

Statement of the National Executive Committee of the ANC delivered by President Jacob Zuma at the 100th anniversary of the ANC

Mangaung 8 January 2012

Your Excellencies Heads of States and Government,

Former Presidents of the ANC, Isithwalandwe Nelson Mandela at home and Comrade Thabo Mbeki,

Former Heads of State and Eminent Persons,

The Presidents and NEC Members of the ANC Women`s League, ANC Youth League and the ANC Veterans League and the leadership of Mkhonto Wesizwe Military Veterans Association,

The Leadership of the SACP, COSATU and SANCO,

Our friends from all over Africa and the world,

Comrades and Compatriots,

The African National Congress, the oldest liberation movement on the African continent, turns 100 years old today!

We have come from all corners of South Africa, Africa and the world, to celebrate this historical milestone.

It is not only a celebration for the African National Congress and its members only. It is a joyous celebration for all the people of South Africa, who, with the support of the continent and the world, destroyed colonial oppression and apartheid, and are building in its ruins, a free, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa together. It is truly an emotional and yet very exciting and moving occasion, which fills us with great pride and joy.

We extend a special welcome to all Heads of State and Government, Eminent Persons and all our friends from the anti-apartheid movement worldwide, who have joined us for this event.

We have the pleasure to release our comprehensive January 8 statement today, which outlines our history.

I will, in this address, provide highlights of this journey of 100 years of selfless struggle.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and friends,

Allow me to begin by paying tribute to my predecessors, the past presidents of the African National Congress, John Langalibalele Dube, Sefako Makgatho, Zac Mahabane, Josiah Gumede, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, AB Xuma, JS Moroka, Albert Mvumbi Luthuli, Oliver Reginald Tambo, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and comrades,

It has been a long road since 1652 when settlers arrived in our country.

It has also been a long road since that meeting of European powers in Berlin in 1884, where they carved up the African continent, and shared the pieces among themselves as colonies and dependencies.

As a race, virtually all Africans had been reduced to subjects. Many years later, in October 1911, Pixley ka Isaka Seme made a clarion call for the unity of the African people. He said MZulu, mXhosa, mSuthu hlanganani, calling upon the African people to bury the demon of racism and tribalism and face the challenge before them.

The following year, the people of Southern Africa responded to the call by dispatching delegates to Bloemfontein. The delegates included esteemed traditional leaders such as Solomon ka Dinizulu, Montsioa of the Barolong, Lewanika of the Lozi of Zambia, Letsie II of Lesotho, Labotsibeni from Swaziland, Dalindyebo of the abaThembu, Sekhukhuni of the baPedi and Khama from Botswana.

King Dalindyebo provided 115 cattle for the occasion in 1912. This time, abaThembu following in that tradition, have provided 50 cattle for the centenary. The Congress of the Traditional Leaders of South Africa added two cows. King Letsie III of Lesotho, the grand-grandson of King Letsie II who attended the founding congress, provided the cow that was used for the cleansing ceremony yesterday.

On the 8th of January 1912, the South African Native National Congress was then founded at the Waaihoek church here in Bloemfontein. Later called the African National Congress, it grew to become a custodian of basic democratic values, principles and practice in our country.

The principle on which the ANC and the rest of the democratic movement have consistently stood, is stated unequivocally in the preamble of the Freedom Charter: "... South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people". The ANC set out to achieve that goal of founding a South Africa that was free, just and which belonged to all.

One year after its formation, the ANC confronted one of its biggest challenges when the Native Land Act of 1913 was enacted. It stripped the African people of their homeland by racist statute, a move that could be called ethnic cleansing in current terminology.

This indicated the challenges that the movement would have to deal with. The ANC mobilized the South African people across the racial, gender and class divides. The ANC, a disciplined force of the left with a bias towards the poor, is also a broad church that is home to all. Its membership and support base comprises nationalists, Marxists, Africanists, workers, capitalists, women, men, youth, rural, urban, rich and poor. This has become one of the biggest strengths of this glorious movement.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and friends,

The movement prides itself on having a strong historical relationship with the working class.

