

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, CDE JACOB ZUMA, AT THE 9TH COSATU CONGRESS

GALLAGHER ESTATE, MIDRAND
18 SEPTEMBER 2006

The President of Cosatu, Comrade Willie Madisha, General Secretary, Comrade Zwelinzima Vavi and all members of the Central Executive Committee, The Secretary-General of the ANC, Cde Kgalema Motlanthe, and all NEC members present, SACP General Secretary, Comrade Blade Nzimande and all Central Committee members present, The leadership of SANCO present, Representatives of international labour organisations, Members of the diplomatic corps and other international guests, Distinguished guests, Comrades and friends,

I bring you warm and revolutionary greetings from the National Executive Committee and the entire membership of the African National Congress.

Comrades, the ANC speaks at this Congress, not as an invited guest addressing an external organisation. Rather, we have come here to be with our own, to listen to our own, and to speak to our own. History has determined this concrete reality and so shall it be!

This is one of the most remarkable characteristics of the congress movement - the deep and unambiguous historical ties that exist amongst the Tripartite Alliance partners. These ties have been articulated eloquently by our illustrious leaders in the past, providing us with the blueprint on which to base our historical, present and future relationship.

As we mark the 21st anniversary of Cosatu, we recall the words of our former ANC President, the late Cde Oliver Tambo. When welcoming the formation of this giant federation, in 1985, he said:

"The struggle to form one democratic trade union centre has been hard and protracted. Many comrades have spent countless hours working to achieve the result that was consummated with the formation of Cosatu. "We all acted in this manner convinced of the need for the unity of the working class of our country, of the imperative to defend and advance the interests of this class and of the necessity for the organised, united and conscious workers to remain in the front ranks, and as an integral part of the mass army of revolution that is today shaking the apartheid system to its very foundations.

"The formation of Cosatu has therefore added enormously to the strength of the democratic movement as a whole and is a victory which this movement must defend at all costs" (end of quote).

The formation of Cosatu and worker unity is a victory that all of us, as Alliance partners will continue to celebrate and defend, as directed by Cde Tambo. Comrades, this ninth national congress of Cosatu is important primarily because of the context in which it takes place. It gives members the opportunity to reflect on the past 20 years of Cosatu's existence and the past 12 years of our democracy. It provides

an occasion to identify existing and new challenges - in the workplace and in broader society. This will be done against the background of Cosatu's sterling work in the past few years, in building the trade union movement, as well as the tireless efforts against the shedding of jobs, and to increase employment.

Beyond the shop floor, Cosatu has throughout its history, been an integral part of the struggle against oppression and exploitation in this country. It has stood steadfastly on the side of the liberation movement to ensure that the objectives of our National Democratic Revolution are achieved. There are a number of issues that we trust this Congress will be dealing with. Among these is the changing nature of employment, as well as challenges such as the reality of HIV and AIDS.

Our well-thought out economic policies in the ANC are very clear on the direction of our economy. I must emphasise that no individual in the ANC develops his or her own policies on any issue of national importance. These policies are crafted, adopted and implemented collectively by the movement as a whole, in line with our history and traditions. We remain committed to the undertakings we made in our 2004 Election Manifesto and this year's January 8th statement.

In the January 8th statement, we said that one of the central tasks of the national democratic revolution, during our Second Decade of Liberation, must be the achievement of high rates of economic growth and development, in order to be able to reverse the legacy of colonialism. We were responding to the need to address the twin evils of poverty and unemployment.

In the 2004 Election Manifesto, we said that we would amongst other things: Strengthen co-operation among economic partners - government, business, trade unions and community organisations - to implement agreements of the Growth and Development Summit, which are aimed at creating work and fighting poverty.

Speed up economic development in rural and urban areas with economic potential, improve skills and access to services especially among women and youth in all parts of the country, and intensify the rural development and urban renewal programmes.

We identified the key priorities as including the reduction of unemployment by half through new jobs, skills development, assistance to small businesses, opportunities for self-employment and sustainable community livelihoods. All of this is work in progress.

