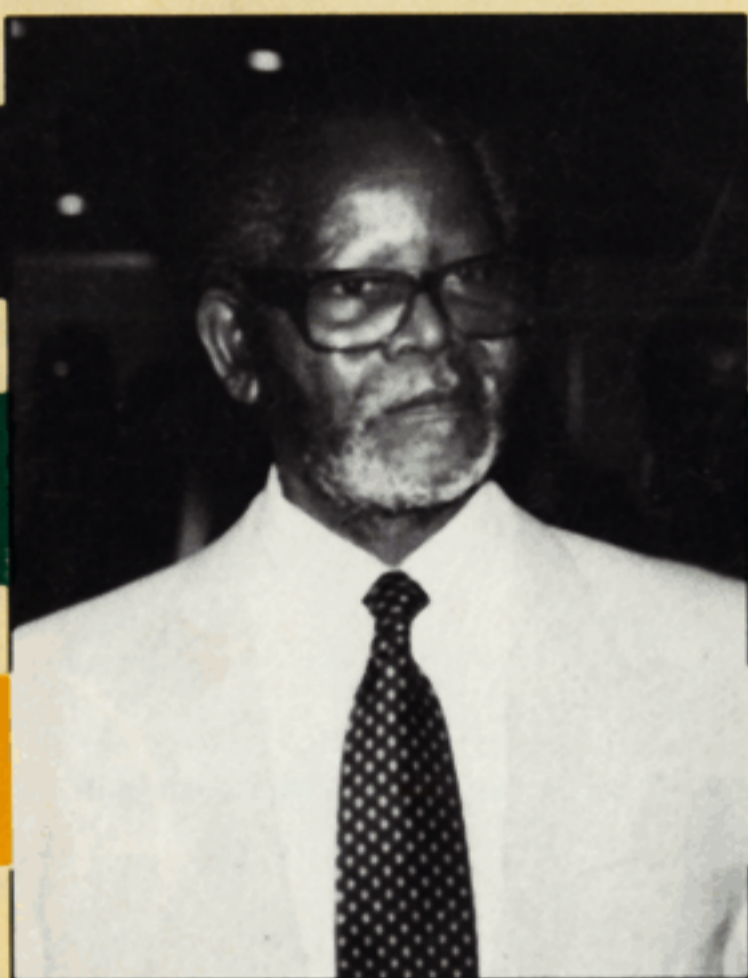


**Year of mass
action for
the transfer
of power to
the people**



**Statement of the
National Executive Committee on the
occasion of the 79th anniversary of the
African National Congress
January 8, 1991**

**Introductory Statement of the President of the ANC,
Oliver Tambo,
on the Presentation of the Statement of the
National Executive Committee on 8 January, 1991**

Compatriots,

Today we mark the 79th anniversary of the formation of the ANC. We do so as a legal organisation for the first time in 30 years. We do so inside the country together with freedom fighters, some of whom have spent almost three decades in prison and in exile.

This reality is itself a tribute to the heroism of the millions of our people who engaged in struggle demanding, among other things, the unbanning of the ANC, the release of political prisoners and the return of the exiles. It is the signal that the basic demand of these masses, that power should reside in the hands of the people as a whole, will soon be realised.

It is our task as a movement to chart the way forward to the speedy accomplishment of this objective. Our statement today points out the measures our country must institute to ensure its early transformation into a non-racial democracy, to ensure that the people enjoy freedom and peace sooner rather than later.

What our statement is about is struggle. It is

about the continued offensive of the masses of our people, both black and white, to end the apartheid crime against humanity, the common enemy of all our people. It is about the constructive steps that must be taken to sustain and expedite the peace process.

We commend it to you all as a programme of action for justice and peace and have directed our Deputy President, Comrade Nelson Mandela, to present it to the nation as a whole and the peoples of the world.

Let us continue to march together in our millions until freedom is won.

Our common victory is in sight.

Amandla Ngawethu!

All Power to the People!

