



ANC TODAY

ONLINE VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

A manifesto for the masses



A multitude of ANC members and supporters turned up for the historic launch of the ANC election manifesto in East London last Saturday. Not since the release of former ANC President Nelson Mandela from Robben Island Prison have we seen such public outpouring of support for Africa's 1st liberation movement, which has just celebrated 97 years of existence, almost a century.

That people thronged into ABSA and the adjacent Jan Smuts stadium, something unprecedented in South African politics, is an indication and a debunking of any myths that the ANC's mass support was being eroded in the Eastern Cape.

We, therefore, challenge any serious contender to the ANC in the run-up to the 2009 elections to equal or better the attendance record set by the organisation in East London.

At the start of a new year, we wish to extend best wishes for a successful and peaceful year to all our people and to pay tribute to the millions of South Africans who continue daily to work towards the achievement of a better society.

We pay tribute to the poor in our villages, towns and cities, workers, youth, women, public servants, professionals, students, traditional leaders, health workers, teachers, farmers, religious leaders, public representatives, soldiers, police men and women, business people - people from all walks of life - who continue to contribute to our revolution on a daily basis.

We also pay tribute to the patriots who passed away during the past year. We mourn their passing, and pass on to their families, friends, colleagues and comrades the heartfelt sympathies and condolences of the African National Congress.

This year our country will hold its fourth general election since the attainment of democracy in 1994. It is a time to reflect on what the ANC, together with our people, has achieved in addressing the challenges facing our country and the more we could achieve if we continue working together.

For over 97 years, the ANC has led the struggle to bring about a South Africa that belongs to all the people, black and white. We brought apartheid to an end and set out to re-build and develop our country. We pushed back the frontiers of poverty; and improved the quality of life for millions.

Under successive ANC Governments since 1994:

■ The country has the longest economic expansion recorded in SA history from 1994 to 2003 the economy grew at an average of 3% and 4.5% since 2004;

WEEK IN REVIEW

NPA application upheld | The Supreme Court of Appeal in Bloemfontein upheld the application by the National Prosecution Authority (NPA) to set aside the ruling of the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court that declared invalid the NPA charges against ANC President Jacob Zuma.

Start of the calendar year for inland schools | This week saw the opening of schools in the country's inland provinces, with the ANC President Jacob Zuma visiting Bhukulani Secondary School in Soweto to encourage learners to do more this year in attaining a higher matric pass rate.

Floods ravage coastal provinces | Floods hit parts of KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape damaging property and schools. The provincial governments have approached the national government to declare the affected areas a national disaster.

ELECTIONS 2009

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- Unemployment has decreased from 31% in 2003 to 23% in 2007, using the official narrow definition. This translated into 500,000 new jobs being created annually since 2004;
- The Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) coverage has been expanded to include nearly a million domestic workers and farm workers;
- Access to social grants has massively increased from 3 million people in 1997 to 12.5 million; 8 million of who are children aged less than 14 years;
- About 3.1 million RDP housing for 10 million people were built, outpacing informal housing for the first time. The majority of RDP homeowners are women;
- About 18.7 million people have access to clean water and 10.9 million provided with sanitation, with the number of households with bucket system reduced from 605 675 in 1994 to 113 085 in 2007;
- The expansion of electricity has reached 70% of the population;
- Progress has been recorded through expansion of free primary health care. We have expanded health infrastructure, including building 1,600 clinics and new eight hospitals. Many public hospitals have been revitalised and refurbished. We have scaled-up the ART rollout programme with more than 480,000 people enrolled. A number of initiatives were launched to combat smoking;
- Access to our primary and secondary schooling has reached near universal enrolment, with the participation of girls being the highest in the world. A total of 98% of children aged from 7 to 15 years are enrolled in schools;
- 88% for 6 years olds and participation rate for children aged 4 and 5 (Grade R) in early child development has now reached 70%. The matriculation pass rate has increased from 58% in 1994 to 65% in 2007. Pupil-to-teacher ratios have improved from 43:1 in 1996 to 32:1 in 2006;
- Mass mobilisation around the literacy campaign means that it is now covering more than 350,000 of our people who cannot read and write. We are well within targets to ensure South Africa is free of illiteracy by 2014;
- In higher education, the ANC government has a plan to ensure participation rate of 17.5% by 2010 and 20% by 2015. Since 1994, 140,000 students have benefited from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), which is aimed at improving participation rates amongst disadvantaged South Africans;
- The impact of these economic and social policies has seen significant reductions in the level of severe poverty and improvement in the quality of life of millions of South Africans. Significant progress was made, therefore, toward the vision of creating a united, non-racial and non-sexist society;
- Our country has become more cohesive and we collectively celebrated achievements in sport, especially being awarded the 2010 FIFA World Cup. During this period we also became the Rugby World Champions, top international cricket team, Angling World Champions and have world-class paralympians whose performance contributed to national pride at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics;
- The ANC government has strengthened the country's role in peace, reconstruction and development, especially on the African continent. Our international responsibilities and recognition has also grown. We have also being active in international global forums, such as the G20 and OECD to advance the South African development and the African agenda.

