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"BLACK UNITY - ACTIONS FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT11

KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO THE 24TH ANNUAL CONGRESS OF NAFCOC

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President of Inyandza National Movement

and Chief Minister of KaNgwane

BLACK UNITY - AETIONS FOR ECONOMIE EMPOWERMENT

Mr Chairman, Mr President

Distinguished guests, friends and compatriots'

It is an honour and a privilege for me to be here with you today. I thank the executive of NAFCOC for inviting me to address you on the occasion of your twenty fourth annual conference. When I received the invitation to deliver the keynote address on the theme of the conference, I winced and reread the letter to ascertain its authenticity. But alas, it was true that, in spite of my limited knowledge and experience in the field of commerce and economics, my acceptance of the invitation would mean sharing my tentative thoughts with ladies and gentlemen who are accomplished in this field. Be that as it may, it is my intention to share with you today a few perceptions and proposals on the key concepts of unity, action and empowerment.

I am reminded on this occasion of two events that transpired thirty five years ago involving men of stature, one of whom is present here today. The inaugural meeting of the first permanent organisation of African traders, the Johannesburg African Chamber of Commerce (JACOC) was held. From its inception and under the leadership of patriots of the calibre and standing of Paul Mosaka, JACOC set out to defend and advance the rights of black businessmen to operate in a severely restricted and hostile environment. By the early sixties JACOC had matured into an organisation fit to become a distinguished participant in both the African Leaders and All-In-Africa Conferences. Mosaka was arraigned in the course of his resolute pursuit of justice and democracy, along with Nelson Mandela, for his part in organising the 1961 stayaway.

The second dates back twenty years to when a distinguished African leader, Dr Samuel Motsuenyane took the helm of JACOC's successor, the National African Chamber of Commerce (NACOC). At the time, NACOC was confronted with a grave threat in the form of an ultimatum. Disband into tribal groupings or forfeit official recognition. To its credit NACOC chose the latter course, despite being forced to compromise its status and transform itself into a federation. Under the effective leadership of its President, NAFSOC has travelled beyond the crossroads, with its compass trained on the high road of freedom and dignity for all South Africans. For me it is more than just tradition to extol great personalities such as these. It is a duty closely linked with the challenges we face in order to move forward to a just and equitable future, to highlight the roles played by the pathfinders.

The theme of this conference is both timely and instructive. Indeed, there cannot be more than one opinion - at least among those assembled here - about the worsening crisis afflicting our society and reducing our beautiful country to a wasteland, and the urgent need to resolve it. I welcome this fresh approach which breaks with the worn out and oft-repeated themes on black business, its direction and purpose, and poses a challenge to those present to unite and act to attain power. Our people know where they are going, how and why, and some of them have paid for their beliefs and actions with their blood. Your role is but one in a multifaceted thrust bent on realising the liberation of the black people of South Africa.

I would like to turn now to the first of the three operative words in the title of this address and explore it in some detail - that is the question of unity. Historically, we need to focus attention on two salient factors which are directly related to black disunity. The first is of our own making; the second is the consequence of a series of political and economic policies pursued by successive white governments in the modern era.

Traditionally, we inherited a system of tribalism premised on rivalry between different ethnic and language groups. The devastating wars of the nineteenth century perpetuated this rivalry over leadership and control. We failed to co-operate for our own good and played into the hands of the colonial power by facilitating and acquiescing to their policy of divide and rule. The edifice of apartheid was erected on this foundation. Our history is characterised by splits and splinter-groups each with exaggerated claims to exclusivity and purity. We have lacked the motivation and commitment to the common good to form a united front, even though the need for such unity should have been abundantly clear to us. In a message sent by Nelson Mandela to the people in 1980 to mark the twenty fifth anniversary of the Freedom Charter he states the case clearly:

"This is not the time for the luxury of division and disunity. At all levels and in every walk of life, we must close ranks... The differences must be submerged to the achievement of a single goal - the complete overthrow of apartheid and race domination."

