

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

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Closing Remarks by ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa to the ANC NEC Lekgotla - 2022

National Chairperson Gwede Mantashe,
Deputy President David Mabuza,
Officials of the African National Congress,
Former President Thabo Mbeki
Former Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe
Members of the NEC,
Leadership of the SACP and COSATU
Leadership of the ANCWL, ANCYL and ANCVL,
Leadership of SASCO and COSAS
Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
Metro Mayors and leaders of SALGA,
Deployed Comrades,
Comrades and Friends,

Good afternoon comrades

We have come to the end of the first NEC Lekgotla of 2022, which will inform the programmes of action for both the movement and government for this year.

Makgotla provide the opportunity for the leadership of the movement and government to assess the extent to which we have succeeded in implementing our electoral mandate and building a national democratic society.

This Lekgotla is being held at a time when our country and the world face a number of challenges.

It is at such a moment that we need to remind ourselves of our historic mission to unite all the people of South Africa for the complete liberation of the country from all forms of discrimination and national oppression.

We exist as a movement to fight for social justice and to eliminate the vast inequalities created by apartheid, and to promote economic development for the benefit of all.

It is with these objectives in mind that we must confront the challenges facing our country and undertake a far-reaching and fundamental renewal of our movement.

The meeting recognised the extent to which COVID-19 has exacerbated fault-lines of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

PRESIDENT
CM Ramaphosa

DEPUTY PRESIDENT
DD Mabuza

NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON
G Mantashe

SECRETARY GENERAL
ES Magashule

DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL
JY Duarte

TREASURER GENERAL
P Mashatile

The pandemic exacerbated an already precarious economic situation, with a significant decline in GDP and job losses. This has led to increasing levels of vulnerability including extreme poverty and hunger, with the poorest bearing the largest impact.

Unemployment is at its highest ever levels, with the latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey putting the unemployment rate at nearly 35%. Youth unemployment is particularly concerning at 50% for young people between 18 - 34.

Building a social compact to decisively address unemployment and poverty is absolutely necessary.

The meeting noted that the world is undergoing a serious economic and social crisis with unemployment rising, widening inequality and deepening poverty. This has impacted South Africa in a profound and deep manner especially the vulnerable, the working class and the youth.

Critically, the Lekgotla called for a decisive response to these challenges. The challenge is to lead all sectors of South Africa towards a new and resilient social compact building an inclusive economy that brings a change in the quality of life for all South Africans.

An effective social compact will require give and take by all parties, as all parties need to contribute in the cause of national development. In addition to this, it will be necessary to identify trade-offs that social partners will need to act on.

The NEC in the January 8 statement urged government to lead in concluding a social compact with all social partners. The Compact should set out a collective commitment to implement measures and targets to place our nation on a higher and more inclusive growth path aimed at addressing our common national challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Such a social compact must set out the obligations and commitments of all social partners – government, business, labour and community – in order to decisively address our nation's lasting challenges. The Lekgotla felt that social compacting should not be limited to large formal sector entities, but should include participation of communities at local level, small businesses, township businesses and cooperatives.

The terms and trade-offs of a social compact would require give and take by all parties, as all parties need to contribute in the cause of national development.

Government will be called upon to take steps to be more effective in guiding the restructuring of network industries as well improving law and order and security for communities and economic infrastructure. Business would need to make real, verifiable commitments to expand investment, and support localisation and black empowerment. Labour and communities would need to commit to improving levels of productivity, skills and entrepreneurship. The Lekgotla agreed that an Alliance committee be established to fine tune our approach to social compacting. The aim should be to forge greater consensus amongst the Alliance Partners which can serve as a building block for broader social consensus on a social compact for accelerated growth and job creation. The Lekgotla reaffirmed that economic recovery efforts to stimulate growth, investment and employment creation must now be accelerated. Fundamental to this should be the increased funding for urgent programmes to improve basic services, such as, access to water, electricity, roads and bridges for communities both in urban and rural areas. A Special Service Delivery cluster, or other appropriate institutional arrangement, should be put in place to improve overall service delivery in areas such as housing, water and sanitation. This is in direct response to community concerns about the poor state of this critical infrastructure across a number of municipalities. The R350 Covid SRD grant has had a significant positive impact on the lives of the poor, but more particularly the unemployed. The government must examine the feasibility and affordability of providing some form of income support

I for the poor and unemployed. Community service programmes and community gardens should be encouraged through existing institutions including ward committees, civics, youth women's groups, and churches. With regard the township economy and community projects, there is a need to promote economic activity through the provision of sites, access to markets, improved regulation and infrastructure, information on opportunities, financing and incentives for local procurement. Labour intensive interventions should be embarked upon to build and maintain community infrastructure and mass employment opportunities should be created particularly for young people. In order to overcome the crippling impact of South Africa's electricity shortage and loadshedding, the country must embark decisively on a Just Energy Transition to restore energy security and to stimulate greater investment and employment.

