



# ANC TODAY

ONLINE VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

EDUCATION | BY BLADE NZIMANDE

## Improving education is a task for everyone



Providing education is an essential condition for consolidating and deepening our democracy, and a cornerstone of the Freedom Charter. In a developing country like South Africa it is one of the major tools for achieving social upliftment and preparing both youth and adults for more productive lives, raising their intellectual and practical skill levels, and allowing them to participate more fully in the economy and in emocratic life. South Africa has a constitutional responsibility for providing the benefits of education to all its citizens and especially to the poorest and most vulnerable.

Although the ANC is proud of South Africa's achievements in education since 1994, it is also acutely aware of the many challenges ahead. Some of these are the result of the complex, objective difficulties left to us by our apartheid past. Others, we must recognise, are the result of our own mistakes and shortcomings, including lack of mass mobilisation on this front.

The achievements include the expansion of the schooling system, resulting in a gross enrolment ratio in basic education of over 97% in 2006. No-fee schools account for 40% of students and plans exist in the ANC 2009 Election Manifesto for expanding this to 60%. Total enrolments in public higher education have increased by over 50% while black enrolments have more than doubled. Much of this is due to the assistance of National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) which now has an annual budget of R1.5 billion.

The prohibition of racial discrimination in education has led to the opening up of opportunities for blacks in previously all-white schools, colleges and universities. Further education and training colleges have expanded their enrolments and are in the process of being recapitalised to help them better meet the country's skills needs. Quality assurance bodies have been established for education and training at all levels.

Despite these successes, we still face formidable challenges. These were discussed thoroughly at the ANC's Polokwane Conference, which adopted a range of resolutions on these challenges. These have been elaborated by the ANC National Executive Committee's (NEC's) January 8th Statement for 2008 and well as in the work of the NEC sub-committee on education and health through the course of 2008.

Polokwane declared that education and health should be the two key priorities of the ANC for the next five years. These are areas of social transformation that contribute most directly to the possibility of improving the living standards of especially the workers and the poor.

### WEEK IN REVIEW

**United States inaugurates its first black president** | Barack Obama is inaugurated, becoming the 44th US President and the first African-American to hold that office. Hundreds of thousands turned out in Washington to witness the historic event.

**Parliament conducts hearings on NPA head** | Suspended National Director of Public Prosecutions Vusi Pikoli makes a presentation to the ad hoc parliamentary committee considering President Kgalema Motlanthe's recommendation on his dismissal. The committee will report to MPs next week.

**Inkosi Zondi assassinated** | Inkosi Mbongeleni Zondi, the great grandson of Inkosi Bhambatha Zondi who led the historic rebellion against the British colonial rule in 1906, and a loyal and disciplined ANC member, is brutally assassinated in Umlazi, south of Durban.

**Education Minister pays surprise visit to Mbizana schools** | Education Minister Naledi Pandor pays a surprise visits to schools in Mbizana district municipality in the Eastern Cape as part of her departments 'Back to School' campaign.

### ELECTIONS 2009

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In order to achieve this, the ANC resolved to elevate education "from being a departmental issue, or even a government issue, to a societal issue - one that occupies the attention and energy of all our people". This must include curriculum changes to teach our children values of social solidarity, service to, and development of, our country.

The most fundamental challenge we face is the need to improve the quality of education in our schools. The key challenge is the effective teaching of literacy and numeracy in most of our primary schools. Many tests, both national and international, show that our children lag behind their peers in other countries, including developing countries. A child who does not learn the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic will clearly be at a serious disadvantage in all future educational efforts.

These problems will be tackled partly by important programs put in place by the Department of Education over the last two or three years. These include: the Foundations for Learning campaign; the Dinaledi Schools programme to promote mathematics, science and technology education; the QIDS-UP programme, aimed at supporting learning, teaching and school leadership at 3,500 low-performing primary schools in poor areas; the introduction of a pre-school Grade R year for all 5 year olds; and various other initiatives. Planning has started to establish a National Education Evaluation and Development Unit to oversee the measurement and improvement of teacher performance.

Adult education must become a priority. Government and communities face a challenge to ensure that the Kha Ri Gude adult literacy campaign is successful and that adult education is expanded at post-literacy levels.

In addition to these various initiatives, the development of educational infrastructure needs to be stepped up. While impressive progress has been made in expanding electricity, water supply and telephone services to public schools, much still needs to be done. In particular, a big effort needs to be made to provide libraries, laboratories and computer facilities to schools.

Statistics from 2006 show that 67.9% of schools had no computers for teaching and learning, 79.3% had no library space, and 88.4% had no functional laboratories. Forty-one percent of schools had poor security due to inadequate fencing and a shocking 97% of schools had no wheelchair access and no appropriate toilet facilities for the disabled.

#### Need for urgent redress

These conditions are totally unacceptable and we require urgent redress and attention. To do any less is to show disrespect to the main victims of the current backlogs: poor, black communities in urban and rural areas who form the majority of South Africa's population.

The school building programme needs to be extended, both to replace defective buildings and to provide new ones. In addition, Polokwane called for affirmative measures for historically disadvantaged higher education institutions, with specific emphasis on infrastructure, access and staff provisioning.

