



**ADDRESS BY ANC PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA
ON THE 113TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

**MANDELA PARK STADIUM, KHAYELITSHA
11 JANUARY 2024**

Comrade Gwede Mantashe, ANC National Chairperson,
Comrade Paul Mashatile, Deputy President,
National Officials and Members of the ANC National Executive Committee,
Comrade Solly Mapaila, General Secretary of the SACP,
Comrade Zingiswa Losi, President of COSATU,
Comrade Richard Hlope, President of SANCO,
Representatives of the ANC Veteran's League, Women's League and Youth League,
Representatives of the Umkhonto weSizwe Liberation War Veterans,
Veterans and Stalwarts of our Movement,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Leaders from the Religious Sector,
Traditional Leaders,
Comrades and Friends,
People of South Africa,

This year marks the 113th anniversary of the formation of the African National Congress, the people's movement for freedom that continues to unite our country in a national effort to transform South Africa into a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society.

Today we gather in Khayelitsha in the City of Cape Town in the Western Cape, on the southern tip of our country and continent.

It is the point of convergence between east and west, wealth and poverty, justice and injustice, despair and hope. A Cape of Storms and a Cape of Good Hope.

It was on these southern shores that our painful history of colonial conquest, dispossession, oppression and exploitation started, driven by forces that sought to exploit our resources, both human and material.

The rapacious expansion of this quest led to the genocide of the Khoi and the San and prolonged wars with African communities in the interior.

The colonialists imported Malay slaves and indentured labourers from India, China and countries along the east coast of our continent.

The subjugation of all these people resulted in complex relationships of domination and subordination.

It defined some people as more than human and others as less than human.

It is also here that the proud and unbroken tradition of resistance and struggle for liberation had its genesis.

From the Battle of Salt River in 1510, where the !Urill'aekua Khoikhoi abaThwa/Khwe defeated the Portuguese, through successive wars of resistance led by great heroes of our people.

We remember heroes such as Autshumato, Maqoma, Hintsu, Sekhukhune, Cetshwayo, Makhado, Mantsopa, Modjadji, Moshoeshe and Ngungunyane.

The spear of resistance was carried forward through the Bambatha Rebellion in 1906, mass resistance in the 1950s, the people's army uMkhonto weSizwe, the 1976 generation and the mass democratic movement of the 1980s.

Today we once again meet in a context of ongoing global crises and stubborn challenges at home.

The people of the Western Cape and South Africa continue to be confronted by unemployment, poverty and inequality and their attendant causes and effects.

These include crime, violence, gender-based violence and femicide, drug abuse, unequal access to education, and service delivery challenges such as water, sanitation, roads and housing.

There is a new political environment following the May 2024 elections.

The ANC no longer has a majority to form a government on its own and now leads a government of national unity with nine other political parties.

The ANC is committed to decisive action on three urgent and inter-related fronts to regain the confidence of the majority of the people in our ability to represent their hopes and aspirations for a better life:

Firstly, to improve the ability of our economy to create wealth and employment for all.

Secondly, to improve the quality of services and the integrity, responsiveness and accountability of government in all spheres.

Thirdly, to renew and rebuild the ANC so that it can provide decisive and ethical leadership in the resolution of our country's problems and the realisation of the vision of the Freedom Charter.

We take this moment to observe the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, a profoundly revolutionary document that serves as the enduring blueprint for the society we seek to create.

The adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955 and the inclusive and participatory process used to compile the document was a watershed moment in the struggle against colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy.

The Freedom Charter was also inspired by the efforts of the women of our land, who the year before launched the Federation of South African Women – FEDSAW – and adopted the Women's Charter.

This laid the foundation for incorporation of the struggle for gender equality into the national struggle.

The Freedom Charter inspired generations that followed, from workers to women, the rural masses and people on farms, students and youth, professionals and small business people.

It provided impetus for non-racialism and for the unity in struggle of all national groups.