Through instruments such as the Integrated Resources Plan (IRP) investment should be mobilized as rapidly, and at lowest possible cost, in order to restore energy security and promote job retention and job creation.

We will continue to pursue an energy mix which includes renewables, battery and pump storage, gas as a transition enabler, nuclear at a pace our country can afford, as well as explore carbon capture and use technologies.

Ongoing plans to restructure Eskom, and resolve the entity's unsustainable debt, must be implemented on schedule, so as to assist in strengthening public management of the national electricity grid, as well as to unlock much-needed public and private investment in electricity generation capacity.

The ANC and Alliance partners should provide leadership to the country's transition to a low carbon economy and climate resilient future. In particular we will ensure workers and communities in coal-producing areas participate in the development of well researched and credible transition pathways which ensure the development of new economic opportunities, community development and above all new jobs.

There needs to be urgent resolution of the ongoing disputes and conflicts delaying the release of the spectrum. The design of the spectrum release process must seek to advance the needs of consumers and public entities for access to affordable, high speed bandwidth.

The process must promote increased competition among businesses operating in the sector. The process must also include explicit strategies to advance public policy objectives, such as the roll-out of high-speed broadband access to poor and working class communities.

The NEC Lekgotla urges government to expedite the promulgation of the Public Procurement Bill to allow for set asides for SMMEs and Cooperatives in the procurement process. We must ensure budget cuts and focus on Public-Private Partnerships do not lead to a slowdown in infrastructure and service provision in poor and working class communities.

At a local government level, the governance and coordination framework offered by the District Development Model (DDM) should be actively implemented and local government structures should be sufficiently resourced to take this forward. Through the DDM all three spheres of government are empowered to work together on a common vision so as to expedite service delivery, local procurement and job creation. Skills development should be better aligned with economic planning so that the relevant skills are produced which are most needed for localisation and economic development.

The 2030 policy position on post School Education, and the development of streams in the basic education curriculum must be closely aligned to the skills needs of the economy. There is a need for better resourcing focused on specific sector needs in the areas of agriculture, mining and information technology.

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Skills development and innovation must be part of our central pillars of employment creation and industrialisation. Skills development should respond to vacancies in the economy at the time when we have seen massive job losses and ongoing retrenchments.

We need to guide skills development to support our national turnaround imperative based on the key pillars of our approach such as infrastructure development, industrialisation, the green transition, the digital economy. We must continue to encourage increased minerals and gas exploration, for the current and future growth of our economy, and job creation just as many other countries are doing. In doing this we must ensure that correct legal and consultation procedures should be followed in permitting minerals and gas exploration activities. South Africa has an opportunity to deepen our industrialisation, using local raw materials as inputs to local manufacturing industries. The policy should be reviewed to identify strategic minerals where export-taxes may be appropriate and energy pricing policies should support such efforts. The process of equitable land redistribution should be accelerated together with supportive measures to assist in the success of black land owners involved in large-scale and small-scale farming activity.

A balanced and effective land transformation process should be pursued without compromising food security. Land reform instruments should include tax on underutilised land, densification strategies, the setting up of production and retail sites in informal and formal settlements.

The Lekgotla urges parliament to finalise the processing of the Expropriation Bill to allow more just and equitable access to land.

Defending the gains of democracy

The Lekgotla recognised our movement is going through a period of decay and degeneration; the ANC has been able to extricate itself from similar situations in the past. It is important not to lower our guard against counter revolution. The threat to our democratic gains is also a result of an era of loss of moral and ethical principles within the congress movement.

We need to show determination in addressing the toxic legacy of state capture resulted in security institutions being weakened, misdirected and hallowed out. Divisions and factions in the ANC are becoming a threat to our democracy. Economic challenges of income and wealth inequality and the triple challenges threaten state security and these require urgent interventions from NEDLAC.

Regression of ethical and moral leadership has resulted in an existential crisis. Our credibility and legitimacy are being undermined by our inability to act.

As the ANC we should analyze and assess threats caused by others and threats caused by own acts of omission and commission. This requires a multifaceted and coordinated approach by the cluster and the government institutions – where self-reflection is practiced.

The ANC need to commit towards deepening and defending the NDR. Counter revolution is wearing a different countenance in our country. There are expressions of democracy under threat which are a result of loss of ethical compass and moral direction.

The ANC and the Alliance reaffirm our support for the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the judiciary and distance ourselves from narratives that seek to negate its transformative intent and gains.