At the very least, all of our 28,000 schools must have an access road, sanitation facilities, clean drinking water, strong buildings and such other important infrastructure. Government's extended public works programmes must prioritise the wiping out of infrastructure backlogs in our schools.

Poverty eradication strategies are an essential component to improve our schooling. An important initiative in this respect has been the introduction of the school nutrition programme which has a budget of approximately R1.6 billion and aims to provide a daily meal for six million learners in approximately 18,000 primary schools; and the ANC intends to extend this programme to high-schools.

Another important decision was that the upper age limit for eligibility for childcare grants be gradually extended to 18 years. The benefits include improved school attendance and an improved ability of children to focus on their lessons.

Unfortunately the programme does not always function well and poor children sometimes find themselves deprived of their right to sufficient food through corruption or incompetence in provincial education departments. Such practices need to be stamped out ruthlessly with the assistance of teachers, parents and communities and the programme progressively extended to secondary schools.

## LATEST STATEMENTS

Statement of the ANC National Work Committee, 20 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/pr/2009/pr0120.html>

ANC statement on the murder of Inkosi Zondi, 22 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docancdocs/pr/2009/pr0122b.html>

ANC distances itself from fake billboard picture, 22 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docancdocs/pr/2009/pr0122.html>

ANC media statement on electioneering during school hours, 22 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docancdocs/pr/2009/pr0122a.html>

ANC statement on weekend Provincial and Regional Election Manifesto Rallies, 22 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docancdocs/pr/2009/pr0122c.html>

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

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

With the cooperation of the departments of health, other anti-poverty measures at schools must include the provision of basic health programmes at schools (eg. de-worming, testing for hearing and eyesight, etc). Combating HIV/AIDS must be intensified, both through the curriculum and through support measures for both students and teachers at school, college and university levels.

The burden of educational costs must be removed from poor families. The Polokwane conference decided that no-fee schooling should be expanded from 40% to 60% of students, and that we should progressively introduce free education for all the poor until undergraduate level. In this respect the further expansion of the services and transformation of the National Student Financial Scheme becomes important.

Government alone cannot bring about the transformation of education, given the many capacity challenges. In this respect the ANC and its alliance structures have an important role to play in mobilising communities to lead the process of establishing community based education committees, mobilising teachers, learners, parents and communities to ensure safe and functional education institutions.

In this respect the ANC's Quality Education for All campaign, launched in Kliptown in August 2008, has a crucial role to play. It provides a Code of Quality Education which sets out the responsibilities of departmental officials, teachers, learners, parents and communities in building functioning, and eliminating dysfunctional, schools.

Teachers have a particularly important role as workers, professionals and community members. The NEC's January 8th Statement calls for teachers "to commit to a set of non-negotiables - to be in school, in class, on time, teaching, no abuse of learners and no neglect of duty".

Dysfunctional schools don't only affect children. They also deprive teachers of any job satisfaction, self-esteem and respect by society. All outstanding issues around an appropriate remuneration regime for teachers and performance evaluation must be urgently settled.

Teachers should work together as collectives in each school to ensure they raise the quality of education provided to the nation's children. Education departments, school governing bodies and education committees should see their main role as providing support to schools and particularly to teachers and principals. If education needs a revolution to meet the nation's needs, as it surely does, then the teachers are the vanguard.

Therefore we need to get rid of seeing teachers and their unions as permanent adversaries, but should be seen as a vital resource for the education revolution we need.

>> Blade Nzimande is a member of the ANC National Executive Committee and  
>> General Secretary of the South African Communist Party.

## NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

### A revolution in health care



In fifteen years of democracy, significant progress has been achieved in improving access to health. However, more remains to be done to ensure that the all South Africans enjoy quality health services without catastrophic medical costs and consequences.

The South African health system has multiple challenges that need to be addressed to improve the delivery of services. At the 52nd ANC National Conference in Polokwane the meeting provided the policy impetus by calling for the "implementation of a National Health

Insurance (NHI) to further strengthen the public health care system and ensure adequate provision of funding".

This resolution acknowledges that the South African health system has challenges that can only be addressed through a comprehensive transformation of the system.

## EVENTS IN HISTORY

+ African women in the Free State protest the extension of passes to women. A result of pressure this law was subsequently relaxed until the 1950s.

**24 January 1960:** Riots erupt in Catc Manor in Durban, a home to both Indians and African people, as Africans refuse to be removed to kwaMashu. The riots result in the death of nine policemen.

**24 January 1992:** Former State President FW de Klerk, in opening parliament, suggests a referendum in which the votes of different race groups would be counted separately

**23 January 1998:** Former State President PW Botha appears in court in George because of his refusal to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The implementation of the national health insurance plan means transformation of the funding model for health as well as reorganisation of health care delivery. Universal access to health services can only be achieved through a simultaneous and two-pronged approach. First, significantly strengthen the public sector so that it becomes the provider of first choice. Second, design mechanisms for ensuring that scarce and critical health service resources in both public and private sector are shared and optimally used by all to maximise social value.

