



South African Communist Party

**Electricity, Land, Food and Work: Forward to a Powerful Socialist Movement
SACP 102nd Anniversary Statement**

*Delivered by Soly Mapaila, the SACP General Secretary
Marikana, Sunday 6 August 2023*

As we stand on the seventh day of our national Women's Month, we pay tribute to the courageous women who fought against colonial and apartheid oppression in our struggle for liberation, freedom, and social emancipation. Today, we reassert our commitment to the ongoing battle for gender equality and the dismantling of patriarchy.

In unity, women and men must organise themselves in non-racial and non-sexist ways, striving towards complete social emancipation. This cannot be achieved without the liberation of women, gender equality, breaking the chains of colonial and apartheid legacies, eradicating economic exploitation, overthrowing imperialism, and fighting for a just and peaceful planet.

The South African Communist Party, founded as the Communist Party of South Africa in 1921, marked its 102nd anniversary last Sunday, 30 July. Throughout our history, the SACP has played a pivotal role in the struggle for liberation and democratic transformation and inclusive development. We pride ourselves on championing the principle of non-racialism, along with the principle of non-sexism, both in our organisation and having both enshrined in our country's democratically adopted constitution.

As a formidable force, which the apartheid regime banned in 1950 before banning others ten years later in 1960, alongside our allies, we led the charge to overthrow colonial and apartheid regimes, culminating in the historic democratic breakthrough of April 1994. This momentous achievement brought about massive social advances benefitting millions of our people, not least the formerly oppressed and the working-class and poor. The democratic gains include, and are not limited to, the provision of free housing to working-class and poor families, significant expansions in education at all levels and healthcare, electrification, clean drinking water, workers' rights and labour protecting standards.

Yet, our hard-won gains have come under constant threat. The negatives have clouded the positives, and in some areas, progress has even reversed. Challenges such as electricity generation and transmission under-capacity, corruption, gender-based violence, and heightened imperialist aggression demand our unwavering attention.

As we embark on the second year of our second centenary, we declare our commitment to defend our democratic achievements and address both historic and emerging challenges. The SACP will intensify Party Building efforts and work towards reconfiguring the Alliance.

We emphasise that the Alliance should function optimally and be impactful as a national democratic revolution front, upholding consensus-seeking consultation on major policy matters, including election manifestos. To be sure, we have not come together in the Alliance to facilitate decision-making and representation by one partner only, render ourselves ineffectual and then liquidate.

In a reconfigured Alliance, who should be delegated to represent us collectively, important as is, takes its cue from policy content and direction. Being delegated to represent the Alliance is tied to being recalled by it, should that become necessary, regardless of which component initiated the recall motion. The compositions of those to be delegated to represent the Alliance in the levers of state power at all levels have to be inclusive, reflecting the face of the Alliance.

There must be accountability to the Alliance by those it delegates to represent it, besides their basic duty to account to their respective components. Delegated representatives must adhere to joint Alliance discipline and be subject to continuous monitoring and evaluation conducted jointly by the Alliance, in addition to each component having to do so in relation to its own members. Therefore, in a reconfigured Alliance, accountability extends beyond individual components to the entire Alliance as a united national democratic revolution front.

We have chosen a reconfigured Alliance as our preferred electoral modality. This does not go alone. It goes hand in hand with building our vanguard character and capacity to fulfil our historical mission as an independent Party of the Working-Class. It is critical for the SACP to be analytically alert at all times and tactically flexible while ensuring strategic consistency. Such a party cannot place its reliance on a single organisational mechanism.

Concurrently, the SACP is therefore forging a popular left front, building a powerful socialist movement of the workers and poor. Our vanguard role as an independent working-class Party remains crucial in safeguarding the present interests and shaping a better future for the working-class.

To the organised working-class formations, we extend the call for unity in overcoming immediate challenges and enhancing our political and organisational capacity to secure a brighter tomorrow.

In the spirit of revolutionary struggle, we march forward, united and resolute, towards a future free from oppression, exploitation, and inequality.