The ANC and government have demonstrated our principled support for the objectives and work of the Zondo Commission of Inquiry since its inception.

The NEC has agreed to the establishment of an NEC Task Team to guide the ANC's response to the Zondo

Commission report. This would be the development of a discussion paper for ANC structures on corruption and state capture and processing of recommendations relating to ANC and its deployees.

Whilst government will only pronounce fully on receipt of the complete Report, the ANC urges government to fully address the behaviour and causes that allowed state capture to occur.

The ANC will need to lead the debate on immigration in order to ensure that it remains infused with principles of pan-Africanism and is not overtaken by right-wing sentiments. Promoting legal migration is a central aspect of securing the peace and security of South Africa and the sub-region and the ANC must act against the stoking of anti-African sentiment.

Building a capable and ethical developmental state

We seek to build a capable and ethical developmental state. This is fundamental to our drive for the reconstruction, growth and transformation of our society and economy.

The Lekgotla highlighted that there must be increased scrutiny of the performance of ANC public representatives and government and agreed that the movement will increase its monitoring and evaluation capacity.

In recognition of the ongoing drive to professionalise the public service, the Lekgotla recommended the urgent finalisation of the professionalisation framework with an emphasis on pre-entry, recruitment, selection, induction, continuous learning and career progression of public servants. The Lekgotla also recommended the further strengthening of the National School of Government.

Lekgotla recognised and recommended conducting government and society wide research and discussions on the future of work to take account of changing attitudes and modalities of work.

Government is urged to finalise the legislative amendments aimed at the realisation of the single public service to ensure equitable and relevant spread of skills throughout the public service.

A better Africa and better world

Our commitment to a better Africa and world remains unwavering, as we participate in the resolution of issues affecting global humanity, including the urgent challenges of climate change, global peace, security and development, the reform of multilateral institutions and as we continue to pledge solidarity with oppressed peoples everywhere.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact internationally, which continues to weaken the global economy, giving rise to increased unemployment rates, poverty and inequality at national, regional and global levels. However, while developing countries have been worst affected by this pandemic, the commission notes the positive and gradual recovery among some countries in the global South.

The Lekgotla noted with concern the growth of right-wing ideology and its adverse impact in international politics and in particular the African continent. This poses a serious risk to the global South, undermines global solidarity efforts and gives rise to imposition of unilateralism in the international system. These right-wing tendencies weaken the principle and practice of sovereign equality of states.

The ANC government must continue to mobilise progressive forces on the continent and globally to advance a progressive international agenda to counter the very strong hegemonic unilateral agenda.

Africa has significant advantages like abundant natural resources, lots of arable land for food production, abundant water supplies and a young population. A “rising” and increasingly prosperous Africa will impact positively on South Africa’s prospects. the

The SADC free trade agreement and the African Continental Free Trade Area are crucial milestones on the path to

I integrated trade and investment in our region and across the continent. There are still too many impediments to the free flow of goods and services between African countries. An acceleration of manufacturing, increased foreign direct investment, and rapid adoption of technology is crucial for the creation of jobs and improving the economic prospects of the continent.

A continent-wide infrastructure roll-out to enable economic development is crucial for our advancement. Building of roads, expansion of rail and ports, and electrification are necessary to ensure products reach local and international markets.

There is a need for continuous support and monitoring of the intervention measures agreed by SADC to ensure peace and stability in Lesotho, Eswatini and Mozambique.

The ANC should continue to object to the unilateral admittance of Israel as an observer to the AU and work with other progressive forces for its removal from the body. This will give greater impetus to the action of government to officially challenge the observer status at the forthcoming African Union Summit.

Members of Parliament need to strengthen their relations with progressive Parliamentarians in other countries to lobby for our relevant cross-cutting international issues.

The ANC should strengthen party to party relations and overall solidarity work and advance our progressive internationalism

Accelerate the fundamental renewal and rebuilding of the ANC

There is widespread acceptance that the ANC, as an organisation, is beset by severe challenges, such as weak structures, internal conflicts, factionalism and members and leaders acting in self-interest rather than in furtherance of the cause of the people.

This has damaged the ANC's standing as a servant of the people and leader of society. If we do not make a decisive break with the practices that have caused this decline in our standing, we will cease to be a trusted and effective agent of change.

The ANC will therefore intensify the fundamental renewal of our movement as mandated by the 54th National Conference and reaffirmed by the January 8th Statement.

We will be principled and decisive in ridding our movement from practices that prevent us from serving the people with distinction.

Renewal is a process, and we will experience successes and setbacks. However, we will not deviate from the mission to restore and rebuild our movement to become more effective and dedicated servants of the people.

I thank you

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