The South African Communist Party was formed in 1921 and had engaged itself in issues affecting workers and the working class.

Already then, the seeds of a unique Alliance were germinating when the ANC and the Communist Party of South Africa resolved to work together in 1929. Meanwhile, the relationship with the trade union movement can be traced back to the first major trade union of Africans, the Industrial Workers Union, which was formed in Bloemfontein in 1920 and also through the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), and later the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

President-General, Chief Albert Luthuli referred to this relationship through an analogy that said the ANC was the shield and the South African Congress of Trade Unions the spear. Comrade Oliver Tambo eloquently articulated the importance of the Alliance as follows;

"Ours is not merely a paper alliance, created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents and representing only an agreement of leaders. Our alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle. We have built it out of our separate and common experiences."

President Nelson Mandela, addressing an SACP congress in 1995, said about the relationship of the ANC and the SACP;

``It is a relationship that has detractors in abundance; a relationship that has its prolific obituary scribes. But it is a relationship that always disappoints these experts. Because it was tempered in struggle. It is written in the blood of many martyrs``.

This revolutionary partnership became invaluable in advancing the struggle for freedom. As we celebrate the centenary today, we pay a special tribute to generations of working class leaders who have made an impact in the history of our struggle.

Among them are Elijah Barayi, Chris Dlamini, John Gomomo, Jay Naidoo, Oscar Mpetha, Ray Simons, Moses Mabhida, Moses Kotane, Raymond Mhlaba, Govan Mbeki, Joe Slovo, Harry Gwala, Edwin Mofutsanyane, Dan Tloome, Curnick Ndlovu, Steven Dlamini, John Nkadimeng, Billy Nair, and many others who served everyone of our revolutionary organs with distinction.

In addition, the historic Congress Alliance during the 1950s brought together the ANC, the Congress of Democrats and the South African Indian Congress, Coloured People`s Congress, South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). The Congress Alliance played an important role in the development of the Freedom Charter, which arose from an idea by ANC intellectual ZK Matthews.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and friends,

Today we also salute women and recognise the pivotal role they have played in the life and growth of the ANC from the Bantu Women`s League in 1931 to the ANC Women`s League in 1948. We also recall the Federation of South African Women which united women across the colour lines in the struggle against apartheid.

Women had also been part of earlier campaigns. As early as 1913, women right here in Bloemfontein, marched against dompasses. Many years later, women undertook that historic march against dompasses to the Union Buildings in 1956.

We honour the many women who have played key leadership roles in our struggle. Amongst them are Lillian Ngoyi, Bertha Gxowa, Adelaide Tambo, Albertina Sisulu, Dorothy Nyembe, Nomzamo Winnie Mandela, Margaret Gazo, Florence Mkhize, Ruth Mompoti, Gertrude Shope, Florence Mophosho, Ruth First, Ray Alexander, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Sophie de Bruyn and many more!

Excellencies,

Compatriots and Friends,

Today we also remember the contribution of the youth to the advancement of our struggle.

The ANC Youth League has produced outstanding leaders of our movement since its establishment in 1944, such as Anton Lembede, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, the youth of the 50s and 60s who played a leadership role in joining Umkhonto Wesizwe up to Peter Mokaba.

The Youth League played a pivotal role in energising the ANC during the 1940s, and produced a programme of action that was adopted by the movement in 1949, influencing the mass action that characterised the Defiance Campaign.

We recognise the militant youth of the June 1976 Soweto uprising, led by Tsietshi Mashinini and others, who challenged the myth about the might of the apartheid state.

We acknowledge the Class of 1994 which contributed to the demise of apartheid by strengthening the ANC, and contributed to its overwhelming electoral victory, which led to the birth of a non-racial, non-sexist and South Africa.

The present generation of youth continues to defend the democratic gains of our struggle, through mobilising for a better life and organising masses of youth into the ANC.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and friends,

Recognising the important role of veterans in our movement, the ANC created the Veterans League in 2008, to enable these cadres to play a role in the movement and share their experience and wisdom.