Resolving the electricity under-capacity crisis and forging a genuine just transition

Today, we stand united in our struggle to resolve the electricity generation and transmission under-capacity crisis and drive a genuine just transition to low carbon

dioxide energy production – considered from the cradle to the grave perspective. The electricity crisis we now face is not an isolated event. It is a consequence of colonial and apartheid oppression combined with failures from post-1994 wrong policy choices, which the government adopted from 1996. The SACP is calling for and will strive to achieve a public pathway, both to resolve the critical electricity under-capacity crisis to end load shedding and forge a genuine just transition.

Our vision for a genuine just transition is one that prioritises the needs of the majority, the workers, and the poor. This vision includes the imperative to roll back de-industrialisation and industrialise our economy, to create employment at scale. We call for the eradication of energy poverty, ever affordable electricity access for all, and uninterrupted power supply. The protection of existing employment, coupled with the creation of more productive work, to address unemployment and put the Freedom Charter's right for all to work into practice, are central to our strategy as the SACP. South Africa must develop sustainable livelihoods along the electric power generation, transmission and distribution value chain and significantly reduce inequality in the entire energy sector.

We will not tolerate the unjust notion of a “Just Energy Transition” pushed by imperialist-dominated institutions like the World Bank, IMF, and World Economic Forum. Their interests do not align with the well-being of our people, and we reject their influence on our domestic energy policies.

By now all reasonable South Africans must have grasped the roots of our electricity under-capacity crisis, which can be traced back to the historical injustices of colonial and apartheid discrimination and exclusion of the majority from household electrification – for a century from 1894 to 1994. The shift towards neoliberalism in 1996, with policies like GEAR, undermined public investment in power generation.

Policy priority in electric power generation went to microeconomic liberalisation, privatisation, outsourcing and unbundling of Eskom, in favour of insinuating competition to the public utility by private power producers, called “Independent Power Producers”. This disregarded the energy security needs of our nation. The government adopted this policy shift under the auspices of GEAR in December 1998, through the White Paper on Energy, asserting that investment by the profit-driven interests was, going forward, to be its source of energy security.

The recent decommissioning of the Komati Power Station underpinned by a World Bank loan without a viable replacement first put in place is a clear example of the double standards we face. As this happened, Europe, the “champion of green transition”, increased its coal imports from South Africa by approximately 720 per cent, from half a million tonnes in the first half of 2021 to above 4 million tonnes in the first half of 2022. In a genuine just transition, there can be no double standards. No power station should be decommissioned until a suitable replacement, with equal or preferably greater capacity, work and sustainable livelihood opportunities, is in place.

We hold those responsible for state capture, governance decay, corruption at Eskom and neoliberal policy choices and their failures accountable. We also demand justice for the mismanagement that led to the perpetual failure of the Medupi and Kusile Power Station build programmes to meet completion deadlines. Their actions have

contributed to the debt crisis at Eskom and hindered our goal of accessible electricity on a developmental basis.

Our struggle for a genuine just transition is not only about fixing the immediate crisis but also addressing the historical injustices that continue to affect our energy sector. We call on all South Africans to join us in this fight for a brighter future, where energy is accessible and ever affordable to all and serves the interests of the working-class and national production development.

Together, we will overcome the challenges before us and build a truly just and sustainable energy future for South Africa.

Radical land redistribution

South Africa's majority was left almost completely landless by the historical injustice of bloody violent colonial land expropriation by the Europeans following their arrival on the southernmost tip of Africa in April 1652. The colonial-type British dominion, established as the South African state in 1910, further empowered the British imperialists and white minority supremacists to heighten racial oppression and class super-exploitation, maintaining the deprivation of Africans in particular and black people in general of equitable access to land in their own country.

The "Native Land Act", passed by the colonial oppressors in 1913, confined the national majority to a mere 13 per cent, initially 7 per cent, of the country's land. Apartheid's reign from 1948 onwards intensified racial oppression, furthering racial land dispossession through forced removals.