The process initiated by the ANC to develop the Constitutional Guidelines in the late 1980s aimed to operationalise the Freedom Charter as we were preparing for a democratic transition.

Thus, the adoption of the democratic and transformative Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996 was a decisive step in dismantling the institutional and legal foundations of racism and the various codes of colonial, apartheid and patriarchal power.

Out of the crucible of struggle, the people of South Africa made the clarion call in the Freedom Charter that: "South Africa belongs to all who live in it: black and white!"

In so-doing, it advanced the demands that:

The people shall govern,

All national groups shall have equal rights,

The people shall share in the country's wealth,

The land shall be shared among those who work it, and,

The doors of learning and culture shall be opened.

The aspirations of the Freedom Charter have shaped South Africa's development path over the first three decades of freedom.

Given the stubborn nature of racism, patriarchy, inequality and ongoing economic exclusion, the Freedom Charter remains relevant.

The National Democratic Revolution – the NDR – is our theory of social change. It has guided our struggle for freedom over many decades.

Guided by the vision of the Freedom Charter, the goal of the NDR is to transform South Africa into a National Democratic Society by eradicating all manifestations of apartheid, colonial and patriarchal power relations.

The NDR is defined as such precisely because it seeks to achieve four objectives:

Firstly, building a new nation with a new national identity as an African country which is underpinned by non-racialism, non-sexism and unity in diversity;

Secondly, building a democratic state based on the will of the people, without regard to race, class, gender, belief, language, ethnicity and geographic location;

Thirdly, building a society based on the best human values, restoring the dignity and guaranteeing the freedoms and human rights of all the people and improving their quality of life;

Fourthly, building a transformed, inclusive and thriving economy that offers opportunities and decent livelihoods to all people, including restoration of the birthright of all South Africans to the land, finance, skills and other resources.

The success of this vision is, objectively, in the best interest of all South Africans.

The change envisaged by the NDR and encapsulated in the Freedom Charter and the Constitution of the Republic represents the best in human civilisation, where no one is left behind.

The strategic alliance between the national liberation movement, the ANC; the working class party, the SACP; the trade union federation, COSATU; and later the civic movement, SANCO, is possibly one of the best examples of the success of united front politics in today's world.

The Alliance remains the proven vehicle to uplift the working class and the poor.

It has won many historic victories.

These include the adoption of worker rights, employment equity and broad-based black empowerment policies, investment in infrastructure, and public employment programmes.

The Alliance is a living organism that developed and matured over almost a century, under different conditions, constantly adapting its role as the phases of the struggle changed.

The National Democratic Revolution is our shared theory of fundamental change and the Freedom Charter is our common minimum programme.

We have made substantial progress in achieving the objectives of the NDR because we have had an Alliance that has been united and single-minded.

To continue to achieve the change we envisage requires strong organisation, ongoing mass mobilisation of society and unity of progressive forces.

Without unity, the revolution will be defeated by counter-revolution.

In last year's January 8th Statement, we drew attention to the fact that there is common cause between the anti-transformation forces and the state capture forces to destroy the ANC from within and dislodge it from power.

Part of the counter-revolutionary tactic is to promote break-away parties to erode the support base of the ANC.

Some of these parties masquerade as more radical than the ANC, but their revolutionary-sounding rhetoric cannot hide the reality that they have common cause with the forces opposing transformation.

The shared goal of all these forces is to deprive the ANC of the ability to use state power to effect change.

To pursue the NDR effectively, the democratic movement needs to have a decisive influence over the state and a clear mandate to govern in pursuit of fundamental change.

Without state power, the NDR will not succeed.

The outcome of the May 2024 elections has been characterised by the ANC's National Executive Committee as a strategic setback for the ANC-led National Democratic Revolution and the Congress movement as a whole.

For any liberation movement or progressive party, losing a majority in government is a strategic setback.

Without an effective response, such a setback can halt or derail the progress of socioeconomic transformation.

The reasons for the electoral decline include the state of the economy reflected in the crisis of unemployment and social reproduction.

