



ANC TODAY

ONLINE VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

We remain focused on building a better life for all



For the past 15 years, we have been telling our people that a vote for the ANC is a vote for a better life for all. That is because the reason for the existence of the ANC is to create a better life for the people of our country. From 1912 we set out to free our people from oppression and racism, and succeeded. We then began the struggle to fight poverty and deprivation.

We have also always seen our task as that of uniting our people, to create a nation united in diversity. It is a goal to which we all aspire and it is the path to achieving our shared goal of a better life for all, black and white, rich and poor, urban and rural, women and men.

We have a clear vision of the kind of South Africa we want to see. We will never rest until all our people have access to clean water, electricity, a house, good education, quality healthcare and an efficient and an accessible public transport system. We want to see all adults having access to decent jobs as well as opportunities to generate an income, so that they can afford to look after their families.

We believe that our manifesto has all the correct ingredients to enable us to take this quest for a better life forward. The manifesto is based on clear objectives and achievable plans drawn up together with the people of South Africa through an extensive consultative process.

We are serious about making a visible impact in the following areas over the next five years: creation of decent work; education; health; fighting crime and corruption; and rural development, food security and land reform.

Our priorities will specifically target the needs of the youth, women and people with disabilities. We are also mindful of the fact that many of our elderly people live in conditions of abject poverty and hardship. We will address their plight as part of the broader drive to bring about a better life for all.

Our campaign is going extremely well and our message is getting across. Our people are responding overwhelmingly to all our rallies, meetings and door-to-door visits. Our exceptional performance in this week's by-elections has also proved that the ANC lives, the ANC leads. It also confirms the people of our country love and support our organisation and they see the ANC as a reliable organisation to change the quality of their lives.

However, the ANC's strength and growth is clearly causing uneasiness in some quarters. We have noticed attempts to divert attention from our message and programme of action. There is a concerted strategy of seeking to portray the ANC as a factional, divided house. Stories are published on Sundays in particular with all sorts of fictitious allegations about the ANC and its leadership.

WEEK IN REVIEW

By-elections demonstrate ANC support | The results of by-elections in a number of provinces this week demonstrate that the ANC maintains its popularity among the people. The ANC won all by-elections in the Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng. In Northern Cape was the most hotly contested province, the ANC won 12 out of 15 wards.

African mediator Jan van Eck dies | Jan van Eck, who played a leading role in African peace mediation efforts, dies after a short illness. Van Eck was one of the first sitting MPs to join the ANC after its unbanning.

Summit urges progress in Zimbabwe | An extraordinary summit of leaders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) reach agreement that all parties in Zimbabwe should ensure the formation of a unity government by 13 February.

President sends bills back | President Kgalema Motlanthe sends two bills - the Films and Publications Amendment Bill and the Competition Amendment Bill - back to Parliament following legal advice that parts of the proposed legislation may be unconstitutional.

There is also an intensification of focus into the private lives of senior ANC leaders, to sow further confusion. Initially the spotlight was on the ANC President, and the latest target is the ANC Deputy President and President of the Republic, Kgalema Motlanthe.

There can be no justification for this type of invasion of the privacy of any individual by the media. Once we remove all boundaries, we begin to undermine the right to human dignity, for which we all fought for so tirelessly.

We stand by our Deputy President. His private life has nothing to do with the way he runs the country or how he executes his tasks as the ANC Deputy President. That is his own business. We have advised him to focus on his work in both government and Luthuli House and to ignore the cheap attempts at distracting him.

At our conference in Polokwane, we reaffirmed the need for the continued existence of our Alliance. We came out of the conference with a clear mandate to build and strengthen the Alliance, to nurture it and defend it. We are succeeding in that regard. The relationship between the ANC and its Alliance partners is sound and constructive. It is an open relationship in which we raise issues and engage one another.

Given this open relationship, we can never be fooled by false rumours such as those claiming that NEC member and SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande is running a campaign to prevent Motlanthe from becoming the Deputy President of the Republic after elections. Those who are peddling such information are wasting their time. They will not succeed in driving a wedge between NEC members or between the ANC and its Alliance partners.