While we established human rights for all and delivered the massive social advances that benefitted millions of our people after our hard-won April 1994 democratic breakthrough, the ugly reality is that we live under conditions of a dangerous powder keg. To this day, the formerly oppressed national majority still have little land. White minority landowners privately control most of our country's land. A combination of inheritance and the unjust capitalist market, underpinned by the high levels of racialised and gendered class inequality, is behind the persisting reproduction of colonial and apartheid landownership patterns now coupled with increased foreign land ownership.

To build a non-racial and non-sexist democratic society, we need radical land redistribution, capacity building and support for productive land use for the majority of South African citizens, towards shared prosperity. To make one point clear, while agricultural production is important and land redistribution must more actively support its expansion, diversification and transformation, it is not the only sector of the land-based economy.

Our call for adequate support to the beneficiaries of the radical land redistribution programme that South Africa must implement is therefore based on a broader understanding of the land-based productive sector and economy at large. For example, mining is part of the land-based economy. The development of small-scale mining, co-operatives in the sector, and localised beneficiation of our mineral resources, is as

crucial in our call as the development of smallholder farming, co-operatives in agriculture and localised agro-processing.

The SACP is calling for a rupture with the policy regime that failed to deliver equitable access to land for the past 29 years since our April 1994 democratic breakthrough. We must end the historical injustice of racially skewed, and also patriarchal, land ownership. To achieve this, a radical approach to land redistribution and allocation for both home and productive uses must take precedence. Sustainability is key: the new approach must ensure equitable access to land and the nation's natural resources both for the current generation and future generations of South African citizens.

The radical land redistribution framework must decisively include expropriation, by which we are not referring to an exchange relation involving compensation or a watered-down version of expropriation. Here, we are referring to expropriation according to its true meaning. At this moment, South Africa needs expropriation with no compensation and categorically, clear legislative measures to put it decisively into practice.

The sooner the better, considering the 29 lost years on the land question!

Food production and village development

The SACP is deeply concerned about food poverty and insecurity in our nation. A report by Statistics South Africa assessing the state of food inadequacy and hunger in 2021, using data from the General Household Survey, revealed the harsh reality of inadequate and severe inadequate access to nutritious and safe food for millions of our people – all of them from working-class and poor families.

To combat food poverty, South Africa must prioritise increasing the number of households and individuals engaged in agricultural food production, linked with food manufacturing, as part of the imperative to industrialise our economy. We place special emphasis on uplifting our villages, as our Village Development Model that we have started shows. This also requires active support from and collaboration between local, district, provincial, and national government bodies.

We also call on businesses to step up and fulfil their corporate social responsibility by contributing to this noble cause of village development. Donations of productive equipment, such as tractors, boreholes, electric motors, pumps, and solar panels, can play a crucial role in supporting efficient water operations and enhancing food production in our villages.

The impact of food inadequacy and hunger is severe and widespread. In 2021, approximately 2.6 million households faced inadequate access to food, while 1.1 million households suffered from severe food inadequacy. This devastating situation affects a staggering 18.5 million people, including young children aged five years or younger, taking African households in particular and black households in general as typically comprising an average of five members.

Children deprived of nutritious food face dire consequences, including acute malnutrition and stunting, which adversely affect their physical and cognitive development. We must recognise that the lack of proper nutrition is a significant factor

contributing to the educational challenges faced by many learners in our schools – who cannot read for understanding.

While the majority of households experiencing food poverty are in urban areas, we cannot overlook the interconnectedness between urban and rural regions. The legacy of colonial and apartheid capitalist rural underdevelopment continues to force people to migrate from rural to urban areas in search of opportunities. This perpetuates the cycle of poverty and exacerbates the problem of food insecurity.

South Africa is a country with a massive tract of land. It is alarming that in this nation of over 60 million people, only 3.1 million households are engaged in agricultural food production, primarily in rural areas. Moreover, these households rely on agriculture as their main source of food as the capitalist market, through sky-rocketing food prices, has made it increasingly difficult for the workers and poor to access basic sustenance.

