

Statement on the Conclusion of the 2000 Local Government Elections

Pretoria 7 December 2000

Once more, eighteen months after our general elections, the people have spoken!

The people have said the ANC lives!
The people have said the ANC leads!

The people have firmly expressed their confidence in the ANC as an agent of change.

The people have renewed their mandate to the ANC to accelerate the advance towards the achievement of a better life for all. The people have given their organisation, the ANC, the directive to bring about reconstruction and development in the places where they live.

By the positions they have taken in free and fair elections, the people have made the categorical statement that:

- they are opposed to the continued racial divisions and disparities in our country and stand for a non-racial South Africa;
- they are opposed to continued gender discrimination in our country and stand for a non-sexist South Africa;
- they are opposed to any neglect of the rural areas and stand for the bridging of the gap between town and country;
- they stand for an accelerated offensive against poverty, unemployment, homelessness, for the elimination of the suffering of the most vulnerable in our society, including children, the youth, women, the disabled and the elderly;
- they want to see all our people living in conditions of safety and security, regardless of race, colour, gender, occupation, social status and residential location;
- they seek the realisation of the objective of health for all, including a sustained victory over diseases of poverty and malnutrition, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, malaria, cholera and AIDS;
- they support the transformation of local government we have brought about and endorse the democratic process as the means by which the will of the people shall be expressed; and,
- they seek an acceleration of the process leading to the complete eradication of the legacy of apartheid.

By their straight forward, categorical and unequivocal statements, the masses of our people have said no! to all those who are opposed to change.

They have said no! to the perpetuation of a racist order that would for ever condemn the majority of the citizens of our country to the position of subservience to which the apartheid system consigned them. They have rebuffed the decades-old offensive against their organisation, the ANC, which offensive has continued to pursue the hopeless objective of seeking to discredit the ANC in the eyes of the masses of our people.

They have chosen to believe the truth rather than be seduced by untruths and propaganda.

They have chosen to respect principle rather than fall victim to opportunism.

They decided to vote in favour of the difficult struggle to create a new society rather than succumb to the temptation of the false stability offered by the architects and beneficiaries of the past.

Despite everything I have just said, our opponents, accustomed to the shameless presentation of falsehood as the truth, are trying to communicate a false and strange message. That false and strange message is that the results of the local government elections indicate that they have won, whereas the ANC has lost.

But let the truth speak for itself!

The truth is that the ANC has won the votes of 60 per cent of our people, a decisive majority achieved despite the complacency of many of our supporters.

The truth is that the ANC has won 5 out of our 6 metropolitan councils.

The truth is that the ANC has won the majority of the district and local councils.

The truth is that more people voted in these local government elections than did in the 1995/6 elections.

The truth is that the ANC won and our opponents lost.

The truth is that no amount of words will transform the defeat of our opponents into a victory for them, whatever support they get from domestic and foreign commentators to suppress the truth; to disguise and deny the failure of those opposed to progressive change; and to concoct negatives that they can lay at the feet of the ANC.

The truth is that the ANC has achieved a popular victory in the face of a co-ordinated attack carried out by an unholy alliance of many parties, united by hatred for the ANC, rather than any commitment to serve the interests of the people.

That popular victory constitutes the people's instructions to their organisation, the ANC, to accelerate the forward march towards a better life for all.

The people have spoken and the ANC has heard. The ANC will therefore act without delay to ensure that all its mayors and councillors work with everybody in their communities to elaborate integrated development plans for their areas.

The ANC will act to ensure that these plans include programmes for the eradication of poverty, for job creation, for sustained local economic development, for an accelerated housing programme.

The ANC will act to ensure that these plans include the development of the required social and economic infrastructure in each area, simultaneously addressing the issue of the imbalances caused by the system of apartheid.

The ANC will act to ensure the implementation of our undertaking to provide free basic services such as water and electricity. The ANC will work to ensure that we continue to improve the safety and security of all our citizens.

The ANC will also work hard to ensure that all our local government representatives, the mayors and the councillors, have the necessary skills to run municipal governments that actually work to improve the lives of the people.

We will ensure that all our representatives account regularly to those who elected them to enable the masses of our people to participate in their own governance.

We will keep to the commitment we made that all those of our mayors and councillors who fail to serve the people or engage in corrupt practice will be exposed and removed from their positions.

We will work without relaxing to ensure that the new, transformed, democratised and strengthened system of local government lives up to the expectations of the people as a force that will help all of us to realise our common dream of a better life for all.

On behalf of the ANC, I thank all our people, all parties and our security forces for ensuring that we hold free and fair elections.

I also congratulate all those who have been elected, regardless of the parties they represent, and wish them well in the discharge of their responsibilities to the ordinary people of our country.

I would also like to thank the IEC and the thousands of patriotic South Africans who helped to ensure that we conduct our elections in an effective and satisfactory manner.

I also thank the thousands of ANC, SACP, COSATU, SANCO and other activists who worked hard to ensure that we obtain the victory we have scored.

The campaigning is now over. We have now done with the beauty contest.

Now is the time to get down to the hard work of ensuring that we secure a better life for the people where they live.

The people have spoken. The ANC has heard.

Amandla!