The reasons for the decline also include poor basic services and deficiencies of capable, ethical and responsive governance, as well as the ANC's organisational weaknesses and damaged brand.

A combination of some of these reasons led to many of our traditional supporters and voters staying away from voting or voting for other parties.

The extent and depth of the electoral loss points to an organisation that has lost significant support and public confidence.

This may be a painful reality for us to accept, but our healing lies in accepting the depth of dysfunction in our structures and among our members and leadership.

The question the ANC had to answer at that time was how, under conditions not of our choosing, to safeguard the NDR and re-establish the ANC as a credible and well supported force for progressive change in society.

The NEC moved swiftly to start mapping out various scenarios and options based on the objective reality of an unfavourable electoral performance.

Unanimously, the NEC arrived at the decision to advocate for the formation of an inclusive ANC-led government of national unity.

It is on the basis of this NEC mandate that negotiations were held with all political parties represented in Parliament and in some legislatures.

Ten parties agreed to join the ANC-led government of national unity based on the Statement of Intent.

Through the Statement of Intent, the parties have made a firm commitment to respect the Constitution and the rule of law and to promote accountability, transparency, integrity and good governance.

The formation of the GNU is a tactical decision to pursue the NDR under new conditions occasioned by the electoral setback.

The ANC's strategic objective has not changed but we pursue this objective under conditions where we no longer have a majority to form a government on our own.

As the ANC, we are determined to regain public confidence and return as a majority party in the next elections.

In the meantime, we will work with other political parties, even those with whom we have fundamental differences, to secure space for addressing the needs of our people as articulated in our 2024 Election Manifesto.

The false notion that the character of the ANC and strategic objective of the NDR has now been redefined by a single tactic of forming a broadly inclusive GNU is a distortion of the realities our movement faced and should be dismissed out of hand.

Similarly, the idea that a progressive party cannot engage its opponents in short term, tactical agreements without selling out is ahistorical.

Our own experience and the experiences of many revolutionary movements show that there are moments where conditions require that you work with your opponents to secure space for the revolution to regain momentum.

The movement therefore has to ensure that the tactical initiative which we gained through the formation of the ANC-led GNU is used effectively to open space for a strategic advance to the benefit of the motive forces and all South Africans.

The ANC remains committed to forge national consensus on fundamental issues that affect our diverse nation.

While being flexible on tactics, we maintain firmness of principle in our determination to implement transformative laws and policies adopted by Parliament, such as the BELA Act, National Health Insurance and other pieces of legislation.

We call on all ANC cadres deployed in government to move with speed and confidently build strategic momentum for rapid implementation of the priorities of the seventh democratic administration.

This is not the time be tentative or doubtful, but rather to be decisive.

SIX PRIORITY ACTIONS AND SPECIFIC TASKS FOR 2025

The strategic task of advancing the National Democratic Revolution does not change year after year because this task is based on the resolutions of the National Conference.

However, the order of priority actions and specific tasks will change from time to time and additional tasks may arise in each year, depending on the changes in the objective conditions.

Renewal of the ANC remains the number one priority, while resolving the water crisis, fixing local government and fixing the economy remain the top priorities in the six tasks for this year.

Our first priority is decisive and visible action to renew the ANC.

The 2024 elections results confirm that we face an existential crisis: this is a moment wherein the ANC should either renew or perish.

We have to do much more work, with greater urgency and determination.

The cornerstone of our renewal agenda therefore remains building our movement's capacity to discharge its historical mission.

This includes strengthening the presence of the ANC in communities through strong ANC branches as centres of development, that engage and listen to citizens and sectors, and work with them to address challenges and grievances.

The work of building strong branches is the responsibility of all structures of the ANC.

Investing in the ideological development of ANC members and improving their skills will enhance the movement's ability to implement its Manifesto and govern our country effectively and ethically.

Renewal is as much about fixing the ANC as it is about improving the quality of governance and service delivery and fast-tracking fundamental socio-economic transformation.