The SACP urges all South Africans to unite and address this urgent humanitarian crisis. We call on the government to prioritise food security measures and allocate necessary resources to support village development and other initiatives aimed at bolstering agricultural production, food manufacturing and the much-needed elimination of uneven development between urban and rural areas.

We reiterate our commitment to fighting for a just and equal society where no one goes hungry. We stand in solidarity with all progressive forces, workers, and communities in South Africa to ensure that food poverty becomes a thing of the past. Together, we can build a better future for all, founded on the principles of social justice and equality.

The right to work for all

The South African Communist Party vehemently asserts the urgent need for a high-impact industrial policy that prioritises national production development and employment creation at scale. Our nation's economic well-being hinges on a robust framework, combining fiscal and monetary policies, to foster local manufacturing, diversification, and expansion. It is imperative to review our macroeconomic framework, trade policies and align them to follow and support industrial policy to achieve industrialisation goals.

The South African Statistics' Quarterly Labour Force Survey highlights the severity of the unemployment crisis. Approximately 12 million active and discouraged work-seekers, comprising 42.4 per cent of our labour force, remained unemployed from January to March this year. Even the narrowest official definition of unemployment, excluding discouraged work-seekers, surpassed 20 per cent since 1996 when the government adopted the ill-fated neoliberal policy of GEAR. The broader definition, including discouraged work-seekers, presented even graver unemployment crisis figures.

Industrialisation holds the key to address unemployment for millions of South Africans, but the neoliberal policy regime followed since the undemocratic adoption of GEAR sustained the aggregate wave of de-industrialisation which started in the 1980s under apartheid.

To understand the urgency of forging a new approach, we must analyse the context that led to the devastating de-industrialisation in South Africa. The apartheid regime shifted towards liberalisation in the early 1990s after previous attempts to liberalise trade in the 1980s halted in the mid-1980s. At that time, the apartheid regime faced intensified struggle by our liberation movement, including sanctions and growing balance of payment pressures.

Sadly, after the democratic election in 1994, the government not only continued down the path of liberalisation but implemented it rapidly, applying a shock therapy without supporting the capacity of pre-existing domestic manufacturing and developing new industrial production capability and activity through measures that could help it both to survive and thrive under new global competitive pressures.

In South Africa, the so-called “Big Bang” liberalisation, hailed by IMF embedded research and IMF supported publications as successful, exposed the underdeveloped domestic manufacturing to the dog-eat-dog global competitive pressures and brought about a flood of imports, including dumped goods, contributing to the ongoing de-industrialisation.

The South African economy, already in a de-industrialisation trajectory since the 1980s, continued its decline after the adoption of GEAR in 1996. Interestingly, unlike in other affected Global South countries where the imperialist dominated IMF played a significant role in pushing for liberalisation without regard to the state of domestic production development, it was claimed in South Africa the neoliberal policy regime under GEAR was “self-imposed”. Surely, the “self” in the “self-imposed” does not include the majority of our people but refers to the reformist elite that rose to dominance in the 1990s and adopted GEAR as “non-negotiable, as “cast in stone, and thus without consultation.

Fiscal support for industrial development and incentives dwindled, further exacerbating the de-industrialisation crisis. It is appalling that the recent budget's medium-term expenditure framework maintained a negative average growth in industrial development and incentives support. How can we expect industrialisation without meaningful investment in our own industries?

The recently published Statistics South Africa's manufacturing statistical release merely confirms what we already knew – the manufacturing industry's overall contribution to national output and employment has been declining for the past 16 years, perpetuating the established de-industrialisation trend.

In light of these grim realities, the SACP urgently calls for a radical change in policy direction, inclusive of a new macroeconomic framework and Reserve Bank mandate that prioritise industrialisation and employment creation. Let us unite to forge a new path towards sustainable and inclusive industrialisation. We must seize this moment to reshape our economic landscape, generating meaningful work opportunities for our people.

Forward with the struggle for a just and industrially vibrant South Africa!

