

African National Congress

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TO: ALL REGIONS

JANUARY 8TH STATEMENT

We forward herewith the draft January 8th Statement for consideration by your region. Could you kindly ensure that comments and amendments you have, are forwarded to us as soon as possible for inclusion in the final draft which will be presented to the NEC on 6 & 7 January 1992.

Could you also kindly ensure that those NEC members in your region are given copies of this Statement so that they too can make comments and amendments.

Yours in the struggle

M.C. Ramaphosa
SECRETARY-GENERAL.

The People Shall Govern!

DRAFT

**STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ON THE
OCCASION OF 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.

The commemoration of January 8 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 an index of the advances we have made that South Africa is now firmly on the road to democracy. Properly organised, our people cannot be stopped by any force from achieving democracy in the shortest possible time.

Those 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 perpetuate to the 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. The ringing preambular declaration of the Freedom Charter, that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white..." can now be translated into reality. 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 a deal 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, representatives of the oppressed people and the government of the day have together committed themselves to jointly explore the 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 own eyes. The 80 years of uninterrupted struggle are about to bear fruit.

The founding conference in Mangaung, Bloemfontein on January 8, 1912 brought together great patriots such as John Langalibalele Dube, Sol Plaatje, Sam Makgatho, Walter Rubusana, Charlotte Maxeke 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 salute these and other great leaders and organisers of the ANC who saw to its development in the early years. We pay tribute to the workers, civics, women, youth, religious leaders, traditional leaders, business-people, the rural masses and others, for their relentless struggle which has brought us to this phase where we can with confidence say that the future is more than ever before within our grasp.

The imperative of national unity through struggle was pinned to the mast of the African National Congress from its very inception. In the long years of the wars of resistance, the African people in particular were defeated as disparate ethnic units. Their heroic spirit was dissipated by their disunity. The formation of the ANC constituted an important break with the past: the adoption of new forms of struggle as a united people. We have truly begun to remove the key obstacles to a breakthrough to freedom which our founders correctly described in 1912, as "the demon of tribalism".

It is a matter of great pride for us that at the founding conference of the ANC were leaders of the people of the sub-continent. This underlined then as it does today that the people of our region and Africa as a whole share a common destiny. As we enter the transition to democracy, we are well aware that we are fulfilling the dream of billions on our continent to rid Africa once and for all of the scourge of racism and colonialism.

Relentless Struggle

The African National Congress and the oppressed and democratic forces of our country look at the future with confidence because we base ourselves on the foundation of 8 decades and more of relentless struggle. We are determined to learn from our successes and our failures.

In these eighty years, we have become keenly aware that only in active

struggle can the democratic forces shift the balance of forces in favour of the oppressed people. The staying power of our movement rests on firm links with the mass of the people. This is the only guarantee of victory.

From the early years - in the campaigns against passes for women, the Land Acts and Hertzog Bills, in the passive resistance campaign of the Indian Congresses, the Great Miners' Strike of 1946 and other actions - the ANC and its allies asserted the rights of the people in actual struggle.

It was with the adoption of the Programme of Action in 1949 that the ANC firmly set itself on a course of active mass resistance to the system of white domination. This found expression in the Defiance Campaign, organisation and mobilisation for the Congress of the People where the Freedom Charter was adopted in 1955, uprisings of the landless rural masses, women's actions against passes, stays-at-home, bus boycotts and other actions.

In the decade of the 50s, the ANC, hand-in-hand with its allies - the South African Congress of Trade Unions, South African Indian Congress, Coloured People's Congress, Congress of Democrats and the then underground South African Communist Party - grew to become the single-most powerful voice against the system of racial tyranny. It is in this decade that non-racial unity was consolidated in struggle, laying the foundation for the development of the ANC into the truly non-racial national organisation that it is today.

Umkhonto we Sizwe

When the time came to resist arms in hand, the ANC did not shirk its responsibility. Despite the fact that the odds were weighted against the democratic forces and the setbacks suffered in the early years of underground operation, efforts were made to build the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe and root it among the people. Over the years Umkhonto developed to become a reliable cutting edge of the people's struggle for freedom and justice.

The bedrock of the development of Umkhonto was the mass actions of the people in defiance of apartheid repression. From the late 1960s and

especially in the two decades that followed, actions of workers, students, the rural masses, youth, women, religious bodies and others made it impossible for the apartheid regime to continue ruling in the old way. The call by the ANC and its allies to make the country ungovernable was answered with vigour. As mass and armed actions dovetailed into a generalised popular offensive, the crisis of apartheid deepened and the regime's retreat routes narrowed.