Pursuant to the renewal tasks we set last year, we launched the ANC Foundation Course to anchor all members on the history, mission and values of the ANC.

To hold elected leadership and public representatives accountable, we have started implementing an Accountability Framework throughout the organisation.

With regard to fostering a culture of ethics and integrity, we have strengthened the terms of reference of the Integrity Commission.

Further, we have introduced a compulsory course on ethics and integrity in the political education curriculum, starting with the induction of all newly-elected public representatives.

Enhancing the quality of membership and leadership is key for the renewal of the ANC.

The membership system of the ANC is being overhauled to ensure that the movement attracts into its ranks the kind of people who are willing to serve the people of South Africa.

The criteria for membership and a screening process to rid the ANC of criminals is an important part of the renewal process. This includes tightening and enforcing the leadership election processes.

A renewed ANC must enforce discipline in the ranks.

As we said last year, “as renewal gains momentum, those whose conduct is in conflict with our values and principles – the criminals, the corrupt, the careerists, extortionists and factionalists, and those who actively work against the organisation – will find themselves outside the ANC”.

The renewal of the ANC must be reflected in our every-day behaviour, on how we conduct ourselves, and what we post on social media.

Let us be known for excellence, ethics, humility, hard work and competence.

Among the renewal tasks for ANC structures in 2025, are to build ANC branches grounded in everyday struggles of ordinary South Africans for a better life in every community and ward throughout the country.

This must include participation in, and support for, school governing bodies, community policing forums, health and ward committees.

We must be involved in these bodies to promote clean and green communities, social cohesion, service delivery and crime prevention.

We must ensure ANC cadres work with local government to address illegal water and electricity connections and prevent vandalism of state infrastructure.

They must assist indigent and elderly people to register for free basic services and access public health services and other forms of social support.

One of the tasks of an ANC branch is to mobilise community members to participate in mobile outreach programmes by Home Affairs, SASSA and the Department of Employment and Labour to make services accessible to communities.

As part of a caring organisation that respects the fundamental human rights of all people, ANC members should always be in the forefront of advocating for the rights of persons with disability, persons with albinism, the LGBTQI+ community and other groups subjected to prejudice and discrimination.

The ANC Women’s League and ANC Youth League, which held successful national conferences last year, are now making meaningful contributions to the life of the ANC and championing issues affecting women and young people.

As the custodians of the ANC’s history and traditions, the ANC Veterans League is championing and giving momentum to the renewal process across the structures of the movement.

The MK Liberation War Veterans continues to play a key role in championing the interests of ex-combatants of the People's Army, Umkhonto weSizwe and as a major resource for the political education and development of cadres.

This year, the MK Liberation War Veterans will convene its National Conference as part of the renewal process.

The ANC National General Council, to be held later this year, will be an important forum for strategic assessment of the balance of forces globally and domestically.

It will enable a stock-taking on the rebuilding and renewal of the ANC.

Our second priority is fixing local government and ensuring water and energy security.

In 2024, we set ourselves the task of resolving the energy crisis and ending load shedding, as well as improving basic services and infrastructure.

The people of South Africa, in their homes and businesses, places of employment and recreation, public spaces and educational institutions have now experienced almost 300 days without load shedding.

This has improved both the economy and the quality of their lives.

We commend government and the management of Eskom for their resolute efforts in addressing the energy crisis.

Building on these advances, we call upon government to ensure the achievement of lasting and sustainable energy security through the implementation of the Energy Action Plan and the Electricity Regulation Amendment Act, in particular.

We call on government to also attend to load reduction and power outages which still affect some communities in townships and rural areas.

Load shedding has now been supplanted by the crisis of water security.

This poses a similar, if not greater, threat to the quality of life and economic prospects of all South Africans.

Water is life and sanitation is dignity.

Accordingly, we have decided to elevate water security as a priority task for 2025.

We are confident that drawing on the lessons learned from dealing successfully with the seemingly intractable challenge of load shedding, we will be able to deal with this crisis.

