

**DECLARATION OF THE 48th NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN  
NATIONAL CONGRESS  
6 July 1991**

**We, participants at this 48th National Conference of the ANC, representing a cross section of South African society: workers, students, the rural masses, intellectuals, religious communities, business-persons - men and women, young and old, black and white - hereby adopt this declaration as our collective message to our country and to the world.**

1.0. This 48th National Conference of the ANC, comes at a time when our country and its people are poised to commence the last leg of our long struggle to bring an end to minority domination and usher in an era of democracy and peace. The people's hopes for freedom, social justice, democracy and peace stand higher than at any time during this century. As a result of the struggles and sacrifices of the people, the moment for the final eradication of the hated system of white domination has dawned.

2.0. We remain convinced that the only real hope for the future of our country and its people lies in the creation of a democratic society based on humane values. These values - government of the people, by the people and for the people - have been kept alive and survived in our country thanks to the sacrifices of millions of our people against the tyranny of white domination. We salute the people of South Africa, who have over many decades waged unrelenting struggle, undaunted by repression and other adversities. We pay tribute to all the patriots who have fallen in the cause of this noble struggle.

3.0. The possibility of eradicating apartheid by peaceful means has emerged through our struggles. The overwhelming majority of South Africans are convinced that the process of peaceful transition to a democratic future must proceed with all deliberate speed.

4.0. In this regard, we reaffirm our unambiguous commitment to exploring every possible avenue to resolve by peaceful means the problems of our country. It is this commitment which persuades us that a climate of peace, free of formal or informal repression, is essential for the transition from apartheid to democracy. We reiterate our full support for the OAU Harare Declaration and the Open Letter to the regime, issued by the National Executive Committee on April 9th, and call on the government to address these issues with immediate effect.

5.0. We note with alarm the continuation of vigilante violence perpetrated by agencies of the state against black communities. Even as conference continued with its deliberations, numerous attacks, including against families of conference delegates, took place. A climate of fear, doubt and uncertainty pervades our country. We refuse to submit to the temptations of despair induced by the enemies of democracy, justice and peace, who have over the past 18 months subjected our country, especially the Natal and PWV regions, to an unprecedented level of violence and bloodletting with a view to derailing the search for peace and postponing indefinitely the establishment of a democratic non-racial state.

6.0. We are no longer prepared to accept pious words of peace, while the government, its supporters and its surrogates pursue a policy of violence and death against the people and their democratic movement. The patience and forbearance of the people have been sorely tested and we demand that President De Klerk and his government demonstrate, in deeds, that they share our commitment to peace and reconciliation. We express our unqualified support for the initiative of religious and business leaders to facilitate the process towards the adoption and implementation of binding multilateral agreements aimed at ending the scourge of violence.



7.0. The removal of all the obstacles to free political activity will open the way for speedy movement on the crucial questions of the transition and the democratic future. We therefore welcome back to the ranks of active struggle the cadres of our movement and the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe who have recently been released. We note however that many other patriots, including those on Death Row, remain in apartheid dungeons. We demand their immediate and unconditional release and the granting of general amnesty to all exiles. The atmosphere necessary for free political activity and negotiations cannot emerge without these measures, the repeal of all repressive legislation and an end to the violence. The regime must honour the solemn undertakings it made in both the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Summits.

8.0. This will open the way to a period of transition which must be supervised by a sovereign and impartial body and during which the masses of the people will take an active part in the formulation of the basic law of the land. We remain committed to the call for an Interim Government and a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of one-person, one-vote on a non-racial voters' roll. We are committed to work out and communicate to the nation our detailed positions on all these issues as soon as possible. With the clearing of obstacles to normal political activity, we will strive to ensure the convening of the All Party Congress without undue delays.

9.0. We, together with the majority of South Africans are committed to the advancement of the struggle within the context of the new situation. This struggle is vital because victory has not yet been won, the danger of repression continues to loom over the people and the possibility of a derailment of the negotiations process exists. Therefore, we will continue to strengthen the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe both as a force indispensable to the defence of the people and in preparation for the creation of a truly national army of a democratic South Africa; to maintain such underground formations as are necessary; to intensify mass organisation and mobilisation and to ensure the continued engagement of the international community in the common offensive against the criminal system of apartheid.

10.0. We reiterate our adherence to the principles of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa as enshrined in the Freedom Charter. These include the guarantee of the fundamental human rights of all South Africans, reinforced by an entrenched Bill of Rights, a multi-party system of government, a representative and independent judiciary and regular elections. However, these rights will be meaningless without the fundamental restructuring of the economy to serve the interests of the people and far-reaching reforms in the areas of land distribution, housing education, health, welfare and so on.

11.0. The main goal of the struggle is the liberation of our people from the system of national oppression. The ANC remains a national liberation movement committed to the transfer of power to the people as a whole. We do not act simply in the narrow interest of the ANC as a political organisation. Our mission, hand-in-hand with other democratic forces, is to rid South Africa of the scourge of apartheid in all its manifestations.

12.0. We reaffirm our commitment to the deepening of democracy within our ranks. The preparations for this Conference and the open and free exchange of ideas in its sessions have reinforced the unity and coherence of our movement. They have also planted the seed which will germinate in the development of a democratic political culture in our society.

13.0. We reaffirm the ANC's non-sexist policy and commit ourselves to urgently to further develop mechanisms of addressing the serious challenge of women's emancipation in society at large, including our own ranks.

14.0. In order to ensure that all our people act as a united force to achieve the common goal of a democratic society, we commit ourselves to the strengthening of the tri-partite alliance of the ANC,



COSATU and the SACP. We also pledge to continue our efforts to build a broad patriotic front of all forces committed to the attainment of a united, non-racial and democratic society.

15.0. We, the delegates assembled at this 48th National Conference of the ANC call upon all our people to join hands in the struggle for democracy and peace in our land. We reach out to workers, youth and students, the rural masses, traditional chiefs, artists, sports-persons, religious communities, intellectuals, business-persons and others. We call on our white compatriots to take active part in the efforts to build a just and democratic future for all our people. We reach out in particular to the security forces and call on them to support and defend the process of peaceful transition to democracy, acting in support of the aspirations of the people.

16.0. We are inspired by the presence at our conference of 450 foreign guests, drawn from 57 countries in every continent of the world. Their presence here underscores the wide-ranging international support our cause has won. We express our profound appreciation of the contribution made by these friends of our people to the anti-apartheid struggle in the past and are equally confident that this shall continue into the future. We call on the international community to maintain its isolation of apartheid South Africa and intensify its support for the forces of democracy and peace in our country.

17.0. Our country has entered a period of decisive movement towards her redemption from years of cruel oppression and repression. We are conscious of the heavy responsibility on the African National Congress and the people in general to ensure that this takes place with the minimum of bloodshed and destruction. We pledge to march together in ever-swelling ranks to a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

**LET PEACE, FREEDOM AND JUSTICE PREVAIL!**