Whatever the political and other structures within which we operate, it is essential for us living at this time in our history, to do all in our power to bring about black unity. For without a meaningful attempt to create solidarity, to exercise our economic muscle, to press forward with an acceptable agenda for a new South Africa on a united front, we will remain dispossessed, second class, and left out in the land of our birth. The assertion that now is when we need black unity to reach our goal does not imply that we could have done without it in the past. I venture to suggest that had we been more unified, more experienced and determined to resist the imposition of apartheid, we might not have found ourselves victims of the unacceptable situation which prevails today.

The fragmentation that characterises us as a people is the tragedy of black South African political organisations. While they are all united in their hatred of apartheid and their call for a just and fair social order, they find it virtually impossible to work together to pursue their ideals, to accept the validity of other political groups and to seek out areas of agreement rather than areas of difference. Vestiges of tribalism and sectionalism contend with differing ideologies and despite having come together in the melting pots of the towns and cities, strongly held allegiances and visions for the future vie with each other, going so far as to draw blood. One disheartening experience of the past three years has been to observe what amounts to a laying bare of the multiform divisions which threaten to rend the black community apart. In areas such as Pietermaritzburg and Crossroads, individual and family life and property have been sacrificed in conflicts among black people which serve only to perpetuate our disempowered status. Various manifestations of

disagreement between different groups have surfaced and acutely played themselves out. Differences between youth and parents; conflict over ideological positions, tactics and strategies; and even ethnic differences have not only kept groups apart, but also at loggerheads. The white rulers themselves have been quick to exploit the opportunity of using one faction in a vicious campaign against the rest, and are laughing all the way to the political bank!

It is not for us to apportion blame or to judge one group favourably in preference to others, except in instances where they are at the beck and call of those who seek to perpetuate our enslavement. But conventional wisdom and the black experience teach us that what we have in common transcends by a million years the differences that might arise. The black people are the collective victims of political and economic denial. Arguably, the degrees might differ. Our conceptions of the best methods to change this situation will certainly not always coincide. But what matters most, I believe, to the black scholar and headmaster, to the black worker and the black businessman, to the African, the Coloured and those of Indian origin, is our rightlessness and the urgent need to restore these inalienable rights.

In this respect, the dark cloud of interblack conflict has had its silver lining. Most significantly a wide spectrum of freedom-loving forces have realised that there is this common denominator of our oppressed status and this realisation has fuelled their determination to change it. We are the central force in effecting this change. Cracks in the black edifice not only undermine respect for our noble cause but also reduce to naught all our endeavours, as well as undermine the gains that we have made. It behoves the black people in particular to

seek and find the many areas of agreement that do exist and act together on this basis. There should indeed be no barriers to such a united partnership except for those who in word and deed advance, abet and defend the oppressive system. No one black organisation or individual is going to win this struggle for liberation. It is bigger than all the separate individuals and multifarious organisations. If these groups are prepared to negotiate and compromise they could overcome these barriers and go a long way to destroying apartheid. The immediate past half century has seen our people bowed under the yoke of apartheid. The M Nationalist government's rise to power in 1948 ushered in a group of laws and enactments that systematically divided and suppressed us. The discriminatory legislation beginning with the Population Registration and Group Areas Acts were based on the foundation of the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts. A burgeoning bureaucracy schooled in the ideology of separation went willingly to work to create and promote government structures that entrenched these divisions: separate amenities and residence, separate education, separate health and transport. The list is endless. The Homelands policy was to be the apex of this complex and abhorrent ideology, the means of divesting South Africa of black citizens. And it too was and remains firmly rooted in ethnic division. The government succeeded in large measure in co-opting leaders who would play along and take 'independence.' We are all witness to or have experienced ourselves the devastations such a policy has wrought on our people and how effective it has been in subverting black unity.