Therefore, the ANC calls upon government urgently to implement the following measures:

- Water boards must urgently ensure security of water supply.
- Ageing municipal water infrastructure, which contributes to significant water losses due to leaks, must be upgraded by ring-fencing water revenue for critical maintenance.
- A water and local financing framework that attracts private sector participation in the refurbishment of water infrastructure must be implemented without relinquishing municipal ownership of water assets.
- Law enforcement agencies, working with municipalities, must tackle sabotage, theft and corruption by water tanker mafias and deal with illegal water connections.
- The programme to formalise informal settlements and ensure safe and legal access to water and electricity and the provision of free basic services to indigent persons must be accelerated.
- In the face of the high cost of living and increasing electricity tariffs, consideration needs to be given to the development of a comprehensive indigent register across all municipalities to ensure all deserving households are cushioned.

- In cooperation with the South African Weather Service, all spheres of government must strengthen early-warning systems for extreme weather events, improve access to disaster relief and build climate resilience in human settlements and infrastructure.

The ANC re-affirms the important role traditional leaders play in the development of communities. We will continue to work with these leaders in community development and resolving service delivery challenges.

Our third priority is to speed up inclusive economic growth to create jobs.

This is vital to resolving the structural challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality, especially for women, young people and people living in rural areas.

The fundamental transformation of South Africa's economy is central to advance the goals of the NDR.

The public employment programmes play a vitally important role in mitigating against the unacceptably high levels of unemployment.

However, these programmes do not replace the need for long-term jobs through growth and investment by both public and private sectors.

Manufacturing is the most reliable sustained employment creator with the highest jobs multiplier.

Therefore, we must revitalise our industrial capacity.

We must build an infrastructure and export-led economy focused on manufacturing globally competitive goods and global business services and invest in technological capabilities.

We commend progress made in improving energy security and enhancing the stability and efficiency of our ports and rail networks as catalysts of economic growth and industrialisation.

We urge government to accelerate work to leverage our critical minerals endowment, working with other countries in Southern Africa,

Emerging technologies such as satellites for communication, virtual reality and artificial intelligence have the potential to deliver significant benefits across several sectors such as education, healthcare, agriculture, manufacturing, defence and security.

We therefore call on government to address youth unemployment through strategic interventions focused on education reform, skills development initiatives, access to labour market information, entrepreneurship and targeted employment programmes.

Government should design youth-focused interventions to stimulate demand for young workers.

Collaboration between the government, private sector, labour and civil society to create an enabling environment for youth employment should be intensified.

Entrepreneurship and small business development should be promoted to empower young people to create their own opportunities.

The effectiveness and impact of public employment programmes across many government departments should be enhanced through greater collaboration and consolidation.

These initiatives include public works and community works programmes, skills training and development programmes and youth service programmes

To promote industrialisation, government must expedite the creation of an enabling environment for investment in improved manufacturing competitiveness, especially in the steel and automotive sectors.

Through the District Development Model, there needs to be collaboration and integration of local and provincial economic development strategies with the overall export-led growth strategy that national government is leading.

On high growth industries, there should be a focus on agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism, the emerging green economy and digital technologies for accelerated interventions to stimulate job creation, participation and entrepreneurship.

District and local municipalities should contribute to transforming the spatial concentration of economic activity in our country and develop and grow the township and village economies.

To promote domestic business and labour, the competitiveness of South Africans in small scale economic activity such as local retail should be improved.

Local job opportunities must be protected by regulating labour migration and enforcing quotas on domestic labour in specified industries.

Universal connectivity and digital technologies must be harnessed as critical enablers of economic development and ensuring that digital infrastructure is widely available and affordable.

Our education system must be geared towards the development of a digitally enabled society, including through collaboration with academia and research institutions.

Our fourth priority for 2025 is to strengthen the fight against crime and corruption and build safe communities.

Last year we said that crime undermines the gains of freedom and shared prosperity and, ultimately, our constitutional democracy and the objectives of the NDR.

