

## **Statement on election by the National Assembly as President of the Republic for a second term**

Cape Town, 23 April 2004

Madame Speaker,  
Deputy Speaker,  
Chief Justice,  
Honourable Members of the National Assembly,  
Distinguished guests:

I would like to thank the Honourable Members for electing me to the high post of President of the Republic. My thanks also go to our Chief Justice, Arthur Chaskalson, for convening our third democratic National Assembly and guiding its proceedings earlier today.

At the same time, I am honoured to congratulate you, Madame Speaker and your Deputy for the privilege you have been accorded to preside over the proceedings of this important Chamber. Similarly, I am pleased to congratulate the Honourable Members on their election by our people to serve as their public representatives and wish you success in your work over the next five years.

During the election campaign, all the political parties represented in this House undertook that, if elected to govern our country, they would do many things that would help to improve the quality of the lives of millions of our people.

Together we recognised and spoke about the reality that despite the fact of our hard-won freedom and democracy, very many of our people continue to lead miserable lives. Together we spoke about the challenges of unemployment and poverty; of lives destroyed by disease and crime; of the unfinished work of ending the racial and gender imbalances that continue to characterise our society; and of the need to strive further to achieve the related goals of national reconciliation and social transformation.

I am certain that even those who only experienced the election campaign by watching its television coverage could not have missed the great enthusiasm with which the electorate welcomed the opportunity to choose our national and provincial governments.

This was both a vote of confidence in our democratic system and a message to all of us present here, of the expectation of the masses of our people that the legislatures and governments they would vote for would do everything necessary further to change their lives for the better.

Whatever anyone and all of us might have said during the election campaign, we are aware of our people's sincere appreciation of the changes that have taken place during the last 10 years. That appreciation also tells us what else we need to do to respond to the needs of our people.

The fact that our country has done what it has, also tells the people that we can do more. Indeed, it would be entirely logical and correct that these masses should expect that we will even do better than in the past, given the experience we have accumulated over the last decade.

Throughout the election campaign we also tried to inspire the people to participate and involve themselves in the process of the reconstruction and development of our country. As in the past, we must therefore continue to project the vision and actively encourage a people-driven process of change.

Gathered in this House is an important segment of our country's national leadership. This leadership has a continuing responsibility to ensure that together we respond to the needs of our people, about which we all spoke during the election campaign.

We share a common responsibility to encourage our political organisations as well as inspire and mobilise the people, to join hands in a popular national movement to speed up the process towards the achievement of the goal of a better life for all our people.

I trust that in addition to your work as lawmakers, you will also contribute to the national effort to ensure that we actually succeed further to improve the lives of our people.

Equally, the national and provincial governments that will be constituted next week will have the task to ensure that we achieve faster and better progress in this regard during the imminent first five years of our Second Decade of Democracy. We, for our part, will do our best to encourage government to live up to this responsibility.

Once more, I would like to thank the Honourable Members for electing me as President of the Republic and look forward to working with you as we, together, continue to serve the people of South Africa as best we can.

Thank you.