



May 2006

# NEC Bulletin

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## A call to unity. A call to action.

Events of the last few weeks and months have tested the unity, cohesion and standing of the ANC. This, according to the NEC, has placed undue strain on the confidence, morale and resolve of leaders and members alike. However, as has been the case throughout the 94 years of its existence, the African National Congress will prevail.

The challenges of the moment call for maximum unity and cohesion among the leaders and members of the organisation in support of the fundamental values, practices and traditions of the ANC. The NEC once again rejects as without foundation perceived notions of a division among the senior leaders of the organisation.

The challenges of the moment require unflinching commitment on the part of every member of the movement to building and strengthening the ANC as a people's movement at the forefront of the struggle for a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

The challenges of the moment dare not distract us from our historic mission and responsibility to unite the people of South Africa in this struggle. It dare not distract us from implementing the mandate given to us in successive elections to build a better life for all.

The NEC recognised that certain events and pronouncements over the last few months may have damaged the image of the movement and may have contributed to uncertainty within the ranks of the movement and across broader society. These include proceedings of the recent trial on charges of rape of the ANC Deputy President, related events and associated commentary.

Prior to the discussion of these issues, and based on considerations including his forthcoming trial in the Pietermaritzburg High Court, the Deputy President requested that he recuse himself from the meeting for the duration of this item.

The NEC proceeded to discuss these events in the context of the challenges identified in the ANC NEC statement of 20 November 2005 and the broader political tasks outlined at the ANC's National General Council (NGC) in July 2005.

The National Executive Committee held a meeting on **26-28 May 2006**. The meeting discussed challenges arising from recent events, Alliance statements and challenges of leadership.

In addressing these matters, the NEC was guided by the need to maintain the unity and cohesion of the African National Congress and its leadership collectives. This matter is of paramount importance, as it lies at the heart of the ANC's ability to provide leadership to the process of fundamental social transformation.

The NEC was guided also by its understanding of the role and responsibilities of leadership within the ANC and the broader democratic movement. This includes its responsibility to provide direction on the critical political issues of the moment, to be exemplary in its conduct and statements, to observe and uphold the organisational discipline of the ANC, and to safeguard the values and principles of the liberation movement.

In exercising this leadership, the NEC agreed on the need to clarify and reiterate key policy positions of the ANC on some of the matters that have arisen in the public arena as a consequence of the coverage of the trial. The NEC further agreed on the need for the ANC to intensify its efforts to build a new nation founded on democratic principles and progressive values.

The ANC therefore committed itself, in particular, to intensify its efforts to:

- strengthen the institutions of the democratic state, including the judiciary, and ensure their continuing transformation to more effectively serve the masses of the people;
- support and uphold the basic human rights of all citizens, contained in our democratic Constitution. This includes the right of both the accused and the complainant in a criminal case to be treated with dignity and respect, the right of all to be treated equally before the law, the right of all citizens to privacy, and the right of all accused to be presumed innocent until and unless found otherwise;

- deepen the struggle for the emancipation of women and the achievement of gender equality in society. This must necessarily include efforts to counter sexist attitudes and practice and eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and abuse;
- build meaningful partnerships across society in the struggle against HIV and AIDS, including working to strengthen government's comprehensive response to the epidemic and its unequivocal messages around prevention, treatment and safer sexual practices; and,
- root out corruption and criminality wherever it occurs, whether in the public or private sectors. This involves deepening efforts to protect the structures of the ANC from the effects of the individual pursuit of material interests. To this end, the NEC will move quickly to finalise discussions on questions of ethics and business, including the proposal for the

introduction of a register of interests for all ANC leaders at national, provincial and regional level.

The NEC is acutely aware that this trial has been distressing and painful for the individuals involved and their families. It has also given rise to events and statements that have, for various reasons, been of deep concern to members of the ANC and of broader society.

This experience calls not for despair. Instead it places a greater responsibility on the membership of the democratic movement, and on society more broadly, to work to reinforce in practice the founding principles and values of our democratic society.

In this context, the NEC reaffirmed its principled support for the ANC Deputy President during these difficult times, including its previous decisions on the form and content that this support should take during the forthcoming trial.

## Addressing challenges of leadership

In preparation for discussions towards the ANC's 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference, the NEC discussed the organisation's approach to the election of leadership and the need to locate this within the context of the challenges facing the organisation.

The NEC reiterated the organisation's approach to the election of national leadership and the selection of candidates for the purposes of national government elections.

The ANC National Conference, which is due to be held in 2007, will elect the ANC's National Executive Committee, including its national officials. The procedure by which the election will take place is outlined in the ANC Constitution, and is well known to the structures and membership of the ANC. The process of nominations will begin in ANC branches a few months before the National Conference.

The NEC agreed that there was no reason to initiate nomination processes or debates about personalities before the moment they would ordinarily be initiated. The ANC will attend to these matters at the appropriate time, according to established procedures, and within the organisational practices of the movement. Discussion around these issues will be launched within the movement around May 2007.

The ANC's candidates for national and provincial elections, including our candidate for South African President, will be selected through an internal list

process in the months preceding the 2009 general election. The nominations process will again be held within ANC branches.