Excellencies,

Comrades and friends,

Today we also celebrate the fact that for many generations, the ANC has promoted unity of purpose and action among the oppressed. One such example is the three Doctors Pact that was concluded between the Presidents of the ANC, the Transvaal Indian Congress and the Natal Indian Congress in 1947.

This Pact was meant to unite Indians and Africans and forge cooperation on the promotion of equal economic and industrial rights, removal of land restrictions, housing, education, full franchise, freedom of movement, abolition of pass laws and the removal of discriminatory and oppressive legislation from statute books.

Compatriots,

It is remarkable that our country was able to produce a non-racial struggle, despite institutionalized racism. The ANC has always and shall continue to cherish the contribution of a small, but courageous contingent of White democrats, who committed themselves completely and selflessly, to the realisation of democratic change. This unity across all these divides have strengthened the ANC and brought us to this phase of celebrating 100 years of selfless struggle.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and friends,

The promotion of human rights for all has always been a key feature of the ANC since its formation. The ANC human rights blueprints preceded the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. This makes our movement one of the pioneers in the development of a human rights culture in the world.

The ANC adopted its first Bill of Rights at the 1923 ANC conference, and later, at the 1943 ANC conference, the movement adopted the historic African Claims document which included a Bill of Rights.

In another demonstration of commitment to human rights, the ANC signed the Geneva Convention of 1949, which regulates the conduct of armed conflicts and the protection of prisoners of war and civilians. That is why when the ANC came back from exile, it came back with its prisoners of war in compliance with the Geneva Convention. This human rights culture is enshrined in the Freedom Charter and the Constitution of a post-apartheid South Africa. It is one of the traits of the ANC that we are celebrating today.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and friends,

The Defiance campaign was one of the outstanding landmarks in our struggle.

It redefined ANC cadreship as it led to the development of a volunteer corps. The volunteers played a key role in the life of the movement. They were disciplined and participated in the organising of various campaigns. We salute President Mandela who was our first Volunteer-in-Chief.

Responding to the repression of the Defiance Campaign period, the ANC leadership called on Nelson Mandela, the Volunteer in Chief, to prepare a strategy document to restructure the movement, to enable it to adapt to rapidly changing conditions of struggle.

He produced an impressive plan. Named the "M Plan", the document proposed that the ANC should be reconstituted from an organisation based on geographically conceived branches to one built on smaller, more intimate cells, that were vertically structured like a pyramid, thus permitting the rapid transmission of information and directives between higher and subordinate structures.

The move was well timed, because as the resistance mounted, the regime escalated its repression. On the 21st of March 1960, police opened fire on unarmed demonstrators in Sharpeville, killing 69 people.

The ANC and the PAC were banned on the 31st of March 1960 and the ANC began to operate underground. Due to increasing intransigence of the apartheid regime, the ANC deeply deliberated and took a difficult but historic and important decision to adopt the armed struggle. It established uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) as the nucleus of a national liberation army.

MK announced its existence with a number of nationally coordinated sabotage actions on government installations on 16th December 1961. Nelson Mandela was its first commander-in-chief. In response to this, the regime passed laws to make death, the penalty for sabotage. It also introduced laws that allowed 90 days of detention without trial and arrested members of the MK leadership in 1963.

Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi, Andrew Mlangeni, Ahmed Kathrada and Denis Goldberg were charged, found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. The majority of them served it on Robben Island.

The Robben Island prison was turned into a political school by the ANC. The struggle continued inside prison. Amongst the shocking acts of abuse of power, the apartheid regime instituted the Sobukwe Clause, to extend his stay. For him to be in a prison environment, they sent him to Robben Island.

Comrades and friends,

There can be no better occasion than this ANC centenary, to celebrate the bravery, determination and selflessness of all the detachments of MK -the Luthuli, June 16, Moncada, Madinoga and the Young lions Detachments.