Attempts by blacks to create a united front have been doomed from the start, given Afrikaner nationalisms' absolute intolerance of any threat, real or perceived, to its hegemony. As the ANC gathered support in the fifties with the Defiance Campaign and stayaways so did the state hammer away at its leaders and this organisation, a pattern which they have continued to follow with ever-increasing sophistication. The lengthy Treason Trial of the late fifties was one of the last legitimate attempts to quell African nationalism in the courts. Bannings and detention without trial took over where the law failed to deliver. In our own time the extraordinary has become the norm as the State of Emergency enters its third year. For a few years in the early eighties there was a false spring. The United Democratic Front, AZAPO and the trade unions were left relatively free to mobilise and politicise their members and establish themselves. But this respite was not long lived. Threatened by the reality of black unity and what it could achieve the state swiftly and ruthlessly crushed the leaders and organisations that had fostered the development of this unity.

Of late, much attention has been focussed in the state-controlled media on the RSA government's so-called reform process. The proposed National Council is premised on ethnic and racial groups and is bent on co-opting 'moderate' blacks who will form the main figures in the window-dressing campaign that this 'reform' is. Our people have been through this process before, with bodies such as the Native Representative Council, which was appropriately called "nothing more than a toy telephone" at the time. The same could be said to apply to the structures touted as solutions to black demands today, which are no more than palliatives. We have observed where co-operation with people intent on

maintaining their power and privilege has led our people in the past. For this reason we deeply regret the pseudOeorganisations which have fulfilled the hidden agenda of those who are responsible for fostering and maintaining them. Bodies such as the Tricameral parliament which led to the demise of the S A Black Alliance, when the Labour Party withdrew; FIDA; and the Independent Christian Movement come to mind. Having considered the roots of this disunity we need to explore options and tactics which will make unity a reality. It would seem imperative that during the course of your deliberations at this Conference, you should examine these three operative words: unity, action and empowerment in much greater detail. First of all we need to be clear on what we mean by black unity. Is it unity based_ on race alone; or are we talking about unity based on well considered principles? Are we prepared to create this unity at any price or are there parameters to what is conceived of as appropriate and legitimate action? Is this action vested solely yin self-proclaimed leaders or are we to work as equal partners with our communities? And when we look at the action to achieve empowerment, do we mean the empowerment of the business community at the expense and to the exclusion of all the people? I believe that I can contribute in part to the discussion on unity and empowerment. As to the action, and the practical steps that members of this body can take, I rely with confidence on the deliberation of you, this group, to propose relevant and far-reaching options. Such action will ensure that NAFCOC and its allies make meaningful progress towards realising freedom and democracy.

A renowned thinker of the past century, John Stewart Mills asserted;

"No great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible, until a great change takes place in the fundamental constitution of their modes of thought".

Black businessmen operate within a macro-environment of the black experience of life in South Africa and not in isolation. As Reuel Khoza states:

"The history of black business is not moulded as much by business itself as by measures against the nation as a whole".

It is the politics that draws the boundaries within which the black businessman can survive rather than thrive.

While we could justifiably sing praises to our very existence, the fact is that we are capable of doing much better, given a different and more conducive environment.

The whole fabric of society is permeated by division and discrimination which pervade every facet of our lives.

There needs to be a fundamental change in the modes of thought of South Africans in order to achieve the great improvements which Mills speaks of, beginning with the white minority who so jealously protect their empowered status and who conduct their affairs in the interests of white privilege and prosperity.

It is we blacks who carry the cost in suffering and impoverishment. Statements about change have a hollow ring to them and are all too often devoid of content and meaningless in practice. Too many men of stature and fired with democratic zeal languish in the darkness of our country's prisons, detained without trial and even