The NEC further agreed that, in the interim, the movement needed to take part in the discourse around the strategic challenges that confront the movement in this period; to reflect on the character of the movement now and into the second century of its existence; the broad expectations regarding its leadership collectives in line with the positions of the movement as encapsulated in its policy document '*Through the Eye of a Needle*'; and issues around the movement's broad approach to the so-called "succession debate". This, the NEC emphasised, cannot at this stage involve debate on or nomination of individuals.

The NEC noted an article containing "reflections of the NEC Political Education Sub-committee". While the article contains some of the issues that need to be considered in this broad debate about challenges of leadership, it does not reflect the collective views of the NEC or National Working Committee (NWC). It is instead a contribution to a substantive debate on these matters. Continuing engagement of ANC members with these issues through structures and platforms of the movement will help inform the formal documents that the NEC will release for structured discussion early next year.

## Strengthen the Alliance through honest, open engagement

**T**he ANC has a responsibility to strengthen the Alliance through honest, open engagement both on the challenges and tasks facing the movement and on recent pronouncements by some Alliance partners.

This was the view of the NEC after considering statements made during the previous week by structures and leaders of its Alliance partners on a range of matters relating to the ANC, its character and the trajectory of the national democratic struggle.

In consideration of these statements, the NEC noted:

- the right and responsibility of our Alliance partners, as independent organisations, to critically analyse, among other things, the state of the democratic movement and the nature of our transition;
- the sustained confidence of the South African people in the ANC as the leading movement for progressive change, as is evident in the overwhelming mandate received by the ANC in the 2004 and 2006 elections;
- the progress being made at all levels of government, and through the mass work of our structures, to implement these mandates. This includes the targets set out in successive ANC manifestos, such as the halving of poverty and unemployment by 2014, and ensuring that all communities have access to clean water by 2010 and all houses will have access to electricity by 2012;
- the deepening of popular participation in the process of governance through ward committees, school governing bodies and other local forums, government

izimbizo programmes, and ward councillor meetings with communities.

Understanding its responsibility to strengthen and unify the Alliance, and while determined not to enter into an unseemly public exchange with its Alliance partners on these matters, the NEC nevertheless considered it necessary to reject some of the key assertions made by the SACP Central Committee and the COSATU Central Executive Committee as being without substance. These statements indicate a misrepresentation of commonly agreed policy positions.

Statements about tendencies towards 'dictatorship' and the centralisation of powers within the ANC and government presidencies, among others made, are not borne out by reality. Unless properly rebutted, these statements may cause confusion and uncertainty among the membership of the Alliance and among the broader public.

The ANC will seek an opportunity to discuss these matters with the SACP and COSATU as part of the continuous and ongoing engagement among Alliance partners. It will do so better to understand the views of these Alliance structures, to clearly communicate the positions of the ANC, and ultimately to strengthen the Alliance as a unified and coherent force capable of leading the process of national democratic transformation.

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## Congratulations to NUM

### Deputy President resumes his duties

**The NEC held a special meeting** on 14 May to consider a letter from ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma in which he indicated his readiness to resume his participation in the leading structures of the ANC after his acquittal on a charge of rape.

This follows a request made by Deputy President Zuma to the organisation on 6 December 2005, which was considered by an extended meeting of the ANC National Working Committee (NWC), that he suspend his participation in the leading structures of the movement for the duration of the rape trial.

The NEC agreed that, as a consequence of the conclusion of the trial, Cde Zuma should resume his duties as ANC Deputy President and his participation in the leading structures of the movement without delay.

The NEC once again welcomed the stance taken by the Deputy President with respect to this matter, and his clear determination to act in the best interests of the ANC and the country.

The NEC extended congratulations to the membership of the National Union of Mine workers on the conclusion of their National Congress. It thanked the outgoing NUM leadership for successfully leading this important organisation of the workers and our people, and congratulates the new NUM leadership on their election. We look forward to interacting with the incoming leadership around the common tasks of our respective organisations.

### Earthquake in Indonesia

The NEC learnt with shock and concern of the major earthquake that hit parts of Indonesia over the weekend. The NEC extends its heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the government and people of Indonesia for the lives lost and homes destroyed.

## Hamba Kahle Stella Sigcau

**T**he NEC paid tribute to Stella Sigcau, an NEC member and Minister of Public Works, who passed away in a Durban hospital on 7 May.

Stella Sigcau will be remembered as a widely respected leader of the democratic movement and a committed Cabinet Minister who served the people of South Africa with dedication in three successive democratic administrations, from 1994 to 2006.

She was elected to the ANC's National Executive Committee at its Bloemfontein National Conference in 1994 and again at the ANC's Stellenbosch National Conference in 2002. As a national leader of the movement she attended to her political and

organisational responsibilities with resolve and distinction.

As Minister of Public Works since 1999, Sigcau played a central role in the national effort to eradicate poverty, develop skills and create work opportunities. She provided political leadership to key development initiatives, like the Expanded Public Works Programme, which remain at the core of the country's efforts to eradicate the legacy of its apartheid past.

The NEC extended its deepest sympathies and condolences to the Sigcau family and to her colleagues, comrades and friends.

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▶ NEXT NEC MEETING: 21-23 JULY 2006