We salute MK's illustrious commanders Joe Modise, Chris Hani, Joe Slovo, Vuyisile Mini and other leading members of MK, Solomon Mahlangu, Marcus Motaung, Telle Mogoerane, Jerry Mosolodi, Mduduzi Guma, Montsi "Obadi" Mogabudi and Monty Motloutse. We salute the first MK cadres and commanders who conducted sabotage actions from December 16, 1961 and the following immediate period.

We acknowledge as well those who fought in Zimbabwe in 1967 and 1968 in the Wankie-Sipolilo campaign, those who conducted operations inside the country throughout the armed struggle, those who joined forces with Frelimo fighters in Mozambique, and those who fought alongside the MPLA in Angola during the 1970s and 1980s.

We honour Flag Boshielo who had distinguished himself in struggle since the Defiance Campaign and Faldon Mziwonke, a seasoned peasant fighter, whose track record stretches back to the 1940s.

We also pay a special tribute to the people of Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique who died during the apartheid army cross-border raids in search of MK bases.

We also highlight women who were sentenced to jail such as Thandi Modise, Dorothy Nyembe, Helene Passtoors, Greta Apelgren, Theresa Ramashamola, Amina Desai, Barbara Hogan and Marion Sparg.

Comrades and friends,

This occasion also enables us to pay our respects to the 134 South African patriots, most of them MK soldiers such as Solomon Mahlangu, who paid the ultimate price for freedom when they were executed by the apartheid regime in Pretoria. Our freedom was definitely not free. It was achieved through the blood, sweat and tears of many selfless revolutionaries and cadres of our movement.

Excellencies

Compatriots and friends,

The ANC owes a great deal of gratitude to its President Oliver Tambo who worked tirelessly to establish friendships and solidarity across the world and helped to mobilise the world against the apartheid regime.

Building on the initial contact made by Moses Kotane who had worked hard to deepen the relationship between the former Soviet Union and the Communist Party of South Africa, President Tambo visited Moscow in April 1963 and developed strong relations between the Soviet Union and the ANC.

The ANC also acknowledges the support we received from socialist countries. We are also indebted to countries such as Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark for their support.

The people of Zambia, through their independence movement and mass organisations, received and assisted our movement even prior to their independence. We acknowledge the presence of our father, President Kenneth Kaunda in these celebrations.

Angola, under the leadership of Agostinho Neto, President Jose Eduardo dos Santos and the MPLA, served as a secure rear base for our army and its personnel until 1988. We welcome the Neto family to this celebration.

We single out Cuba for her unwavering solidarity politically and militarily. The epic battle in Cuito Cuanavale in Angola, between January and March 1988, forced the apartheid forces to retreat, guaranteeing the sovereignty of Angola, paving the way for the liberation of Namibia and leading eventually to our own freedom. It indeed changed the political landscape of Southern Africa.

Tanzania became our second home. We established settlements and were given land to build the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College. We extend our deepest gratitude to Chama Cha

Mapinduzi and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere for this solidarity. We welcome the Nyerere family who have joined us for these celebrations.

Botswana played a very important role in our struggle when it was, at one time, the only exit and entry point for our cadres and leaders. As a result of its role, it was subjected to many attacks and raids by the apartheid regime. We will forever be grateful for the contribution it made.

We are grateful to Uganda, which provided political support and bases for MK in 1989, when we had to leave Angola following the passing of UN Resolution 435 for the independence of Namibia.

We thank our immediate neighbours, Swaziland and Lesotho where many of our cadres stayed and from where we ran some of our operations.

We thank FRELIMO and the people of Mozambique for solidarity that cost them dearly economically, politically and also when the apartheid army conducted cross border raids, leading to loss of life. This country also lost its President Samora Machel on South African soil.

We highlight most of Africa - Zimbabwe, Algeria, Guinea (Conakry), Ethiopia, Benin, Nigeria and others who provided all kinds of support.

We thank the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations which accepted the ANC and PAC as legitimate representatives of the South African people instead of the apartheid regime.