Our country has a growing economy, which is managed competently by the ANC government. The goals we set are therefore achievable. Having said that, you will recall Comrades that we also raised in the Manifesto, the fact that despite the enormous strides we had made in the economy, the dignity of sustainable livelihoods still eluded many families.

Let me remind you Comrades, that when we analysed this challenge in the Manifesto we said:

". The number of people seeking work has sharply increased; many workers have lost their jobs; and many have been negatively affected by casualisation and outsourcing. As a result many, many South Africans do

not have jobs or decent self-employment; poverty is still a reality for millions as many do not have appropriate skills, while many cannot get credit to start or improve their own businesses''.

There are people in this country, who have worked for a decade or more as casual workers with no job security, dignity or benefits. It is a very difficult situation, which requires the undivided attention of labour, business and government. As we stated in our 2004 Election Manifesto, as ANC we undertook to conduct research into the full impact of casualisation of labour and outsourcing, and devise ways of dealing with their negative impact on workers and the economy as a whole. Surely, it should be possible to find a solution that extends to workers, the dignity and rights they deserve.

Another issue that we trust Congress will discuss vigorously is the health of our nation, particularly HIV and AIDS. Very few in this gathering can claim to be not affected by the epidemic in one way or another, directly or indirectly. Government, on its part, has in place a comprehensive HIV and AIDS programme which integrates prevention, treatment, care, support and research towards a vaccine, amongst other interventions. In addition, the alleviation and eradication of poverty remains a critical priority. Consequently, we need to ensure that our sustainable livelihoods programmes reach the poor, thereby guaranteeing food security and good nutrition.

South Africa has in the past been praised for its excellent HIV and AIDS programmes, which are supported by a good budget. Unfortunately, HIV and AIDS remains a highly contested terrain in our country. The politicisation and bickering clouds any progress made, and impact negatively on partnerships and collaboration. We need to find each other as various sectors, and focus on implementing programmes that will bring about relief to the infected and affected, and those which prevent the spread of the virus.

We need to remind ourselves that in the final analysis, the HIV and AIDS epidemic is about the lives of our people, especially the poorest of the poor. It is therefore not a matter we should be seeking to score points on. Comrades, most importantly this crucial Congress reminds us that we should go back to basics - reflect, and reaffirm the ties that bind us as the Tripartite Alliance. Recently, the question has been raised of whether the Alliance was still a viable vehicle, to pursue the interests of the national democratic revolution.

The advantage of the congress movement is that it is guided by its cherished history and traditions. We do not have to go to soothsayers or izangoma nemihlahlo to establish which direction we need to go. We know where we come from, where we are right now, and where we are going. Our history and traditions provide the roadmap.

Borrowing from this rich history, let us recall what Cde President Tambo said marking the 60th anniversary of the SACP in London on July 30th, 1981, on the role of the worker-ANC Alliance.

He said: "Ours is not merely a paper alliance, created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents and representing only an agreement of leaders. Our alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle. We have built it out of our separate and common experiences... It has been strengthened through resistance to

the vicious onslaught against both the ANC and the SACP by the Pretoria regime; it has been fertilised by the blood of the countless heroes; many of them are unnamed and unsung. It has been reinforced by a common determination to destroy the enemy and by our shared belief in the certainty of victory".

Comrades, you will recall that the relationship between the ANC and the working class, which gave birth to this Alliance, did not start with the formation of COSATU in 1985. It dates back to the evolution of trade unionism in our country, for example the formation of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) in 1920. The ICU was formed with the full blessing and support of the ANC, through the struggles waged in the 1930's, which resulted in the loss of lives by worker and communist leaders, such as Cde Johannes Nkosi.

Another milestone was the formation of the African Mine Workers Union in 1941. The union led mineworkers in one of the major strikes to have taken place in our country, in 1946. We can also never forget the role of trade unions in reviving our struggle during the 1972-73 Durban strikes. The strikes had a major impact in the revival of internal mass resistance to apartheid in the 1970's. These strikes were led by amongst others, cadres who carried the political influence, of the revolutionary trade union federation, SACTU. This indicates the correctness of the approach of political revolutionary trade union movements, as distinguished from those union movements that concern themselves only with factory floor issues.