On this day, we pay tribute to the heroes of the people's army, whose selfless contribution to the overall struggle made it possible for us to reach the decisive phase we are at today. We lower our banners in memory of our martyrs, some of whose remains lie buried in faraway lands. We salute the fighters of the mass democratic movement who lost their lives in the line of duty.

We owe it to all these heroes to ensure that the process we have now embarked upon is neither derailed nor delayed. We owe it to their memory to move with deliberate speed to the democratic South Africa for which they paid the supreme sacrifice.

Mass Action for Transfer of Power

We have just emerged from yet another eventful year in the calendar of our struggle. 1991, the Year of Mass Action for the Transfer of Power, was so designated because of the realisation that mass action has become more crucial than ever before in our struggle. Without mass action we cannot move forward. Without the people in constant political motion, our demands at the negotiations table will sound hollow. Without mass action, the process we have entered into will be relegated to an exchange among leaders. It will lack the decisive input of the people.

Throughout this past year, we have had to fight every inch of the way in the effort to realise free political activity and ensure a fair and just transition to democracy. Central in these actions - from the marches on the opening of parliament, consumer boycotts, rallies and general strikes - is one crucial message: that the apartheid regime does not have the right to rule our country even one day longer.

A special place among these actions belongs to the general strike against Value Added Tax. In its unilateral decision to impose this tax, the regime sounded an important warning to the people of our country. This warning is that we cannot focus our attention solely on the constitutional and political issues of transition.

At virtually all levels of the economy, the regime and big business are engaged in a concerted drive to restructure the economy at the expense of the poor. Privatisation, VAT, proposed mineral laws and other plans are among the many measures they hope to use to ensure that a new democratic government will be left without the means to redress the historical socio-economic injustices brought about by apartheid.

The anti-VAT general strike served an important notice that the people will not allow this legalised plunder. In the coming year, it will be necessary to strengthen our intervention in socio-economic matters to stop the regime's programmes and initiate measures that will help lay the basis for a democratic economy.

Vibrant Organisation

1991 saw the development of the ANC into a vibrant organisation, a pace-setter in the streets and in negotiations and an example of democratic practice.

The African National Congress has re-established itself as a truly national organisation. From the southern tip of the continent to the Limpopo, in both rural and urban areas, ANC branches are being set up. Black and white democrats: women, youth, workers, religious personalities, traditional leaders, business-people - all these forces and others have swelled the ranks of the ANC because it voices their aspirations.

At our first ever National Conference within South Africa in more than 30 years, we reviewed the state of the nation and our organisation and charted the way forward. It is common cause that this conference was infused with a democratic spirit, unprecedented in the history of this country. We emerged from the 48th National Conference stronger and with

clearer purpose and vision. It is no exaggeration to say that the events unfolding today owe their success to the contributions of the branches and mandated delegates to that historic conference.

Yet we must improve our organisational capacity if we are to meet the new challenging tasks. The environment within which we have to operate is changing all the time. Adequate leadership must be exercised not only from national office. All our structures must become the tribune of the people, capable of giving leadership and guiding the search for viable remedies to the people's plight.

The all-round clarity and consistency of our pronouncements, the vitality of our political life in the lowest structures and our links with the masses are the only means to guarantee the growth and development of our organisation. As we enter the new and uncharted terrain of open political contest in the build-up to democratic elections, we need to combine all these qualities with the necessary expertise that these new forms of struggle demand.

Political Violence

But there are serious limits if the atmosphere for normal political activity has not been realised. The violence engulfing our country is the major impediment in this regard. During the course of the past year, thousands of our people have been killed and maimed in senseless carnage directed at members of the ANC and its allies and black communities in general.

The sheer scale and brutality of the killings and the seeds of hatred being sown will leave a terrible blot on the soul of the whole nation.

The African National Congress initiated and took an active part in the preparations for the National Peace Convention because we value life and seek harmony among our people. We are not only involved in the structures set up by the Peace Accord; we seek to speed up the process and place all these structures on a sound operational footing in the various regions.

But it is quite clear that these structures and the codes of conduct

adopted will be meaningless if the killings continue.

In the communities bearing the brunt of this violence, evidence of police collusion and disregard of the agreed codes abounds. The media continue to uncover facts about the involvement of the apartheid army and police in perpetrating violence. Public funds have been used to support parties implicated in the violence. There is an evident reluctance on the part of the regime to outlaw the carrying of dangerous weapons in public, despite the alarming death toll.

All these developments point to one reality: the white minority regime is talking peace on the one hand while colluding in the war against its opponents on the other. In this way, they hope to exact from the liberation movement compromises that will leave the system of apartheid essentially unchanged. The irresponsible statements and threats of civil war from certain political leaders also attest to this heinous strategy.