**Statement of the National Executive Committee of the
African National Congress on the Occasion
of the 79th Anniversary of the ANC
Delivered by the Deputy President, Nelson Mandela,
8 January, 1991**

Fellow South Africans,

Today, 8 January 1991, we observe the 79th anniversary of the foundation of the ANC. On this historic occasion I greet you all on behalf of our President, Comrade Oliver Tambo, the National Executive Committee of the ANC and the rest of our membership. We wish you all a successful new year, one which should see our country take resolute steps forward on the road to freedom, justice and peace.

This past year marked a turning point in our struggle for the liberation of our people from the yoke of apartheid tyranny. As a result of the victories scored through the struggles waged by our heroic people, the balance of forces within our country has shifted irrevocably in favour of the cause of national liberation, democracy, peace and social progress.

Since the beginning of the colonial settlement of South Africa, successive white minority regimes took power, committed to the perpetuation of racist and colonial domination. During this past year, the white ruling group had to admit that it

could no longer resist the tide which has resulted in the historic process of decolonisation through which millions of people gained their independence and their right to self-determination.

It had no choice but to accept that it was the right of all the people of South Africa, both black and white, jointly to decide the future of our country.

People's Victories through Struggle

This is the true significance of the decisions that the National Party government was obliged to take, relating to the unbanning of the ANC and other organisations and the inevitability of a negotiated resolution of the problems facing our country.

For its part, the ANC understood the decisive importance of this popular victory. It was on the basis of that understanding that the ANC pointed the way forward by taking the initiative to ensure that the process of resolving the problems of our country by peaceful means should begin.

We understood the magnitude of the people's victory because we have, for decades, been involved in struggle. The ANC, and the masses of the people whom it leads and inspires, had not been content to talk about struggle. We had engaged the racist enemy in a relentless offensive in which the courageous activities of the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and the mass actions of the people played a decisive role.

We take this opportunity to salute both the commanders and combatants of Umkhonto and the fighting masses of our people, as well as the other organised formations of the democratic movement which played a central role in the struggle which has brought us where we are today.

We refer here specifically to the United Democratic Front and its affiliates, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, religious bodies of all faiths and many outstanding patriots, among them sportspeople, cultural workers, traditional leaders, business people, academics, media workers and others.

All of these forces know precisely what repression and the arrogance of white power means. They know what it means when those who stand for justice, reason and dialogue are condemned to death, long terms of imprisonment, driven into exile and subjected to relentless persecution.

Forces against Repression

It was precisely because of this actual experience that they also understood the magnitude of the victory that the democratic forces had won when, as we have said, the Pretoria government gave in to the demand of the majority and conceded that the future of our country must, as a matter of right, be decided by all its citizens.

We must, at this stage, make the point that all the

Mass Action a Right

people of our country, regardless of the political cause they espouse, have a fundamental democratic right to express their views in public through peaceful demonstrations and other forms of mass action. We will defend the right of the people to this basic human right both now and in the future. All state practices intended to limit or circumscribe the exercise of this right must be ended without any delay.

Furthermore, the point should be clearly understood that it is wrong to pose negotiations and mass activity as being opposed to each other. The mass involvement of the people in the process of negotiations is a vital component part of the process of ensuring that the very result of these negotiations reflects the true interests and aspirations of these masses. The voice of the people will therefore continue to be heard through mass action in all its forms.

In terms of the issue of the fundamental transformation of South Africa, the principal question that faces us now, that confronts all the people of our country, is - what do we do with the common victory we have all scored enabling all the people to participate in shaping the destiny of our country!

Apartheid Must Go!

The ANC approaches the future with only two aims in mind. These are the total abolition of the system of apartheid, and not its reform or amend-

ment, and its replacement by a genuine, non-racial democracy. Power must be transferred into the hands of all the people so that they, the people, govern.

We believe these are victories over the system of apartheid which should be striven for by every South African who dares call himself or herself a patriot, without anyone seeking to play with the lives and hopes of the people to gain what can only be temporary sectarian political advantage for themselves.