We have tried and tested procedures of choosing leaders who will represent our people in Parliament and the provincial legislatures. Our list process is still underway but there is no doubt that our Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe is second on the list. We have full confidence in him as the ANC Deputy President and as the President of the Republic. The ANC deployed him in government because we knew his capabilities, and were in no doubt that he would be equal to the task of running our country. We support Deputy President Motlanthe fully in the wonderful work that he is doing for our country and the ANC.

The ANC campaign is going on exceptionally well and we are poised to score a resounding victory. We shall stay focused on the campaign, and continue to speak to the electorate and convince our people that the ANC is the only organisation that can and will bring about a better life for all.

The flying rumours and gossip are to us just "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing", to borrow from Shakespeare's Macbeth.

Working together we can do more to build a better life for all our people!

Jacob G. Zuma

EVENTS IN HISTORY

31 January 1985: President PW Botha offers Nelson Mandela conditional release from prison if he renounces violence and violent protest. Mandela responds that he cannot and will not give any such undertaking at a time when the people of South Africa are not free.

1 February 1991: President FW De Klerk promises to demolish the 'remaining pillars' of apartheid, including the Land Act, Group Areas Act and Registration of Population Act.

3 February 1992: Nelson Mandela and De Klerk jointly accept the Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize for their efforts in bringing about peaceful negotiations for a democratic dispensation in South Africa.

4 February 1997: The new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa comes into force, having been approved by the Constitutional Court on 4 December and signed into being by President Nelson Mandela in Sharpeville on 10 December 1996.



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 or call 0800 11 8000 toll free from a landline.

SOCIAL GRANTS

Child grants are an affordable way to fight poverty



A great deal has been written about how unaffordable some of our manifesto programmes supposedly are. Extension of child support has come in for some harsh criticism. The accusation is that this is an empty promise and a serious drain on taxpayers. These accusations are unfounded and ill-informed.

The child support grant (CSG) is currently provided to children from birth to 15 years. The grant is means tested. Single parents whose income is below R2,300 a month or R27,600 a year are eligible to qualify for the child support grant.

In its election manifesto, the ANC promises to expand the provision of the grant to children aged 15 to 18 years in a phased manner. This will be linked to school attendance and enrolment. During the ANC's manifesto policy conference, the Sunday Times reported that the cost of extending the child support grant was too high and unaffordable.

The cost estimates by the Sunday Times are misleading and incorrect. The Department of Social Development has done the costing on the extension of the grant. The preliminary cost estimate shows that, based on projected gross domestic product (GDP) growth by the treasury, the extension is affordable. It only marginally increases social assistance expenditure as a share of GDP in the first years and thereafter it will decline as a share of total government expenditure.

If the grant is extended to children under the age of 16 years in the 2009/10 financial year, over 700,000 will qualify. Assuming the grant value of R240 a month a child and the administration cost of R32 per beneficiary, the cost for extension will be R1.9 billion.

If extended to children under the age of 17 in the 2010/11 financial year, over 600,000 children will qualify. Assuming the grant value of R250 a month per beneficiary and the administration cost of R34 a month, the cumulative cost for the extension will be R3.6 billion in that year.

When extended to children under the age of 18 years in the 2011/12 financial year, 550,00 children will qualify. Assuming now a grant value of R260 a month and a reduced administration cost of R28 a month per beneficiary (government will be migrating beneficiaries to the Post Office and banks), the cumulative cost for the extension will be R5.2 billion.

If the child support grant is extended, the expenditure on social grants as a percentage of GDP will remain at less than 3.5%. This is based on the cost estimates above and projected GDP growth from the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS).

There are approximately two million children between the ages 15 to 18 years living in ultra-poor households who have no income support to meet their basic needs. These are children living in households with a per capita income of less than R160 in an urban area and less than R220 a month in a rural area.

Some studies show that 8% of these poor households reported child hunger either often or always, with hunger being defined as having to go without a meal a day.

Approximately 3% of all children live in child-headed households, while 120,000 children live in a youth-headed household, according to the Human Sciences Research Council. It is difficult to place a large number of siblings and older children in a single foster care placement and most often siblings and related children want to stay together in their own home instead of being separated. Currently the only income support available to children aged 15 to 18 years is a foster child grant.

The extension of the child support grant will provide a less costly alternative to foster care for older children who want to remain with their siblings and preserve their family unit.

