



NATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL

POLITICAL REPORT

**BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
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**TO THE 5TH NATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE ANC
BIRCHWOOD, GAUTENG**



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1. INTRODUCTION

It is an honour to present this Political Report to the 5th National General Council of the African National Congress, as mandated by the ANC Constitution, setting out a comprehensive overview of the state of the nation and political situation generally.

This year, our movement celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter.

We celebrate and honour the brave women and men who traversed the length and breadth of our country soliciting the views and proposals of the masses of our people on their aspirations for a free and democratic South Africa. Our forebears duly gathered in Kliptown on 26 June 1955 having concluded that our country would not grow and our people would not succeed until all of us can live in a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa.

South Africans from all walks of life and across the land pledged in the Freedom Charter: ***“to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage until the democratic changes set out...have been won.”***

Fulfilling the aspirations set out in the Freedom Charter is the central objective of the National Democratic Revolution. It is this that defines the vision and mission of the ANC.

The constitution of the ANC sets out our fundamental purpose, aims and objectives, which are to:

- unite all the people of South Africa, Africans in particular, for the complete liberation of the country from all forms of discrimination and national oppression;

- end apartheid in all its forms and transform South Africa as rapidly as possible into a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic country based on the principles of the Freedom Charter... and in pursuit of the National Democratic Revolution;
- defend the democratic gains of the people and to advance towards a society in which the government is freely chosen by the people according to the principles of universal suffrage on a common voters' roll;
- fight for social justice and to eliminate the vast inequalities created by apartheid and the system of national oppression;
- build a South African nation with a common patriotism and loyalty in which the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the people is recognised;
- promote economic development for the benefit of all;
- support and advance the cause of women's emancipation;
- support and advance the cause of national liberation, development, world peace, disarmament and environmentally sustainable development; and
- support and promote the struggle for the rights of children and people with disabilities.

The ANC measures the success and progress of the National Democratic Revolution by the extent to which we have fulfilled these objectives and lived up to the aspirations set out in the Freedom Charter.

The NEC declared on 8th January that 2025 is ***“The Year of Renewal to make the ANC a more effective instrument of the people to achieve the vision of the Freedom Charter: The people shall govern! The people shall share in the country’s wealth!”***

This theme resonates with the objectives of the NGC, which are encapsulated in the Base Document titled: “ANC Renewal to Advance the Freedom Charter: Forward to a National Democratic Society based on Social Justice, Shared Prosperity and Human Solidarity”.

During this NGC, delegates are called upon to firstly reflect on 30 years of democracy, secondly to assess the balance of forces and the current conjuncture, thirdly to characterise the nature of the crises we face and the implications for the NDR, and fourthly to determine what should be done to address the challenges that we face as a nation and an organisation.

We are also required to use the opportunity of the NGC to evaluate the extent to which the ANC has succeeded in implementing the decisions of the 55th National Conference and in the course of our deliberations we should examine how our policies and programmes must be recalibrated and adjusted to better serve the people.

More importantly, the theme asks delegates to interrogate how the ANC must be united, strengthened and renewed to respond to the challenges and opportunities of our time.

We meet at a time when the world is changing in unprecedented ways, presenting both challenges and opportunities for our country. Geopolitical uncertainties, an onslaught against multilateralism, climate change, turbulence in the global economy, conflict and rapid technological change all put pressure on our country as it grapples with unemployment, poverty and crime. Yet, there are also opportunities for our country if we address these challenges and harness the technological changes and industrialise our economy.

In the face of great challenges, it falls upon the African National Congress to provide leadership to our country. We must, as we have at other times in the past where our nation faced difficulty or adversity, take up the struggle.

TRIBUTE TO STALWARTS WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY SINCE 55TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Since we gathered at 55th National Conference, our movement had to bid farewell to several stalwarts, leaders and cadres of our movement.

Senior members of our movement who passed away during this time include former ANC Deputy President David Mabuza, Gertrude Shope, Frene Ginwala, Tito Mboweni, Membathisi Mdladlana, Pravin Gordhan, Violet Siwela, Sibusiso Bhengu, Chris Matlhako, Azizi Pahad, Essop Pahad, Lungi Gcabashe, Tina Joemat-Pettersson, and Nathi Mthethwa.

Many other comrades who made an outstanding contribution to our struggle and to the cause of our people also passed away.

We pay tribute to these gallant freedom fighters. To honour their lives and contribution, we must pick up the spear where it has fallen to continue the struggle to which they dedicated their lives.

2. RENEWAL AND REBUILDING OF THE ANC

The Declaration of the 55th National Conference builds on the imperative to unite and renew the African National Congress, when it said that the *“Conference rose with determination to begin to implement the immediate programme of renewal.”*

The 2024 elections results confirm that we face an existential crisis: this is a moment wherein the ANC should either renew or perish. We must do much more work, with greater urgency and determination.

For the ANC to be successful in transforming South Africa it must become a renewed, responsive, modernised, well-governed, well-resourced, caring and effective formation. For us to remain an effective and trusted agent of change, we have to renew and rebuild ourselves. Inherent in this is the acknowledgement that the ANC can become a better version of itself.

Our movement holds this belief not just because we have committed mistakes and missteps, but also because of the innate desire to serve the people of our country better. The fundamental mission requires the ANC to be united, coherent and disciplined in order to advance the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) towards the achievement of a National Democratic Society.

The NGC Base Document summarises the attributes of the National Democratic Society as being about achieving:

- A united, capable and ethical developmental state based on the will of the people, regardless of race, sex, belief, language, ethnicity or geography – incorporating representative, participatory and deliberative elements so that “the people shall govern”.
- An improving quality of life for all through access to affordable, quality basic services; equal rights and human dignity; and broad opportunities for every citizen.
- An inclusive, transformed and thriving economy that offers decent livelihoods to all, including restoring the birthright of all South Africans to access land, the nation’s wealth, finance and other resources – within a growing, integrated African continental economy.
- A nation with a common identity as an African country, underpinned by non-racialism, non-sexism, unity in diversity and a spirit of global human solidarity.

Given the evolving terrain of struggle, one

of the questions we are asked to consider is whether the foundational assumptions of the NDR still hold. The historical theory of change that has guided our movement now faces new and complex realities.

We note in the NGC Base Document that South African society has shifted in profound ways. The motive forces are increasingly fragmented, stratified and ideologically disoriented. The lived experiences of different social strata have diverged.

Understanding the implications of these changes is fundamental to repositioning the ANC and the broader Alliance within the ongoing struggle for fundamental transformation: “The balance of forces is always in motion, shifting both locally and globally. Equally, the strategic and ideological cohesion of the Alliance is now in question. The path forward demands ideological clarity, political discipline, foresight, firmness of principle and tactical agility within the context of a renewed strategic posture capable of guiding the next phase of the NDR.”¹

Unity, Cohesion And Discipline

As we reflect on the way forward, we know that only a united and strong ANC can execute the national democratic revolution. It is therefore imperative that the ANC should embark on a journey of thorough going renewal. The ANC seeks to unite all the people of South Africa and has since inception, sought to unite our people against racial oppression. This is a principled unity and based on adherence to the values and principles of our movement.

As comrade OR Tambo emphasised in 1980, for mass struggle to be decisive, it must be conscious, organised and united. He went on to say that one cannot unite with those who operated outside the conscious and organised framework, as one needs to be united in action against the common enemy (the Apartheid regime).

This is equally true of those who operate outside the principled and value-based system of

¹ ANC 5th National General Council Base Document

the ANC. Our organisation has been negatively affected by those who preached unity whilst abusing organisational positions or authority for nefarious purposes. Their misdeeds and wrongs allowed negative perceptions about the ANC to gain traction and contributed to the people losing faith in us.

The 55th National Conference mandated the organisation to implement measures to strengthen organisational accountability to address leadership weaknesses across all levels of our organisation. This was done in recognition of the fact that organisational renewal requires disciplined, accountable and politically coherent leadership from the NEC to all BECs. These measures to strengthen accountability and address leadership weaknesses were extended to cover all ANC public representatives.

Clear accountability mechanisms or frameworks were developed that ties leadership to expectations, measurable performance and consistent reporting. Holding leaders accountable improves performance, tends to reconnect leaders and deployees with the constituencies they are meant to serve and leads to greater organisational coherence.

These mechanisms include the *ANC Annual Report*, through which the Secretary General gives an account of the work of ANC structures.

The Manifesto Framework, which focuses on monitoring the implementation of resolutions and commitments. A Results framework was developed and forms the basis of the monitoring of the 2024 Manifesto and other ANC policies, such the Local Government Action Plan and the 10 Point Economic Action Plan.

The Accountability Framework was adopted by the organisation in 2023, and the first ANC Leadership baseline survey was conducted and the outcomes presented to the NEC in October 2024. The first review focused on organisational leadership, providing a baseline from which to measure performance of the movement's leaders.

The second component of the ANC Accountability framework is aimed at public representatives. A Review of all ANC Councillors is being undertaken, and the outcomes will form part of the ongoing the monitoring and evaluation of local government functionality by the ANC.

The NEC continued to give effect to organisational prescripts relating to organisational discipline during this period.

This led to some of our members who had been criminally charged having to step aside pending criminal proceedings against them. Other members were required to present themselves to the Integrity Commission, whilst other members decided to voluntarily appear before the Integrity Commission to answer for matters pertaining to their integrity.

As the NEC noted in the January 8th Statement 2025:

“With regard to fostering a culture of ethics and integrity, we have strengthened the terms of reference of the Integrity Commission. Further, we have introduced a compulsory course on ethics and integrity in the political education curriculum, starting with the induction of all newly-elected public representatives.

“Enhancing the quality of membership and leadership is key for the renewal of the ANC. The membership system of the ANC is also being overhauled to ensure that the movement attracts into its ranks the kind of people who are willing to serve the people of South Africa. The criteria for membership and screening process to rid the ANC of criminals is an important part of the renewal process. This includes tightening and enforcing the leadership election processes.