What, therefore, is our vision for the year ahead of us? What is it that the ANC must and will do to build on the common victory, so that our country advances rapidly towards its long-overdue liberation?

This year we must focus our attention on the central question confronting our country - the question of the transfer of power to the people. This requires that a democratic constitution should be adopted, based on the principle of one person one vote in a united South Africa, incorporating an entrenched and justiciable Bill of Rights and protected by a representative and independent judiciary.

In other words, this year, 1991, must see us realise the goal of the political emancipation of the majority by the introduction of a political order

**Power to
the People!**

which will guarantee the democratic rights of all South Africans, including the rights to language, culture and the pursuit of religious beliefs.

The reality we still face is that, whatever might have been done or said during the past year, our country continues to be ruled by an apartheid white minority regime, which functions on the basis of an apartheid constitution and a litany of apartheid laws.

This is a situation which no amount of sweet words and declarations about commitment to a democratic future can change. Its continued existence represents a perpetuation of a crime against humanity which should not be tolerated for one day longer.

Forward to a Constituent Assembly

What is therefore required and required urgently is that we move forward to the establishment of the representative and sovereign body which must, within a determined period, draw up the new democratic constitution. As is well known, we have advanced the demand that this body should be an elected Constituent Assembly.

During this past year, as reflected in the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes, we entered into a number of agreements with the government, agreements that are of major importance to the peace process. Agreement was reached that various identified obstacles to the process of nego-

tiating a new constitution had to be removed prior to such negotiations. Specific steps and a timetable were also agreed concerning the removal of these obstacles. The government must fully implement these agreements, in keeping with the agreed time scales.

Failure to do this will put in very serious doubt the announced commitment of the government to genuine negotiations and further sharpen questions about its readiness to keep to agreements it has entered into. We, for our part, are committed to a review of the situation if outstanding agreements are not implemented by 30 April, 1991.

**Implement
Agreements
Now!**

The government will therefore have to take full responsibility for any delay to the constitutional negotiations caused by its failure to implement the agreements entered into at Groote Schuur and Pretoria. We will continue to use all means at our disposal to ensure that these agreements are adhered to, both because of their intrinsic importance and because of their relevance to the process of an early start to the process of negotiating a new constitution.

We have stated it many times that the ANC is firmly committed to the view that all political forces in our country should be involved both in determining how the constitution-making body should be composed as well as drawing up the constitution itself. What must be understood is

that these are two different though related elements of the constitutional process.

The People Must Decide

With regard to the issue of the body to negotiate the new constitution, we believe that it is only right that the people themselves should decide the composition of what will obviously be a critically important organ in the struggle for the democratic transformation of our country. It is for this reason that we advocate the election of a sovereign Constituent Assembly, vested with full powers to negotiate and adopt a constitution that will be acceptable to the millions of our people who would have elected the members of the assembly.

It seems to us obvious that for us to arrive at a stable settlement, the legitimacy of the institution charged with the task of drawing up the constitution and, consequently, the product that will issue from this institution, must derive from the fact that it would have been mandated by the people as a whole.

Free and Fair Elections

None who genuinely believe that the will of the people should reign supreme should have any problem in agreeing that each party at the negotiations should, as in Namibia, represent a proven constituency, as would be determined during free and fair elections to a Constituent Assembly.

But, as visualised in both the Harare and United

Nations Declarations dealing with the peaceful resolution of the South African question, it is necessary and indispensable that an all-party congress be summoned to discuss various questions.

The summoning of such a congress would constitute the first step in the process leading to the adoption of the new constitution. Unless it were mandated by the people themselves, this congress would not itself have the power to draw up a constitution.

The all-party congress, which can only be convened after all obstacles to negotiations have actually been removed, would have to carry out three tasks. These are:

All-Party Congress

- To set out the broad principles within which the detailed constitutional work would be carried out;
- To determine the make-up of the body, such as an elected Constituent Assembly, that would draw up the constitution;
- To establish an interim government to oversee the process of transition until a new parliament was elected, and a democratic government formed, on the basis on the new constitution.

