

## **Statement on receipt of the final results of the 2004 general elections**

IEC Results Centre, Tshwane, 17 April 2004

Chairperson of the Electoral Commission and Commissioners,  
CEO and members of the staff of the Commission,  
Leaders and representatives of our political parties,  
Members of the Election Observer teams,  
Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners,  
Distinguished guests:

This ceremony tonight concludes the 2004 General Elections. I have no hesitation in saying that these elections were truly free and fair. The results that have been announced reflect the will of the people of South Africa.

On behalf of the Government and all our people, I would like to thank the Electoral Commission for the outstanding work it has done to bring about this excellent outcome.

What the Commission has done vindicates the confidence that both our people and the international community have in the capacity of the Commission properly to discharge its responsibilities in a manner that contributes to the further entrenchment of democracy in our country.

All of us draw great pride and inspiration from the fact that all the operations of the Electoral Commission have been managed and run by South Africans. This demonstrates the enormous capacity our country has developed during our First Decade of Liberation to handle the largest and most sophisticated operations.

Accordingly we pay tribute to all the specialists within the Electoral Commission and are very pleased that many of them are young people. I would like to suggest, Chairperson, that an effort should be made to popularise their work especially among the youth of our country, so that they can serve as role models for their peers and those who are younger than them.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the political parties that participated in the elections and thank them for their ready acceptance of the election results, even in those instances in which the outcome was not as favourable as they might have expected.

I would also like to thank the parties for the manner in which they conducted themselves during the election campaign and the voting process.

Their highly responsible and patriotic behaviour played a critical role in ensuring that we held peaceful, free and fair elections.

Our government and many of our people were concerned that some degree of political violence, especially in KwaZulu-Natal might undermine the possibility for us to hold fully free and fair elections. I am very pleased to say that what so many feared did not happen.

I must nevertheless take this opportunity to convey our condolences to the families of those who did lose their loved ones as a result of the criminal actions of a very small handful of people who have not understood that the time for political violence has long passed.

The law enforcement authorities will spare no effort in investigating these crimes and bringing those responsible to justice.

In this context, I must also thank the Police Service, the National Defence Force and our intelligence agencies for the sterling work they did to secure the voters and the elections and in many other ways to support the Electoral Commission.

Special tribute is also due to our Ministers and Deputy Ministers within the peace and stability sector, for the enormous amount of work they did as they led our security organs during the last few weeks.

But perhaps above all we should thank the masses of our people. They have been exemplary in their refusal to be provoked or incited to engage in acts of violence and intimidation. They have set a benchmark in terms of what our country must always do to respect the diversity of opinion and entrench a culture of tolerance.

In a few days we will celebrate the end of our First Decade of Democracy and the beginning of the Second. This week's General Elections, our third national and provincial democratic elections, have served as a tribute and a climax to what we have achieved in the last 10 years to consolidate democracy in our country.

It will be the task of all those that the people freely elected as their national and provincial representatives further to entrench this democracy by ensuring that our democracy responds to the urgent needs of the people to improve the quality of their lives.

Fortunately, many of the parties that contested the elections identified the same problems that have to be solved. Accordingly, none among our elected representatives can say that they do not know what needs to be done.

I am certain that as we begin our Second Decade of Liberation, these representatives know that what the electorate expects of them is to do everything in their power to secure a better life for all our people, and not mere discussion that this should happen.

I would therefore like to congratulate all those who have been elected to our national and provincial legislatures. I wish them success in their important work that must help our country to register new advances in the next five years, as we continue to pursue the goals of reconstruction and development.

Once more let me thank the Electoral Commission for the work it has done and the final results it has now handed to the nation.

I trust that we will all be together again in 10 days to relax in the company of many friends from the rest of Africa and the world as we celebrate a Decade of Freedom. This will provide an opportunity for the peoples of the whole world and ourselves to rejoice that this country that has known a lot of pain, has confirmed that it is determined never to betray the victory our people scored a decade ago.

Thank you.