“A renewed ANC must enforce discipline in the ranks of our membership. As renewal gains momentum, those whose conduct conflicts with our values and principles – the criminals, the corrupt, the careerists, extortionists and factionalists, and those who actively work against the organisation – will find themselves outside the ANC”.

“The renewal of the ANC must be reflected in our every-day behaviour, on how we conduct ourselves and what we post on social media. Let us be known for excellence, ethics, humility, hard work and competence.”²

At the same time, the image and standing of our movement must also be protected and principled adherence to integrity and disciplinary processes is critical to protecting the organisation.

Delegates to the NGC must discuss how to strengthen organisational discipline, practices and procedures to more effectively and swiftly respond to reputational damage done to the ANC by untested allegations against members.

STRENGTHENING ANC STRUCTURES

All ANC structures must be grounded in the communities where they are located. This requires strong links and engagements with civil society, religious and cultural organisations as well as other stakeholders throughout society.

ANC branches are the basis of organisational life and determines the success of our ability to provide a better life for communities. If the basic unit is dysfunctional, then the ANC is dysfunctional in that particular community. This then cascades throughout the region and, tragically, can lead situations where our branches and structures only truly function for electoral purposes.

The 55th Conference took comprehensive resolutions outlining how to strengthen ANC branches to become more grounded amongst the people, respond to community concerns and better serve the people.

The ANC Constitution therefore defines a branch in good standing as not only having 100 members but one who is fully compliant with its obligations as per the Constitution on the responsibilities of the branch.³

The concept of an “activist ANC branch” became more prevalent in the ANC from 1997 onwards and we have sought to expand upon this in the ANC’s compulsory Foundation Course.

It is expected that all ANC branches must have a branch programme of action, which is based on a comprehensive community profile and that the BEC and branch subcommittees are capacitated to respond to the needs of the community.

Branches are expected to do sectoral and community outreach work and to report regularly on their work in order to strengthen accountability and also, enable upper structures to intervene timeously should challenges occur.

Recruitment, induction and cadre development are fundamental components of components of renewing and rebuilding our movement. The ANC must not only draw into its ranks the best and most advanced amongst society, but ANC structures must actively strengthen political education to build the movement.

The 55th National Conference⁴ said that the ANC must attract “*skilled people with expertise that will assist our transformation agenda. The ANC must invest more resources in cadre development and bring back to the fold its intelligentsia through mobilising in various sectors. This may mean allowing for the recruitment of sectoral expertise that will assist in specific areas e.g., local government, health, education, and others.*”

Every ANC member, of course, bears personal responsibility to develop their own understanding of the policies and programmes of the movement. However, the ANC equally has the responsibility to improve the political consciousness, knowledge and skills of cadres and to ensure that members undergo basic and advanced courses that will equip them with relevant skills and capabilities to lead society.

² January 8th Statement 2025, page 11

³ ANC Constitution 2022, Rule 23

⁴ 55th National Conference Report, page 21, *Organisational Renewal*

The 55th National Conference said that the movement must develop political education to sharpen the ideological, theoretical, policy and organisational skills of members. The OR Tambo School of Leadership has been actively enhancing and strengthening political education throughout the movement since 2022.

Political Education has also been enhanced by collaboration with the Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Leadership School (MJNLS). The MJNLS was launched in 2022 as the Joint Political School of the six liberation movements in Southern Africa – ANC (South Africa), CCM (Tanzania), FRELIMO (Mozambique), MPLA (Angola), SWAPO (Namibia) and ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe). The school is based in Tanzania and presented its report to the Summit of the National Liberation Movements in July.

Going forward, the MJNLS will focus on ideological training, leadership development programmes and governance training programmes in partnership with national and international party schools.

The 55th National Conference highlighted the importance of induction for all leadership structures and the OR Tambo Leadership School responded to this directive by introducing a compulsory programme for all elected structures and public representatives within three months of their deployment. Part of the compulsory induction is a foundation course that aims to familiarise elected leaders and public representatives with the history, vision and values of the movement.

The movement must consider whether periodic, compulsory political education for elected leaders and public representatives will enhance its capacity to achieve organisational priorities.

STRENGTHENING THE ALLIANCE

The revolutionary and strategic Alliance grew out of struggle, out of a shared commitment to the liberation of the oppressed masses of our people.

Comrade OR Tambo's often quoted words still resonate with the overwhelming of our membership that:

“Ours is not merely a paper Alliance, created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents and representing only an agreement of leaders. Our Alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle”.

President Tambo said these words at the 60th Anniversary of the SACP in July 1981.

They embody the shared blood, shared principles, shared sacrifices and shared ideals that gave rise to this Alliance.

The Alliance-relationship has been less than optimal for too long and this state of affairs is recognised by all the Allies.

The 55th National Conference therefore directed the NEC to ensure that discussion on the reconfiguration of the Alliance is concluded, paying adequate attention to the theoretical underpinnings and organisational form of the Alliance.⁵

We are still working on giving full effect to this directive, in full recognition of the fact that this matter has been outstanding since 2018. The ANC is in full agreement that the Alliance must be reconfigured to respond to a rapidly changing world and accepts the need for reconfiguration of the Alliance as part of renewing our broader movement.

The unity of the Alliance remains critical for the successful pursuit of the NDR, especially in these times when progressive ideas and values are under constant attack.

This is the time to strengthen the Alliance and for our movement to lead the people in defence of our sovereignty and independence.

This year, we joined our Alliance partners in celebrating the 40th anniversary of the formation of COSATU. Throughout its existence, COSATU has carried forward the tradition of militant trade

⁵ 55th National Conference Report, page 18, **On Strategy and Tactics**

unionism. This tradition started with the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) in the 1920s through to the African Mine Workers' Union of the 1940s, the formation of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in 1955, the emergence of militant trade unions in the 1970s, leading up to the formation of COSATU in 1985. In this spirit, we pledge as the ANC to stand side-by-side with COSATU to protect and advance the interests of the workers of South Africa.

The decision by the SACP to contest elections separately threatens the unity and cohesion of the Alliance.

Recent by-elections have shown the unintended consequences of causing divisions amongst the motive forces, and fragmenting of Alliance organisations. Dual membership, as we have known it, is likely to become untenable under the harsh reality of electoral politics.

The further retreat of leftwing thought from the battle of ideas within the liberation movement is a profound mistake. Whilst the ANC accepts the Party to be saying it is not walking away from the Alliance, the inevitable outcome of its decision will be absence from crucial debates and discussions within the movement.

This NGC must discuss the full implications of the Party's decision to contest elections separately for our movement and the Alliance. The SGO's Midterm Report will give further details on the NEC proposals in this regard.

3. STATE OF THE NATION AND PROGRESS OF THE NDR

SOUTH AFRICA AT THE TIME OF THE 55TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 55th National Conference was held at a critical moment for our country. As a people, we were recovering from the devastation of the COVID pandemic, in which more than 100,000 lives were lost. The COVID State of Disaster had been lifted just a few months earlier, in

April 2022, having been in place for 750 days. The economy was also still recovering from the effects of the pandemic, as well as the civil unrest of July 2021 and catastrophic flooding in parts of the country in April 2022. The unemployment rate stood at 32.7% and inflation at the time was 7.2%.

At the time, the country was in the midst of the most protracted and severe period of load shedding in our history, with 205 days of load shedding recorded in 2022 and another 330 days of load shedding to follow in 2023.

The country was still emerging from the era of state capture and government was putting in place measures to prevent its reoccurrence. In October 2022, the President had submitted to Parliament government's implementation plan following the findings and recommendations of the State Capture Commission.

It was in this context that the 55th National Conference emphasised that the central task of the movement was the transformation and growth of the economy and the creation of jobs.

In its Declaration, the Conference said: *"The newly-elected NEC must act with demonstrable urgency in addressing the shortcomings, setbacks and reversals that threaten to undermine and erode the democratic gains. These include chronic poor economic performance and the resultant high rate of unemployment, poverty and inequalities, rising lawlessness, criminality and violence."*⁶

This Political Report reflects on the progress that the movement has made in the last three years in giving effect to that directive.

QUALITY OF LIFE OF SOUTH AFRICANS

The essential measure of the state of the nation is the quality of life of its citizens.

The legacy of colonial dispossession and apartheid remains a defining feature of South

⁶ 55th National Conference Declaration

African society, reflecting persistent inequality in wealth and income and land access and ownership. The shadow of colonialism and apartheid continues to cast a dark shadow on the living conditions and access to opportunities for many of our people.

The effects of this legacy have been exacerbated by years of weak economic growth, the erosion of public institutions through state capture and corruption, policy missteps, the electricity crisis and the COVID pandemic.

Poverty

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, progress has been made in reducing poverty, but challenges remain as it remains the greatest challenge facing our country. According to Statistics SA, in 2015 more than half of all South Africans were living below the upper-bound poverty line, and a quarter were living below the food poverty line.

These levels of poverty are caused in the main by stubbornly high levels of unemployment, which is most severe among young people. Other factors that contribute to poverty include spatial inequality, lack of access to quality public services, and a lack of social and economic infrastructure in townships and rural areas.

In 2024, nearly a quarter of households considered social grants as their main source of income. Over the past 20 years, the percentage of South Africans that benefited from social grants has increased steadily from around 13% to 40%.

While this is a sign of the extent of the need in society, it is also an indication of the extensive social support measures that the ANC has put in place to assist poor South Africans. The provision of social grants has shown to have developmental benefits: improving child nutrition and educational performance, increasing household income and supporting better health outcomes for both children and older adults. Evidence shows that the Social Relief of Dis-

tress Grant introduced in 2020 in the wake of COVID-19 has lifted millions of people above the food poverty line, marking a significant step towards the goal of reducing poverty. Studies suggest that had we not introduced the SRD Grant, poverty would have worsened.

Around 61% of the national budget after debt service costs goes towards the social wage. In addition to social grants, the social wage includes education, healthcare, housing, other social support measures and free basic services such as water and electricity.

