



ONLINE VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

THE FREEDOM CHARTER

Fifty-four years of the guiding light



Today, June 26, we mark the fifty-fourth anniversary of the Congress of the People in Kliptown and the Freedom Charter. It is an occasion that challenges all patriotic South Africans to reassess how far we are in the light of the ideas of the Freedom Charter.

The idea of a "Congress of the People" came from Professor ZK Matthews in his capacity as the President of the Cape Province of the ANC. He made a proposal to the ANC Provincial Conference of 15 August 1953 that was held in Cradock:

"I wonder whether the time has not come for the African National Congress to consider the question of convening a national Convention, A CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE, representing all the people of this country irrespective of race or colour to draw up a FREEDOM CHARTER for the DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA OF THE FUTURE. Once the principle of the establishment of such a CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE was accepted, the details of its implementation could be worked out either by the National Executive or by an ad hoc committee with that special duty."

The proposal became an ANC decision when it was adopted at the Annual Conference of December 18-20, 1953:

"Conference instructs the National Executive Committee (NEC) to make immediate preparations for the organisation of a "CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE OF S.A." whose task shall be to work out a "FREEDOM CHARTER" for all peoples and groups in the country. To this end, Conference urges the ANC National Executive Committee to call a meeting of the National Executives of the South African Indian Congress, the Coloured Peoples Organisation and the South African Congress of Democrats or any other democratic organisation for the purpose of placing before them the plan of Congress and obtain their co-operation in creating a truly representative "CONVENTION" of the peoples of South Africa."

The NEC carried out this directive by convening a meeting of the Alliance partners on 23 March 1954 in uThongathi to accommodate Chief Albert Luthuli whose movement was restricted by the apartheid regime. The Liberal Party was also invited in accordance with the conference resolution which envisaged a movement much broader than the Alliance.

Chief Luthuli recalled in his Let My People Go:

"The proceedings at the Congress of the People were politically led by the ANC in that, among others, the opening session was chaired by Dr Conco of the ANC, with the welcome address delivered by the Transvaal ANC President, EP Moretsele.

WEEK IN REVIEW

Nersa grants Eskom tariff hike | The National Energy Regulator of South Africa made a cautious decision and granted Eskom second tariff hike of thirty one percent interim price hike. The increase will see light users pay a fifteen percent increase while industry and heavy users will pay thirty one percent.

Two more SABC Board members resign | Former South African Broadcasting Corporation Board Chairperson, Khanyi Mkhonza and Gloria Serobe tendered their resignation notice at the enquiry conducted by Parliament's Communications Portfolio Committee.

Public service doctors' pay adjusted | Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi tabled a proposed salary adjustment for doctors aimed at addressing the issue of underpayment of the medical profession as part of the Occupation Specific Dispensation.

Interest rates unchanged | Monetary Policy Committee of the South African Reserve Bank retained the repurchase rate at seven point five per annum. Economists had expected the rate to be cut to seven percent. Governor Tito Mboweni said, "output growth remains negative while trends in household consumption expenditure have continued to deteriorate. There are however signs that the downturn, both globally and domestically, may be nearing the lower turning point, but the recovery is expected to be slow and protracted."

The leadership of the ANC in the campaign for the Congress of the People was well understood and accepted as Ben Turok, one of the keynote speakers at the Congress of the People, recounted in his autobiography, *Nothing but the Truth*: “It was understood, however, that the ANC would play the leading role and this no doubt placated the more nationalist elements for whom the new structure [the National Action Council] posed some difficulty”.

After eighteen months of intensive preparation in every part of the country, the Congress of the People came as the culmination of the most widespread and thorough canvassing of opinion, of the most truly democratic process South Africa had ever witnessed.

The Congress of the People expressed more profoundly and authentically the common aspiration of the overwhelming majority of South Africans, black and white, to live in peace in the country of their birth, to shape its future and share its fruits, to put an end to the centuries of colonial domination, racist tyranny, exploitation, misery and humiliation.

It built on the militant spirit of the Youth League and the Programme of Action of 1949, it consolidated the unity in action achieved in the mass campaigns of the nineteen-forties and topped by the Defiance Campaign of 1952, it gave cohesion and clarity of direction to the liberation movement at a decisive moment in its growth as a truly mass movement.

