



ANC TODAY

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I will lead the country on a path of friendship, cooperation, harmony, unity and faster change



I am overwhelmed by the responsibility that is thrust upon my shoulders. I am truly humbled by the opportunity to serve as the fourth President of the democratic Republic of South Africa.

South Africa is a remarkable country with very special people. We normally get caught up in our day-to-day challenges and forget to appreciate the fact that we made history in the world in 1994 when together we discarded our tragic past, and opted for a future of harmony, peace and stability.

We elected our first President, our icon Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, whom we all love dearly. Madiba taught us the importance of forgiveness, reconciliation and humility. He made us walk tall and feel proud to be South Africans.

As President of the Republic, I will do my best to lead the country towards the realisation of Madiba's vision of a truly non-sexist, non-racial South Africa, united in its diversity. With the support of my organisation the ANC, as well as all South Africans, I hope to lead the country on a path of friendship, cooperation, harmony, unity and faster change.

We have just emerged from very vibrant elections, the Independent Electoral Commission, which can always be relied upon to deliver free and fair elections, rose to the occasion. The millions of South African voters made us the custodians of their hopes and dreams.

The next five years will depend on us to serve them with dignity and respect and to maintain the decorum of Parliament, which is the face of our democracy. Our people have high expectations, as the Executive we will do our best to be more hands-on, more accessible and to deliver on our commitments.

We also intend to start a new chapter in relations between Government and the Opposition. We reiterate that it should be possible to work with Opposition parties on issues that are in the national interest. While appreciating a robust Opposition, we also trust that we will be able to move slightly away from the dogmatic approach, which turns every issue into a contentious one.

On the side of the Executive, we will also need to try to avoid being over-defensive, and not view all criticism from the Opposition in a negative light. We can surely be able to build a working relationship that emphasizes oversight, while also allowing cooperation where necessary.

It is going to be a busy five years. We have deliberately given ourselves five priorities to focus on which will make us more effective in implementation. We will focus on education, health, land reform and rural development, the fight against crime as well as creating decent work. We are determined to leave an indelible mark in these five areas.

WEEK IN REVIEW

Increase in job losses | Statistic South Africa releases a report detailing that unemployment an alarming rate of 270 000 job losses in three months. The report showed an increase to 23,5 percent in unemployment as compared to 21,9 percent in March 2009.

Zola Skweyiya to work at the ANC HQ | Former Minister of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya retired from parliamentary politics to assume a job of the Head of Presidency at the ANC Headquarters in Chief Albert Luthuli House.

SA Rand strengthens | The rand achieved its largest monthly gain. According to Business Day reports this was due to successful general elections and dropping of criminal charges against ANC President Jacob Zuma were major contributors that calmed the investors' nerves.

ANC wins by-elections | In by-elections that were held in 30 wards in six provinces, the ANC retained all seats, except one, which it lost to the DA.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

9 May 1966: Bram Fischer was sentenced to life imprisonment on the charges of conspiring with the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe to commit sabotage and violating the Suppression of Communism Act.

8 May 1996: South Africa's new constitution considered by many as one of the most advanced in the world and with a Bill of Rights second to none was adopted.

10 May 1994: Nelson Mandela was sworn in as South Africa's first black president at the Union Buildings.

Our most immediate priority is to respond decisively to the challenges posed by the global economic downturn. We must move quickly to implement the framework agreed by government, business and labour to protect jobs and boost the economy. It is my fervent hope that our public servants heard our campaign message and understand that it shall not be business as usual. We expect hard work and utmost dedication.

It was quite a moving moment for me to be sworn in again as a Member of Parliament, even though my membership was just for a few hours. I have a special relationship with Parliament.

In 1994 I used to sit in the cross-benches as an NCOP KwaZulu-Natal representative, when I was still MEC for Economic Affairs and Tourism. In 1999 I moved to the front benches as Deputy President of the Republic. Members who were part of the last Parliament will confirm that I was a very well behaved Member. I attended sessions and presented myself timeously for the fortnightly Deputy President's question time.

I dutifully answered all questions, amid occasional heckling from the Opposition benches. Honourable Members who would not let me rest and kept me very busy with questions included the Honourable Koos van der Merwe and Velaphi Ndlovu of the IFP, Pieter Mulder of FF Plus and the Honourable Cherilyne Dudley of the ACDP.

I was also a proud recipient of little notes from Honourable Members from various political parties, usually gossiping about each other, which I have kept very safely at home. I left rather unceremoniously on the 14th of June 2005, without an opportunity to say goodbye to all my friends. However, I continued to visit, now sitting in the public gallery during the opening of Parliament and other occasions.

I congratulate our new Presiding Officers in the National Assembly, and wish them well on their appointments. We also recognise the contribution of all our former Presiding Officers. We must also acknowledge and thank the outgoing Cabinet for their good service.

I intend to have my Cabinet assume office by the 11th of May, so that we can get down to business. I have gained immensely from the wisdom of the top five ANC officials whom I have consulted on the matter. I should be able to produce a team that will work very hard, and with the necessary speed. We mean business when we talk about faster change.

On behalf of all South Africans, let me extend our sincerest gratitude to President Motlanthe for his service to the nation. He has acquitted himself well, and has definitely been equal to the task.

I also wish to reiterate our appreciation to all South Africans for participating actively in the elections. We must emphasise that the responsibility of voters did not end at the polling stations. Working together we must now do much more to build a better South Africa. I thank you all for your confidence in me and in the ANC.

Jacob G. Zuma



LATEST STATEMENTS

[ANC statement on by-elections results](#), 7 May 2009

[Zola Skweyiya, former Social Development Minister, to work at ANC Headquarters](#), 7 May 2009

[Skweyiya retires from parliamentary politics](#), 6 May 2009

[ANC President Jacob Zuma will be the nominee of the ANC for the position of President of South Africa](#), 5 May 2009

[ANC NEC statement on Premier candidates and Parliamentary appointments](#), 30 April 2009

LATEST SPEECHES

[Address by Honourable Mr Jacob Zuma on his election as President-Elect of the Republic of South Africa](#), 6 May 2009

[Speech by ANC Treasurer General Mathews Phosa to the Business Council of Africa](#), 30 April 2009

UPCOMING EVENTS

Inauguration of the President of South Africa
Saturday 9 May 2009
Union Buildings, Tshwane