We also register our gratitude to the Anti-Apartheid Movement which played an enormous role in bringing apartheid atrocities to the attention of people in Western democracies.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and friends,

We pay tribute to comrades inside the country who enhanced the political activities from the underground and influenced political activity in the country. Special mention can be made of comrades like Joe Gqabi, Winnie Mandela, Harry Gwala, Zoli Malindi, Mme Lesia, Dorothy Myembe, Lawrence and Rita Ndzanga, Samson Ndou, Albertina Sisulu, Helen Joseph, Bertha Gxowa and others, who continued the link with the ANC in exile.

In Soweto community leaders such as Dr Nthato Motlana and others assisted students during the Soweto uprising. The leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, Steve Biko, played an important role in conscientising many black South Africans that they were their own liberators. His brutal murder in police custody on 12 September 1977 led to a local and international outcry and robbed the country of an energetic and committed patriot.

The year 1979 was declared the Year of the Spear, named after the centenary of the Battle of Isandlwana, and the ANC went on the offensive. The movement had attained maximum political and organisational unity. The armed actions which we had resumed in 1977 were having the political impact we desired. The ANC was beginning to determine the political agenda of the day rather than reacting to what the enemy was doing.

Culture continued to be an arena of struggle. We acknowledge the role of artists such as Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa, Julian Bahula, Caiphus Semanya, Letta Mbulu, Dorothy Masuka, Harry Belafonte and the Amandla Cultural Ensemble, the MK cultural group and others who kept the spirit of the struggle alive around the world.

Comrades,

By the early 1980s, the regime had banned all our peoples' organisations and gatherings. To discuss our oppression was virtually impossible. People survived by gathering in women's, students, workers and issue-based organisations. These organisations multiplied throughout the country.

In August 1983, history was made when more than 400 organisations gathered in Mitchell's Plain in Cape Town and founded the United Democratic Front. Formations such as the South African National Civics Organisation, student organizations, traditional, religious, community organizations and those representing academics, lawyers, workers, sport and others played a key role in the activities of the UDF.

The role of the church was also more pronounced. The ANC has had a strong relationship with the church since its inception. The World Council of Churches and the South African Council of Churches worked tirelessly in the promotion of justice and the fight against apartheid, mobilizing the church around the world.

We acknowledge the critical role of church leaders such as Father Trevor Huddleston, the Reverend Beyers Naude, Archbishop Denis Hurley, Father Smangaliso Mkhathswa, Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Reverend Alan Boesak, Sister Bernard Ncube and a host of others in fighting for a free and democratic South Africa.

The emergence of mass based organizations during the 80s under the banner of the UDF, made it possible for President OR Tambo to call for South Africa to be made ungovernable and apartheid unworkable.

An atmosphere of mass insurrection prevailed in many townships and rural towns across the country during 1985 and 1986. The ANC worked to open up rural areas to allow operatives to work from these areas. While some Bantustans were hostile to the ANC, the movement established critical contact with structures and individuals such as Enos Mabuza and General Bantu Holomisa in the Transkei, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele and others. The plan was to work within the homelands and change them.

An important achievement during this period was the formation of CONTRALESA, which organised traditional leaders into the ANC, assisting the movement to make further inroads in rural areas.

The regime unleashed terror in communities around the country during this period. We pay our respects to the families of many who were killed in state-sponsored violence in KwaZulu-Natal and the now Gauteng area during the 80s.

We also remember other comrades who died in other tragic killings such as the Trojan Horse massacre in Cape Town, Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge, the PEBCO 3, Cradock 4, Dulcie September, Ruth First and other comrades who were killed by hitsquads inside and outside the country.

When the ANC and other organisations were unbanned in February 1990, freedom had come at a great price. Leaders were released from jails across the country, underground activists began to operate openly, and others began returning home from exile. The ANC began to establish legitimate branch and regional structures of the movement inside the country.

Nelson Mandela was elected President and Oliver Tambo as National Chairperson at the 1991 ANC National Conference, the first inside the country after the unbanning.

The ANC was committed to ending apartheid through a series of negotiations and participated fully in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). The ANC played a leading role in shaping the nature, form, process and content of CODESA and its outcome.

