

Statement of the National Executive Committee on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the African National Congress January 8, 1992

*Fellow South Africans,
Comrades and compatriots,*

Today, January 8, we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the formation of the African National Congress.

Through the length and breadth of South Africa and in many parts of the world, anti-apartheid fighters and democrats – young and old, black and white – join hands to reflect on the history of struggle against racial oppression and tyranny and to take stock of the tasks that lie ahead. This is the case because the African National Congress has been and remains the torch-bearer of the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of South Africans.

We take this opportunity to congratulate the people of our country who successfully implemented the programme outlined in our statement on the occasion of January 8 last year, registering new advances in our struggle to attain democracy.

The commemoration of our anniversary this year bears a quality and content different from all previous years. A new spirit is abroad in our land. The successful convocation of the first sitting of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) is a great achievement for all South Africans.

However, we are under no illusion that the transition to democracy will be plain-sailing. The more serious business of this Convention has just started; and the historic duty of ridding our country of the criminal system of apartheid still awaits accomplishment.

Road to Democracy

It is a reflection of the advances we have made that South Africa is now firmly on the road to democracy. Properly organised, no force can stop our people from achieving democracy in the shortest possible time.

Those on the extreme right of the political spectrum who cling to the past with threats against negotiations might possibly delay transition to

democracy. But they cannot stop it. Attempts to block the march of history and use violence to perpetuate discredited apartheid policies or even modified apartheid will only lead to a replay of conflict which will cause greater devastation on our whole society.

In the last instance, those who seek to subvert democracy will lose because democracy will surely triumph. Our destiny as a people – black and white – is intertwined. We owe it to future generations to rebuild our country afresh as our common heritage.

The formation of the ANC was in large measure a response to the 1910 Act of Union. This act represented an illegitimate agreement at an earlier convention between British imperialism and the colonial settlers to unite South Africa on the basis of the racial exclusion of the majority of its people.

Today we celebrate our 80th anniversary after the adoption of a Declaration of Intent containing constitutional principles which unequivocally reject the policies and practices of apartheid and racial domination. For the first time ever, as a result of struggle, representatives of the oppressed people and the apartheid regime have together committed themselves to jointly explore the creation of democratic institutions in South Africa.

Founding Conference

It is not with a spirit of self-congratulation and undue optimism that we assert that the policies of the founders of the African National Congress are being further vindicated before our very eyes. The 80 years of uninterrupted struggle led by the ANC are about to bear fruit.

The founding conference in Mangaung, Bloemfontein on January 8, 1912 brought together great patriots such as John Langalibalele Dube, Pixley ka Izaka Seme, Sol Plaatje, Sam Makgatho, Walter Rubusana, Charlotte Maxeke, Thomas Maphikela and Edward Tsewu. In recognition of the role of their forefathers in the wars of resistance and the contribution they could make in forging the future, Solomon ka Dinizulu of the Zulu, Montsioa of the Barolong, Lewanika of the Lozi, Letsie II of the Sotho, Lobatsibeni of the Swazi, Dalindyebo of the Thembu, Sekhukhuni of the Pedi, Khama of the Tswana and other traditional leaders participated on that historic day to help establish the African National Congress.

We pay special tribute to one of the first honorary presidents of the ANC, that patriotic leader of our people, King Dinizulu ka Cetshwayo who, in his absence, was given this accolade in recognition of his commitment to the struggle against white domination in general, and his role in the

Dear Thandi

Lots of freete ps. I've been
trying to contact you for some weeks
now. Hope you will be joining us
at home on Saturday at 13⁰⁰ for
a little gathering.

Love.

William

Cybil

Sorry for respo-
nse but I've been
over the car
messing around
since coming in
early next week