Solidarity with families who lost their loved ones in Marikana and the broader Rustenburg platinum belt

Once again, the SACP expresses its heartfelt condolences and unwavering solidarity with all the families who lost their loved ones in the Marikana tragedy and the broader Rustenburg platinum belt incidents prior to, on and after 16 August 2012. Days prior to 16 August 2012, 10 people, including four mineworkers, two police officers, and two security guards, were killed in acts of violence, followed by the police's intervention on 16 August 2012, during which they killed 34 mineworkers. Regrettably, acts of violence persisted, claiming the lives of other workers, shop stewards, union officials, and elected leaders. Also, there was gender-based violence affecting women, including rape. The SACP emphasises that such tragedies should never be allowed to occur again. We fully support the families' pursuit of reparations and justice for their rightful cause.

Let us remember. The primary class culprits that led to the situation are the capitalist bosses, through their astronomical executive pay and exorbitant dividends from profit maximising restructuring and exploitation of workers. To this day, the capitalist bosses in the mining and other sectors still pay workers a pittance – far below the actual value that the workers create through their labour. It is principally the capitalist bosses who divided the workers through cost cutting and profit maximising divide and rule management tactics.

The capitalist bosses are the primary class culprits for what happened also through the endemic crisis of their capitalist system. This saw a massive global production meltdown in 2008 with far-reaching consequences for the years that followed, mostly affecting the workers and poor.

Let us expand and deepen the unity of workers and the working-class at large, to hold the capitalist bosses accountable, intensify the struggle against economic exploitation, and ultimately overcome their exploitative capitalist system.

Support for collaborative efforts and call for broader and deeper trade union unity

The SACP commends the National Union of Mineworkers, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union for their collaborative efforts demonstrated through their participation in various collective bargaining engagements and seeking a genuine just transition in the energy sector. This positive collaboration sets a commendable example.

The SACP strongly encourages not only the three but all trade unions across the economy to further strengthen their co-operation and foster a broader and deeper sense of unity. By working together, unions can achieve greater collective power, advance the interests of workers more effectively and take their collaboration to the greater heights of organisational unity.

The formerly oppressed workers continue to experience racial discrimination, particularly in the private sector, which remains overwhelmingly white controlled. This is the context in which the private sector leaves much to be desired in employment equity transformation. Within these population groups, women remain the most disadvantaged.

As successive Employment Equity Commission reports show, while the public sector has made noticeable progress in employment equity transformation, the private sector, which remains predominantly white-controlled, has moved at a snail's pace, marginalising African, Coloured and Indian workers. Women workers within these affected population groups are the most impacted because of the persistent pandemic of capitalist patriarchy.

The pandemic of capitalist patriarchy is also responsible for violating women's reproductive rights. It also disadvantages women from being considered for promotion. There are, for example, many pregnant women who have experienced this form of gender discrimination in the economy.

The SACP calls for and will itself strengthen its efforts to expand and deepen the unity of workers and the working-class at large. Organised workers should take it upon themselves to push for and support legislative changes aimed at accelerating employment equity transformation and achieving equal treatment in the workplace, regardless of race and gender.

Second Phase of the African Revolution

To all Africans, let us unite! This is our call on this occasion of the 102nd anniversary of our Party, the SACP.

Steps such as establishing the African Union were important, but alone they are far from enough. We need to rebuild and strengthen Africa's continental liberation movement.

Let us unite politically and organisationally to advance and deepen the emancipatory anti-colonial and anti-imperialist Second Phase of the African Revolution. Let us exercise our democratic rights and liberate Africa from domination and exploitation by former colonial metropolises and active imperialist forces.

In the last century, our liberation movements fought for national independence and self-determination.

But beware!

Africa, still systematically underdeveloped, continues to suffer plunder and extractive exploitation at the hands of the imperialist forces. Africans only receive a pittance, while the imperialist forces amass wealth from Africa's natural resources and agricultural produce, such as, but not limited to, coffee.