The Boipatong massacre and the tragic assassination of Comrade Chris Hani threatened to derail the talks. President Mandela provided matured leadership, together with the leadership of the ANC, saved the situation and enabled us to focus on the goals at hand.

We are proud of the fact that the negotiations took place on South African soil, managed by South Africans themselves. The ANC, as always, promoted unity by bringing together negotiating parties under its wing as a united front.

On 27 April 1994, millions of South Africans - black and white - voted in the first democratic elections. The leadership of the ANC, under the guidance of President Mandela united the nation behind the goal of reconciliation and nation building.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to deal with the mysteries and painful atrocities of the past. We congratulate South Africans for the mature handling of this difficult transitional processes.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and friends,

The first seventeen years of freedom have been successful. The ANC has laid a sound foundation for socio-economic development, although challenges remain.

The vision for the first two decades of freedom are encapsulated in the following pillars:

- " The building of a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society.
- " Deepening our democracy, the culture of human rights and people's participation in changing their lives for the better.
- " Meeting basic needs and developing human resources.
- " Building the economy and creating jobs.
- " Combating crime and corruption.
- " Transforming the state.
- " Building a better Africa and a better world.

The first few years after the end of apartheid was about putting in place the correct legal framework and mechanisms. The second phase was about executing our plans and programmes.

We have succeeded in addressing the many challenges facing South Africa. We have moved some way to ensure access to basic services in areas such as health care, social security, housing, electricity, water and sanitation, education and others.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and friends,

Today we ask ourselves, what has made the ANC survive for 100 years.

It was established by a nation as a response to a national challenge. It is not an organisation of a few, it is guided by the interests of the nation. It is a people's organisation. That is why its founders called it the parliament of the people.

It takes the trouble to clarify its policies, strategies and tactics, which are continuously reviewed so that they reflect the changing situation in the land. That is why the ANC during every term organises a national policy conference which helps to keep the policies relevant and focused.

The ANC has well-built organisational structures that make it change with the times, and adapt to new conditions. It adheres to serious discipline in general and political discipline in particular, and emphasises respect. It has strong internal democratic processes.

It empowers its cadres politically. It has a culture of open and democratic debate on any matter.

It has grown not just to be a national or regional or continental organisation, it is an international organisation.

It has a culture of working with progressive organisations of all types. It is an organisation that is prepared to learn and also it is conscious of its position as a leader in society.

The ANC always humbles itself, it is not arrogant. This is what has made the ANC to live and lead.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and friends,

As we mark the ANC Centenary, this is the right moment to pause and ponder the future of South Africa and of the ANC over the next one hundred years. We must ask and answer the difficult questions about the future of our country.

During this year, 2012, our nation must renew our determination to build a South Africa founded on the principles of the Freedom Charter and our democratic Constitution. We must bring new energy and new ideas into the kind of society we want to build over the next few decades.

As the ANC prepares for its Policy Conference in June and its 53rd National Conference in December 2012, we call on all South Africans to join a national dialogue on the future of the country. This debate should be based on our common commitment to build a caring society that is truly non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, prosperous and united in its diversity.

With regards to the way forward, we have identified the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality as needing attention.

Principally, Africans, women and youth continue to carry a disproportionate burden of the challenges. Over the next decade, both the ANC and all organs of state, shall pay a single-minded and undivided attention in order to overcome these triple challenges.

Our education and training system should be the cornerstone of all efforts to radically transform South Africa and build a truly non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united and prosperous society. As we move into the future, we shall invest hugely in, and elevate the

importance of theoretical and ideological work, as well as a scientific approach to analysing and solving society's problems.

To join the ANC should, among other things, mean a commitment to lifelong learning through theory and practice.

The ANC has led our people well during the struggle against colonialism and apartheid because it had a distinct capacity to produce a galaxy of leaders of exceptional qualities and talents. Two of its Presidents, President-General Luthuli and President Mandela were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. This affirmed the quality of leadership that the ANC produces.

This unique character has enabled the ANC to produce some of Africa's finest revolutionaries - men and women of courage and conviction, vision and humility, intellect and integrity, selfless service and loyalty to the people of our country and continent.