There is still much to do to reach our goals and new challenges have arisen. We have to ensure that we grow the economy to meet the needs of our people squarely. Lasting victory over poverty and hunger requires the creation of decent work opportunities and sustainable livelihoods. Education must be at the centre of our efforts to improve the potential of every citizen and enable each one of us to play a productive role in building our nation. The quality of services the government will provide must be improved.

Our common struggle to build a better South Africa that truly belongs to all has not come to an end. The ANC has developed a manifesto that calls on the experience and vision of all South Africans.

Based on clear objectives and achievable plans drawn up together with the people of South Africa through an extensive consultative process, the ANC has identified five priority areas for the next five years:

- Creation of decent work,
- Education,
- Health,
- Fighting crime and corruption,
- Rural development, food security and land reform.

The ANC during 2008 devoted substantial time and energy to developing costed strategies to achieve the imperatives of creating decent work and sustainable livelihoods.

LATEST STATEMENTS

ANC takes manifesto dialogue online
January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/pr/2009/pr0109a.html>

Launch of ANC election manifesto
unprecedented, 11 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0111a.html>

Briefing after election manifesto
launch, 12 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0112a.html>

Appeal Court Judgement on NPA
appeal, 12 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0112.html>

ANC President leaves school
energised, 14 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0114.html>

ANC mobilises a diverse Western
Cape election team, 15 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0115a.html>

ANC welcomes acquittal of Billy
Masetlha, 15 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0115.html>

LATEST SPEECHES

Address by ANC President at ANC
Manifesto 2009 Gala Dinner, 9 Janu
2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/speeches/2009/sp0109.html>

Address by ANC President at launch
of 2009 Election Manifesto, 10
January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/ancdocs/speeches/2009/sp0110.htm>

Some of these measures are already being implemented, most notably the public infrastructure expansion programme and several public works programmes. We will put in place a comprehensive state-led industrial policy that will direct public and private investment to support employment creation and broader economic transformation.

Our approach to education derives its inspiration from the Freedom Charter. Using some of the Millennium Development Goals as benchmarks - we will introduce a sustainable early childhood development (ECD) system that spans both public and private sectors and gives children a head start in numeracy and literacy. The ANC government will also train and employ 15 000 trainers per annum and strengthen support for ECD centres in rural villages and urban centres.

We will work to improve the quality of schooling, particularly performance in maths, science and technology. We will improve the access of poor South Africans to quality education, by ensuring that 60% of schools are no-fee schools this year, as part of the progressive introduction of free and compulsory education for the poor until they enter university.

We will review the National Student Financial Aid Scheme to facilitate the progressive introduction of free education for the poor at undergraduate level.

The ANC is determined to end the huge inequalities that exist in the public and private sectors by making sure that these sectors work together. We will pursue the introduction of a National Health Insurance (NHI) system, which will be phased in over the next five years.

The NHI will be publicly funded and publicly administered and will provide every South African with access to quality health care which will be free at the point of delivery. People will have a choice of which service provider to use within the district.

We will strengthen the formal partnership against AIDS in our country in the form of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC). The structure brings together government, business, labour, women, youth, religious leaders, entertainment fraternity and many others bound by a common goal of ensuring that the epidemic does not reverse the gains we have made.

We will continue to mobilise our communities around the Healthy Lifestyles Campaign, including the anti-tobacco campaign and the campaign against alcohol and substance abuse.

The level of crime in our country is unacceptable. There is a need to overhaul the criminal justice system to ensure that we drastically reduce the levels of crime in our country.

At the centre of our fight against crime will be the establishment of the new modernised, efficient and transformed criminal justice system (CJS) with a view to enhancing the capacity for fighting and reducing crime in real terms.

The ANC government has stated its goal of reducing serious and violent crime, and in particular contact crimes, by 7 to 10% a year.

The transformation of the entire criminal justice will be linked to mobilising communities and the establishment of street committees to assist law enforcement agencies and complement visible policing. Resources would be allocated to better equip and remunerate those tasked with police and judicial services duties.

The fight against corruption will form part of our struggle against crime. The ANC will step up measures in the fight against corruption within its ranks and the state. This will include measures to review the tendering system, to ensure that ANC members in business, public servants and elected representatives do not abuse the state for corrupt practices.

Rural development and agrarian reform is integral to the struggle to create a better life for all. The rural situation in South Africa is still characterised by division; there are well-developed areas and the former homelands and other deep rural areas, where the majority of our people, especially rural women, continue to live in conditions of degradation and poverty. This must change.

The ANC has a stated aim that by 2014 all rural schools and health facilities will have adequate basic infrastructure.

EVENTS IN HISTORY

22 January 1879: Amabutho ka Cetshwayo wipes out British troops at Isandlwana in one of the worst disasters in British military history, killing 1,272 British soldiers. Only 350 Zulus are killed..