The Freedom Charter is not merely an historical document. It is a living document, an important guide about the direction in which we should all take our country. Its visionary prescriptions have served as an educational tool for different generations of freedom fighters and the masses of the people of South Africa. It continues to provide an enduring vision of a new South African society.

The matters the addressed by the Freedom Charter remain the same issues with which we have to contend as we strive to build our new democracy. In its preamble, the Freedom Charter says:

“We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know: That 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”.

This captures the fundamental and enduring principle at the heart of our democracy that the People Shall Govern, and underscores the notion of an inclusive society, a country in which all South Africans have a place under the sun.

We have to work to ensure that all the people to whom this country belongs are not divided by opulence at one end and squalor on the other, over-indulgence and hunger pains, rich and poor, development and underdevelopment. Given the situation where the majority had been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace, and where our country could not be prosperous because the majority were denied equal rights and opportunities.

The South African Constitution, inspired by the vision of the Freedom Charter unites a nation of many languages and significant cultural, religious and socio economic diversity. We have to work together to weave the threads that will see us celebrating a nation which is non racial, non-sexist and democratic - a nation that is dedicated to pushing back the frontiers of poverty.

On April 22nd, an overwhelming majority of South Africans voted for the African National Congress and gave it the mandate to govern the country for another five years. The resolutions of the ANC conference in Polokwane in 2007, later refined in our election Manifesto, form the basis of the policies and programmes of government.

The ANC led government has made much progress in the past 15 years, in the provision of housing, water and electricity to millions of homes. There is still much to do to reach our goals and new challenges have arisen. 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.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

26 June 1955: the Freedom Charter was adopted at the Congress of the People in Kliptown, bringing the ANC together with Indian, Coloured and White organisations. It was attended by 3 000 delegates from all over the country who were workers, peasants, intellectuals, women, youth and students. During the Congress the *Isitwalandwe/Seaparankoe*, the highest honour awarded by the ANC, was awarded to Chief Albert Luthuli, Dr Yusuf Dadoo and Father Trevor Huddleston.

26 June 1993: Troops of the right-wing Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) stormed the World Trade Centre where the Congress for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) was in session. The action was in protest against negotiations for a future democracy in South Africa. The invaders broke through the glass front of the building with an armoured car and then took over the main conference hall, threatening delegates and painting slogans on the walls.

2 July 1839: Slaves aboard a ship called the *Amistad* revolted to secure their freedom while being transported from one Cuban port to another. The majority of the slaves had been kidnapped from present day Sierra Leone and sold to Spanish slavers.

The Freedom Charter says;

“The people shall share in the country's wealth!”

The creation of decent work and sustainable livelihoods is central to the ANC government's agenda. The ANC government will make the creation of decent work opportunities and sustainable livelihoods, the primary focus of our economic policies. Economic policy will include measures to decisively address obstacles that limit the pace of employment creation and poverty eradication, and will intervene in favour of more sustainable and inclusive growth for all South Africans.

Adequate resources will be provided to strengthen the state-led industrial policy programme, which directs public and private investment to support decent work outcomes, including employment creation and broad economic transformation. The programme will target labour-intensive production sectors and encourage activities that have high employment effects. It will include systematic support for co-operatives by way of a dedicated support institution and small business development; supporting investment in productive sectors; and working together with our partners in Southern Africa to invest in our regional economy.

We will ensure that a comprehensive package of measures is introduced to promote beneficiation programmes, to ensure that the natural wealth of the country is shared, and developed locally, and accelerates the creation of decent work opportunities in manufacturing and services.

In order to avoid exploitation of workers and ensure decent work for all workers as well as to protect the employment relationship, introduce laws to regulate contract work, subcontracting and out-sourcing, address the problem of labour broking and prohibit certain abusive practices.

Vigorously implement broad-based economic empowerment and affirmative action policies and adjust them to ensure that they benefit more broad sections of our people, especially the workers, youth, women and people with disabilities. Policies will, in addition, actively promote skills development and equity at the workplace.

We have already launched a new national youth development agency, which will focus on access to funding and employment creation for young people.
“The doors of learning and cultures shall be opened!”