Open Letter

When the ANC issued the Open Letter to the government in April of last year, we sought to sensitise the public about the seriousness of this danger and to nudge the regime into taking the necessary measures to deal with this horrendous situation. Their half-hearted measures and refusal to clear other obstacles demonstrate that the apartheid rulers are neither willing nor capable of bringing about free political activity. The racist regime is the major obstacle to the process of fundamental change. It must make way for an Interim Government of National Unity.

Therefore, while we intensify the implementation of the agreements contained in the Peace Accord and take all necessary measures to bring peace to our communities, we must redouble our efforts to put in place an Interim Government which enjoys the confidence of the people as a whole.

Broad Patriotic Front

The phase of struggle we have entered requires the widest possible unity of all forces opposed to apartheid. No single organisation, no matter how powerful, can shoulder the burden of the challenges facing the country

alone. The urgent task confronting all the people of South Africa today is the transfer of power from the white minority regime to the people.

The ANC's approach to the Broad Patriotic Front initiative is guided by this perspective. When the patriotic front conference was finally held in October, it signified the culmination of efforts by the ANC and other organisations to empower the overwhelming majority of the people for the task of transfer of power. This historic achievement should be consolidated in actual struggle.

Basing itself on the decisions of this conference, the ANC took the initiative in calling for an All-Party Conference which was realised in the holding of CODESA. We placed before this forum the demands of the patriotic forces for a Constituent Assembly and impartial transitional mechanisms. In this endeavour, the ANC enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of the organisations which took part in that conference: political parties and organisations, trade unions, youth and students' structures, women's organisations, professional associations, business organisations and others.

The solemn pledge from the patriotic front conference was to pursue the objective of transfer of power with all deliberate speed. Those who approach the front with the seriousness it deserves cannot therefore be embarrassed, as some seem to be, by the advances South Africa is making in this direction. It is the duty of the ANC and all other forces who subscribe to that historic patriotic declaration to ensure that we act together to achieve the demands contained in it. It is also our duty to win over as many forces as possible into this front.

Freedom will be won nowhere else but in struggle, including, as the patriotic front conference resolved, in the theatre of negotiations. All efforts need to be directed at consolidating unity against the primary enemy of all South Africans: the apartheid system. The ANC's purpose in entering negotiations also remains unchanged: the transfer of power from the racist minority to the people as a whole.

International Community

As 1991 drew to a close, the Commonwealth of Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the United Nations General Assembly all unanimously took far-reaching decisions regarding their support for the struggle against apartheid. It is a measure of the stature of our movement and the correctness of its approach that the resolutions taken by these august bodies correspond with our own policy positions as reflected in the decisions of our 48th National Conference.

Basically, the international community is saying that the system of apartheid and its perpetrators should continue to be isolated as has been the case before. However, the new organs of the transition that are being born in struggle should be given maximum support. This should include relevant measures to censure those who violate agreements of the National Peace Convention and CODESA.

The concrete programmes emerging from this process seek to relate the lifting of isolation to specific steps in the direction of a democratic South Africa.

The presence of eminent representatives of the OAU, the Commonwealth, NAM, UN, European Economic Community and the Red Cross at the first sitting of CODESA is one example of the moral and political support these forces can give to the process now under way. Certainly, as the process unfolds, their involvement will have to be increased in accordance with concrete needs and agreements reached among various parties within South Africa.

Their expertise in transitional processes, the moral power of their supervision and monitoring, the strength of their voice in the verification of the outcome of various stages of the transition will not only help guarantee fairness in the process. It will also ensure that what finally emerges enjoys international legitimacy. After all, it is in no small measure thanks to the efforts of anti-apartheid forces the world over, responding to the massive build up of internal struggles, that South Africa today is entering the stage of transition to democracy.

Interdependent World

Precisely because we live in an interdependent world, we are duty-bound to learn from and take advantage of developments in other regions of the world.

In this regard we take heart at the first steps taken in the Middle East towards a peaceful negotiated settlement. The right of the Palestinian people to statehood is not only morally just. It is a necessary prerequisite for peace in that embattled region.

In Eastern Europe, upheavals of epoch-making proportions are afoot. In the final analysis, the prerogative to choose, amend and change a status quo belongs to the people of any given country. The positive developments in Africa leading to a multi-party democratic culture constitute a welcome exercise of this right. This perspective and the search for world peace and stability are paramount in international relations. The ANC stands unequivocally by these principles.

The right of nations to determine their destiny without foreign interference and domination is enshrined in our policy documents and forms the bedrock of our practice. We therefore stand opposed to brinkmanship, the use of arms and financial domination as an instrument of foreign policy by any state, big or small. We reiterate our solidarity with the people of Western Sahara, Palestine, East Timor and elsewhere in their struggle for national self-determination.

