

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS



DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

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Message of support by ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa to the COSATU Central Committee

20 September 2021

Virtual meeting

Comrade Zingiswa Losi, President of COSATU
National Office Bearers of COSATU
Members of the National Executive Committee of the ANC present
Cde Blade Nzimande and leadership of the SACP present
Members of the COSATU Central Executive Committee
Comrades and Friends

I bring greetings and a message of solidarity and support from the African National Congress to our ally, the federation of workers, COSATU.

We have been in the midst of a pandemic that is unlike anything the world has seen in more than a century.

The pandemic has tested our society, its people and the movement. South Africans have responded admirably and we commend the people for the bravery and strength they continue to show.

We, once again, extend our condolences to all those who have lost loved ones during this period. COVID-19 has taken so much from so many of us.

PRESIDENT CM Ramaphosa	DEPUTY PRESIDENT DD Mabuza	NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON G Mantashe	SECRETARY GENERAL ES Magashule	DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL JY Duarte	TREASURER GENERAL P Mashatile
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Members of the Federation, in especially the front-line sectors of health, law enforcement and other sectors, have served the nation with distinction and we thank them.

The Alliance demonstrated utmost unity at the start of the pandemic and we worked together to develop a comprehensive response to our social and economic challenges.

This unity of the Alliance contributed towards uniting most of society behind the measures implemented to combat the pandemic. This is a clear demonstration of the important position we occupy in the lives of South Africans; our actions have a profound impact on the country and her people.

When we are divided, fighting one another in public and pre-occupied with ourselves, the people of our country do not appreciate it. Divisions and internal squabbles detract from our ability to advance the National Democratic Revolution and serve the people.

If we are to truly give effect to the trust the people continue to bestow on us, we must continue with the unity we displayed at the onset of the pandemic and implement programmes that meaningfully address their most pressing challenges.

One of the important issues that we need to attend to as an alliance is to ensure that we address various issues that are important to the strengthening of the alliance, particularly the outstanding issue of the reconfiguration of the alliance and the implementation of various alliance decisions of the alliance.

Comrades, defeating the pandemic remains a priority and we must all ensure that we mobilise as many people as possible to be vaccinated. The Alliance must lead popular vaccination campaigns.

We must spread this message as we go about campaigning.

Ensuring that sufficient numbers of people are vaccinated is the only way of preventing new and potentially more infectious variants from emerging.

South Africans must stand together to combat the many conspiracy theories about vaccines and spread the message that vaccines are safe, they work and are very effective in preventing severe illness from COVID-19.

Workers can be rest assured that we respect the right to bodily integrity and all other constitutional rights. However, this must be balanced against the right to a safe working environment and it is correct to take measures to ensure the economy can re-open in a safe manner that protects all workers.

We urge the federation to step up efforts to educate and persuade workers, and indeed all South Africans, to be vaccinated.

The pandemic exacerbated an already fraught economic situation.

Poverty is pervasive and too many people go to bed hungry, regularly, in South Africa. The Covid 19 pandemic has exacerbated poverty and the negative impact it has had on our economy has led to almost 1.4 million people losing their jobs since the start of the pandemic.

Unemployment is beyond a crisis level and it is clear that much more needs to be done. Our current strategies are, at the moment, not sufficient scale to address the extent of the problem.

In dealing with the pandemic the government introduced on a number of interventions to deal with the negative impacts of the pandemic. We introduced a stimulus package equal to about 10% of our GDP that enabled workers, the unemployed, households and businesses to weather the devastating effects of the pandemic. A number of these interventions were embarked upon following proposals your Federation as well as a number of community-based organisations and businesses. This confirmed the efficacy of our compact between government, labour, community-based organisations and business in dealing with crises that face our nation.

Notwithstanding the laudable initiatives we embarked upon unemployment persists, poverty is pervasive, and our economy continues to operate at sub- minimal levels.

In our consultations we also agreed that this Covid 19 crisis presents us with an opportunity to transform our economy so as to make it more inclusive.

We have observed how many countries around the world are re-examining their own economic policies for a post Covid 19 world. The more developed economies are rethinking traditional conservative, neo-liberal economic policies and are gravitating towards encouraging fiscal spending, increased government debt and increased taxes to deal with the aftermath of the pandemic. This has been accompanied by greater recognition for unions and the rights of workers.

South Africa's economy may not have as much room as these developed economies for implementing all of the above strategies, but we must chart our own path in transforming our economy so that it is underpinned by solidarity with the vulnerable and the poor and is more inclusive.

We need to investigate how we can use our economic policy instruments and what changes may be required to address the extent of the challenges confronting us more effectively.

The most recent ANC NEC Lekgotla, correctly, reaffirmed that the most important task of this moment is to reduce poverty and create jobs.

The Alliance Economic Task Team must therefore develop proposals for the reform of economic policy that will lead to the transformation of our economy and also how we can supplement the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) to deepen and accelerate its impact.

The NEC Lekgotla identified a number of measures aimed at increasing growth and enhancing job creation.

Continuing to "implement structural reforms and promote local productive activity to grow our economy more quickly and stimulate more investment and employment.

The increased role of digital platforms in our economic lives is expected to persist even beyond the pandemic, as more and more social, economic, governance and supply chain interactions move to the digital sphere.

Enabling universal access to broadband should be the approach to the release of the spectrum and other digital technologies so that the development of the digital economy is inclusive and sustainable

Enhancing industrial capacity and increased localisation in collaboration with the private sector and organised labour.

There continues to be significant demand on government to continue with and expand income support measures for those living in poverty.

Further work needs to be done towards the achievement of Comprehensive Social Security to ensure that all South Africans can live in comfort and dignity.

This necessarily requires better alignment and linkages between social security policies and labour market policies so that beneficiaries of social support can move more readily into employment.