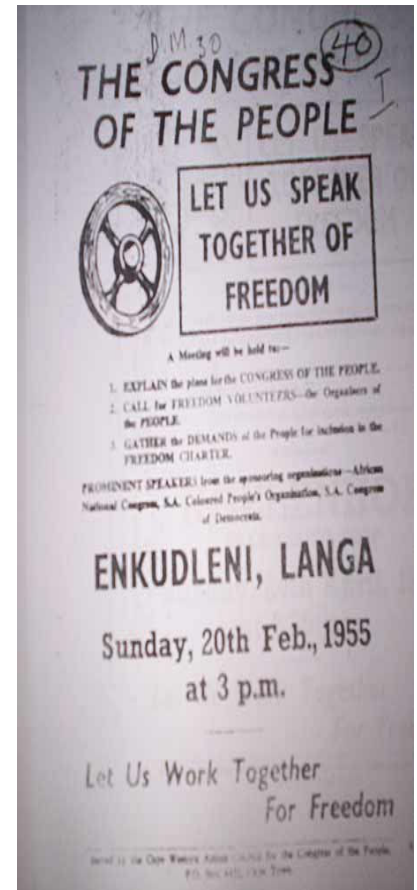
Education is a means of promoting good citizenship as well as preparing our people for the needs of a modern economy and a democratic society. The ANC government will aim to ensure progressive realisation of universal schooling, improving quality education and eliminating disparities.

It will work together with educators, learners, parents, school governing bodies and other stakeholders, to make education the priority of all. As the immediate step it will ensure that at least 60% of schools are no-fee schools; place Further Education and Training colleges at the centre of a popular drive to develop skills development for the economy; and encourage students from working class and poor communities to go to tertiary institutions by reviewing and improving the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

“There shall be houses, security and comfort for all!”

The ANC will continue to protect and strengthen the gains we made over the last fifteen years. Through our programmes for housing, social security, sport and recreation, we aim to continue to build a better life for all. Housing is not just about building houses. It is also about transforming our cities and towns and building cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with closer access to work, social amenities, including sports and recreation facilities. Our social security system, such as the provision of social grants, is aimed at empowering our people to take active part in the social and economic life of our country. In addition, ANC policies will continue to promote the role of inter-faith organisations in promoting cohesive, caring and sustainable communities.

The ANC is committed to creating an environment that ensures that there is adequate food available to all, that we grow our own food and protect the poor communities from the rising prices of food and eradicate hunger.



The ANC government will promote food security as a way to lessen our dependence on food imports. Introduce measures to improve the logistics of food distribution such as transportation, warehousing, procurement and outsourcing in order to reduce food prices in the long term.

The government will intensify the land reform programme to ensure that more land is in the hands of the rural poor and will provide them with technical skills and financial resources to productively use the land to create sustainable livelihoods and decent work in rural areas; review the appropriateness of the existing land redistribution programme; introduce measures aimed at speeding up the pace of land reform and redistribution and promote land ownership by South Africans; and expand agrarian reform programme, which will focus on the systematic promotion of agricultural co-operatives throughout the value chain, including agro-processing in the agricultural areas.

The Freedom Charter commits us to a preventive health scheme run by the state; free medical care and hospitalisation provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children.

The ANC government aim to reduce inequalities in our health system, improve quality of care and public facilities, and boost our human resources and step up the fight against HIV and AIDS and other diseases.

The ANC government will introduce the National Health Insurance System (NHI) system, which will be phased in over the next five years. NHI will be publicly funded and publicly administered and will provide the right of all to access quality health care, which will be free at the point of service. People will have a choice of which service provider to use within a district. In the implementation of the NHI there will be an engagement with the private sector in general, including private doctors working in group practices and hospitals, to encourage them to participate in the NHI system.

“There shall be peace and friendship!”

The ANC believes that economic and political cooperation with other countries can improve the lives of our own people and will continue to work towards a better life for all, a better Africa and a better world, without hunger, disease, conflict and underdevelopment.

We are part of the African countries that have been assigned to elaborate a vision of the renewal of our continent. One of the first conditions for this renewal is that we must never again expose our people to the cruelty and indecency of war and conflict.

We have to achieve this stability so that we can embark on the important programmes of developing all our countries, so that sooner rather than later, we should banish poverty, hunger, disease and underdevelopment from the face of the African soil.

As we celebrate the Freedom Charter, let us do what we used to do in the past - go door to door and talk to our people about the Freedom Charter. Let us report back to our people about the progress that we have made in realising the demands of the Charter and explain the obstacles responsible for some of the delays. Let us do this clearly, patiently and honestly.