LATEST STATEMENTS

ANC statement on the crisis in Sri La
January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/pr/2009/pr0129b.html>

Voters can now watch the ANC's
election campaign on line, 29 Januar
2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docancdocs/pr/2009/pr0129.html>

ANC welcomes results of by-
elections, 29 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docancdocs/pr/2009/pr0129.html>

ANC condemns media report about
ANC Deputy President, 27 January
2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docancdocs/pr/2009/pr0127.html>

Passing away of Jan van Eck, 27
January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docancdocs/pr/2009/pr0127.html>

Conclusion of the National List
Conference, 25 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docancdocs/pr/2009/pr0125a.html>

ANC welcomes success of PE voter
mobilisation rally, 25 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docancdocs/pr/2009/pr0125a.html>

LATEST SPEECHES

Address by ANC President Jacob Zu
the opening of the ANC National List
Conference, 24 January 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?docs/history/zuma/2009/jz0124.html>

It is also reported that close to three million children engage in labour that reduces their opportunities for meaningful development and for full integration into society. This primarily includes children who drop out of school prematurely.

In 1999, 36% of children did at least three hours of economic work and at least seven hours of other work per week. Approximately 1.7 million children did at least 12 hours of economic work, 14 hours of household work and 12 hours school labour a week, according to the Department of Labour.

The extension of the child support grant will reduce the need for children to engage in harmful labour practices to support themselves and their families, and provide them with an opportunity to attend school.

The arrest figures of children under the ages of 18 years vary from 8,000 to 12,000 a month, averaging 144,000 arrests a year. Studies show that children are enticed and coerced by adults into crime, with poverty being the push factor.

Income support through the extension of the child support grant will give children an opportunity to resist enticement by adults into crime and provide them with an opportunity to invest in their development.

In 2005, 100,000 children under the age of 18 years were estimated to have died, of which 44% was estimated to be the result of HIV/AIDS related ailments. In 2006 the number of maternal orphans under the age of 18 years was 1.5 million, 66% of which were said to be the result of HIV/AIDS. In that year, 300,000 of these children had become orphans. This figure is expected to increase to three million by the year 2015 in the absence of major health interventions.

In 2005, among young people aged 15-24 years an estimated 4.6% women and 1.7% men were living with HIV. It is estimated that within ten years the mortality from HIV/AIDS for this age group will outnumber the infant and child mortality rates in South Africa.

The extension of the child support grant to older children will enable them to be less dependent on opportunistic adults and enable them to access information and other measures to improve their health and well-being status.

There is overwhelming evidence in South Africa that social grants, especially the child support grant, reduces the poverty gap by approximately 23% and promotes desired social behaviour like school attendance, improvement in nutrition and in accessing health care.

There is also evidence that households that received the child support grant show higher incidence in the search for employment than households that did not receive a grant. Impact studies on the child support grant also indicate higher school enrolment and attendance rates, and that girls are more likely to attend school than in households not receiving the grant.

The findings further show that caregivers of children behave responsibly and use the grants for food and education rather than on personal needs. They also use the grant to respond to the needs of all the children in the household equally.

The extension of the child support grant to children under 18 years will reduce child destitution by 70% and poverty by half. This is just another way in which the ANC's clear and achievable plan will improve people's lives.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Northern Cape Election Launch Rally

Saturday 31 January 2009
Pampierstad Stadium,
10h00

Mpumalanga Election Launch Rally

Saturday 31 January 2009
Mpumalanga Stadium (Ermelo),
09h00

Launch of ANC Women's League Election Trail

Saturday 31 January 2009
University of Johannesburg, Soweto
Campus (formerly Vista Soweto),
09h00

Manifesto Endorsement Gala Dinner

Saturday 31 January 2009
Sandton Convention Centre,
Johannesburg,
18h30

ANC President addresses Nongoma Rally

Sunday 1 February 2009
Kwa-Falaza Sports Ground,
KwaNongoma, KwaZulu Natal,
10h00

OR Tambo Regional Election Rally

Sunday 1 February 2009
Mthatha City Hall,
10h00

Sod-turning ceremony for Thukela Bridge

ANC President attends
Tulwane, Nkandla,
KwaZulu Natal