Cost of living

The 55th National Conference resolved to address the high cost of living which was impacting many citizens.⁷

Increases in the cost of living in recent years have affected all South African households, with the poor and working class being most vulnerable. The costs of basic items like fuel and food have been driven up by conflict in various parts of the world, most notably in Ukraine, by the effects of climate change on agricultural production, and by increases in electricity and water prices.

Measures that have been taken to address the cost of living include increases in funds to municipalities to provide free basic services to needy households, an increase in the value of social grants, and an expansion of the list of food items zero-rated for VAT.

In the three years since the 55th National Conference in December 2022, the rate of inflation has fallen from 7.2% to its current level of 3.6%. This provides some relief to households as prices are rising more slowly. Lower inflation is also leading to a reduction in borrowing costs. This means ordinary South Africans pay less interest on their debt, their home loans and their car finance. Lower interest rates also encourage companies to invest more and reducing financial pressures on South African households. This will boost demand in the economy and help to stimulate economic growth.

⁷ 55th National Conference Report, page 17, **On Strategy and Tactics**

Education

We have often said that education must be at the centre of our fight against poverty. The 55th National Conference focused on several areas of education, but more importantly on increasing investment in early childhood development, improving infrastructure, teacher training and support, curriculum reform and access to higher education.

We welcome the progress made over the last two decades. The percentage of South Africans aged 20 years and older with at least a matric qualification increased from 30% in 2002 to 52% in 2024.

There has been a steady improvement in our matric results. More than 600,000 learners passed their matric exams last year. At 87%, this was the highest recorded pass rate in our country's democratic history.

One of the areas we had not paid sufficient attention to since the dawn of democracy is quality and impactful early childhood development. Our focus now is on expanding access to quality early childhood development and early-grade literacy and numeracy. The foundational years are central to a child's progress throughout their educational journey and even later in life.

We are undertaking the work needed to implement the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Act to ensure that all children have access to quality education and well-run schools. The BELA Act makes Grade R compulsory, which, as it is steadily implemented across the country, will have a lasting impact on the readiness of young children for learning.⁸

We continue efforts to expand and strengthen vocational training, to match the skills we develop with the needs of our economy.

Through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), we are expanding access for students from poor and working-class fami-

lies, and with the support of the National Skills Fund, we are expanding assistance to the 'missing middle'. This year, NSFAS is supporting over 800,000 university and TVET college students. This provides opportunities to young people today that will, in time, transform our economy and society.

Despite this progress, we are still not producing the appropriate skills at the necessary scale to drive economic growth and prepare young people for the world of work.

We have embarked on innovative programmes like the Jobs Boost Fund, which links training for young people directly to sustainable job opportunities. A number of young people have been placed in high quality jobs during the pilot phase, and many more opportunities will be created once the programme expands.

However, if we are to realise our goal of a skills revolution, we need to aim much higher and we need to act much smarter. We need to use our substantial skills development funds and capabilities more effectively. We need less wastage and more impact.

The skills system needs to shift towards producing skills linked to demand in the economy. We need to consider a radical overhaul of the SETA system to scale up outcomes-based funding and ensure that TVET colleges that focus on technical training strengthen their partnerships with the private sector. Funding should be directed towards courses that lead to employability.⁹

A dual academic and on-the-job training system, often referred to as dual education or dual vocational training should be introduced. This approach integrates theoretical learning in an academic setting with practical, hands-on experience in a work environment. We should consider this approach to enable our young people to have skills that are linked to the demand in the economy.

⁸ 55th National Conference Report, page 91, **Resolution on Basic Education**

⁹ 55th National Conference Report, page 79, **Resolution on Skills for the Economy**

Health

The 55th National Conference made several key decisions regarding health care, focusing on improving access, quality and efficiency within South Africa's health care system. The resolutions included establishment of the National Healthcare Insurance (NHI), improving public health facilities, addressing workforce challenges, enhancing mental healthcare services and combating infectious diseases.¹⁰

In 2024, we achieved a milestone on the path towards affordable and accessible quality health care for all South Africans with the passage of the National Health Insurance Act. Once implemented, the NHI will ensure that all people have equal access to health care regardless of their ability to pay.

While a number of organisations and interest groups have launched legal challenges to the NHI Act, the work needed to strengthen our public health system continues. If we are to ensure access for all people to quality health care, we need to address the poor state of some of our hospitals and clinics. The ANC-led government is investing in the construction, revitalisation and maintenance of facilities across the country. This is vital to reduce overcrowding and improving the quality of care.

To address the severe challenges in the health system and in preparation for the implementation of the NHI, government is, as announced in this year's budget, directing resources towards the hiring of more doctors, nurses and health professionals, the permanent employment of community health workers, and the purchase of new equipment and supplies.

The challenges in our public health system call for a response that brings together all stakeholders in both the public and private spheres. There needs to be a concerted and coordinated effort to mobilise all the resources the country must improve the quality of care that our people receive. Among other things, this requires that we address the conflictual nature of engagement over the NHI Act amongst the

number of stakeholders.

South Africa continues to make significant progress in the fights against HIV, Aids and Tuberculosis. By the time we commemorated World Aids Day last week, 96% of people with HIV knew their status, 80% of those people were on treatment, and 97% of those on treatment had undetectable viral loads.

In pursuit of the World Health Organisation goal of 95-95-95, South Africa has launched the "Close the Gap" Treatment Acceleration Campaign to get 1.1 million people on treatment. We are determined to meet these targets and to end AIDS as a public health threat.

Progress continues to be made in improving public health facilities by a commitment to invest in infrastructure development and maintenance of our hospitals and clinics to enable us to deliver better health services.

Basic services

The delegates at the 55th National Conference adopted significant resolutions regarding basic services to enhance the quality of life for South Africans. The key decisions included: improving access to water and sanitation, expanding electricity access, initiating affordable housing solutions for low income families, improve mobility and accessibility of transport within urban and rural areas, and involving communities in planning and implementing basic service delivery projects.

One of the great achievements of successive ANC governments is the massive extension of access to basic services such as electricity, water, sanitation and refuse removal.

Since the advent of democracy, the percentage of households with access to electricity for lighting increased from 58% to 95%, according to the 2022 Census. In 2022, over 82% of households in the country had access to piped water inside their house or yard, up from 61% in 1996.

¹⁰ 55th National Conference Report, page 94, **Resolution on Health**

Households that resided in formal dwellings increased sharply in just over a decade from 65% in 2011 to 88.5% in 2022. This increase is particularly impressive given that the total number of households in the country grew by 3.4 million over that period.

However, many communities have been experiencing problems with the reliability and quality of these services. According to the General Household Survey 2024, the percentage of households that experienced water interruptions lasting more than two days at a time, or 15 days in total, over the past year increased from 24% in 2012 to 34% in 2024.

The Blue Drop report produced by the Department of Water and Sanitation in 2023 found a worrying decline in the quality of municipal water and an overall increase in water supply systems in a critical state of performance.

Much of the decline in basic service delivery is due to weaknesses in local government, including governance lapses, poor financial management, inadequate infrastructure maintenance and a lack of skills and expertise. Effective local government is also undermined by corruption and tender rigging in municipalities. Work underway to strengthen municipalities is essential to the restoration – and expansion – of service delivery.

SOCIAL COHESION AND NATIONAL UNITY

Central to the historic mission of the ANC is to solve the national question by uniting the people of South Africa and building a sovereign South African nation “with a common patriotism and loyalty in which the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the people of South Africa is recognised”.¹¹

The ANC has successfully embedded these principles within the fabric of our democratic constitutional order and across society. The sense of a shared nationhood is well established among South Africans of all races and

from all parts of society. The most prominent manifestation of this patriotism is in the celebration of the achievements of our sports teams, artists and other individuals who achieve international recognition.

But this sense of a united nation has also taken more substantial forms: when South Africans came together in response to the COVID pandemic or when they resisted attempts to foment a popular insurrection in July 2021. It takes the form of daily interactions and cooperation among South Africans in many different settings.

Despite the widespread embrace by South Africans of our shared constitutional values, some in our society still adhere to notions of racial superiority and seek to maintain racial privilege.

The vehement opposition by some groups to our policies of transformation and redress conveniently align with wider notions of white victimhood. These have been fed by false claims of the persecution of white Afrikaners, which have been amplified on the world stage and even embedded in official US policy.

The propagation of these false claims has real implications for the country’s sovereignty, international relations and national security. It affects our economy and threatens jobs.

It is essential that we counter this narrative and that we defeat this agenda. This we must do not through the suppression of views, but rather through direct and frank engagement with those who hold those views. Through this engagement we must mobilise broad social support, both locally and internationally, for the South African vision of non-racialism, reconciliation and transformation.

National Dialogue

As a country, we have a long tradition of coming together at moments of crisis and difficulty to find common solutions. Time and again,

¹¹ ANC Constitution 2022, Rule 2.7

we have relied on dialogue and conciliation to bridge our differences, to confront our problems and to agree on the actions we need to take together.

It is in this tradition that an inclusive National Dialogue has been convened in response to calls from individuals and formations from across society, including from within the ANC and the broader democratic movement.

In convening the National Dialogue, we recognise that we have made great strides as a nation over the last three decades, expanding freedom, deepening democracy and building a better life for millions of our people.

Yet we face persistent challenges. Poverty, unemployment and inequality are deep wounds that prevent us from reaching our full potential as a nation and as a country.

The National Dialogue provides an opportunity for all South Africans to address these challenges, define a shared vision and forge a path into the future. This initiative has received wide support as a significant national process to develop a social compact to meet the aspirations of the National Development Plan.

The National Dialogue must produce real results that have a tangible impact on people's lives. It must be an instrument of development, transformation, progress, national cohesion and nation building.

The National Dialogue began with the first National Convention, which was held on 15-16 August 2025. The convention was attended by over 1,000 delegates from more than 400 organisations, who endorsed the need for a National Dialogue and set out a roadmap and broad themes for public dialogues that are to take place across the country.

