

1. KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE ANC PRESIDENT

I bring to this congress, revolutionary greetings from the National Executive Committee of your movement, the African National Congress. Siyanibingelela egameni lombutho wenu, umbutho wabantu, uKhongolose.

Comrades - Exactly 58 years ago today, the 26th of June, our people from all walks of life converged in Kliptown to constitute the Congress of the people, which produced the overarching vision for our country, the Freedom Charter. This Charter remains at the centre of our economic vision as the ANC, the Alliance and our democratic government. We continue to derive the objectives of our common programme, the National Democratic Revolution, from the Freedom Charter. We will not rest until these objectives are achieved. The Freedom Charter is the basis of the society we seek to build and we will always be committed to it as the African National Congress.

Comrades - This 10th national congress of NEHAWU takes place less than a week after we marked the centenary of the 1913 Land Act which dispossessed the black majority of their land of birth. Despite the repeal of this Act more than 20 years ago, its effects continue to haunt our young democracy and serve to derail socio-economic development. We are making some progress to undo this injustice of the past. However, by our own admission and to keep up with the targets we have set for ourselves, we need to move at a faster pace.

The importance of our historic task to redistribute land cannot be overemphasized because it is inextricably linked to rural development. Rural local economies cannot be created on a sustainable basis without the redistribution of productive land to the black rural communities. The success of this task lies in the acceptance by all South Africans, black and white, that a wrong was committed and that the democratic government has a right, and even a duty, to correct it.

We trust that this congress must consider the progress made thus far and come up with proposals of how we can best accelerate the redistribution of land to the landless so that they can make a living from land. We must do this conscious of the fact that to leave the status quo intact will constitute, in the eyes of our people, the highest betrayal of the Freedom Charter. But we will reverse this injustice through the framework of our democratic Constitution, whose foundation in the main, is the Freedom Charter.

Comrades - We cannot achieve the objectives we have set for ourselves and create the society envisioned in the Freedom Charter without the unity of our movement and our people. It was because of this understanding that the ANC declared this year to be the year of unity in action towards socio-economic freedom. This theme suggests that our unity must not only be in words but also in action. The unity of the Alliance and its individual components is paramount and in the best interest of all South Africans. This is because the unity of the South African people depends on the unity of the ANC as the people's movement and a leader of society. The unity of the working class and the poor depends on the unity of the SACP as their vanguard.

The workers of this country need a united and strong COSATU to defend their rights and advance their daily struggles. The unity of COSATU as a federation is entirely dependent on the actions or non-actions of its individual affiliates. In this regard, NEHAWU and all affiliates are duty bound to do everything in their power to defend the unity of COSATU. Issues, if any, of the Federation must be discussed at proper platforms of the Federation in line with the constitution of COSATU and consistent with our proud traditions of democratic engagement.

Comrades - We have entered the second phase of our long-drawn transition from Colonialism of a Special Type to the National Democratic Society. One of the key defining features of this phase is the National Development Plan which is the blueprint for South Africa's development for the next few years. This overarching plan offers a holistic approach to dealing with the triple challenges of high unemployment, grinding poverty and deepening inequality.

The adoption of the National Development Plan was informed by the need to abandon ad hoc planning and eliminate the overreliance on market forces to resolve social and structural problems.

This plan reaffirms the centrality of a capable developmental state with a strong planning entity.

The implementation of the NDP and the consequent success of the National Democratic Revolution depend on the strategic capacity of the movement and the government it leads to deliver on the tasks of the revolution.

The tasks of this phase of the transition require a new cadre whose orientation is anchored on political discipline and commitment to the service of the people. Thus, we must embark on an intensive ideological, political, academic and moral training of a critical mass of patriotic South Africans who are public servants. Through institutions like the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA), we must deepen the consciousness of our public servants about the tasks of the revolution and the important role they have to play in improving the lives of our people.

The new cadre we need for an effective developmental state is one who is driven by the Batho-Pele principles, not for political expediency but by revolutionary consciousness and moral conviction. We need public servants who are proud to serve the nation and who are conscious of the fact that their actions or non-actions in the line of duty, shape our peoples opinions about the democratic government. NEHAWU has an important role to play in the development of this new cadre. We rely on NEHAWU to transform, educate members about what it really means to be a servant of the people.

Another critical point for this congress to look at is the issue of corruption within the public service.

We cannot allow corruption to be so institutionalised in government such that public servants, be it at the licensing or housing departments, expect to be paid a bribe for performing their duties which they get salaries for. We must never accept this kind of practice to define the ANC government of the ANC Alliance. In the past 19 years, every kind of crime has been reduced except white-collar crime. The security cluster released an update recently, naming 42 individuals who have been convicted and investigations are ongoing in many other cases within government.