***Long Live the Freedom Charter!
The Struggle Continues!***

LATEST STATEMENTS

ANC statement on SA Institute of Race Relations and the opposition, 25 June 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0625.html>

ANC-ANCYL statement on North-West, 23 June 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0623c.html>

ANC KZN on the murder of its members in Greytown, 23 June 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0623b.html>

ANC media statement on "Jesus" remark, 23 June 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0623a.html>

ANC NDAC concludes appeals hearing over expelled members, 22 June 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0623.html>

ANC NEC concludes visit to NW Province, 21 June 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0622.html>

Zuma thank the people of Mpumalanga, 21 June 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0621.html>

BRITISH ANTI APARTHEID MOVEMENT

Fifty years of solidarity



On 26 June 1959, over five hundred people attended a meeting at the Holborn Hall, London in order to launch an economic boycott against South Africa. Speakers included Julius Nyerere, future President of Tanzania and long-time fighter against apartheid, K. Chieme, press secretary of the Nyasaland African Congress, Tennyson Makiwane and Vella Pillay of South Africa and the redoubtable Rev. Michael Scott; Trevor Huddleston was in the Chair.

It was formed as a result of a solemn appeal made on behalf of millions of oppressed people in South Africa by Chief Albert Luthuli. It has this umbilical cord relationship with the struggle. It was directly linked to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa and operated both in its proactive and its reactive role as an instrument of solidarity with the people of South Africa.

The idea on which the Movement was based was very simple, the boycott call was essentially an appeal from the people of South Africa not to collaborate with apartheid. As Julius Nyerere said in 1959; "We are not asking you, the British people, for anything special. We are just asking you to withdraw your support from apartheid by not buying South African goods." Father Huddleston, was far more passionate at that founding meeting in demanding an end to collaboration with an evil ideology that amounted to a blasphemy against God. And there were others who used different bases for trying to mobilise people to support the boycott.

There were very many who opposed the call, on various grounds, including the claim that boycotts never work and that it would hurt most those whom it was intended to help. Overnight the apartheid regime and international business and other interests tried to transform themselves into those who cared most for the victims of apartheid. The Boycott Movement obviously threatened very powerful vested interests and no analysis or history of the Anti-Apartheid Movement is complete without examining those forces that united to try to undermine and destroy it.

Madiba has said that the overthrow of apartheid was a victory for all humanity. He meant partly that no one in the world could be free as long as a system such as apartheid still existed. But it was also his way of saying thank you to the millions of people all over the world who acted in solidarity with South Africans who were struggling for their freedom.

In Britain the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) was set up 50 years ago on 26 June 1959. At first it was called the Boycott Movement and campaigned for a British boycott of South African goods in response to an appeal from ANC President Chief Albert Luthuli. In 1960, after the shootings at Sharpeville and the banning of the ANC and PAC, it changed its name to the Anti-Apartheid Movement and called for international sanctions and the total isolation of apartheid South Africa.

From the beginning the AAM worked to foster an international solidarity movement. It co-operated with the UN Special Committee against Apartheid and with African and non-aligned countries that initiated sanctions resolutions at the UN. It also lobbied Commonwealth countries to impose Commonwealth sanctions against South Africa.

After the shootings at Sharpeville in 1960, the ANC sent Oliver Tambo overseas to set up the ANC external mission and for the next 34 years the AAM worked closely with the ANC.

Britain was apartheid South Africa's biggest trade partner and overseas investor. Thousands of workers emigrated from Britain to South Africa to take skilled jobs which should have gone to South African workers. The AAM argued that the best way people in Britain could support the freedom struggle was by forcing the British government to end this support for apartheid.

LATEST SPEECHES

Address by President Jacob Zuma in response to the debate on The Presidency Budget Vote, 25 June 2009

<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/show.asp?include=president/sp/2009/sp06251427.htm&ID=1953&type=sp>

Address by the President of the Republic of South Africa, Jacob G Zuma, on the occasion of the Budget Vote of The Presidency, 24 June 2009

<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/show.asp?include=president/sp/2009/sp0624152.htm&ID=1948&type=sp>

Speech of the Deputy President of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe, on the occasion of The Presidency Budget Vote, 24 June 2009

<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/show.asp?include=deputy/sp/2009/sp0624158.htm&ID=1949&type=sp>

Welcome statement on the occasion of the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of SADC Heads of State and Government, 20 June 2009

<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/history/zuma/2009/jz0620.html>

For 34 years it campaigned for a boycott of South African products and for British companies to pull out of South Africa. It campaigned to end overseas tours by whites-only sports teams and in 1970 stopped the Springbok cricket team from coming to Britain. By 1990 apartheid sports federations had been banned from international competition in nearly every major world sport.

