

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY



STATEMENT OF THE ANC NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

28-30 AUGUST 2020

The ANC National Executive Committee held a virtual special meeting on 28-30 August 2020, to take forward specific matters that included the following issues: the COVID-19 pandemic; the fight against corruption; progress on the economic reconstruction and recovery programme, gender-based violence, local government and the African agenda.

VIGILANCE NEEDED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

The NEC received an update on the state of the coronavirus pandemic in South Africa and the measures that have been taken to reduce its spread and limit its impact on people's health, lives and livelihoods.

The NEC is encouraged by the significant decline in new cases across all provinces, as well as the decline in hospital admissions and deaths. These figures suggest that the country has most likely passed the peak of infections earlier than projected and with fewer infections and fatalities.

This is due, in large part, to the decisive action taken in March to curb transmission of the virus and by the adherence of all South Africans to the measures necessary to prevent infection.

The NEC mourned the lives of those lost to COVID-19 and extends condolences and sympathies to their families and friends.

The NEC paid tribute to the doctors, nurses, health and other frontline workers whose tireless and selfless efforts have helped save lives and restore many patients back to health. The nation owes them a debt of gratitude for working under difficult conditions and at risk to their own health to ensure that we overcome this health emergency.

The NEC agreed that the safety and health of all frontline personnel must be a priority, and welcomed the engagements that have taken place between the Department of Health and trade unions to ensure that there is an adequate supply of personal protective equipment for all frontline workers.

The meeting welcomed the decision of government to move the country to alert level 2 from 18 August 2020 and agreed that this was justified both by the decline in infections and by the need to resume most economic activities as speedily and as safely as possible.

However, the NEC agreed that, as is happening in many parts the world, there remains a substantial risk of a 'second wave' of infections as restrictions on movement and economic activity are relaxed. It is therefore vital that all South Africans remain cautious and vigilant, and continue to adhere to the most basic prevention measures – wearing masks, physical distancing as well as regular hand-washing and sanitising.

Through consistent adherence by all South Africans to these and other measures announced by the health authorities, the country will be able to avoid the economic and social disruption of a return to more restrictive regulations.

The ANC will continue to intensify its campaign of awareness and mobilisation among communities to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and ensure adequate care for those who fall ill.

It will also campaign for widespread take-up of the national contact tracing app (COVID Alert SA), which will be soon be launched to inform people – privately

and anonymously – if they have been exposed to a person who has tested positive for coronavirus.

The NEC notes progress on the measures put in place to deal decisively with corruption related to COVID-19, including to recoup illegally-acquired funds. Law enforcement agencies must leave no stone unturned in dealing with this matter. Government must explore all avenues to speed up investigations and prosecutions of these and other corruption-related cases.

The NEC welcomed the decision by government to make public details of COVID-related contracts awarded by all departments and public entities. This is an important step towards greater transparency and accountability in government procurement.

The NEC commends all South Africans for their united action over the last five months to keep themselves and others safe. This spirit and dedication will be required in the many months ahead as South Africa and the world come to terms with this 'new normal'.

ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION AND RECOVERY

The NEC welcomed the progress being made among social partners under the auspices of NEDLAC to develop an economic reconstruction and recovery programme. It was encouraged by the extent of agreement among all partners, government, labour and business, on the key interventions required and the need to act with urgency.

The NEC reaffirmed its position that given the depth of the economic damage caused by COVID-19 and the difficulties that our economy was already experiencing before the onset of the pandemic, extraordinary measures are required to protect existing jobs and create new ones in the immediate to medium term.

These include the implementation of a massive infrastructure investment programme, stimulation of local production and manufacturing, a public employment drive and the implementation of key economic reforms.

The ANC has released its economic recovery programme, which combines efforts towards reconstruction with accelerated transformation, economic inclusion, particularly for black people, the youth and women, as well as a faster rate of growth.

The ANC government announced relief measures of an amount of R500 billion to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was to deal with the health effects, measures to prevent a massive humanitarian crisis, and to provide a safety net for households and businesses to cushion the impact of restrictions on economic activity.

The R500 billion is being financed through a combination of revenue foregone by the government (tax relief), credit guarantees, additional government borrowing, and reprioritisation of existing government budgets.

The ANC recognises that, while these measures have had a positive impact and continue to do so, they are insufficient to deal with the totality of the challenges of unemployment, poverty, inequality and exclusion which our society faces. It is in this context that the work on a reconstruction, growth and transformation plan should be completed as urgently as possible.

The NEC will shortly convene a special lekgotla on the economic reconstruction and recovery programme.

RENEWAL OF THE ANC AND THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

The NEC reaffirmed the position taken at its meeting of 31 July to 2 August 2020 that the ANC needs to draw a clear line in the sand between the organisation and those who steal from the people. It agreed on decisive action to tackle corruption within the ANC and across society.

In this regard, the meeting received a report from the National Working Committee on the work undertaken to collate information on the individuals within the organisation facing charges of corruption or other serious crimes. The NEC welcomed the report and actions being taken at various levels, and resolved that these actions must be completed with urgency. This must be accompanied by public accountability.