land up in the psychiatric wards of hospitals. The guardians of our society patrol our townships in armoured vehicles attempting to win the hearts and minds of our people. Peaceful attempts to create the conditions for meaningful change by individuals and groups are denied, with even the churches labelled as enemies and included as targets for repression. The rule of law is rendered slave to the rule of force with troops semi_permanently stationed in the townships. Such a scenario belies the claims that apartheid and all its stands for is dead. Given this scenario, one is justified to question the relevance and effectiveness of 'homeland' leadership; Apartheid apologists will construe it as an improvement in terms of black representation. In KaNgwane, we have proved that structures which were designed to confine blacks to backyard and subservient political roles can be used to forestall and frustrate measures that are designed to entrench our oppression, and substitute them with our own agenda. I would like to believe that those present here know our stand and are aware of our track record. Suffice to say that despite being forced to operate from backyard premises, we are doing good business, so to speak, probably to the consternation of the powers that be! At issue, however is the point that black people are far, and it would seem are being pushed further, from determining their destiny in the prevalent status quo.

It would be appropriate at this juncture to look at economic disempowerment and our people's lack of credible representation in any of the major sectors such as mining, agriculture, manufacturing, banking and finance and even retailing. Why is this the case and what is the cause? We have touched on a number of the issues in our discussion on disunity, but there are others which need

to be acknowledged. Our people begin at a disadvantage with an education system that is grossly inequitable, spending R2225 on a white and R368 on a black pupil each year. 65% of black teachers are underqualified and with the need for newly qualified teachers running at 17,500 per year, I have scant hope of us ever making up the huge backlog.

Apart from the obvious head start of qualitatively better education that white children obtain, there is the hidden curriculum of acculturation which produces self-confident young people equipped to cope in an aggressive, profit-oriented society that characterises much of the white-dominated business world's dealings, both English and Afrikaans speaking. The 'Bantu education' that has been forced down our throats is premised on dependence and subservience. Taking the initiative and the encouragement of independent thought are not its hallmarks. Despite our people's rejection of this gutter education, many have been socialised into tacitly accepting that whites make decisions for us. The pervasiveness of such a hidden agenda immediately disadvantages would-be black managers and keeps them effectively locked out. Concomitant with this is the apparent reluctance of blacks to pursue academic careers oriented toward business and commercial skills.

In a country which loudly claims to be a capitalist one, we would expect to find the skills of the entire population actively developed. But our enforced commercial and residential separation has produced a situation antithetical to the demands of capitalism. It is significant that the greatest inroads into the vice-grip of apartheid have been brought about by the dictates of the market place. Apartheid has been broken down more effectively as a result of integration on the factory

floor and in offices, coupled with the demands of cost effective and sound business practices, than it has by any of the political groups which have opposed it. Those blacks who are selected for training do not always have it easy. A non-statutory form of job reservation still prevails, and no doubt will continue well on into the future. It is based on the traditional perception that whites occupy skilled or managerial positions, this, despite black willingness and ability to fill such positions, even the necessary training.

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Instead, many companies resorted in the past to recruiting skilled labour from overseas. Given South Africa's present pariah status internationally, there are few foreigners who will take the bait and by default more and more blacks are being included in internal training programmes. Once in the programme, the trainee needs to cope with a host of problems which include: a low or even negative self-image coupled with an inhibited sense of ability and a preoccupation with personal limitations. There is the hurdle of the cultural gap to overcome, the pressure to come to grips with the Protestant work ethic and the whole 'social scene'. For some, promotion serves only as a 'window dressing' exercise enabling companies to draw attention to themselves as promoting black advancement. Such 'Uncle Tom'-like positions are intolerable and are to be deplored. Other companies pay lip service to pressure to train black managers and create 'black homelands' within their corporations that consist of all black departments dealing only with black customers.

To address these handicaps, an affirmative action programme is necessary involving inter alia the provision of role models or mentors to facilitate the promotional process and support the trainee. Social intercourse

outside the work place should be actively promoted in order to begin to normalise our polarised society. Management needs to take a strong stand against any possible expression of a white backlash which, I believe, is a potentially critical area. For ourselves, we as a community need to recognise the stresses the black manager is under as he lives out a schizophrenic role, as an individual attempting to succeed in his job, and as a black person rejecting the system and allying himself with our people's struggle. Care needs to be taken to avoid labelling the aspirant executive as a 'sell out.' South Africa's managerial shortage is not going to be solved by traditional remedies of spending more money to build schools, develop training programmes, etc. While this will ameliorate the situation, we must go further: I would suggest that the solution lies in boldness and imagination necessitating a firm commitment from both the private and public sectors to work towards equality of opportunity; a massive and sustained training programme to educate and train black entrants to the workforce on the one hand and the training and upliftment of the blacks already in the system, on the other.' Black managers will have to take up the challenge to promote and participate in the transformation of our society, without losing hope or succumbing to intimidation and despair.