Having decided these three issues, and complet-

ing its work within a defined period of time, the all-party congress would then dissolve, unless, as we have said, it obtained a specific popular mandate to continue as a constitution-making body, an interim government, or both.

Interim Government

The early installation of an interim government, as a body with real power in fact and in law, and in control of all instruments of state power, is critical to the process of the transition to the new order. Quite clearly this process of transition away from apartheid cannot be supervised by an apartheid institution, which is precisely what the present government is.

Already during the past year, we have experienced the problems which arise from the fact that the ruling National Party is both a player and a referee. Furthermore, nobody should run away from the fact that a great deal of mistrust still persists about the intentions and the good faith of the present government.

We are entering a very delicate period in the history of our country, during which a new constitution will be negotiated and the transition made to a democratic order. No serious person can suggest that during this period our country should be governed by a ruling authority which does not enjoy the confidence and trust of the people as a whole.

The National Party must understand and accept that not only apartheid legislation must be done away with, but also that its government, itself an apartheid institution, should also be abolished. In the interim, it must be replaced by an authority which would include representatives of the National Party as well as those of other political formations that would be participating in the process of negotiations.

The ANC is committed to the view that the transition to a non-racial democracy should be as short as possible. The oppressed demand freedom now and not tomorrow. Furthermore, prolonged uncertainty about the future will itself result in further conflict and destabilisation. Our liberty, which has been denied for so long, should no longer be delayed.

During this past year, the government demonstrated some dismal failures in terms of the maintenance of peace in this country. It alone controls the institutions which have the duty and the capacity to ensure that all our people are protected from the threat of violence. But through its actions, over many months, it allowed the situation in which hundreds of people were killed and thousands displaced from their homes, in some instances as a result of actions carried out by elements within its own security services.

This situation should not be allowed to recur. In

Abolish Apartheid Institutions

End the Violence

addition to the absolute need to protect human lives, the fact of the matter is that no negotiations about the future can take place while hundreds are being slaughtered by forces that are opposed to change.

Join the Democratic Forces

We reiterate our call to all those who serve within the police and the army to commit themselves to the non-racial and democratic future which is certain to become a reality. All these must act now to end all campaigns of terror against the people and thus prepare for their place as part of the security forces of a new and peaceful South Africa.

Self Defence our Right

In the light of our experience we would like, once more, to reaffirm the right of the people to self-defence. By decision of our Consultative Conference, our movement is committed to assist the people throughout the country to set up the necessary mechanisms for the defence of each community, which mechanisms must enjoy the support and confidence of the people as a whole.

In addition to this, the ANC will also further pursue its programme of liaising with all the relevant political organisations to ensure that we act together to stop and preclude all violent confrontation and conflict that emanates from the fact that people hold varying political views. We trust that all these organisations, including the Inkatha Freedom Party, will co-operate with us in genu-

ine good faith to save the lives and the property of the people.

In addition to carrying out its tasks of organising inside the homelands and discharging its responsibilities to our people in these areas, the ANC has also sought to establish relations with the authorities administering the various homelands. We appeal to all of these to desist from all hostile actions directed against the ANC and other democratic structures, as well as the people within the homelands.

Rather, they should themselves normalise their relations with the people within their areas, help create the situation where there is free and peaceful expression of political views and co-operate with the democratic movement as a whole in the effort to shape the future of our country.

None of these homelands, and specifically those described as independent, should be holding political prisoners and detainees, banning meetings and governing by imposing states of emergency and in the context of anti-democratic security legislation.

We would also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our unwavering opposition to any of our members and supporters using force where political discussion is called for or as a means of promoting any of our campaigns. The movement

**Political
Tolerance
is Vital**

will take all necessary disciplinary measures against anybody from our ranks who resorts to these unacceptable methods.

Over the years we have waged, and continue to conduct, an unrelenting struggle against the system of apartheid local government, especially in the black urban areas. In the course of that struggle we have advanced the perspective of a genuinely non-racial system of local government that would serve the interests of all the people in each locality.