The AAM also campaigned against arms sales and military collaboration with the apartheid government. In 1977 the UN imposed a mandatory international arms embargo against South Africa. The Botha regime was unable to manufacture sophisticated military equipment like fighter aircraft. Partly because of this, in 1988 it was defeated at Cuito Cuanavale in Angola and forced to pull out of Namibia.

Together with the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF), the AAM made sure political prisoners were not forgotten. It campaigned to stop the hanging of ANC militant Solomon Mahlangu in 1979. Although that effort failed, an international campaign succeeded in stopping the hanging of the Sharpeville Six and the Uppington Seven.

Through the 1980s, hundreds of streets, buildings and public gardens in Britain were renamed in honour Nelson Mandela. To mark his 70th birthday in 1988, the AAM mounted its biggest ever campaign – calling for his release. On 11 June 1988 stars like Stevie Wonder and Whoopie Goldberg performed at a birthday concert at Wembley Football Stadium that was broadcast to a billion people in 67 countries.

After the country's first democratic elections in 1994, the AAM was transformed into Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA), to work for peace, democracy and rights for all the people of southern Africa. Today ACTSA is still working to build links between schools, health organisations and local government in Britain and South Africa. It lobbies the British government to give more money to support health programmes and combat HIV/AIDS.

As we celebrate the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the formation of the AAM, in a message to the ANC, ACTSA pledged that it will not give up until apartheid's legacy of disadvantage and inequality has been overcome.

WHAT THE MEDIA SAYS?



Those opposed to the democratic and consultative culture of the African National Congress (ANC) and its Alliance partners – the SACP, COSATU and SANCO - have sought to stop at nothing in their concerted campaign to drive a wedge between the organisation and its Alliance partners. They have also sought to portray ANC President Jacob Zuma - who is also President of the Republic - as someone who is being “managed”.

The latest salvo fired by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) in a paper published in the SAIRR website titled “why the ANC can drop its alliance partners,” further illustrates a desperate trend in the thinking of those opposed to cohesion of the ANC-SACP-COSATU-SANCO Alliance.

It also comes in the wake of negative and distorted commentary in some sections of the media bent on undermining the President. These prophets of doom describe the President as being “managed” when seeking counsel from one of his Cabinet ministers. Cabinet ministers are appointed to execute the mandate of the ruling party under the stewardship of the President of the country. In line with ANC tradition, there is nothing sinister in the President adopting an inclusive and consultative approach to issues.

After the President's Budget speech in the National Assembly, the opposition tried so hard to confuse the public by saying that ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe was “not the President”, calling on President Zuma to “reign in the ANC's tripartite alliance partners' insatiable appetite for power”.

In terms of his position as ANC Secretary General, Mantashe is required by the ANC Constitution to ensure that the organisation's policies are implemented. This includes ensuring that the ANC 2009 Manifesto is adhered to and that policies of the ruling party find resonance in the articulation and implementation by the Government. This is normal in any democracy.

In calling the ANC to "dump" the COSATU and the SACP as Alliance partners, the SAIRR – in its latest report – needs to be reminded that the Alliance is not merely based on power opportunism but that it is historical, strategic and representative of the aspirations of the majority of South Africans. No amount of intended negative propaganda by the SAIRR and the opposition will succeed in destabilising the Alliance.

In his closing remarks at the 52nd ANC National Conference, President Zuma eloquently described the Alliance as being based on mutual trust and respect, saying it should be defended and protected by all ANC members. Building, nurturing and defending the Alliance is an ANC mandate.

The 52nd ANC Conference was clear in its resolution confirming the Policy Conference assertion that the right of individual Alliance partners to discuss and arrive at own decisions and pursuing own strategic objectives should be respected. Conference - consistent with this principle - also resolved that the ANC would continue to determine - in its own structures and processes - how best to advance its own strategic objectives.

The leadership role of the ANC - in terms of the 52nd Conference resolution - places on it the primary responsibility to unite the Alliance and all democratic forces