An Eminent Persons Group of prominent South Africans has been established to act as champions of the National Dialogue and the guarantors of its integrity and inclusiveness. In the coming year, thousands of public dialogues

will take place in wards across the country and organised by citizens in various sectors. The outcomes of these public dialogues will be collated and presented to the second National Convention for discussion and finalisation.

The National Dialogue should not displace the democratic processes mandated by our Constitution, nor the electoral mandates that parties carry into Parliament and the Executive. However, the National Dialogue is expected to produce a Social Compact that is widely inclusive, and which has broad support in society, and which will guide the country forward along a common path.

The ANC has welcomed the National Dialogue as an opportunity to promote active citizenship and to rebuild community structures and initiatives. All structures of the ANC and democratic movement should encourage community participation in the public dialogues that will take place across the country.

GOVERNANCE, ELECTIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

2024 Elections

South Africa held its seventh election for national and provincial government on 29 May 2024. The election reaffirmed that democracy in South Africa is entrenched, robust and enduring. Through the election, South Africans reinforced the call of the Freedom Charter that the people shall govern and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people.

The election was held in conditions of peace and stability. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) declared the elections to be free and fair, a view that was supported by local and international observers, and by other stakeholders in society. The ANC has always been foremost among those campaigning for free, fair and peaceful elections, and we applaud our leaders, candidates and volunteers for leading by example.

This was the most contested national and provincial election in the 30 years of our democracy, with a proliferation of parties and, for the first time, independent candidates. The IEC needs to be commended for successfully undertaking a massive feat of organisation, with over 23,000 voting stations and more than 200,000 staff.

While the 2024 election confirmed the strength of our democracy, it was a severe strategic setback for the ANC, as we received only 40% of the national vote. This was the first time since the advent of democracy that the ANC's share of the vote was less than 50%.

While the ANC remains the most popular party in the country, with almost twice as many votes as the next party, we suffered our greatest drop in support since 1994. We lost our majority at a national level and in the country's two most populous provinces, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

This setback follows our poor performance in the local government elections in 2021 and a steady decline in our share of the vote in each election since 2004.

Among other things, the drop in our support can be directly linked to the emergence of the MK Party, which took a significant portion of the ANC's vote in KwaZulu-Natal.

The poor performance of the ANC also reflected dissatisfaction with the state of the economy and continuing unemployment. Added to this was the impact of the service delivery challenges, which contributed significantly to our poor performance in the 2021 local government elections, and the anger and mistrust that has resulted from public perceptions of widespread corruption and abuse of state resources. The record low voter turnout of 58% affected the ANC's share of the vote more than other parties.

Significantly, none of the other main parties achieved a substantial improvement in their share of the vote.

In reflecting on the outcomes of the election, the National Executive Committee (NEC) said:

"While the ANC finds itself in uncharted territory, this is by no means the first time it has encountered a great setback. Like we have done before, we need to understand where our challenges are, address them and rebuild."

"We need to maintain unity and discipline. At moments of great difficulty, there is a potential for discord and disruption. Yet, even as we debate the way forward, we must remain committed to the unity of our movement and the South African people."

Government of National Unity

The NEC agreed that the election results placed a responsibility on the ANC to ensure unity, stability, peace and progress in the country. After considering the various available options, the NEC decided to invite all political parties in the National Assembly to form a Government of National Unity (GNU) as the best approach to move the country forward.

The NEC agreed on the need for the broadest unity of the people of South Africa, and that voters expected their leaders to work together to ensure effective governance and to lead economic growth and social development.

Following several engagements with parties that had won seats in the National Assembly, a Government of National Unity was established by 10 parties: ANC, DA, IFP, PA, FF Plus, UDM, Rise Mzansi, Al Jama-Ah, PAC and GOOD Party.

The parties agreed on a Statement of Intent, in which they made a firm commitment to respect the Constitution and the rule of law and to promote accountability, transparency, integrity and good governance. They agreed on a basic minimum programme of priorities as the foundation of the work of the Government of National Unity.

This basic programme formed the basis for the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP), which outlines the programme of the administration for the five years of its term. The MTDP identifies three strategic priorities: firstly, to drive inclusive growth and job creation; secondly, to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living; and, thirdly, to build a capable, ethical and developmental state. The MTDP thus provides a basis for far-reaching social and economic transformation.

In its assessment of the first year of the GNU, the NEC agreed that we have been able to safeguard the core progressive policy agenda of the National Democratic Revolution. Through the GNU, the ANC has continued to execute its agenda for nation-building and fundamental social and economic transformation, albeit under difficult conditions.

Through the GNU, the ANC has worked to defend the gains of the 1994 democratic breakthrough. We have stood firm against resistance campaigns mounted by right-wing forces, both domestic and global. We have not retreated from the progressive domestic and foreign policy positions of our movement.

While there have been tensions within the GNU, most notably around the 2025 Budget and transformative legislation, like the BELA Act, NHI Act and Expropriation Act, the parties remain committed to work together in the interests of the country. To ensure effective coordination and structured management of disputes, a GNU Clearing House has been established under the chairship of the Deputy President and a GNU Leaders' Forum chaired by the President.

It is not inevitable that the GNU will advance a progressive agenda. To ensure the programmes of the GNU always advance social and economic transformation we will have to work harder and smarter.

Capable, ethical developmental state

The 55th National Conference said that “building an ethical and capable state, which enjoys popular support, is essential for economic transformation”.¹²

A fundamental feature of such a state is a public service that is professional and competent. It needs people with skills, experience, foresight and integrity, who must act in the best interests of the people.

To this end, the national framework for the professionalisation of the public service was adopted by Cabinet in 2022 to build meritocracy in the public service. Recruitment and selection processes are being overhauled, as are performance management systems. Competency-based assessments and integrity tests are being introduced. The induction of new public servants is now mandatory. The professionalisation framework also seeks to encourage young people who aspire to careers in the public service.¹³

One of the other key aspirations of the professionalisation framework is the depoliticisation of the public service. Those who work in all spheres of the state need to be insulated from undue political interference and vested interests. State capture provided a bitter lesson on the vulnerabilities of the public sector to interference by private business interests.

Rebuilding the state requires not only replenishing the ranks of the public service with capable personnel, but reforming its systems and processes to shield them from abuse. Important steps that need to be taken include the establishment of the Office of the Head of the Public Service, the introduction of a more rigorous appointment process for senior officials, and introducing a graduate recruitment scheme to attract skilled talent into the public service.

There is an urgent need to modernise all aspects of the state. Countries across the world are increasingly using digital technology to transform

¹² 55th National Conference Report, page 75, **Resolution on Economic Transformation**

¹³ 55th National Conference Report, page 72, **Resolution on Legislature and Governance**

government and improve service delivery.

To make government work more efficiently and bring it closer to the people, the Digital Transformation Roadmap was launched in April 2025. The roadmap focuses on building digital public infrastructure, including a digital identity for every South African citizen. It includes a digital payments system to enable instant, low-cost payments and interoperable data systems to ensure that citizens only must provide their information to government once. This roadmap is designed to expand access to services for the poor and to advance the financial inclusion of all South Africans.

Local government reform

The 55th National Conference reflected on various challenges and issues facing local government and resolved that we should strengthen governance by addressing political and administrative instability, service delivery improvement focusing on capacity building, strengthening accountability and financial sustainability.¹⁴

The impact of weak governance is felt the most at the local level. Many of our cities and towns are failing to deliver basic services, creating serious challenges for businesses, residents and public facilities such as schools, clinics and hospitals.

Government has initiated a comprehensive reform of the local government system, underpinned by a review of the White Paper on Local Government and the local government fiscal framework. While this reform process is underway, the Presidency is providing targeted intervention and support in struggling municipalities, starting with eThekweni and Johannesburg. We will need to consider extending this approach to other metros to confront service delivery challenges.

Working groups established in both cities have brought together mayors, senior officials from

local, provincial and national government, business and civil society to tackle the most urgent problems. We have put into practice our inter-governmental relations framework and ensured that we address service delivery challenges through a whole-of-government approach, in partnership with civil society and business.

Traditional leadership remains an essential part of local governance and development, especially in rural areas. We are committed to continue working to strengthen the institution of traditional leadership to ensure that it can play its role in promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development, while being custodians of heritage, culture and traditional values.

The District Development Model (DDM) that we introduced to support the reorganisation of local government has become an operating philosophy for all spheres for government. The DDM enhances efficiency by having the three spheres of government, including other key role players, aligning planning, budgeting and implementation to reduce fragmentation, duplication and wastage across government departments and entities.¹⁵

Procurement

The ability of the state to procure goods and services efficiently, and cost effectively, while meeting developmental objectives is key to improving the performance of public institutions.

To address widespread issues of misconduct and corruption, the public procurement system needs substantive reform. Among other things, the National Treasury is preparing for implementation of the Public Procurement Act, which will introduce a new overarching framework for the procurement system and establish a new Public Procurement Office. The Act also provides for a Code of Conduct setting out ethical standards for procurement and protection for Accounting Officers from liability for actions taken in good faith.

¹⁴ 55th National Conference Report, page 72, **Resolution on Local Government**

¹⁵ 55th National Conference Report, page 71, **Resolution on Legislature and Governance**

We need to ensure that procurement is used as an instrument to build black- and women-owned companies that produce the products and provide the services that government needs. Too many tenders are issued to ‘middlemen’ – individuals and companies that have no competence in the relevant area and have to source the goods and services from the companies that do have the competence. This is a waste of public funds, encourages corruption and does not advance real economic empowerment.

Through the Digital Transformation Roadmap, digitisation will be used to enhance transparency of procurement data and improve outcomes. Last month, government launched a publicly available Procurement Payments Dashboard, which shows payments made to suppliers by most national and provincial departments. This dashboard will promote procurement transparency and accountability while helping to identify inefficiencies.¹⁶

Outsourcing

One of the practices that has weakened the state at all levels has been the outsourcing of functions that should be performed by government departments and public bodies. This is most pronounced at a municipal level, where the provision of basic services and the maintenance of infrastructure are often put out to tender.