The NEC agreed that this will be a turning point in the fight against corruption and accordingly decided on the following:

- The NEC endorsed the contents of President Ramaphosa's letter to ANC members of 23 August 2020 as a clear articulation of the policies and positions of the organisation, and agreed to the implementation of the points of action contained therein.
- The NEC emphasised that what seems to be a choreographed campaign against the President will not distract the movement from undertaking an intensified programme against corruption and state capture, as mandated by the 54th National Conference. In this regard, we will also work with other sectors of society and the broader population to confront this scourge.
- Cadres of the ANC who are formally charged for corruption or other serious crimes must immediately step aside from all leadership positions in the ANC, legislatures or other government structures pending the finalisation of their cases. The Officials, as mandated, will develop guidelines and procedures on implementation, and the next NWC meeting will review progress. In cases where this has not happened, such individuals will be instructed to step aside.
- Cadres of the ANC who are reported to be involved in corrupt and other serious criminal practices must go to the Integrity Commission to explain themselves. Those who do not give an acceptable explanation may be suspended.

- Cadres of the ANC who are convicted of corruption or other serious crimes must resign from leadership positions and face disciplinary action in line with the ANC Constitution.
- The NEC will meet with the Integrity Commission with a view to strengthen its role in restoring the values of the ANC, and ensuring that it has the means and the resources it needs to carry out its mandate.
- Guidelines on the ANC's approach to internal leadership contests in elective meetings and conferences of the organisation will be developed, especially rules for lobbying and campaigning. This will take into account the organisation's experiences over many years and will be guided by the overriding imperative to ensure that internal democratic processes protect the movement's integrity and do indeed produce the best cadres to lead transformation.
- The ANC will put in place a system for leaders to make regular declarations of financial interests to the organisation. Drawing on existing practices in Parliament and government, the system will need to ensure a proper balance between privacy and accountability.
- Guidelines will be developed on ANC leaders and their families doing business with government and public entities. The guidelines will give due regard to the right of every person to engage in legitimate business activity while removing the potential for any ANC leader or member of their family to derive undue benefit from political access.

Proceeding from the understanding that this is a matter affecting all parties and government institutions, the ANC will also table this matter for discussion in the legislatures and encourage forums such as NEDLAC to engage on the issue.

The NEC is determined that these measures should be implemented consistently and without fear or favour, and that they are essential steps towards renewing, rebuilding and uniting the movement.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The NEC received reports on local government, proposals on electoral reform, on the process of selection of ANC local public representatives and on preparations for the 2021 Local Government Elections. The NEC will continue discussions of these matters at a special session later this week.

ORGANISATIONAL CAMPAIGNS AND PROGRAMMES

The NEC took note of the ongoing organisational campaign against racism, vowed to intensify the promotion of the principle of non-racialism, and to continue to fight racism and tribalism in the movement and in society. This is particularly important as we celebrate Heritage Month in September 2020, recognising the centenary anniversaries of Harry Gwala, Rusty Bernstein, Vuyisile Mini, Phyllis Ntantala, Robert Resha and others.

The NEC condemned in the strongest terms the killing of disabled teenager, Nathaniel Julies from Eldorado Park. As a society, we are responsible for the well-being and protection of children and persons living with disabilities.

The NEC also reflected on the ongoing programme against gender-based violence and femicide, and urged Parliament to swiftly consider and finalise the legislative amendments to strengthen measures against GBV. It welcomed the broadening of engagements by men and boys on the role they can play in the fight against gender-based violence and add their voices to the call that women's lives matter.

As we conclude Women's Month, we must ensure that in dealing with GBV and femicide as the worst manifestations of patriarchy, we also tackle other dimensions of patriarchy, including the economic exclusion of women.

THE AFRICAN AGENDA

The NEC notes that South Africa continues to play a critical role in its capacity as African Union Chair, led by President Ramaphosa. It welcomed the reports on work done around a continent-wide programme on COVID-19, working with the AU Commission, Regional Economic Communities and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

The NEC further acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, and appreciated the resumption of work to take the process of an African common market forward. It welcomed the fact that the Africa CFTA office has now been opened, headed by one of our own as Secretary General.

It also notes work being done to continue to silence the guns in Mali and Libya, and to ensure stability in Mozambique, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

The NEC welcomed government efforts to engage the situation in Zimbabwe, in particular the deployment of special envoys. It emphasised the importance of the envoys engaging with all stakeholders in the country to assist in addressing the current situation. ANC and government processes must complement each other.

The NEC supported greater party-to-party interaction between the ANC and Zanu-PF with the intention to develop a fuller understanding of the situation in Zimbabwe and to determine how the ANC and government can assist. It was also agreed that the ANC must speak to all parties and stakeholders as well.

Concern was expressed at the insurgency in Mozambique. Government was urged to effectively address any security threats to this country and to provide support to the government of Mozambique should this be requested.

The NEC agreed that the International Relations committee of the ANC must provide detailed reports on these two matters at its next meeting.

The NEC supports the ongoing Alliance campaign of solidarity with the people of Palestine in these very difficult and trying times that they face.

CONCLUSION

This special meeting of the NEC has made significant progress in addressing critical issues of organisational unity and renewal. It has emerged with a clear direction and unity of purpose. This was one of the better meetings that the NEC has held.

This NEC meeting has laid a firm foundation for the organisation to provide leadership on the urgent reconstruction and transformation of our economy, to sustain our response to the coronavirus pandemic, to fight corruption by drawing a line in the sand, and to end violence against women and children.

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