTION & DEVELOPMENT**

As Conference is aware, the African Union has now been launched, as well as its socio-economic programme, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, NEPAD. The task ahead of us is to work to ensure the success of these new initiatives. This means that we have to continue to implement the resolutions and policies on these matters, adopted by the 50th National Conference and the NGC, and reflected in our Strategy and Tactics document.

Among other things, we will have to continue to make our contribution to the continental effort to achieve stable peace and stability. We have already put considerable effort to the achievement of this objective, as represented by what we have done and are doing with regard to the Comores, Burundi and the DRC, which includes the deployment of units of our National Defence Force.

We must also welcome the end of the war in Angola. This creates the possibility for the people of this sister country to rebuild their country and attend to the important matters of national unity and reconciliation. As a movement, we are committed to working closely with our long-standing historic ally, the MPLA, to give whatever support is required and possible, to contribute to the achievement of these goals.

We are also convinced that it is necessary to bring to a close the controversial issues relating to our important neighbour, Zimbabwe. In this regard, we are ready to engage both our ally and fellow liberation movement, ZANU-PF, and all others concerned to help resolve the various issues in a constructive manner. Like the leadership of the people of Zimbabwe, we are interested that everything is done to address the challenge of ensuring a better life for all the people of this sister country, both black and white.

Our movement is part of the progressive movement of our continent. It is therefore involved with other political formations to promote the goals of the AU and NEPAD. Four objectives stand at the centre of these goals.

One of these is the strengthening of democracy to ensure that the people govern. Another is the eradication of violent conflict within and between states to entrench conditions of peace and stability.

Another is the socio-economic upliftment of the masses of the African people to end poverty and underdevelopment, and ensure the achievement of the goal of a better life for all. This includes a determined effort to address the challenges of malaria, tuberculosis, AIDS and other infectious diseases. Poverty reduction is critical to the improvement of the health condition of the peoples of Africa, including our own, given the direct and immediate relationship between poverty and the incidence of disease.

The fourth of these objectives is the proper integration of the African continent within the world community as an equal and respect partner, with appropriate steps taken to address the adverse consequences of globalisation on our continent.

These are the strategic tasks of the continental national democratic revolution. They are as relevant to our country as they are to all the member states of the African Union. They bear directly on the global strategic question of the birth of a new world order centred on the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment throughout the world, and the democratisation of the system of international relations.

This provides us with the continental programme around which we must work to unite Africa's progressive political formations and mobilise other progressive and patriotic forces to rally around this programme, and therefore the promotion of the AU and its development programme, NEPAD.

Whether driven by ignorance or contempt for the internal processes of our movement, or other motives, some in our country have sought to criticise especially NEPAD on the basis that it the product of a small cabal and has no popular base. These critics have either forgotten or have no respect for the resolutions approved by our 50th National Conference, which mandated our movement to do exactly the things that have led to the realisation of NEPAD.

None of this should divert us from the pursuit of our objectives for the success of the African Renaissance. Whatever they think of themselves, these elements cannot and will not decide what our movement and other patriotic forces in our country should do. National Conference has the responsibility to decide that our movement should do to contribute to the historic process of African renewal, represented by the AU and NEPAD.

Necessarily, this must include the issue of our response to the process of globalisation. The AU and NEPAD, as well as the decisions of WACA and the WSSD provide some of the responses to the process of globalisation that we should pursue. The same is true of the development agenda decided at the Doha Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which our representatives helped to determine.

## **THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TERRORISM**

Conference must also reflect on the serious matter of terrorism, which has forced itself on the global agenda more forcefully during the period since the 50th National Conference. Our movement has always been opposed to terrorism. Even during our struggle for liberation, we refused to resort to terrorist methods of struggle.

Various terrorist incidents, such as those in Kenya and Tanzania, the United States and Indonesia have demonstrated the unacceptable, anti-people nature and impact of terrorism. We also saw this during the campaign of urban terrorism in this part of our country, which our security forces, supported by the people, have managed to contain.

## **MULTILATERALISM & THE WORLD ORDER**

There are other international issues that have remained unresolved in the period since our 50th National Conference. One of these is the question of Western Sahara. This failure draws attention to the

continuing responsibility of the UN and the AU to discharge their responsibilities properly to conclude this long-outstanding matter.