The effect of this practice is that public institutions no longer have the skills and capabilities they need to fulfil their mandate. In many places the cost of service delivery has been on the rise, while the quality of services has been declining.

We have seen how outsourcing opens the door to corruption, as those wishing to win government contracts collude with public representatives and officials to illegally extract public funds, often on a massive scale, and often

without any intention to deliver on those contracts. Many cases have come to light of tender manipulation, the payment of bribes and kickbacks, overpricing and the use of front companies.

The ANC should act to end the practice of outsourcing core functions of the state. The capacity of the state to perform these functions needs to be rebuilt.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

The 55th National Conference observed that South Africa needs rapid inclusive growth to create jobs and support new activity, new businesses and new employment opportunities.¹⁷ In the January 8th Statement 2025, the NEC declared that speeding up inclusive growth to create jobs was a priority action for the movement.¹⁸

In pursuit of its basic minimum programme, the Government of National Unity also resolved to place inclusive economic growth at the centre of its work.

After more than 15 years of low economic growth, we are now seeing the signs of a turning point. The most recent projections from National Treasury show that we can achieve much higher growth over the next five years if we implement the policy commitments that we have made.

Our experience over the past 30 years has shown that when our economy grows, jobs are created. In the first 15 years of our democracy, when our economy grew at a rate of above 3% a year, employment rose and levels of poverty fell. But, in the second 15 year period, when the rate of economic growth fell closer to 1%, then unemployment and poverty rose and government programmes began to face serious resource constraints.

¹⁶ 55th National Conference Report, page 62, **Resolution on Information and Communications Technology**

¹⁷ 55th National Conference Report, page 74, **Resolution on Economic Transformation**

¹⁸ January 8th Statement 2025, **page 15**

This is why a government-led strategy to achieve higher levels of inclusive growth, through accelerated infrastructure investment, forward-looking industrial policy, improved service delivery, land redistribution, transformative spatial planning, black economic empowerment and supportive macroeconomic policies, has been placed at the strategic centre of government's programme.

Our approach has been to remove the barriers to economic growth and competitiveness while at the same time expanding support for employment and social programmes from the state.

As the ANC, we have been clear that growth must be inclusive. It must drive radical social and economic transformation through the redistribution of wealth and opportunity. It must support the empowerment of black South Africans and women.

In the face of a concerted campaign to push back the gains of broad-based black economic empowerment, the ANC has remained steadfast in defence of the constitutional imperative to redress the imbalances of the past. This is more than the correction of past injustices. Through empowerment and transformation, we can ensure that the skills, capabilities, resources and energies of all South Africans are used to the greatest effect.

As the ANC, we are committed to broad-based black economic empowerment, employment equity and support to small- and medium-sized enterprises. As with all our policies, we must continuously review the effectiveness of our broad-based black economic empowerment policies to ensure that they are advancing fundamental transformation and that they are effective in widening economic participation and promoting inclusive growth and job creation.

As the ANC we have fought shoulder to shoulder with trade unions to secure improved rights and protections for the working class, including a legislated minimum wage.

To advance the position of workers, we have enacted the Labour Relations Act, Employment Equity Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act and the Skills Development Act, among others.

We must never falter in our commitment to improving the conditions in which South Africans work and live. We will continue to remove all barriers to the full participation of women, young people and persons with disabilities in the economy.

Youth employment and empowerment

One of the most pressing challenges facing our country today is youth unemployment. Approximately 3.5 million out of 10.3 million young people aged 15 to 24 years are not in employment, education or training.

As we pursue faster and more inclusive economic growth, government has undertaken programmes on a large scale to provide opportunities for young people to earn an income, develop skills and gain work experience.

Since their establishment in October 2020, the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) and the Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES) have created earning opportunities for more than 2 million participants through a wide range of programmes.

One of these programmes is the Basic Education Employment Initiative, which has now created over 1 million job opportunities for young people to serve as assistants in schools. Through programmes like the Social Employment Fund, government has leveraged community-based organisations to create work for the common good while providing an income, skills and dignity to participants.

Building on this success, public employment programmes should be consolidated, streamlined and effectively coordinated to achieve maximum impact.

Young people face many barriers. Without established networks in the economy, work experience, or money for data or transport, it is difficult for many young people even to look for work. To address these challenges, government launched the SAYouth.mobi platform in 2020. Since then, it has linked a growing number of young people to learning and earning opportunities. There are now over 5 million young people registered on the SAYouth network.

A significant achievement of SAYouth is that the vast majority of earning opportunities have been accessed by the most excluded young people. Seventy percent of opportunities have been accessed by young black African women. Around 65 percent of young people on the SAYouth platform live in households where at least one member receives a social grant.

To increase the value of this network, it should become the main instrument across the public and private sectors to hire young people.

The Youth Employment Service (YES), a joint initiative of government and the private sector, has become the largest corporate funded youth jobs programme in the world. The programme has to date provided over 200,000 young people with a year-long work experience opportunity.

Industrial policy

The 55th National Conference observed that one of the key pillars of our economic intervention is the “strengthening of industrial policy interventions to support the growth and expansion of the manufacturing and services sectors”.¹⁹

In its deliberations on the economy, the NEC has reaffirmed that industrial policy must be a leading instrument of economic development and transformation.

South African manufacturing and beneficiation activities are currently under pressure due to a range of factors. Rising electricity prices and

logistical challenges have damaged South African competitiveness. Increased use of tariffs and trade barriers by other countries has affected South African exports.

For South Africa’s industrial policy to succeed it needs to be forward looking, so that we can position a diverse range of our industries to succeed in an increasingly digitalised and decarbonised world economy. This will require coordinated alignment across government departments and state functions. Industrial policy cannot be the work of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition alone, but must also guide the work of other government departments, such as energy and electricity, transport and water.

Just as we focus in our industrial policy on labour-intensive sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, construction and services, we also need also to be bold in developing new industries like battery storage, renewable-energy components, hydrogen derivatives and electric vehicle production.

South Africa has among the best solar and wind resources in the world, which if correctly harnessed could provide our economy with a powerful competitive advantage.²⁰

Structural transformation

Industrial expansion requires network industries that are efficient, reliable and competitive. However, over the course of more than a decade, state-owned enterprises in these network industries – primarily Eskom, Transnet and Prasa – declined due to the effects of state capture, mismanagement and a lack of capital investment.

To correct this, in line with the resolutions of the 55th National Conference, government is leading a process of structural transformation in energy, water, ports and rail, and telecommunications.²¹ Through this work, we are reducing

¹⁹ 55th National Conference Report, page 75, **Resolution on Economic Transformation**

²⁰ 55th National Conference Report, page 77, **Resolution on the Green Economy**

²¹ 55th National Conference Report, page 75, **Resolution on Economic Transformation**

costs, improving efficiency, lowering barriers to entry, and enabling higher levels of investment.

The aim of these measures is to fundamentally restructure our economy to increase our competitiveness and create jobs. We inherited from apartheid an economy that was highly concentrated, with inefficient monopolies established by the apartheid regime in response to sanctions that were designed to benefit a narrow economic elite. These monopoly structures have continued to dominate our economy, preventing competition and the entry of smaller businesses while increasing costs.

Much of this work is being driven through Operation Vulindlela, a government-wide initiative led by the Presidency and National Treasury to remove the constraints that have long held back economic growth: an unreliable energy supply, inefficient rail and ports, high data costs, and a visa system that had deterred investors and tourists.

We have made significant progress.

Through the work of the National Energy Crisis Committee (NECOM), we have seen a dramatic drop in the frequency and severity of load shedding.

This has been made possible by a steady and sustained improvement in the performance of Eskom's power plants and regulatory changes to allow private investment in electricity generation. This investment is mainly in renewable energy projects, which is enabling us to utilise the natural endowments we have of sun, wind and water.

Government recently finalised the Integrated Resource Plan 2025, which outlines a balanced and diversified energy mix to ensure energy security into the future.²²

The IRP 2025 illustrates the fundamental changes underway in our energy system, which will ultimately transform our economy. In the future, our energy mix will comprise a large

amount of solar and wind together with battery storage, gas and nuclear power. The plan projects that renewable energy capacity will increase from 17 GW to over 45 GW by 2030, and will continue to grow thereafter to provide more than half of our energy supply.

The country is moving towards a competitive electricity market. While Eskom will continue to play a leading role in energy generation, the new model will enable many different generators to supply electricity and to compete based on efficiency and cost. This increased competition will lead to lower prices and ensure a more reliable electricity supply for all South Africans.

The importance of producing electricity at the lowest cost cannot be overemphasised. The price of electricity is critical to the pace of industrialisation. If we can make electricity competitive, affordable and predictable, the competitiveness of a wide range of manufacturing, industrial and beneficiation activities would increase.

Just as South African competitiveness was once based on coal, we can build a growing, world-beating economy based on a low cost, reliable electricity system.

Government has also made significant progress towards enabling greater investment in our transmission network, including from the private sector.

In implementing these measures, we are learning from the experience of other countries. Most of our peer countries have implemented similar measures to attract investment in generation capacity, network infrastructure and electrification. More than 40 middle-income countries have undertaken similar electricity transformation programmes, including all of the BRICS countries.

We are making significant headway in increasing the volume of goods moved on our rail lines and through our ports. After a dramatic decline over a number of years, the volume of freight

²² 55th National Conference Report, page 77, **Resolution on Energy Security and Just Energy Transition**

carried on our railways has increased in just two years from a low of 150 million tons in 2023 to 174 million tons in 2025.

To increase volumes further, Transnet has established a Rail Infrastructure Manager, which will manage our rail infrastructure and has made capacity available across the freight rail network to private train operating companies. This will enable us to mobilise new investment to modernise and expand our logistics infrastructure.

The commissioning of new equipment in all our ports means we are now loading and unloading ships at record speeds with the result that we no longer have vessels queued outside our ports.