Towards Negotiations

As we ring down the curtain on 1991, we can say with confidence that the general crisis of the apartheid system has never been deeper. During the past year, the democratic movement consolidated its hold on the strategic initiative.

With the successful conclusion of the first sitting of CODESA, the people of South Africa have taken an important step towards a negotiated resolution of their problems. The declaration adopted at CODESA signifies a break with the past - an important step into the transition. However, while the Declaration of Intent constitutes an admission of failure on the part of the regime and the moral superiority of our cause, it remains but a

declaration. How decisive this break is will be determined in the struggles of the year ahead.

Precisely because the new phase is about the central question of our struggle - the question of transfer of power - resistance by the white ruling bloc will be more intense. We should expect more showmanship, attempts at disruption, counter-revolutionary violence and systematic propaganda against the liberation movement. Though the struggle will take new forms, it is likely to remain difficult.

Interim Government

Transition will begin in earnest with the installation of an Interim Government of National Unity. Such a body should be sovereign, with effective impartial mechanisms to ensure freedom and fairness.

It is a measure of the strength of the democratic movement and our international supporters that the regime has conceded that it cannot be referee and player in this process. By acknowledging the need for an interim government, the apartheid rulers have objectively accepted that their regime is illegitimate and incapable of supervising the transition. However, as can be expected from such an illegitimate and illegal regime, where it is forced to retreat, it does so to new lines of defence.

This is what the convoluted constitutional process proposed by the De Klerk administration amounts to. To have a referendum in which the only voice that will count is that of whites is to perpetuate the criminal system of apartheid. To hold an election for a transitional parliament and government is to deliberately complicate and delay what should otherwise be a simple and manageable transition. It is a device to keep the essential content of the 1983 constitution in place for as long as possible.

The democratic movement demands an Interim Government of National Unity because the regime cannot supervise democratic elections and fairly undertake other tasks of the transition. Therefore, the regime's proposal for a referendum and election before such an Interim Government is in place pitifully begs the question.

Behind this lies a more sinister scheme: an attempt to legitimise an undemocratic constitution, parliament and regime and prolong the transition by ten years and more. In this period, power will remain essentially in white hands.

The African National Congress and other democratic forces demand a multi-party interim government whose composition should be negotiated in the Convention for a Democratic SA. Its mandate will be to supervise the transition to democracy which should be accomplished in the shortest possible time. Such a government will ensure free political activity, fairness in the treatment of all political organisations and parties and supervise elections for a Constituent Assembly.

It is therefore crucial that the interim government be sovereign and have a limited time-span. Such a government would have, among others, the following attributes:

- * sovereign control over all armed forces and police, state media, electoral processes, budget and finance, foreign affairs and trade, judicial matters and so on; and
- * forums to take decisions on and supervise the management of socio-economic issues in the transition.

Immediate Implementation

Once agreement has been reached regarding multi-party control over security forces, state media, and other areas so identified as well as the multi-party council, these decisions should be immediately implemented and preparations started for elections for a Constituent Assembly. Negotiations over other aspects of government should be facilitated as much as possible, but they should not delay movement towards a Constituent Assembly.

The implementation mechanisms of CODESA are meant to ensure that legislation drafted by its relevant structures is not vetoed by the tri-cameral parliament or the present government. This includes relevant amendments to the current constitution. In any case the majority of parties in this parliament and government will be party to these

decisions. The ANC rejects attempts by the National Party regime to grant a minority within broader South African society veto powers over the future of the whole nation, simply because they are white.

We put forward these proposals with the aim of ensuring speedy and balanced movement towards the central objective of negotiations: the drafting of a democratic constitution and the setting up of a democratic government.

Constituent Assembly

The issue of a Constituent Assembly is therefore central to our approach to the transition. This demand derives from the universally accepted principle that sovereignty in any country resides with the people. A new constitution, based on the broad principles adopted by CODESA, should be drafted by mandated representatives of the people on the basis of one-person, one-vote on a common voters' roll.

Nothing less than a democratically-elected constitution-making body will enjoy legitimacy in the eyes of our people and ensure that the overwhelming majority respect the final product. Further, there cannot be any point in setting up an interim government if this principle has not been adopted.

Given a commitment on the part of all parties to realise the democratic constitutional principles adopted by CODESA, the process of transition can be accomplished within a reasonably short period. The ANC will strive for the setting up of an Interim Government in the first half of this year, and elections for a Constituent Assembly to be held by December 1992. Therefore, South Africa could for the first time in its history have a democratic government within the immediate future. We urge all South Africans to strive for the accomplishment of this objective.

Inclusive Process

The process of reshaping South Africa should involve all its people without exception. This by definition includes millions of our people residing in the so-called "independent homelands", relegated to patches of