At the same time, successful blacks need to take care not to move from complete exclusion in the business world, to controlled inclusion hostile to black interests as a whole and by this co-option alienate ourselves from the national democratic movement and the masses, through our elite middle class status. The emergence of economically advantaged blacks isolated from the poor and oppressed, and intent on satisfying their own greed, will not

advance our cause. At the risk, but without the intention of antagonising successful businessmen here present, I venture to suggest that some of the affluent appear to be intent on protecting their wealth and confining its influence to a narrow sphere.

We need to learn a lesson from the Afrikaners who travelled this road before us in the thirties when they became urbanised. Sanlam and Volkskas bear witness today to what shared assets, well invested, achieved for them as a means of penetrating and wresting control partially in the economic and wholly in the political spheres. We too could accumulate capital and use it to buy up property and buy into existent and profitable businesses as the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) did in the sixties in the United States. Such moves would not only break through the divisions created by apartheid but also dramatically demonstrate our economic muscle.

The principle of a rotating credit association such as constitutes our own indigenous 'stokvels' is a good point to start. Such grass-roots level co-operative financial activity has successfully mobilised savings to finance the informal sector. It would appear that these organisations are on the brink of launching into larger business ventures across the country. There are certain qualities which characterise their internal operation, which if valued and nurtured could go a long way to promoting black economic liberation. These include an accepted and enforced discipline, a high element of trust and a low default rate among contributing members.

If they could be encouraged to embark on joint ventures and to call on professional intervention to build up the skills acquired in accumulating and circulating capital,

they might be able to move beyond such levels to that of capital creation. We welcome the decision of the African Bank to provide assistance according to the stokvels' and burial societies' needs. The President of the National Stokvels Association, Andrew Lukhele guestimates that between R4 and R8 million is saved monthly at the present time, on the reef alone. The interesting point here is that this amount of finance, with its enormous investment potential, exists and circulates entirely outside the formal banking and savings sectors. How the competing giants must long to channel this money through their organisationsi

Be this as it may, black business is restricted to the periphery of the private sector in ownership of capital as well as! management. Historically, blacks have been cut off from and locked out of the core of economic activities where substantial capital formation takes place. Formal black business contributes less than 1% to South Africa's gross domestic product of R200 Billion and operates principally in the informal sector. Denial of access to that core through legislative barriers, lack of capital, underdeveloped skills and an impoverished background form part of the package of grievances that our people demand be addressed. The claim has been made that the unrecorded sector may be generating a turnover of about R40 billion. But we have no economic muscle so to speak, and are unable to advance our own interests. Our initiatives are constrained by a lack of skills, capital and access to markets, resulting in our economic and commercial activities remaining small scale and going largely unrecorded.

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Where the businesses are larger they are usually involved in distribution services and increasingly, construction and transport. The South African Black Taxi Association

(SABTA) has received much publicity in the media of late for its successful pooling of resources which has strengthened the 45,000 taxi drivers who benefit from its bargaining power. A recent newspaper report (The Star, 28 July 1988), quoted Clem Sumter, the scenario planner at the Anglo American Corporation as saying that the expansion of black taxi fleets has proved the miracle of the mid-eighties, with investment running at R3 billion, and the number of jobs created directly and indirectly standing at 300,000 which equals 60% of the labour force in gold-mining.

Sumter stated further:

"Without the car manufacturers on one hand and black entrepreneurs on the other, nothing would have happened. The formal and informal sectors combined very effectively to produce this miracle, which has also destroyed the myth about blacks not being creative and demonstrated the power of deregulation."