By November 2024, the actions of our law enforcement agencies, working with communities, Community Policing Forums and private security services, were having an impact.

Crime statistics indicated a significant decline in most reported crimes.

The recruitment of 10,000 new police officers has contributed to improving community safety.

These interventions have been bolstered by initiatives such as Operation Shanela, which continues to sweep crimes out of communities across the country, and Operation Vala Umgodi, which is dealing decisively with illegal mining activities.

We welcome the establishment of the Border Management Authority and commend the effective interventions it is making to ensure our territorial integrity and to prevent illegal and undocumented migrants from entering our country.

Notwithstanding this progress, women across our country, including those in rural and farming communities, continue to live in daily terror of gender-based violence and femicide.

This includes the unacceptable proliferation of statutory rape resulting in the impregnation of girl children. This perpetuates a cycle of poverty and deprivation. This is a crisis that no nation can afford to ignore.

Just yesterday, we heard about the abduction and rape of two nurses who were on duty at Ga-Chuene Clinic in Limpopo. We must work together to end such horrific crimes.

Organised crime, gangsterism, drug dealing and extortion impact on all sectors of our society, undermining personal security as well as economic, community and infrastructural development.

The ANC calls on government urgently to implement the following measures:

- Ensure the building of a united front of community leaders, civil society, businesses and citizens against crime.
- Finalise the establishment of the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide and ensure that it is adequately funded and resourced.
- Unite all sectors of society to inculcate social values and practices that support the eradication of GBVF in all spheres of life. This includes the important role of traditional and religious leaders. It also involves actively mobilising men in general to be positive role models for boy children.

- Act decisively against the employment of illegal and undocumented migrants in the agriculture, domestic, catering and other sectors of the economy.
- Prevent deaths from foodborne illnesses, especially of children, through the registration of spaza shops, regular inspection of food vending outlets, enforcement of health regulations, and closure of those outlets that do not comply.

Our fifth priority is to build a South Africa that belongs to all through a National Dialogue.

The major purpose of the National Dialogue is to create an inclusive and transparent process to shape a new socio-political consensus.

Progressive forces in our country have a proud tradition of mass participation in dialogue, including the process leading to the adoption of the Women's Charter in 1954 and the Freedom Charter in 1955, the formation of the United Democratic Front in the 1980s, and the Constitutional Assembly that resulted in the first democratic Constitution in 1996.

In establishing a Government of National Unity, we have built on the rich legacy of Nelson Mandela and his generation, who taught us the importance of building bridges across narrow divides of race, class, religion and party politics so we can create a country that truly belongs to all who live in it.

The National Dialogue offers a comprehensive platform for all citizens to be part of the political process and reclaim political agency.

The National Dialogue will create a safe space to discuss and find solutions to the difficult issues of economic exclusion, social inequality and societal marginalisation.

Only by doing this can we ensure that the National Dialogue rekindles and restores public participation as the expression of people's power.

The ANC calls on government to resource and support this process.

We also call on the Alliance, the mass democratic movement and progressive civil society to support the process so it can build a new social consensus on the future direction of our country.

Our sixth priority is to build a better Africa and a better world.

Globally, the world is in the throes of several crises, characterised by instability, fragility, conflict, injustice and insecurity.

The ANC remains committed to the principles of international solidarity, human rights, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and Pan-Africanism.

We are committed to strengthening the capabilities of the Southern African Development Community – SADC – particularly on the 45th anniversary of its formation.

We will continue to champion Africa's development through the African Union.

Multilateralism and respect for international law and its institutions are under attack by powerful countries and their leaders.

We are deeply concerned about the increase in regional, continental and global conflicts, particularly in Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

The political and economic consequences of these regional conflicts continue to have a negative impact particularly on developing economy countries.

In this context, it is important that the countries of the Global South strengthen international solidarity to ensure that the world moves away from the current unipolar disorder and domination by the Global North, towards a more multi-polar, multi-cultural, multi-civilizational, humane, fair and inclusive world order.

