

ANC STATEMENT ON COMMENTS BY ZWELINZIMA VAVI

The African National Congress is disappointed with statements made on the weekend by COSATU General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi regarding past and serving cabinet ministers.

He was reported to have referred to some ministers as „deadwoods%, „who remain untouchable%, and some who „are dying on duty%.

These comments are deplorable, irresponsible and unbecoming of a leader who heads the secretariat of the progressive trade union movement.

They demonstrate a failure to understand the difference between frank and constructive criticism, which is an essential feature of the democratic movement, and the kind of abusive ranting to which many of the ANC,s opponents regularly stoop.

These are not the sort of comments that one would expect from a senior member of the ANC-led Alliance.

His insensitive reference to ministers „dying on duty% demonstrates a shameful lack of respect for those who have passed away, and for their families, colleagues and friends. Cabinet ministers who died in office, including Joe Slovo, Steve Tshwete, Dullah Omar and Stella Sigcau, all served the nation with commitment and dignity.

Vavi,s attack on current members of the executive is uncalled for. The experience of the last 13 years demonstrates that tangible and meaningful progress has been made by the ANC-led government in improving the living conditions of our people. These achievements have been reviewed and reiterated on numerous occasions in recent years, including at two successive Alliance Summits.

The contribution that members of the executive have made to this progress, working alongside all sectors of society, should not be demeaned or belittled by those who would rather play to the gallery than honestly examine the strengths and weaknesses of our government.

The ANC reiterates its position on the President,s decision to relieve the former Deputy Minister of Health of her responsibilities in government.

The ANC respects and accepts the decision taken by the President, in accordance with the powers and responsibilities conferred on him by the Constitution.

The ANC once more thanks Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge for her contribution to the country,s transformation during her tenure in the executive.

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