The burgeoning of unions in the early eighties and their successful organisation has begun to make inroads into the world of white privilege. Capitalism has been seen to serve white interests for the most part and the black bourgeoisie are seen as being in alliance with the capitalist powers. At the height of the unrest concerted efforts were made by the ordinary people to bring down the affluent. Given this perception it is small wonder that our people have been looking to the Freedom Charter, with its call to nationalise the wealth and share it equitably, as a solution to this untenable situation. I have a built-in reticence about strident attempts to

justify pure capitalism and pure socialism each at the expense and to the exclusion of the other. I would prefer to see a pragmatic and eclectic blend of economic values, practices and systems develop in our country, suited to our situation and our needs.

Regrettably, the white dominated private sector has manifested a reluctance to finance black business because of the perceived risks involved. However, the development of black business is now being sponsored and encouraged by massive contributions from over 30 organisations promoting small entrepreneurship. 'Get Ahead' for example, which caters for the very small entrepreneur recorded R5,242 in bad debts over one year, having lent out R750,000 in the space of three years. But still, the control of the major trading companies listed on the stock exchange remains an enclave of white male directors, many of whom serve on several boards simultaneously. A miniscule percentage of the country's managers are black. Such a situation vividly illustrates how patronage and paternalism have operated. A documentary shown recently on TV1 dealing with black businessmen, succeeded in conveying the entrepreunering spirit and sheer determination to succeed in the face of enormous obstacles that characterises those who have made it. It also highlighted the frightening fact that there are only 16 black chartered accountants registered with the Institute in South Africa at present.

As experience elsewhere in Africa has shown, it takes a generation after independence for people to forsake the 'safe' careers of the civil service and the traditional professions like teaching. In Kenya in the 1960's, a coffee exporting company failed to attract even one national applicant for an accountant's position. Twenty five years later there were one hundred Kenyan

accountants applying for that same post. I hope that this situation is one that our own people will emulate. No amount of education and training can, however, compensate for robbing us of the land we once possessed. The 1913 and 1936 Land Acts ensured that access to and ownership of land was and remains premised on race. We have no more than a toe-hold on the land. It is gratifying to find that whites are beginning to realise that laws on black property rights have to be scrapped, if not for moral and ethical reasons, then for economic ones. Ben Vosloo of the Small Business Development Corporation said lately:

"No measure has caused more continued resentment among blacks, nor has done more to prevent blacks from gaining access to capital, than their denial of normal property rights in terms of the 1913 Land Act and subsequent legislation."

Coupled with the removal of statutory legislation. on land rights, we would like to see a meaningful and visible attempt to deregulate, privatise and actively promote small business development. Much is being said but what is being done?

The Hawkers Association is beginning to make inroads in this area for its 12500 members, part of a group estimated at 150,000 such small salespeople. I believe Dr Louise Teger will address this conference on deregulation, which has yet to emerge on a comprehensive scale, and on which she is at present doing much good work. With institutions such as Stellenbosch University running an entrepreneurial skills development programme

geared to Third World problems and business behaviour, I must believe that the entrepreneurial talent displayed by blacks as long ago as the nineteenth century, and which posed a real threat to white colonists and settlers, will grow from strength to strength. Their successes then were partly instrumental in our being dispossessed and squeezed off the land as a people.

Imagine for a moment, ladies and gentlemen, that a selective hurricane blew through all those government edifices, those imposing towers of bureaucracy in Pretoria and swept away an entire generation of central planners, social engineers and controllers, along with their paper mountains of rules and regulations, licences and legislation? Some would say that chaos would ensue and fling their arms in the air in horror at the thought. I would like to think of the ensuing time as a melting pot, during which a dynamic and creative process would allow natural competitive market forces to supercede vested interests; which would promote entrepreneurially led, job-creating growth that could lead to a redistribution of wealth and allow the unemployed poor to compete with the rich few, who shelter behind this Kafkaesque world of protective laws and privileges.