Comrades - In a few months we will mark 20 years of freedom. We are proud of what we have achieved thus far as the ANC-Led Alliance. Together we brought about an end to apartheid, achieved peace and stability, made the lives of millions of our people better and established a firm foundation for even faster progress. Our policies have reduced poverty for millions of people. Over two and half million houses have been built for the poor giving shelter to over ten million people.

Our programmes have opened the doors of learning. More than eight million children at primary and secondary schools benefit from school-feeding schemes. We have offered more opportunities for the children of the poor. Student loans are now being converted into bursaries for qualifying final-year students. Students in further education and training colleges who qualify for financial aid are now exempted from paying fees.

We have provided social grants to the poor and vulnerable without discrimination to alleviate poverty. These have grown from 2.5million in 1993 to 16 million to date, which is regarded as impressive and progressive for a developing country.

The South African economy has expanded by 83 per cent over the past 19 years. Some sectors have grown phenomenally, for example telecommunications. We now have more than 60 million cellular phone subscribers across the networks, which augurs well for economic activity and a better life. A person in Muyexe village in Limpopo can now engage in cell phone banking.

In other communications industry achievements, 37 new post offices were opened last year, mostly in rural areas. The post office remains a key service point in our country. South Africans visited SA Post Office branches 81 million times last year for various services. And this past year, 4.3 billion rand was deposited into the Postbank, which has 4.5 million customers, mostly the working class and the poor. Life is indeed improving for many.

It is also fact that incomes have improved for many over the past few years although poverty levels remain unacceptably high. The national income per capita has increased from twenty seven thousand five hundred rand (R27 500) in 1993 to thirty eight thousand five hundred rand (R38 500) in 2012, an increase of 40 per cent. Disposable income per capita of households has increased by 43 per cent since 1994.

Total employment has increased by more than 3.5 million since 1994. Average real wages in mining and industry have increased by over 150 per cent since 1994. Gross fixed capital formation increased from 15 per cent of GDP in 1993 to an average of 20 per cent over the past five years.

One major achievement for which the country is praised by the UNAIDS is in the area of HIV and AIDS. Following the turnaround in 2009, and increased access to anti-retroviral drugs and mother to child transmission drugs, life expectancy has improved dramatically. Lives of people living with HIV have also improved dramatically. UNAIDS announced only yesterday the good news that South Africa has reduced HIV infection in women and children by 63 percent. The ANC government, working with all sectors of society is making progress in the fight against AIDS. We acknowledge the contribution of health care workers and health professionals around the country to this tremendous achievement!

Whatever we do from now until next year, we must work harder and build on the story of the success of this young democracy, a country that was once a pariah state in the world. We boldly state that South Africa is a much better place now than it was before 1994 due to the ANC Alliance.

At the same time, many more communities are still waiting for services. It was impossible to reach every village and every township at the same time. Services must be accelerated and the quality must improve. Members of NEHAWU are key to providing this improvement, as I said earlier, by developing a more caring, dedicated and hard working cadre.

Dear Comrades - This 10th national congress, taking place on the eve of marking 20 years of freedom, should contribute to strengthening NEHAWU and COSATU. It should cement the role of the federation on the shop floor as the voice of workers across the political spectrum. This means COSATU should be more vocal on matters affecting working conditions and should be the primary reference point for workers on shop floor matters and the improvement of working conditions. We are encouraged by the positive role played by the federation at NEDLAC as we work together to build the economy and cushion it from the blows of the recession, especially job losses.

Comrades - As we move towards celebrating 20 years of freedom, we have to tell a story that will make our founding democratic President, Isithwalandwe Nelson Mandela proud. It is a story that says South Africa has changed for the better through the ANC-led Alliance Government. There is still a lot of work to be done still to achieve the type of society we want. That is a society where every household has water, electricity, sanitation, housing, access to quality education, health care and all other basic needs.

We will continue soldiering on until we achieve these goals, which is what Madiba wants us to do, as he lies in hospital in Pretoria, after dedicating his entire adult life to the betterment of the lives of all, especially the poor and the working class. We look forward to celebrating Madiba's 95th birthday on the 18th of July with vigour, as it is a life spent in dedication to humanity. Siyasho sithi akekho ofana naye. As he remains in a critical condition in hospital, we must keep him and the family in our thoughts and prayers every minute.

Comrades - I wish this congress success in its deliberations. May NEHAWU union emerge out of this congress more united and stronger.