The passenger rail agency PRASA has now restored 35 out of 40 priority lines. This means that commuters are now able to travel to work safely and affordably on our locally-manufactured blue trains. Restoration of signalling will ensure that our passenger rail network returns to near full capacity in this term of government.

Transformation in the rail and ports sector aims to restore the efficiency and competitiveness of key supply chains by reducing the cost of logistics, shifting goods from road to rail, leveraging private sector capital to invest in infrastructure, and integrating South Africa's economy with the rest of the continent and the world.²³

Structural transformation in the telecommunications sector has brought down the cost of mobile data. Government has reduced the turnaround times for approval processes for water use licences and energy projects, and has made great progress in clearing the visa application backlog and implementing an electronic travel authorisation system.

Structural transformation of the network industries will strengthen the ability of our largest and most strategic state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to fulfil their economic and social man-

dates. This will be achieved by, among things, the introduction of greater competition and the mobilisation of public and private investment on a concessional basis, with the ownership of these industries remaining in the state's hands.

The 55th National Conference resolved that state-owned enterprises (SOEs) should be returned to the relevant ministries that align with their core functions and areas of work. This decision was aimed at improving oversight, governance and operational efficiency by ensuring that each SOE is managed within the framework of the ministry that has the relevant sectoral expertise.²⁴

While maintaining public ownership of strategic assets, we are improving the operational performance of these SOEs through the implementation of this decision, making our SOEs more competitive and stabilising their financial position. As with all transformational change, these transitions can be difficult and complex. They can also encounter resistance from vested interests. However, these changes are vital if we are to grow our economy and meet the needs of our people.

The refocusing and restructuring of our SOEs is necessary to ensure that they can effectively fulfil their social and economic mandates. This includes the work underway to put in place a new model to strengthen governance and oversight of public entities.

This new model will enable strong and robust oversight of state-owned enterprises to ensure sound governance and accountability for performance while preserving the important role of policy departments in overseeing the mandate of SOEs.

As we undertake this wide-ranging structural transformation programme to make our economy more inclusive, dynamic, competitive and fast-growing, we must also focus on those parts of the economy that will ultimately be the largest drivers of employment.

²³ 55th National Conference Report, page 82, **Resolution on Logistics**

²⁴ 55th National Conference Report, page 82, **Resolution on SOEs**

Support for micro, small and medium-sized businesses needs to be reoriented to ensure greater leverage of public resources and improved outcomes. This can be achieved by channeling more public funding towards first-loss capital and guarantees, partnering with banks and non-bank financial institutions.

Unlike most developing economies, South Africa's informal sector is heavily regulated and suppressed by trading regulations, barriers to accessing finance and heavy-handed enforcement. Unlocking growth in employment would require removing restrictions on informal trading, including through changes to zoning and land use regulations, reducing or removing the cost of trading permits for informal businesses, and expanding non-bank lending to small businesses.

Infrastructure investment

The 55th National Conference noted that: "Expanded infrastructure investment can play a critical role in providing basic services to our urban and rural communities and improving South Africa's overall economic performance and job creation."²⁵

However, over the past 15 years investment by both the public and private sectors has declined. Our country's gross fixed capital investment declined due to economic challenges, policy uncertainty and the challenges that were faced by our SOEs, which have always been the key drivers of fixed capital investment. From the public sector point of view, we are addressing this through structural transformation of the network industries, through a commitment to increased prioritisation of infrastructure investment in the national budget, and through the mobilisation of finance by development finance institutions.

Investment in infrastructure is the backbone of spatial transformation, industrial expansion and economic inclusion. We must use our infra-

structure build and maintenance programme to create platforms for black industrialists, workers, MSMEs and marginalised communities in urban and rural areas. We must ensure it assists us in localising production of critical inputs such as steel and promotes processing and beneficiation of our rich mineral endowment.

Government is using the Infrastructure Fund and public-private partnerships to invest in the roads that link communities to economic centres and the water projects that supply expanding cities and towns. Regulations for Public Private Partnerships have been amended to make it easier for the private sector to invest in infrastructure ranging from renewable energy generation to housing.

This infrastructure has a direct impact on people's lives, providing the services they need, reducing the cost of living, improving the business environment and encouraging economic activity.

Government has made a commitment to invest more than R1 trillion in infrastructure over the next three years to renew our country's roads, port, rail, energy and water systems.²⁶ This is the largest amount ever budgeted from the fiscus for infrastructure development. Government has also allocated an additional R54 billion to fix water and electricity infrastructure in the eight metros, linked to institutional and financing changes to improve service delivery going forward. These measures will enable us to drive an unprecedented renewal of our infrastructure systems after many years of neglect.

Trade

Disruptions to the global trading system are threatening South Africa's exports and the jobs involved in producing those exports. We have had to adapt to increasing turbulent headwinds.

Like most other countries, South Africa had punitive tariffs imposed on it by the United States earlier this year. In our case, the US imposed a

²⁵ 55th National Conference Report, page 80, **Resolution on Infrastructure**

²⁶ 55th National Conference Report, page 80, **Resolution on Infrastructure**

30% tariff. This is unfortunate as our trade relations have historically been complementary; South African exports do not compete with US producers.

Our government is continuing to engage the United States in negotiations to reach a trade agreement that benefits both countries. At the same time, we have had to accelerate the diversification of our export markets. We are scaling up our trade missions into new markets in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas.

South Africa continues to play a leading role in supporting the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to grow South Africa's exports to the rest of the continent. This is a significant opportunity to propel the growth of the services, agriculture and other labour-intensive sectors for the much larger African market. Strengthening regional value chains will be key to building resilience for our export markets in the longer term and to ensuring that trade is more balanced and beneficial to both South Africa and its neighbours.

While we strengthen the resilience of our export industries, we need to continue to advocate for an international trade regime that is fair, equitable and rules-based. We need to build a trade regime that does not render developing economies vulnerable to unilateral measures or protectionist pressures.

As we encourage foreign investment in South Africa, we need to promote integration into global production and value chains and encourage technological transfer and skills training in South Africa.

Land reform

In closing the 55th National Conference in December 2022, we said: "We undertake land reform not only because justice demands it, but because it is a necessary condition for the growth of an inclusive economy that can realise the potential of our plentiful natural resources

and the capabilities of our people."²⁷

Land reform remains one of the most urgent tasks of the National Democratic Revolution. Some economists estimate that since the ANC came into government, almost 25% of all farm land previously owned by white land owners has been restored, redistributed to black South Africans or moved to state ownership.

But there is still a greater hunger for land and much work still to be done to give effect to the Constitutional injunction that the state must foster conditions which enable citizens to gain access to land on an equitable basis.

Government has embarked on the Proactive Land Acquisition Policy to expedite state grant processes, enabling direct transfer or free leasehold for households with limited land access, subsistence production and small-scale farmers. Over the last five years, around 125 land parcels, totalling 25,000 hectares of state land has been released for land redistribution.

Key tasks ahead include the improvement of support systems for beneficiaries of land reform, including access to finance, training, infrastructure and markets. We need to accelerate the processing of outstanding restitution claims and resolving disputes more efficiently. Equally important is addressing urban land reform, as most South Africans now live in cities where access to well-located land and housing remains deeply unequal.

Ultimately, successful land reform requires adequate resources and inclusive dialogue that brings together government, traditional leaders, farmers and communities to chart the path forward.

Macroeconomic stability

As directed by the 55th National Conference, the ANC-led government has continued to maintain macroeconomic stability and coordinate fiscal and monetary policy in a manner that supports inclusive growth and enables the

²⁷ 55th National Conference Report, page 128, Closing Address

sustained implementation of programmes of social and economic transformation.²⁸

Macroeconomic policy seeks to avoid rising national debt and seeks to achieve low interest rates through the maintenance of low inflation levels. This policy framework aims to create a conducive environment for investment, particularly infrastructure investment, and job creation.²⁹

Sound management of the country's public finances is critical to macroeconomic stability. A critical fiscal challenge in recent years has been the rising level of public debt, which has resulted in a situation where more than 20% of tax revenues has to be spent on debt service payments. This has reduced the funds available to spend on infrastructure, health, education and productive investment to stimulate growth.

Important progress is underway in reducing corruption and wasteful public spending. However, cutting spending across the board carries a significant social and economic cost. Rather, we need to reduce spending on inefficient or underperforming programmes and increase spending on programmes that have the greatest social and economic impact, such as infrastructure investment. At the same time, we need to maintain much-needed social assistance to poor and working class households through the social wage.

All of these measures are beginning to create a shift in public sentiment and investment in our economy. Over the past few weeks, our sovereign credit rating has been upgraded, we have been removed from the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force, the interest rate on government bonds has decreased, and our currency has strengthened. There is now wind in the sails of our economic recovery, which we must encourage and sustain.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

Next year, the country will celebrate 70 years since the Women's March on the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956. We will recall the courage and determination of the women of our country in standing up not only to the apartheid government, but to the laws, practices and attitudes that prevented South African women from realising their rights.

As the ANC, we have carried through that spirit into our democratic Constitution, laws, policies, programmes and campaigns. We have worked to advance the representation of women in all areas of life and to ensure their full and equal participation in decision making. Today, South Africa ranks second out of the G20 countries in terms of female representation in Parliament. Around 42% of MPs are women.

Over the years, government has accelerated women's access to basic services, including social welfare provisions and economic opportunities, lifting millions out of absolute poverty. The Employment Equity Act and other progressive laws have paved the way for more equitable representation of women in the economy. Over a quarter of top managers in the private sector are now women, and just under a half of senior managers in national government departments are women.

Preferential procurement is an important transformative tool to help achieve the objectives of job creation, growth and equal opportunity. Government has made a commitment to 40 percent preferential procurement in favour of women-owned and women-led companies. At present, only 16% of government procurement spend goes to women-owned companies, while a further 25% goes to companies that are partially women-owned.

The Women Economic Empowerment Programme implemented by the Presidency and its partners, has trained more than 10,000 women business owners across the country to

²⁸ 55th National Conference Report, page 75, **Resolution on Economic Transformation**

²⁹ 55th National Conference Report, page 78, **Resolution on Fiscal Policy**

do business with government.