Subject to long-term affordability, serious consideration should be given to extending further support to the unemployed, and those who are structurally marginalised, possibly in the form of an extension of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant, targeted food-poverty-line support. We should also consider a combination of all this with mass employment projects for people.

We are taking steps to reduce the regulatory burden on small, medium and micro enterprises. This includes ensuring that informal traders are not subject to undue and unfair regulatory requirements. This should unleash the economic energy of our people when unnecessary red tape is done away with.

Our fiscal constraints mean that we must set clear priorities, focusing on measures which will have the greatest social and economic impact.

Transitioning to a low-carbon, ecologically friendly and socially sustainable economy presents opportunities to create jobs, inclusion and growth in the following sectors: renewable energy, grid construction, manufacturing of renewable components, battery storage, green vehicles, and green hydrogen while assisting us to further our environmental protection objectives.

Infrastructure development is the backbone of economic progress. We must therefore aggressively expand social and economic infrastructure to meet the needs of the economy and the South African people at large. This includes new investments in renewable energy, mining, water and sanitation, roads and bridges, human settlements, health and education, digital infrastructure and public transport.

To further strengthen the massive roll-out of infrastructure, we are increasing community participation in a way that leads to skills development, SMME participation and employment for affected communities.

Our infrastructure investments must anchor the One-Plan, One Budget approach of the District Development Model and prioritise critical network infrastructure such as rural roads and bridges, water, energy and digital infrastructure. “

The involvement of the Federation in the conceptualisation and implementation of all these initiatives must happen as it will be crucial. The voice of workers must inform our strategies to put the country on a higher growth and employment generating trajectory.

We are all in agreement that the success of our revolution and the ability to bring about a better life for all, depends on the improving the capacity of the state. The state must be efficient, developmental and capable. The state must be rid of corruption, malfeasance and corruption.

The ANC admits that we have made a number of errors, in this area and we are working to professionalise the public service.

We are implementing a whole range of measures to instil a culture of service across all spheres of government, but especially at local government level where most people have regular and consistent contact with government.

The finalisation of the work to put in place a single public service will be fast-tracked and is taking place in consultation.

The ANC remains committed to protecting collective bargaining and all other workers' rights. The notion that the ANC-government is trying to weaken this system is not true.

Collective bargaining is a hard-won right, that the ANC wants workers to continue enjoying and the ANC will protect this right.

The local government elections we are going to hold in November should be seen as a watershed moment for our democracy and enable us to reposition the local government sphere of government. The candidates who will be elected following these elections will be required to lead clean, efficient and service delivery focused local government structures that will be committed to serving the interests of our people.

We expect that those who will be chosen to lead our local government will be people of integrity and will be capable and qualified to serve our people and to improve service delivery in all the municipalities of our country.

We will intensify the utilisation of the District Development Model (DDM), and integrate all three spheres of government, to continue defending our communities against the COVID-19 pandemic, and better combat the scourge of gender-based violence and femicide.

The District Development Model will be leveraged to strengthen capacity of municipalities to provide basic services better and to unlock economic potential of each district to ensure food

security, accelerate skills development and align it with the developmental needs of the district, support industries and create jobs.

I am pleased to observe that a number of provinces have taken the DDM to heart and drawing in stakeholders and role-players in to work in a more collaborative manner.

All of us are agreed that we must work harder to turn local government around and serve the people better.

On a political level, the ANC has begun to interview mayoral candidates in an effort to ensure we entrust competent and capable cadres with this important responsibility. We are institutionalising and standardising this practice and it will continue following the forthcoming local government elections.

We need to ensure that senior officials, especially municipal managers and chief financial officers, and other technical officers, are suitably qualified and subject to more rigorous qualification criteria in order to be appointed.

There must be more consistency in applying discipline and consequence management both to recognise and learn from good performance and to correct poor performance.

The ANC conducted our recent candidate selection process in accordance with our principles of inclusiveness and representativity. We also, in accordance with the decision of the 54th National Conference, appointed an Electoral Committee to oversee the process.

As with all new processes and structures, there were teething problems and we also received troubling reports of alleged misconduct, transgressions of list guidelines and manipulation of lists.

The ANC will investigate all these reports and allegations. Where necessary, we will institute disciplinary measures.

However, most of our structures ran credible and inclusive processes, involving communities across the length and breadth of the country. The nature of this community involvement took many innovative forms, often dictated by the pandemic restrictions.

We have just concluded the final voter registration weekend and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) re-opened candidate registration. The ANC worked hard to ensure we are able register candidates in all wards and for all PR-lists. This was also to correct some of the weaknesses we had.

We welcome the decision of the Constitutional Court to allow the reopening of candidate registration to enable all South Africans to freely participate in the elections and be able to vote for eligible candidates of their choice and to stand.

This will be a short and targeted campaign and we must all be on the ground mobilising as many as people as possible to vote for the ANC.

We must emphasise our successes. The ANC-government has succeeded in making this a better country and we need to back this assertion with objective facts.

The movement must be humble and admit where we have made mistakes. In admitting our mistakes, we must provide people with information about the strategies we are implementing to address our mistakes and bring wrongdoers to book.

There will be many questions posed to leaders and candidates and we must be prepared to engage with all questions and challenges, especially from our own members and supporters.

It is important for all of us to stay on message and make sure the message of the movement reaches as many people as possible. We must convince the people that the ANC will continue to work towards building a better life for all.

This is our task as an alliance.

We need to go to the people united, whilst continue to engage on our difficulties. We have always found solutions.

The Alliance is sealed in history, underpinned by working in the trenches of struggle and striving for the success of the NDR.

Let us go out and ensure a decisive victory for the ANC.

Amandla!

I wish your Central Committee the very best.