As we move into the future, the ANC will renew its internal systems and processes in order to prepare and produce new generations of leadership for our country, whose integrity and passion to serve our country is unquestionable.

The ANC has always been able to attract into its ranks all South Africans, who have distinct abilities and capabilities necessary to push the revolution forward.

As we move forward, the ANC will intensify its programme to recruit and train young people who show tremendous potential, skills and talents in all fields of human endeavour.

We are determined to move to the second centenary with a more rejuvenated organisation that is strategically positioned to continue to lead the people of our country and continent in their tireless and ceaseless quest for a better life, in a just and more humane world.

In this regard, the most urgent task facing us is to speed up the building of a national democratic society, wherein all South Africans enjoy an improved quality of life, especially the working class and the poor.

During its second century of existence, the ANC will undoubtedly require new organisational capacities and strategic capabilities to give political, moral and intellectual leadership and serve our nation in all the five pillars of social transformation.

These are the organisation, the state, the economy, the international arena work and the ideological terrain.

In 2012:

" We will take urgent and practical steps to revitalise the grassroots structures of the movement.

" We will take urgent and practical steps to once again place the ANC at the forefront of the progressive forces for change.

" We will take urgent and practical steps to fast-track the development of cadres - new and old.

" We will take urgent and practical steps to ensure that our programme of transforming our country is accelerated and taken to new heights.

" We will take urgent and practical steps to restore the core values, stamp out factionalism and promote political discipline.

" We will take urgent and practical steps to place education and skills development at the centre of our transformation and development agenda.

We will take urgent and practical steps to deepen our contribution to the renewal of the African continent and the progressive forces in the world.

" We will take urgent and practical steps to professionalise and modernise the operations of the ANC.

Excellencies,

Compatriots and friends,

The 1942 ANC conference passed a resolution that the ANC should have a million members by the time it celebrated its centenary. It is my pleasure to announce that we have achieved this goal.

The total number of ANC members is 1 027 389 members in good standing. KwaZulu-Natal leads with 244 900, followed by the Eastern Cape with 225 597.

Gauteng 121 223, Limpopo 114 385, Mpumalanga 98 892, Free State 76 334, North West 60 319, Western Cape 43 397 and Northern Cape has 42 342. The figures are much higher if we include members who are not in good standing. We congratulate all members for working hard to enable us to meet this target.

Comrades,

It is now my pleasure to announce the winners of the ANC Annual Achievement Awards for our centenary year.

They are as follows;

" The Sol Plaatje Award, conferred on the best performing ANC branch, goes to the Sondelani Branch, Bohlabela Region, Mpumalanga.

" The Charlotte Maxeke Award, conferred on the best performing ANC Women`s League branch, goes to the Sipho Mgiijima Branch, Frances Baard Region, Kimberley.

" The Anton Lembede Award, conferred on the best performing ANC Youth League branch, goes to the Madiba Branch, Mookgophong Sub-region, Limpopo.

" The ZK Matthews Award, conferred on the best performing group of ANC councillors goes to the ANC councillors of the Hibiscus Coast Council, Lower South Coast, KwaZulu-Natal.

We congratulate all the winners who prove that there is excellence in the ANC.

Comrades,

The ANC salutes all the comrades who passed away during 2011, who sadly departed before this centenary. May their souls rest in peace.

On this, January 8 2012, we make a clarion call to all South Africans to work with us to make the dream of a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa a reality in our lifetime. We call on all the progressive forces in our continent to work tirelessly for the regeneration, renewal and renaissance of Africa in our lifetime.

We call on all progressive people in the world to spare no energy and effort in fighting for a better Africa and more humane world. These ideals we shall fight for, side by side, throughout our lives until we realise our goals.

"The ANC is a child of Bloemfontein. The child conceived here in 1912, returns to its mother, older, stronger and wiser`, so said Comrade President Nelson Mandela in February 1990 at an ANC anniversary rally here in Bloemfontein.

Comrades,

THE NEC DECLARES 2012 THE YEAR OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY!

Amandla!