Another concerns Iraq. Our movement should continue to insist on a peaceful resolution of this matter on the basis of the resolutions of the UN Security Council. As a country and a movement, we have done what we could do both to persuade Iraq fully to cooperate with the United Nations, and to discourage the resort to a war that would have incalculable consequences.

The people of Palestine are still deprived of their independent homeland. Everyday that passes with more Palestinians and Israelis killed, communicates a message of despair that the just resolution of this conflict is not in sight.

Nevertheless, we must persist in our principles support for the independence of the Palestinian people, the existence of the state of Israel within secure borders, and peaceful coexistence and cooperation among the people of the Middle East. Similarly, we should sustain and intensify our programme of support for the peace forces among both the Palestinians and the Israelis.

The independence of East Timor was an important victory of the world progressive movement that had, for many years, supported Fretilin in its struggle for the liberation of their people. These sister people are now exercising their right to determine their future.

All these matters emphasise the critical importance of the United Nations and therefore the centrality of the multilateral institutions in the system of global governance. This is particularly important in the light of the process of globalisation which impacts on the sovereignty of states, even as the reality of gross imbalance in power and influence especially between the countries of the North and the South persists.

This means that we should reaffirm our positions both for the strengthening of the multilateral system as well as its democratisation. This is critical to our struggle for the birth of a just world order.

We must therefore integrate these positions within our international programme of work, acting together with the rest of the global progressive movement. At the same time, we must remain firm in our commitment to the principles and practice of human and international solidarity, understanding that we will be better to achieve the objectives of the national democratic revolution in the context of a favourable international situation.

In addition to strengthening our links with the progressive forces on our continent, we should also pay more attention to our work in the Socialist International. Similarly, we will continue our active participation in the international progressive governance group.

## **THE ANC & THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT**

But also of decisive importance is the matter addressed by Nelson Mandela at the 50th National Conference, of the need for us to ensure that ours remains and grows as a strong and united national democratic movement.

As he said, "the objective of reconstruction and development cannot be achieved unless the ANC and the rest of the progressive movement of our country are strong and united around the realisation of clear policy objectives which actually result in reconstruction and development."

I am proud to say that, indeed, in the period since our 50th National Conference the ANC has maintained its unity. This has been demonstrated at various times, such as at the National General Council, the National Policy Conference and the Regional General Councils convened last year to explain the positions of our organisation on such matters as the restructuring of state assets.

We have, throughout our ranks, continued to focus on what Nelson Mandela described as the realisation of clear policy objectives that actually result in reconstruction and development. This is despite various attempts to get us to depart from the agreed positions of our movement.

As before, some of our opponents have continued to speculate on fictional divisive tendencies within the movement. This is done in the hope that this would in fact encourage disunity in our ranks and that our members would accept these speculations as representing actual reality. Thanks to the maturity of our membership, these manoeuvres have failed and will continue to fail.

However, serious strains have developed within the Alliance based on disagreement on various issues. In this context, we would like to remind the National Conference of remarks that Nelson Mandela made in his Political Report to the 50th National Conference, warning us about negative tendencies that had by then emerged within the Alliance. Among other things, he said:

"The ANC also has an important and continuing responsibility to lead the Revolutionary Alliance and the rest of the democratic movement.

"During the last three years, we have not succeeded as well as we should have to carry out this task. Consequently, both the Alliance and the democratic movement as a whole have been characterised both by a tendency towards division and a reaffirmation of its cohesion.

"Part of this derived from the fact that the Alliance and the rest of the movement had to deal with the entirely new situation of the defeat of the apartheid regime and our assumption of political power.

"It has proved difficult for all sectors within our political camp properly to define their role in this phase of our struggle for the defence and consolidation of our revolutionary gains, and the reconstruction and development of our country.

"Equally, we have not as yet evolved a stable and satisfactory system of interaction among the various echelons of the movement, to ensure, for instance, that initiatives taken at the level of governance are properly canvassed within the movement as a whole, or that actions undertaken by the trade union movement are similarly discussed.