IN CONCLUSION

As this conference unfolds over the next few days I trust that both the speakers and delegates will closely examine some of the issues raised and make realistic proposals to alter prevailing circumstances. We need to ask where, in the milieu of centralised and concentrated economic power, we blacks fit in. How are we to make meaningful inroads into the stranglehold exercised by giant corporate establishments? When are we going to divert a large measure of the finances controlled by these titans, to our own communities, to build up infrastructure and address the needs of the black population? Where are our small businessmen and women going to fit in, in such a saturated environment, beset as they are by statutes and restrictions and largely dependent on the supposed goodwill and charity of those who hold the economic reins? How are we to link our immediate economic and commercial concerns on the one hand with the longterm national demands for freedom and equality on the other? To quote Murphy's law:

"Left to themselves things will tend to go from bad to worse."

I believe that great changes will come about as a result of resolute action taken by none other than ourselves, We shall not be pathfinders in this regard, but Vwill swell the ranks of these pioneers who have already beaten on the doors of injustice and oppression. We, as businessmen and women need to be seen to contribute directly to the national effort, to be engaged in this long and bitter struggle to achieve fundamental change, rather than to be seen as mere beneficiaries of the national effort, protecting and aivancing our individual

interests and affluence. In the schools and universities, in the work places and the villages our people have protested and continue to protest against the injustices that apartheid perpetuates. In spite of the draconian laws and regulations introduced by proclamation and implemented by people committed to our oppression and suppression, our people continue to demand their birthright in their motherland. Despite imprisonment and jailing, in the face of possible death, the struggle continues with resolution and tenacity. The last few years have marked an upswell of the masses, who have a goal in sight - that of a free, non_racial and democratic South Africa. They have mustered confidence in their capacity to change the course of history, to alter their world and that of their children. A qualitative change has occurred in what Mills has called the fundamental While I emphasise the need for black unity I wish to guard against focussing on this alone at the expense of national unity, which encompasses all South Africans. For, in the final analysis we are the most important, but not the only force interested in the transformation of the status quo. In other words, black unity should be the bedrock of the united nation of all the people in our country, both black and white. In the context of the struggle, black unity should be the core of the wider unity of ALL who stand opposed to the denial of human dignity, of human equality and rights. And let us make no mistake, apartheid is NOT dead. Its awful face, haggard and grown old is masked by cosmetic changes or plastic surgery. There may be differences on where and how the whites who eschew and want no part of this abhorrent doctrine fit in to the struggle - but I do know that we all need to contribute to the realisation of justice, peace and freedom for all South Africans.

We welcome the dawning of the light that is beginning to take place among the Afrikaner establishment and we laud the bravery of those Afrikaners who like John the Baptist, call out in the wilderness to their fellow men, to repent. This government is losing its power base steadily as more and more of the "volk" realise that the unjust and repressive deeds it perpetrates taint and defile them. To a large extent I believe, the scale of conflict and bloodshed in our country will inversely depend on the involvement of such groups standing up for justice on the side of the struggling majority.

As I see it, one of the main objectives, if not the principal one of black business people and of NAFCOC in particular, is economic empowerment which will percolate through to all ranks of our society. To recapitulate: real economic empowerment needs to focus on production rather than consumerism, real management as distinct from mere salesmanship and supervision of personnel; actual ownership of the national wealth rather than the status of exploited labourer, and the creation of a restriction-free environment. Experience throughout the world and in particular in the Third World, has graphically illustrated that political power without the solid foundation of a sound economy is like the proverbial house built on sand. Conversely, real economic empowerment is virtually unattainable, as we know, in a context of political denial and disempowerment. For this reason I applaud the advancement that has been made as a result of the combined effort of individuals and NAFCOC.

I urge you to build on our labour power and our buying power. We need to penetrate to the highest levels of management as a people, to divert the enormous savings of the black communities lodged with white controlled banks,