Last year, this struggle scored a major victory when the government announced that it had conceded to our demand for a democratic and non-racial system of local government and accepted that it was necessary to move forward to establish interim structures of local government on the basis of these principles.

Democratise Local Government

At the same time as we wage struggle for an interim government at the national level, it is necessary that we also act on the matter of local government by taking all the necessary steps to ensure that these interim structures are established and the old apartheid institutions, such as the community councils, are finally abolished. An important lead concerning what is to be done has already been given by the agreement negotiated by the Soweto People's Delegation with the Transvaal Provincial Administration, which,

among other things, visualises the establishment of a democratic and non-racial central Witwatersrand metropolitan chamber.

The disastrous matric results among African students once more bring into sharp focus the urgent need to end the system of apartheid education. This issue cannot await the introduction of a new constitution, but must be acted upon now.

It is to hide one's head in the sand to claim that these results are a consequence of school boycotts without addressing the question why the school boycotts occurred in the first instance. Nobody should therefore run away from the reality that the problem lies with the perpetuation of the apartheid system of bantu education.

Nevertheless, once more we reiterate our call to the students to go back to school. We will contribute everything we can to ensure a return to normal learning and teaching. But this cannot be the end to the matter. Urgent measures are required to ensure that all our people are subject to the same system of education and that all schools are open to all, without discrimination on grounds of race or colour.

Accordingly, we must make the point here that the measures announced by the government to open the white schools need to be changed radically. It is quite clear that these measures are de-

**Open the
Doors of
Learning!**

signed to slow down or otherwise make very difficult the process of desegregating these schools. Such actions do not serve to inspire confidence in the commitment of the government to genuine change.

We pay tribute to the white parents who, in spite of the obstacles they face, have nevertheless acted to have the white schools opened to all the children of our country.

Proceeding from our commitment to the perspective that the doors of learning and culture should be open to all, we demand that these doors should be opened now so that the country as a whole begins seriously to tackle the urgent question of the development of our human resources for the building of a free, peaceful and prosperous society.

Improve Quality of Life

As we go through the period of transition to a democratic society, it is absolutely vital that everything be done to improve the quality of life of the poor sections of our population. The process of change will inspire very little confidence and occur in a situation of increasing instability if, in practice, the impoverished masses of the people continue to experience a further lowering of their standards of living.

At the beginning of the year, the government proclaimed its readiness and commitment to im-

prove the quality of life of the people. The real situation is that very little has happened. The forthcoming budget, and public expenditure in general, must reflect genuine movement forward with regard to this matter.

At the same time, we will also have to wage struggle to ensure that the private sector does not itself carry out an attack on the living standards of the people. The call for a living wage remains among our principal demands and must be pursued. We welcome the agreements reached between some unions and employers to help provide alternative employment for those workers who are unavoidably retrenched. We urge other companies to follow these examples.

In addition to this, there is a continuing need for the private sector to show greater sensitivity to the broader objective of carrying out a determined offensive against the abject poverty which afflicts so many of our people. The necessary financial resources and business skills have to be released to tackle such urgent questions as the housing and education crises, with the business community acting in concert with structures that are genuinely representative of the people. The ANC will continue to engage the private sector to address these and other matters.

In the meantime all of us must now carry out the preparations aimed at building an economic sys-

Private Sector Responsibilities

tem that will create jobs, ensure a fair and just distribution of wealth, enable black economic empowerment, attend to the matter of the redistribution of the land, lead to the elimination of poverty and focus on the objective of ensuring a rising standard of living for all the people of our country.

**Freedom and
Prosperity
for all!**

Serious thinking has to be devoted to the objective of executing both immediate programmes to address these issues and longer term plans aimed at sustained growth and all-round enrichment of all the people of our country, in the context of a growing economy.

As South Africans we know this very well that liberty and poverty are uncomfortable bedfellows. Therefore all of us have to engage in a very serious struggle to ensure that freedom and prosperity relate to each other like twins. This is one of the major challenges confronting all of us during this historic year.