21 January 1946: Prime Minister Jan Smuts announces the intention of the government to introduce new legislation to prohibit Indians from purchasing land from non-Indians. Indians would be entitled to elect three white Europeans to the House of Assembly, two whites to the Senate, and three members to the Natal Provincial Council on a communal franchise with educational and property qualifications.

21 January 1987: Twelve people are killed in the KwaMakhuta massacre when the home of UDF activist Bheki Ntuli was attacked by a group of men armed with AK rifles.

Current land reform initiatives, including the Land and Agricultural Reform Programme, are in the process of being strengthened and expanded to create sustainable rural livelihoods on a mass scale.

Food security is linked to the agrarian and land reform programme. South Africa is currently a net importer of food. We need to increase our food production. This will be linked to measures aimed at developing the cooperative, smallholder and skills development in the agricultural sector.

We have also put in place a range of emergency social development measures such as the Social Relief of Distress Grant and food assistance projects, like soup kitchens, to address the immediate food challenges.

The developmental state is also one that provides a safety net for its most vulnerable citizens. South Africa already provides a range of social grants for its citizens and one of the further measures we will introduce is the progressive implementation of the Child Support Grant for children between 15 and 18 years of age. Implementation will be linked to other requirements, including compulsory schooling.

The most important task of the beginning of the year is to ensure that the ANC returns a decisive elections victory. We must rededicate ourselves to extensive mass mobilisation efforts, door-to-door work, public forums, house and town hall meetings, small and large gatherings. When we mobilise our people, we must talk about the issues that affect them directly.

All our campaigns should aim to mobilise people to participate in programmes aimed at creating a better life for all. Mass mobilisation should entail mass education, mass distribution of information, and mass participation in practical programmes.

The ANC will continue our concerted efforts to contribute to a better Africa and world. Our organisation was formed and evolved as part of progressive forces across the globe in the fight against colonialism, racism, poverty, underdevelopment and gender oppression. We continue to agitate for an Africa and world that is based on the creation of a just, humane and equitable world order.

The global financial crisis demands a global response. This response must address the immediate dangers posed by the financial collapse and global recession. But it must also turn the crisis into an opportunity for a more democratic system of global economic and financial governance. It is only on the basis of a new economic multilateralism, which is both legitimate and effective that we can secure the conditions for the sustainable, inclusive and balanced global growth. This is what informs our position on various issues affecting the world and our continent.

We thank all the citizens of our country for their input into the development of our and we look forward to continuing our dialogue with you in the next five years.

Working together we can do more! A vote for the ANC is a vote for a better life for all!

Jacob G. Zuma

SCHOOLING

Make education the priority for all



At the start of the school calendar for 2009 we need to reinforce the pledge we made to improve the quality of education for all. Education is a means of promoting good citizenship as well as preparing our people for the needs of a modern economy a democratic society. The ANC aims to ensure progressive realisation of universal schooling, improving quality education and eliminating disparities.

This requires a major renewal of our schooling and education system. The power to improve education lies with all of us. We need to work together as students, educators, parents, school governing bodies and other stakeholders to make education the priority of all, and continue our efforts to promote the status of teachers - they must be in school, in class, on time, teaching, no abuse of learners and no neglect of duty.

Let us all renew our commitment to a 'Code for Quality Education'.

According to this code, education department officials at a local level have a responsibility among other things to always be available to assist schools, principals and teachers; visit all schools within the district on a regular basis, to provide support and guidance; monitor teacher and student attendance, and ensure no child is out of school; and ensure all schools receive the necessary resources in time for teaching to commence.

Teachers have a responsibility to teach, as the formal teaching process is critical to education and to the development of learners as individuals. They also need to develop loyalty and respect for the profession, which involves punctuality, enthusiasm, preparedness for lessons, and being of sober mind and body. They need to develop and maintain mutual respect and good communication between teachers and students, and between teachers and parents. They must eliminate unprofessional behaviour such as unsavoury and unacceptable teacher-pupil relationships, drunkenness, drug use, assault, and others.

For their part, learners have a responsibility to accept that their primary reason for being in school is to learn and for the development of their potential as all-rounded individuals, academically, socially and culturally. They should adhere to school rules agreed upon in legitimate, democratic forums and institutions. They should respect the authority of teachers, and use Learner Representatives Councils (LRCs) to ensure that teachers do not abuse their authority. Learners need to avoid anti-social behaviour like theft, vandalism, and assault, alcohol and drug use, and other activities that disrupt the learning process.

Parents have a responsibility to involve themselves actively in governance structures that affect the education of their children; create a home environment conducive to study; and assist in the protection of educational resources such as textbooks, chairs, tables and others.

Community members also have responsibilities, to ensure that every school-going child is at school. They should work to ensure a safe and crime-free environment for schooling, and to protect the school and its assets from vandalism.

If all sections of society work together - government, communities, health care workers, civil society, business, media and other sectors - we can improve the health of all our people, and ensure that all learners benefit from quality education.