Women-owned companies are also supported through the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency.

This demonstrates clear progress in advancing the position of women in the economy and in public life since the advent of democracy. However, it also shows that we have much further to go until we achieve gender equality.

Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

We are at the mid-point of the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). Yet, violence against women and children continues unabated. It remains a pandemic that shames the men of our nation.

While we can point to progress in responding to instances of gender-based violence – from clearing the historical DNA backlog to increasing conviction rates and improving victim services in police stations – our greatest challenge is to prevent such instances in the first place.³⁰

In assessing the threat that this scourge continues to pose, on 20 November 2025 the government classified gender-based violence and femicide as a national disaster. This classification will support the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF through stronger governance, funding, communication and coordination.

In particular, it is expected to strengthen multi-sectoral collaboration among government, civil society, academia, the private sector and development partners; accelerate prevention programmes; improve access to justice, shelter services, psychosocial support and protection for survivors; support law enforcement and the judiciary in expediting GBVF-related cases; and enhancing accountability mechanisms across government.

Our efforts to prevent gender-based violence need special focus. They need to be intensified, massively scaled-up and include all sectors of society. We need to give greater attention to the social factors – such as alcohol abuse – that fuel such violence.

SAFETY, SECURITY AND STABILITY

Crime and violence

Crime and violence continue to take a toll on our society. Apart from the human cost – the loss of life, injury and trauma – crime impedes social development and inclusive economic growth. While communities live in fear, crime also deters investment and increases the cost of doing business.

The police continue to work with other law enforcement agencies to dismantle organised crime syndicates and combat financial and violent crimes. The SAPS has partnered with the metropolitan municipalities and is working with communities to fight crime in the provinces where crime is particularly high.

Initiatives like Operation Shanela have had great success in arresting suspects, recovering firearms and seizing stolen vehicles. The SAPS has increased its intake of new personnel, including into units like Public Order Policing and the Detective Service. Working together with business and other partners, the SAPS is working on adopting surveillance, analytics and smart policing solutions for modern law enforcement.

While the country has recorded a decline in some categories of crime in recent years, we have seen a rise in crimes like extortion, kidnapping and illegal mining. The establishment of multi-disciplinary Economic Infrastructure Task Teams in 20 hotspots has led to several breakthroughs with respect to damage to essential and critical infrastructure, illegal mining and extortion at construction sites.

³⁰ 55th National Conference Report, page 38, Resolution on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

The involvement and mobilisation of communities is critical to the fight against crime. Significant effort and resources have been directed towards reviving Community Policing Forums (CPFs). It is important that ANC branches be integrally involved in strengthening CPFs and mobilising communities more broadly in crime fighting campaigns.³¹

As we work to rebuild our criminal justice system, we need to act when reports emerge and allegations are made that threaten to undermine the stability and effectiveness of these institutions.

Earlier this year, the SAPS KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Commissioner Lt Gen Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi alleged that the Minister of Police had interfered with sensitive police investigations and colluded with business people to disband the Political Killings Task Team based in KwaZulu-Natal.

In August 2025, we established a commission of inquiry headed by Justice Mbuyiseli Madlanga to investigate these serious allegations. We considered this necessary to establish the facts through an independent, credible and thorough process so that we can ensure accountability and safeguard public confidence in the police service.

At the same time, the National Assembly established an Ad-Hoc Committee to probe the same allegations.

Some of the evidence and testimony presented during these hearings raises serious concerns about the extent to which some in the police may have been compromised by criminal elements. We are hopeful that the findings and recommendations from these investigations will represent a turning point in our fight against crime and corruption.

Corruption and its causes

The integrity and credibility of the criminal justice system is vital to our ongoing efforts to

combat crime and corruption. Over the last few years, we have made significant progress in rebuilding and strengthening law enforcement agencies, security services and prosecutorial bodies. These changes have been real and visible in the South African Police Service, the Hawks, National Prosecuting Authority, Asset Forfeiture Unit, Special Investigating Unit, State Security Agency and others.

In the three years since the final report of the State Capture Commission was presented to the President, government has undertaken major reforms based on its recommendations. These include a raft of new laws to strengthen our anti-corruption institutions, enhance the procurement system, reform the intelligence services, and improve corporate accountability and public administration.

The value of assets linked to State Capture that have been recovered by the state is now over R16.4 billion. There are now 14 cases before court that are directly linked to the commission's recommendations, involving 73 accused persons. Six cases have been finalised, all with guilty verdicts.

In August 2025, the National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council (NACAC) handed over its final report on strengthening the state's anti-corruption architecture. The Council recommended the establishment of a permanent, independent, overarching anti-corruption body. The proposed body, which responds to one of the key recommendations of the State Capture Commission, would be expected to both fight corruption and prevent it from happening in the first place. This recommendation is currently being reviewed by the relevant government institutions.

In 2024, we established the Investigating Directorate against Corruption in the NPA, which has been granted police powers and criminal investigation capabilities, allowing greater effectiveness in tackling high-level corruption cases. Since its establishment, the Directorate has brought 232 state capture corruption accused to court.

³¹ 55th National Conference Report, page 32, Resolution on Peace and Stability

One of the most significant recent developments in our efforts to tackle corruption, money laundering and financial crimes was our country's exit from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list. In 2023, South Africa was put on the FATF 'grey list' for falling short of certain international standards. The removal of South Africa from the grey list is good for the integrity and reputation of our financial system. It is a boost for South Africa's international reputation and global standing.

It is clear from evidence before the Madlanga Commission of Inquiry and from the ongoing work of our law enforcement agencies that corruption remains pervasive across society. It is therefore critical that we intensify our efforts to prevent, detect and prosecute corruption in all its forms.

4. STATE OF AFRICA

The 55th National Conference reaffirmed that "Africa and its development remain the central objective of the ANC's international perspective and policy, with the African Renaissance remaining a key policy objective".³²

Through our engagements as a movement and as the ANC-led government we have prioritised work towards the achievement of the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. We have focused on building economic, political and social ties with other countries across the continent, and on strengthening regional and continental bodies like the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union.

Social and Economic Development

While Africa has some of the fastest growing economies in the world, overall growth on the continent is constrained by poor infrastructure, low levels of investment, instability and conflict. Many countries are further constrained by a substantial debt burden, often spending more on debt interest costs than on education, health or infrastructure.

Together with the devastation caused by the COVID pandemic, these factors are limiting progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. While some progress has been made on issues such as health, education and access to clean water, there has been insufficient progress on issues such as poverty, hunger, decent work, affordable energy and climate. To accelerate sustainable social development, Africa needs to focus on growing investment and trade, building infrastructure, achieving debt sustainability, investing in its people, and promoting peace and stability.

Trade, Industrialisation and Infrastructure

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which entered its operational phase in 2024, presents an unprecedented opportunity for African growth and development. Intra-African trade only accounts for around 16% of total trade on the continent. Increasing trade between African countries through the AfCFTA will spur industrialisation, attract investment and encourage the development of regional value chains.

The success of the AfCFTA depends, among other things, on the construction of the infrastructure that will carry goods, information, people and energy between African countries. Africa has a significant infrastructure deficit, and it is estimated that around \$130 to \$170 billion will be needed each year to fill the gap.

The report of the Africa Expert Panel, which was presented to the G20 Leaders' Summit in November, calls for a new partnership among African countries and between Africa and the world to mobilise finance for productive investments on the continent. It addresses the problem of unsustainable debt and the high cost of capital in Africa, which is higher than other regions. It also addresses the biased perceptions of risk in Africa and calls for greater transparency and accountability from credit rating agencies.

³² 55th National Conference Resolutions, page 119, Resolution on International Relations

South Africa is well positioned to benefit from access to a single African market of over 1.4 billion people. With an advanced and diversified economy, developed infrastructure and mature capital markets, South Africa is an attractive place for both domestic and foreign companies to locate their African operations.³³

Less than half of Africans have reliable energy access, yet the continent has among the world's best solar and wind resources. If effectively harnessed, Africa's renewable energy potential could meet the energy needs of its people. Together with its critical mineral reserves, the continent's renewable energy resources could drive an industrial revolution on the continent. Africa could become a manufacturing hub for green technologies like batteries and electric vehicles.

Conflict, Security and Stability

Meaningful social development and economic growth cannot be achieved until we forever silence the guns on our continent.

Despite progress over the last three decades, the last few years have seen a reversal in many parts of the continent. There has been a surge of military coups in countries such as Mali, Guinea, Sudan, Chad, Burkina Faso, Niger, Gabon and Madagascar. Some of these coups have received popular backing from citizens who are fed up with corruption, economic hardship and poor governance, and a number of coup leaders have taken a firm anti-colonial and anti-imperialist posture.

We have seen devastating conflict and instability in Sudan, the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tigray and South Sudan. These conflicts have caused many thousands of civilian deaths and displaced millions of people. Many parts of the Sahel region, as well as northern Mozambique, have suffered from terrorist attacks and insurgencies.

In the midst of these conflicts, a priority is to ensure alignment between the peacekeeping

functions of the United Nations and the African Union and regional bodies like SADC. In December 2023, the UN Security Council resolved that AU-led peace operations could receive up to 75% of their budget from UN assessed contributions.

In line with the international stance of the ANC-led government, since 1994 our country has contributed to UN peace operations in Burundi, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, the DRC, the UN-AU Mission in Darfur and the SADC mission in northern Mozambique. South Africa has been part of fostering peace in Lesotho, Burundi and South Sudan. In 2022 we hosted negotiations that brokered a ceasefire between the government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front.

The struggle of the people of Western Sahara for self-determination has been set back by the recent UN Security Council resolution which strongly endorsed Morocco's autonomy plan as the "most feasible solution", shifting away from past UN positions on a referendum on self-determination. This development calls for the intensification of diplomatic efforts to find a path forward that priorities the rights and interests of the people of Western Sahara.

