

Camp/0110/2

**ANC VICE-PRESIDENT'S SPEECH TO THE CHIEF REPRESENTATIVES MEETING
10 DECEMBER 1990**

COMRADES

We have been given the special honour of welcoming you back home. We are receiving you all here as soldiers of our struggle and people who have mobilised the International Community into action against apartheid. Under your leaderships we have been able to consolidate a campaign for the International isolation of apartheid South Africa and this became one of the principal contributions of the world community in the struggle to end apartheid.

You involved everyone, governments, inter-governmental organisations, anti-apartheid and other non-governmental organisations, drawing millions of people into the struggle for sanctions against apartheid South Africa.

We have witnessed the energy which you have invested as individuals into mobilising all forces, in forty different parts of the world. Today as we welcome you home, we also honour your courage. You have aided in building our missions in exiles into powerful units of struggle for our desire to have, a non-racial, non-sexist, united and democratic South Africa. Today we must also pay tribute to comrades like Johnny Makatini, who sacrificed his health and eventually his life in the persuation of our goals. We must also salute and pay tribute to our President, Oliver Tambo, who knocked on every door and opened the way for the ANC to establish the forty missions we now have. This represents more diplomatic missions than those of the South African government.

Our Movement has only been unbanned for 10 months. During this time our cadres have set out to build a strong movement combining the experience of mass struggle and determination to build a strong movement. We have divided the country into fourteen regions and to date twelve of the fourteen have launched regional structures. Our total membership is just over 300,000 and we are working for a membership of 1 million before our congress in June 1991.

Our membership drive has been faced with many difficulties. Since March this year our people have witnessed violence of major proportions. Whilst we were witnessing the birth of Namibia as an independent nation our efforts at building a strong mass based ANC were thwarted by acts of violence perpetuated against our people by elements within the government. Between March 1990 and November 1990 every region of our country has witnessed intensified and well orchestrated acts of violence. We believe

these to be aimed at attempts to stop the ANC from building strong structures and creating a paralysis in the process of uniting of our country by introducing fear.

Yet, our people have grown used to turning setbacks into challenge. Whilst we were engaged in mobilising our people into action against the violence and apartheid, talks continued with the government the Groote Schuur minute was the result of the first formal meeting between the ANC and the government, aimed at removing obstacles in the way of negotiations.

We raised the obstacles mentioned in the Harare Declaration and presented much evidence of repression against activists and communities since February 2. The government argued that the armed struggle was an obstacle in the way of creating a climate for negotiations. This was not accepted by the ANC, we presented to the government the coalition between the police and Inkatha in Natal and they refuted this. This first resulting in a commitment from the ANC and the government to seek ways of ending the violence. A working group was established to work out a definition of political offences and to work out the mechanisms for release of political prisoners. We must point out that our delegation to this meeting characterised a dynamic non-racial composition. We were clear then as we are now, that our struggle is about power, that is for transfer of power to the people. It is not about sharing power or dual power, but majority rule. It is to ensure that the people shall govern.

In Pretoria where we met the government for the second time, the ANC unilaterally suspended the armed struggle, we took a step which has placed us for in advance of the government. Even while the government was working on a time table for release of political prisoners and the return of exiles, the ANC felt then and now that our country cannot afford any delays in achieving peace. We wish to state that suspension is not abandonment of armed struggle. We have waged a very long struggle and we have learned not to give away our strengths, but we have learned that our courage to face a situation squarely has brought results. The process of negotiations is not irreversible and cannot be said to be so until we have achieved our democratic goals and that is to wrest power and privilege from a minority and give power, economic and social justice to all. We went reluctantly into armed struggle, our people have paid with their lives, we have to see concrete results in the form of real political change before we can request a mandate from our people to abandon armed struggle. Our strategic priorities are:

To build a mass based ANC as a multi faceted weapon, paying particular attention to its being deployed in mass struggle in support of democratic demands.

We are demanding a Constituent Assembly based on a non racial vote.

We want to ensure that a new constitution is made by the people. We say that elections will determine what support all organisations or parties command. We have no doubt about the support people give to the ANC, this has been demonstrated in different forms at rallies, marches and funerals. We must harness this support and include the people in the building of our nation.

In our travels abroad we have asked the international Community to keep up the pressure on the apartheid regime. Many countries do this with reluctance, but they are prepared to continue to support the call of the ANC. Our objective is not to deny our people growth, nor did we seek sanctions as a tool to bring the South African government to the negotiating table. We sought sanctions to end apartheid and minority rule. Thus comrades, it has been a strong weapon and it needs to be maintained until we have certainly established from the government that the road to a non-racial, united, non-sexist and democratic South Africa is no longer a matter merely for discussion, but a proposition which will result in concrete reality. We must stress that our position is not ambivalent. Our decision to maintain sanctions stands. When we decide to review sanction we will have to consult with a broad range of people both inside and outside the country.

Our decision to review sanctions cannot be a unilateral decision. When we adopted this as a tactic to isolate the South African government, we mobilized many communities, both nationally and internationally. Sanctions were applied as a demand of the people in various countries. It is our duty to organise the masses of people in other countries to continue to support us until we reach our final objective.

Amandla!