On this occasion of the anniversary of our movement, we also greet our friends and supporters in Southern Africa, Africa and the rest of the world. We salute all these millions, as well as their governments and organisations, who have also played and must continue to play a critical role in the joint effort to end the apartheid crime against humanity.

That common struggle is not over yet. We therefore urge the peoples of the world to continue marching side by side with the majority of the people of our country until South Africa is transformed into a non-racial democracy. This requires that the international community should continue to exert pressure for the speedy transformation of South Africa through the application of various sanctions.

Sanctions Part of Common Struggle

In keeping with the decisions of our Consultative Conference, we will soon initiate discussions with this community on the question of sanctions to ensure the continued isolation of those who remain committed to the perpetuation of apartheid, increased support for the democratic forces and such international interventions as would help expedite the dismantling of the apartheid system and the upliftment of the dispossessed majority, the victims of this repugnant system.

We are determined that our country should, as soon as possible, take its place as an equal member among the world community of nations, without any sanctions applied against it. This requires that we achieve speedy movement forward towards its democratic transformation.

We will continue to prepare for the day when all the people of a free South Africa will, at last, be able to interact with the rest of the world in all fields of human endeavour, conscious of the fact

Continue International Support!

that we will require the continued support of the international community to undo the damage caused by the system of white minority domination and to enhance the social order we are fighting for, of freedom, justice, peace and prosperity.

Build the ANC

I would also like to take this opportunity directly to address the members and supporters of the ANC. We face an urgent challenge to re-establish and expand the organisational structures of our movement among all the people of our country and in all areas, both rural and urban. After thirty years of illegality, it is not easy to realise this objective.

Our situation is made more difficult by the fact that our country is still ruled by an apartheid regime, many of whose members continue to see us as part of a "total onslaught" which must be rebuffed through a "total strategy".

We must therefore expect that, at every stage, there will be forces within the present state system, and the establishment at large, which will be very active or lying in wait to destabilise and discredit our movement. These forces will continue to do everything in their power to destroy our capacity to play our role in the transformation of our country into a non-racial democracy.

Despite all this, we must work very hard to build the organised structures of the ANC. Apart from

any immediate organisational interests, the reality of our country is that no permanent solution can be achieved without the participation and involvement of our movement.

Recognising this, we must therefore be ready to play our role in the mobilisation of the country for justice and peace, not merely in our interest as an organisation, but for the benefit of the country and the people as a whole. To achieve all this, we must ensure that we are organisationally strong, based among the people as a national democratic movement and capable of reaching all the people. In this regard, we must not only build and strengthen the mother body, but also the Youth and Women's Leagues as well.

We can only accomplish the aims detailed in this statement if we are organised and in every way prepared to act for their realisation. Everything will remain a dream unless we are strong enough to move the masses of the people to understand, accept and support the perspectives we put forward.

Beyond this we have to reach out to other organisations that pursue goals that are similar to ours, as well as those that are capable of moving towards and accepting these positions, to form a patriotic front for a democratic South Africa. The unity of all these forces is central to the success of our struggle for the transformation of

Unity of all Patriotic Forces

South Africa into a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist country.

This unity also requires that we further reinforce our alliance with the South African Communist Party and Cosatu, and defeat the hostile efforts to drive wedges among the member organisations of this alliance.

**Mass Action
for the
Transfer of
Power to
the People**

Both individually and together with these sister organisations in the patriotic front, we have to move and engage the millions of our people in struggle to achieve all the objectives we have spoken about in this statement. It is the mass activity of the people, combined with strong organisation and a clear programme of action, that will assure us of our victory over the criminal system of apartheid which continues to blight the lives of our people.

In this way shall we translate into reality our proclamation of 1991 as the **Year of Mass Action for the Transfer of Power to the People.**

Amandla Ngawethu!

Matla ke a Rona!

All Power to the People!

"The ANC approaches the future with only two aims in mind. These are the total abolition of the system of apartheid, and not its reform or amendment, and its replacement by a genuine, non-racial democracy. Power must be transferred into the hands of all the people so that they, the people, govern."