Africa and the Rest of the World

Since the advent of colonialism, countries of the North have exploited Africa's land, resources and people to amass great wealth and power. Even decades after independence, most African countries continue to experience the legacy of colonialism, imperialism and foreign interference.

Climate change presents a new form of exploitation. The adverse weather conditions that African countries are increasingly exposed to are the direct result of the emissions caused by the industrialisation of countries of the North. Once again, these countries became wealthy at the expense of Africa and other vulnerable regions in the world.

³³ 55th National Conference Report, page 84, Resolution on the African Continental Free Trade Area

This informs our insistence that these wealthy countries provide substantial and sufficient finance to enable African countries to adapt to climate change, to prevent natural disasters, to rebuild after they occur, and to undertake just energy transitions.

At the same time, there is a new scramble for Africa's critical minerals, which all countries see as essential to advance their own economic interests in a changing global economy. A number of powerful countries are seeking to secure a supply of critical minerals without consideration of their value to local communities and host countries. As has been done for centuries, most are seeking to export raw materials from the continent.

The G20 Leaders' Declaration 2025 is a significant development in this regard. Through the declaration, the leaders of some of the world's most powerful countries agreed on a new approach to critical minerals so that they become a source of prosperity and sustainable development in the countries that produce them. They have committed to ensure that beneficiation of these minerals takes place in the areas where they are mined.

The G20 leaders agreed on the need for increased global investment for climate action, and scaled up disaster prevention and post-disaster reconstruction to address the increasing frequency of extreme heat, floods, droughts and wildfires.

Through its hosting of the first G20 on African soil and by ensuring that the African Union becomes a full member of the G20, South Africa has been able to put Africa's needs and interests more firmly on the global agenda.³⁴

5. STATE OF THE WORLD

Global Balance of Forces

The world is facing severe interconnected challenges. The climate change crisis is worsening, with billions affected by underdevelopment, inequality, poverty, hunger and unemployment.

Economic growth remains subdued globally, with many nations burdened by unsustainable debt levels. Geopolitical instability, conflict and war are causing further hardship and suffering. This is occurring during a period of rapid technological transformation that presents both opportunities and risks.

The global balance of forces is shifting in different, sometimes contradictory, ways. The economic and political rise of countries of the Global South, seen for example in the expansion of BRICS, is upending long-established international power relations.

These changes are taking place amidst the unpredictable and disruptive actions of a new US administration, which are creating uncertainty and volatility. These actions, whether on trade, diplomacy or security, are putting global institutions, multilateralism and international law under great strain.

At the same time, a number of countries are witnessing a shift towards reactionary politics, with intolerance and narrow nationalism gaining ground. These tendencies are not universal however, as many societies hold firm to progressive values, to the pillars of the UN Charter and to the protection of equal rights for all. There is evidence for this in the broad support from almost all G20 countries for South Africa's G20 principles of solidarity, equality and sustainability.

As a movement and as South Africa, our engagement in international relations aims to promote our national interest and the protection of our national sovereignty and constitutional order. It is aimed at improving the well-being,

³⁴ 55th National Conference Report, page 123, **Resolution on G20**

safety and prosperity of our people. To advance these goals, our foreign policy is based on the promotion of human rights, peace and stability and the strengthening of trade and investment ties with other countries.

In line with the call of the Freedom Charter, that 'There Shall be Peace and Friendship', South Africa is playing an increasingly important role in international affairs. Through the G20, BRICS, the Non-Aligned Movement and various United Nations platforms, our country is making an important contribution towards an international order that is more inclusive, just, stable and peaceful.

As a country, we used our G20 Presidency to promote practical actions to advance the interests of Africa and the Global South. Through more than 130 meetings, we engaged with G20 partners and invited countries on a bold transformative agenda that resets relations between countries of the North and South and which strengthens multilateral institutions and the rule of law.

All of the key agreements at the G20 Leaders' Summit are important for the well-being and development of the people of South Africa. From the actions agreed on debt sustainability to just transition finance, from critical minerals to the international financial architecture, the G20 outcomes provide important support to our efforts to grow and transform our own economy and create jobs.

South Africa continues to play an important role in promoting peace on our continent and further afield.

The atrocities committed by Israel against the people of Gaza prompted our government to argue before the International Court of Justice that the State of Israel was in violation of its obligations under the Genocide Convention. As the onslaught against Gaza has unfolded, it has become increasingly clear to many around the world that Israel is indeed committing genocide.

Just as we condemned the attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian groups against civilians in Israel on 7 October 2023 as war crimes, so too have we been consistent in our stance on the mass killing, destruction and starvation inflicted on the people of Gaza.

Since this onslaught began in October 2023, more than 70,000 people are known to have been killed in Gaza, most of whom are women and children. Several thousand more are believed to be buried under rubble. Homes, schools, hospitals, places of worship and essential infrastructure have been destroyed. The population has been subject to starvation and deprived of water, shelter and electricity.

As a country, we welcomed the agreement on a ceasefire that resulted in the return of the hostages in Gaza and the release of many Palestinian political prisoners. However, it is a matter of grave concern that Israel is breaking the ceasefire on an almost daily basis. Around 350 people have been killed by Israeli attacks in Gaza since the ceasefire came into effect in October and the humanitarian situation is only getting worse.

South Africa continues to call for an immediate end to the assault on Gaza, and for meaningful negotiations towards the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state existing in peace alongside the State of Israel. Anything short of the achievement of self-determination and the recognition of the fundamental human rights of the Palestine people will not be acceptable to the world and will not bring peace to the region.³⁵

As a movement, as a continent and as a global community, we must be deeply concerned about the horrific suffering caused by the civil war in Sudan, in which more than 150,000 people are reported to have died and around 12 million have been displaced. This is a human catastrophe that the world cannot ignore. The international community has a responsibility to act together to bring this conflict to an end.

³⁵ 55th National Conference Report, page 121, **Resolution on Palestine and Israel**

South Africa continues to participate in the different peace processes seeking to bring about a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. Our efforts are informed by our commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflict through diplomacy and dialogue, and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states and peoples.

All of these conflicts reveal the shortcomings in international mechanisms to maintain peace and security in the world. The UN Security Council in particular has shown that it is incapable in its current form of fulfilling its mandate to maintain international peace and security.

There is an urgent need for the reform the UN Security Council and other international institutions to ensure that they are representative and inclusive, and capable of responding effectively to the needs of the world today and into the future.³⁶

6. TOWARDS THE 120TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ANC

Reflection on the Work of the Renewal Commission

The ANC's programme of organisational renewal is showing progress. Variable progress, but progress nonetheless.

There is still important work to be done and the movement will continue to attend to both organisational and ideological renewal.

It is not merely rhetoric to say unless the ANC succeeds in renewing itself, we will perish.

We must build better and activist branches, we must revive sectoral work, we must strengthen the Alliance, we must reassert ANC values and principles and strengthen organisational integrity.

The ANC appointed the first Renewal Commission during the 2017–2022 term of office, with the main brief to develop an ANC Vision 2032, when the movement reaches the 120 years milestone.

The discussion document on the Vision was completed, presented to the NEC and to National Conference in 2022.

Given the variable levels of political discussions at the 55th National Conference, this was not adequately considered and Vision 2032 will thus be made available to NGC delegates to consider as part of their commission deliberations.

The 55th National Conference mandated a series of engagements on Vision 2032 with ANC structures and broader society. This was specifically aimed at ensuring renewal encompasses not only the ANC but also leads to renewal of governance and society as a whole.

The second Renewal Commission, appointed by the NEC for 2022 – 2027, highlights the need to continue strengthening key elements as parts of renewal. These include the basic parts of the movement such as organisational design, cadre development and integrity and revolutionary morality.

Tasks towards the Realisation of Vision 2032

The Renewal Commission recommends the following specific areas for attention and focus.

- Eradicate factionalism and patronage: this requires the movement to intensify efforts to build unity and acting decisively against all instances of factionalism and patronage,
- Reassert political discipline and cadre accountability: the movement should become more systematic and vigorous in enforcing accountability and political leadership should be seen as a privilege tied to performance.
- Modernise internal processes – this should be done to streamline processes and make them more efficient and accessible,
- Strengthen ideological training and leadership skills: intensify political education and improve ideological clarity across the movement
- Leadership renewal and inclusion – diversify and broaden the demographic compo-

³⁶ 55th National Conference Report, page 123, **Resolution on the United Nations**

sition of leadership structures to prevent gatekeeping and stagnation.

- Enhance the integrity of candidate lists – strengthen transparency in the ANC candidate selection processes.
- Reinvigorate the Alliance interface – create and strengthen existing Alliance forums for discussing ideology and strategy.
- Grassroots mass work – regular engagements with the masses through door-to-door engagements, izimbizo and other forms of mass work. branches should reinforce this work by championing community issues.
- Renewed values and political culture – re-introduce meaningful initiatives to engage communities and serve the people, through for instance volunteering to fix schools, clean public facilities and encouraging a culture of humility and modesty amongst ANC leaders.
- Monitor and evaluate renewal progress – the ANC must track renewal efforts against concrete indicators. These reports should be shared with leadership, from the NEC to all BECs as well as membership. This is how we hold each other accountable for ensuring the success of our collective efforts.

This NGC must elaborate on specific actions to be taken under each focus area as well as other gaps that may exist.

If the ANC can demonstrably renew itself —then public attitudes toward the movement could shift from cynicism to cautious optimism. We have to earn that trust through actions, not words.

The world is changing in unprecedented ways, with both challenges and opportunities for our country. It falls upon the African National Congress to provide leadership to the people. As in other times when our nation faced difficulty or adversity, we must take up the struggle.

The brave women and men of 1955 pledged to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage until the democratic changes set out in the Freedom Charter have been won. That remains our solemn commitment today.

Forward to the complete realisation of the National Democratic Revolution!

Forward to a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa!

NOTES

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NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. At the top left, the word "NOTES" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the title, there are approximately 28 evenly spaced horizontal lines extending across the width of the page. The first line is slightly thicker than the others, serving as a header line. The rest of the lines are standard weight.



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