South Africa's Presidency of the G20 provides huge opportunities to advance the interests of the African continent and the Global South.

The ANC will work hard to make sure that South Africa's Presidency of the G20 is an important pillar of our efforts to advance sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, justice, peace, stability, multilateralism and human rights across the globe.

The transformation of the international financial agencies and the multilateral development banks is key to ensure inclusive sustainable development for all.

The ANC stands in steadfast solidarity with and reaffirms the inalienable right of the people of Western Sahara and Palestine to self-determination and independence.

We continue to call for an end to the decades-long US economic blockade against Cuba and to have Cuba removed from the list of terrorist states.

We continue to condemn the genocidal slaughter and ethnic cleansing by the Apartheid Israeli government, which has since October 2023 resulted in more than 55,000 people being killed in Gaza and hundreds of thousands more being injured.

Palestinian people continued to be killed in the West Bank and other occupied areas.

The ANC calls on the seventh administration to remain seized with the cases at the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court.

We reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire in the assault on Gaza, the opening of corridors so that humanitarian assistance can reach those in dire need, the release of hostages and political prisoners, and the settlement of the conflict based on the two-state solution, in terms of the 1967 borders.

We must remain resolute in advancing the African Agenda 2063 to build a peaceful, united and prosperous continent.

In this regard, we remain concerned by the growing number of conflicts in Africa.

Without the peaceful resolution of conflict, we will not be able to ensure the full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

And without the full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, we will not be able to meet the economic integration ideals of Pan Africanism.

Thus our government must continue to prioritise the resolution of conflicts on the African Continent through peace keeping, peace enforcement, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and development.

The ANC notes the consolidation of democracy in Southern Africa.

Seven countries in the SADC region – Comoros, Botswana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa – held elections in 2024.

The ANC will host the much-anticipated Liberation Movements Summit this year.

This will further strengthen the people's liberation gains towards lasting regional stability and sustainable socio-economic development.

We are deeply concerned about the ongoing conflicts in Sudan and the eastern DRC, as well as the post-election violence in Mozambique.

We call on the AU and SADC to take urgent steps in working towards a resolution of these conflicts.

We must also continue to work to advance industrialisation and inclusive intra-African trade.

We need to advance food, water, energy and critical mineral security as well as infrastructural development in Africa.

This is important to ending the historical extractive and fragmented commodity-based economies where all trade was with countries of the North rather than amongst ourselves in Africa.

On this occasion of the 113th anniversary of our movement, we are proud to announce that the NEC has awarded three patriots and veterans of our movement the highest honour of Isithwalandwe/Seaparankwe.

These three outstanding comrades are Dr Tlou Theophilis Cholo, Dr Mana Mildred Ramakaba Lesiea and Cde Nkosinathi Benson Fihla.

We salute them for their extraordinary contributions to the struggle of the people of South Africa for freedom and equality.

On this day, we also congratulate the winners of the 2024 ANC Branch Awards.

The baton of struggle in the South African people's quest for freedom and justice has been passed from generation to generation.

In both advances and setbacks, defeats and triumphs these generations have remained true to the solemn pledge by the delegates to the Congress of the People that adopted the Freedom Charter that:

"These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty."

Today, every member, upon being accepted in the ANC, makes a solemn declaration which includes a commitment that: "I will work towards making the ANC an even more effective instrument of liberation in the hands of the people."

The transformation of our country into a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous nation, inspired by the Freedom Charter, and mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, will succeed.

Together, we will improve the ability of our economy to create wealth and employment for all.

Together, we will improve the quality of services and the integrity, responsiveness, capacity and accountability of government in all spheres.

The ANC will renew and rebuild itself to unite all South Africans and to provide clear, decisive and ethical leadership in the achievement of these objectives.

We therefore declare 2025 to be:

The Year of Renewal to Make the ANC a More Effective Instrument of the People to Achieve the Vision of the Freedom Charter: The People Shall Govern! The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth!

Amandla!