The transformation process intends to fundamentally address structural and systemic aspects of the health system that are sustaining current inequities, and engender solidarity through redistributive and social justice in the delivery of health services.

The establishment of National Health Insurance is predicated on two core principles:

● *First, the right to health:* the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of the right to access health care services. A key aspect of ensuring access to health care is that services must be free of any charges at the point of use.

● *Second, social solidarity and universal coverage:* The commitment to social solidarity in the South African health system means a mandatory contribution by South Africans to funding health care according to their ability to pay. Given the massive income inequalities, progressive funding mechanisms must be used (i.e. the rich should contribute a higher percentage of their income to funding health services than the poor) and the government contributes for the indigent.

There should be universal access to health services that meets established quality standards so that everyone is able to use health services according to the need for health care and not on the basis of ability to pay.

The main sources of funding for the NHI will be allocations from general tax revenue with a progressive increase of the public health sector budget over five years and a small mandatory health insurance contribution. All of these funds will be combined into a single NHI Fund, from which all services covered by the NHI will be funded.

The resources pooled in the NHI Fund will be managed by a public authority that will allocate them according to an agreed annual national health plan and be responsible for central purchasing of health services for the NHI through sub-national levels.

Central allocation of funds and purchasing is critical in ensuring that national public health policy objectives are achieved and unnecessary disparities are avoided. The allocations will be based on relative health care needs, such as the size of population, age and sex composition of the population, HIV/AIDS/tuberculosis and levels of ill-health).

There will be a separate mechanism for allocating capital funds under the NHI. Underlying this separate allocation mechanism is the need to redress historical inequities in the availability of health infrastructure and improve physical access for all.

Purchasing refers to the transfer of financial resources to both private and public health service. The NHI through its sub-national levels will assess the specific health care needs of the community served, decide on what type and quantity and quality of health services are required to meet these needs, and which health care providers should provide these services to ensure that appropriate services are available to the population.

This process of assessment applies to services directly provided by the purchasing organisation itself and to services provided by independent contractors. A single purchaser will fundamentally address the current fragmentation, spiralling costs and allow the government to effectively implement public health policy.

A comprehensive package of services that includes primary health care services as well as hospital inpatient and outpatient care. People will be expected to follow the appropriate referral route to ensure effective gate-keeping as at the primary health care level before referrals to specialists and hospital-based care when necessary. This will ensure that resources are use efficiently and appropriately. People will have choices of where to obtain care.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**North West election campaign launch**  
Saturday 24 January 2009  
Ikageng Stadium (Potchestroom),  
10h00

**Nelson Mandela regional election rally**  
Saturday 24 January 2009  
Dan Qeque Stadium, Zwide,  
10h00

**Limpopo election campaign launch**  
Sunday 25 January 2009  
Ephraim Mogale (Stadium Modimolle)  
09h00

**ANC President visits Musina**  
Tuesday 27 January 2009  
10h00.

**Launch of ANC Women's League election trail**  
Saturday 31 January 2009  
University of Johannesburg,  
Soweto Campus,  
09h00

The main provider mechanism will be capitation payments (i.e. a set amount per person per year) in its various forms. The payment arrangements will be structured to ensure that both providers and users of services are less inclined to overuse or over service patients and hence control spiralling of costs.

Health care will be purchased from either public or private health care providers which have been accredited by the NHI. Providers will be accredited on the basis of their ability to provide services of acceptable quality, willingness to accept payment levels affordable to the NHI, and the need for such providers within a particular area.

At the primary care level, existing private general practitioners (GPs) can be accredited if they work in group practices, which include primary health care nurses and a range of allied health professionals. Similarly public and private hospitals at various levels will be accredited to provide NHI services. People can then choose between accredited providers in their area.

However, it is important that other health system challenges are addressed and this includes: interventions to improve human resources for health, infrastructure revitalisation, maintenance and new developments, reforming management of hospitals and general quality improvement plans.

To ensure effective stewardship of the health system, there must be an appropriate and integrated framework for regulating the quantity, distribution and quality of care of both public and private health care providers.

Although in the past, recommendations for substantial health systems transformation in South Africa have not been taken forward, the Polokwane resolution to proceed with a NHI combined with the prioritisation of health and education sectors, suggests that the pace of change is likely to be faster than seen hitherto.

The challenges for such substantial transformation of all aspects of funding and providing health services in South Africa are well appreciated and understood that is why it critical that the process be phased over a period of up to five years.

However, each year will be characterised by significant changes to towards the full implementation of NHI. To facilitate the transformation process appropriate legislative reforms will be implemented soon to provide the legal framework for introducing change and formation of appropriate institutions for NHI. It is only though such bold changes that universal access to quality services can be guaranteed.

## Are you registered to vote?



Every voter needs to vote at the voting station closest to where they live, and where they are registered to vote.

If you have not registered, go to your nearest voting station over the weekend of **7- 8 February 2009**. Voting stations are open from 8am to 5pm.

To find out if you are registered to vote, SMS your ID number to 32810, visit the IEC website at [www.elections.org.za](http://www.elections.org.za) or call 0800 11 8000 toll free from a landline.