Imperialist forces still dominate Africa, this time around through a multiplicity of old and new policy instruments, including monopoly of high value production processes and services. Their transnational corporations drain surplus value, expatriating profits from Africa.

Using unequal power relations, military might, weaponised unilateral sanctions and other machinations of subversion and regime change, the imperialist forces intransigently curtail African countries' independence and national self-determination.

France sees Africa's uranium and other strategic minerals as French interests, for instance. Its government, under one Emmanuel Macron, has threatened to intervene

in Africa through military aggression. The imperialist war allies organised into NATO, such as France and the United States, have active military bases in Africa. These imperialist military bases in Africa must shut down.

Let us recall. In 2011, together with its United States-dominated NATO allies, France bombarded Libya from its airspace, ironically declared a no-fly zone. With air-launched explosives, NATO caused massive destruction and loss of life, in pursuit of regime change and control over Libya's oil, other natural resources and government. The consequences included Africans being turned into slaves. Too many people drowned in the Mediterranean Sea, trying to flee the deadly attacks and the anarchy and multiple crises that followed.

African must rise. Imperialism must fall.

International solidarity

The South African Communist Party takes this moment to reassert its unwavering solidarity with the people of Swaziland, who courageously struggle for a democratic breakthrough against the autocratic rule of absolute monarch Mzwati.

We call for an immediate end to acts of violence in the Zimbabwean elections. The elections must be conducted freely, fairly, and credibly, ensuring the people's voices are heard and respected.

The SACP stands firmly in solidarity with the people of South Cameroon, facing a genocidal campaign by the French-backed government. We condemn such atrocities and demand justice for the victims.

Our support for the people of Western Sahara remains steadfast in their fight against occupation by Morocco. We call for the end of this occupation and the realisation of the people's right to self-determination.

In Sudan, the SACP calls for an end to the war and supports a democratic transition, peace, and inclusive development for the nation. The Sudanese people deserve a peaceful future free from conflict.

We reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with the people of Palestine against occupation, land expropriation, and other human rights violations and atrocities perpetrated by the apartheid Israeli regime. We demand justice and respect for the rights of the Palestinian people and reiterate our support for a two-state solution based on the pre-1967 borders with a viable Palestinian state.

In Syria, we stand with the people against foreign occupation and military aggression by the United States and Israel. The people deserve democratic sovereignty and freedom from external interference.

The SACP wholeheartedly supports the people of Cuba against the economic, financial and wider criminal blockade imposed by the imperialist United States regime. We call on the United States to end this inhumane and illegal blockade and to withdraw unconditionally and immediately from Guantanamo Bay.

We express our solidarity with the people of Venezuela and others around the world facing United States-led imperialist aggression. The principles of self-determination and democratic sovereignty must be upheld for all nations.

In Ukraine, we advocate for a peaceful diplomatic resolution and dialogue to end the war, which was instigated and is armed, technically capacitated and bankrolled by NATO in its eastward expansion aimed at Russia, which responded with what it called a Special Military Operation.

The SACP remains committed to standing in militant solidarity with oppressed peoples worldwide. Together, we will continue our struggle against imperialism, oppression, and injustice, and work towards a just and peaceful world for all.

ISSUED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY | SACP
EST. 1921 AS THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA | CPSA

Dr Alex Mohubetswane Mashilo:
SACP Central Committee Member, National Spokesperson
Political Bureau Secretary for Policy and Research

FOR INTERVIEW ARRANGEMENTS, MEDIA LIAISON & CIRCULATION SERVICES
Hlengiwe Nkonyane
Communications Officer: Media Liaison and Digital Platforms Co-ordinator
Mobile: +27 66 473 4819

OFFICE & OTHER CONTACT DETAILS

Office: +2711 339 3621/2

Website: www.sacp.org.za

Facebook Page: South African Communist Party

Twitter: SACP1921

WELCOME TO THE SACP DONATION PAGE: <https://donate.sacp.org.za/>. PLEASE MAKE A CLEAN DONATION.