"Efforts have been made during the last three years to address all these new problems. However, it is true that we have as yet not found the lasting solutions we need. Conference must therefore discuss these matters with all the seriousness they deserve."

Our movement has explained its positions with regard to the negative tendencies foreseen by Nelson Mandela in a number of documents. These are available to the delegates. We will therefore not repeat these positions.

Throughout this period, we have explained that our movement is convinced that the situation that necessitated the formation of the Alliance has not changed. The tasks of the national democratic revolution have not all been achieved.

Indeed, our very decision to accelerate the process of change means that we need the greatest unity of the Alliance to rise to this challenge and to respond to those we must expect will respond by intensifying their resistance to the transformation process. The recent violent activities of the extreme white rightwing sound the alarm about what we must expect.

We must therefore work hard to strengthen the unity of the Alliance. This also relates to the rest of the democratic movement in the context of the challenge posed by Comrade Nelson Mandela five years ago, when he said that the ANC also has an important and continuing responsibility to lead the Revolutionary

Alliance and the rest of the democratic movement. It is our task to ensure that this Alliance Advances in Unity to the Year 2012!

In this context, we will also have to pay attention to strengthening our relations and cooperation with SANCO. This is particularly important in the light of the critical role played by the local sphere of government. It is necessary that SANCO is empowered to discharge its own responsibilities as a component part of the progressive forces of our country.

Generally, we must, of course, do everything necessary to defend and promote the positions of our movement. This means that we must position ourselves vigorously to engage the ideological and political struggle as part of our responsibility to ensure the victory of the national democratic revolution.

The period since the 50th National Conference has confirmed that the struggle continues to decide who shall determine the national agenda. We must expect that this struggle will intensify with both ultra-left and rightwing forces battling to secure the hegemony of their ideas over those of the national democratic revolution and our movement.

### **THE POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVE OF NEO-LIBERALISM**

The Democratic Party/Democratic Alliance has continued to position itself as the most determined opponent of our movement and our perspective for the fundamental social transformation of our country. In the period since our last National Conference, the DP/DA has indeed done everything it could to oppose our transformation efforts.

This formation is the most unashamed proponent of neo-liberalism in our country, which objectively favours the entrenchment of the racial and gender imbalances we inherited from the past. In reality this historical relic, which perpetuates itself by encouraging fear of democracy among the national minorities, will not succeed.

Even its attempts to ally itself with supposedly "left" campaigns, a process that is not unknown in history, will not save it from continuous defeat. Our movement will persist in its own opposition to the destructive positions adopted by the rightwing DP/DA.

### **ADVANCE IN UNITY TO THE YEAR 2012!**

We have already discussed the matter of the role of some NGO's and elements within the MDM. At the same time, we must also make the observation that the overwhelming majority of members and activists of the democratic movement as a whole have remained firm in their support for the ANC and its leadership of this movement.

This has therefore continued to give the capacity to our movement to lead our country and the national democratic revolution. This also means that our obligation to the people and the organised democratic forces to fulfil their expectations remains as high as ever.

This is the challenge that faces us as we convene as the 51st National Conference of the ANC. The masses of our people and the democratic forces require that our country continues to advance to the realisation of the goals of non-racism, non-sexism and prosperity.

They want to see ours as a winning nation, a happy home for all our people, black and white, men and women, young and old, rural and urban.

They expect that the African Renaissance will take new decisive steps with a positive impact on the lives of the ordinary people of our continent and Africa's standing in the world.

They aspire to the situation in which the global community of nations will advance towards the realisation of the goals of democracy, justice, peace and prosperity for all, uniting its resources to achieve the objective of a better life for all.

These are the tasks that face our movement as we meet here at this important centre of learning and research. Let this inspire all of us to live up to the expectations of all our people, willing to learn the necessary lessons from our past and ready to take all necessary decisions to ensure that we break new ground in our advance towards the realisation of all the goals of the national democratic revolution.

On behalf of the National Executive Committee I wish our 51st National Conference success, confident that, as before, we will remain faithful to our pledge to serve the people of South Africa, taking the necessary decisions that will ensure that we Advance in Unity to the Year 2012!

**Amandla ngawethu! Matla ke a rona! Forward to the Centenary of the ANC!**