



AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

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PRESS RELEASE ✓

For immediate release
Attention: Foreign Desk/News Editor
NOTE: 1 page to follow

STATEMENT OF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, FEBRUARY 2nd, 1991. ✓

As reflected in its anniversary statement issued on January 8th, this year, the National Executive Committee of the ANC remains of the view that the apartheid system must be abolished now and the process of transforming our country into a non-racial democracy begin as speedily as possible.

In this context the ANC commends President De Klerk for the announcements he made on Friday 1st February that all discriminatory legislation will be repealed within a few months.

We welcome also the belated acceptance of the principle that South Africa and all the people who inhabit it constitute one nation, and that the government should derive its legitimacy from the consent of the governed by the leader of the National Party.

The publication of the "Manifesto for a new South Africa" by the government, as an expression of the principle thrust of its *future policies*, also *constitutes a fundamental departure from* the apartheid framework which deserves recognition. The NEC also notes with satisfaction the narrowing of the distance between the positions now being adopted by the National Party and the historic policies of the ANC and its allies as adumbrated in the Freedom Charter and more recently in the ANC's Draft Bill of Rights. These developments will be of great assistance in providing a climate conducive to the elaboration of a new constitution.

It is therefore ironic that President De Klerk rejects both the notions of a Constituent Assembly and an Interim Government. This amounts to an insistence that the minority regime which has no legitimacy in the eyes of the majority of our people, presides over transition to democracy. Together with millions of our people, throughout the country, as shown by the peaceful demonstrations that coincided with the opening of Parliament, the ANC is of the firm view that only an elected Constituent Assembly can provide the forum to negotiate a new constitution for South Africa.

The ANC shall not be party to any arrangement that seeks to foist responsibility for the system of apartheid on us but denies us effective power to uproot it. In this context we cannot accept President De Klerk's proposal to find ways to integrate leaders of the negotiating parties into policy formulation.

We must also draw attention to the remarkable absence of any reference to the numerous Repressive and Security Laws that clutter up South Africa's statute books. These have been the subject of intense discussions between the ANC and the government for the past nine months and are amongst the most obstinate obstacles in the path of free political activity. President De Klerk's silence on the release of political prisoners, ending all political trials and the return of exiles is also cause for alarm.

These omissions suggest a reluctance on the government's part to relinquish the inordinate powers it wields in terms of these laws. This underscores the urgency of the installation of an interim government, reflective of all the political forces in our country.

The homeland system, an expression of the system of apartheid, must also be addressed and measures taken to ensure that all the people of South Africa, including those in the so-called TBVC states, participate in determining the future of their country.

JOHANNESBURG, FEBRUARY 2.

For interviews please contact Nad Pillay, Information Officer.
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T E L E F A X

DATE: 1 February 1991 Page 1 of 1

TO:

from: Abdul S. Minty

WORLD CAMPAIGN, fax +472 303381 tel: +472 301345

*plus 5 pages
S. African
Reports.*

MESSAGE:

RESPONSE TO STATEMENT BY DE KLERK

The following is my immediate response on the basis of the South African Press Association (SAPA) story and without having seen the full text of the statement:

1. The regime rejects the ANC proposal for a Constituent Assembly and an Interim Government - the constitution is apparently to be adopted by heads of various organisations without any democratic process of involving the adult population of the country.

The problem of excluding the ANC and others from government is recognised by the reference to giving them "a voice in the formulation of important decisions". This could amount to co-opting those organisations into "government" without giving them any power - they will thus have to share responsibility and accountability for actions by the regime. This is unlikely to be acceptable.

2. With regard to the Manifesto for a New South Africa the acceptance that minority rights should be without any racial basis is welcome - if all those principles are to be understood in the same way as they mean in the Freedom Charter they are most welcome.

3. The main apartheid laws are to be repealed but the Internal Security Act - a major instrument of repression - is still to be retained. This is a major obstacle to the negotiations.

4. There is no mention of the release of political prisoners or the return of exiles. Thus, although this has been agreed with the ANC the regime is not acting to remove these major obstacles to negotiations.

5. The international community clearly needs to exert greater pressure to ensure that all the obstacles to negotiations are removed and that a democratic framework is agreed for the adoption of a new constitution.

13:00 Hours, Friday 1 February 1991

*We may have more information later -
Please call 47-2-301345 and
we can advise you.*