The strikes precipitated the formation of the South African Allied Workers Union (Saawu), the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu) the forerunners to Cosatu in the 1970s and the formation of Cosatu and the United Democratic Front in the 1980s. The origin of our relationship proves that our unity over the years was not an accident of history. We have a bond that has been determined by a common history, in a common struggle. It is the strategic unity that Chief Albert Luthuli, the then President of the ANC, spoke about, when he said that the ANC is the shield and the revolutionary trade union movement, the spear.

Comrades, it is also important to note that the relationship among the Alliance partners is also fundamentally a question of practicality and objective interests. Each of the Alliance partners needs the others. For Cosatu to advance in its objectives, it needs an ANC government which is user friendly in its approach and policies towards worker interests.

The ANC is the only political organisation in the country that can produce policies and legal environment that addresses the plight of the workers. Simply put, for the plight of the workers to be addressed, Cosatu needs the ANC to be in government. Cosatu therefore remains in this Alliance, safe in the knowledge that the ANC will never turn against worker interests.

With regards to the SACP whose objective is socialism, in the history of this country there is no other political formation that the party has worked with except the ANC. The SACP needs Cosatu as a revolutionary trade union movement, and the ANC as a political party that understands the problems of the poor. The party therefore needs

the ANC for better conditions, in which it can pursue its own objectives.

The ANC on the other hand needs both Cosatu and the SACP, for it to remain in power and its overwhelming majority, in order to pursue the objectives of the national democratic revolution. The ANC's association with its Alliance partners has defined it as a progressive and revolutionary liberation movement, and a true parliament of the people.

Comrades, our Alliance is unique, not only in South Africa but in the world. The rationale for this historical relationship is not a theoretical issue; it is a very practical issue of interests and objectives. Therefore, this congress cannot arrive at a different conclusion about the future of the Alliance. As I have said earlier, history has determined this concrete reality, and so shall it be!

Any challenges that might exist within the Alliance can and must be resolved, within the Alliance. We need to be guided by our history and traditions that I have referred to. In this regard, we are looking forward to resolutions that will chart the way forward towards strengthening our Alliance and to further advance the goals of our national democratic revolution.

Comrades, the Alliance provides a conveyor belt, on which the sentiments of the people on the ground have a direct link to their political decision-makers. Each of the Alliance partners has a right to speak out within the framework of the National Democratic Revolution, in furtherance of the interests of each of constituencies. This characterises the dynamism in the Alliance. After all, it is only in the Alliance where debates about the policies and future of this country take place.

Granted, from time to time, there may appear to be contradictory messages emerging from the Alliance partners. Our task then is to ensure that all these voices are heard, while simultaneously finding mechanisms through Alliance structures, to harmonise these voices into a collective Alliance voice. After all, contradictions are not always antagonistic. Some are non-antagonistic and need to be resolved non-antagonistically.

Comrades, one of the key agenda points in the business of this congress is the election of new leadership. The decision about the leadership must be guided by the interests of the federation as a whole, and not by individual interests. The underlying principle must be that of unity. Our choice of leadership therefore, must reflect the pursuit of this unity.

I am saying this because the issue of leadership of the entire democratic movement has been taken very seriously since the late 1940s and early 1950s. It has always been a matter that nobody wanted to take chances on. This Congress has brought us all together as Comrades in the Alliance. In isiZulu we defined Comrades as amafelandawonye, people who are prepared to die together in the trenches, if need be. This concept of Comrade was inherent and it was passed on organically through the generations. It characterised us as members of the ANC, the SACP and Cosatu and defined our commitment, courage and the nature of our struggle.

Comradeship permeated international boundaries and conquered the brutal apartheid machinery. It united us in dark days and bound us together in our victory. Let it stay that way. Let the members of the Alliance continue to be bound by this undying spirit of comradeship, as they advance the objectives of our national democratic revolution, in one united Tripartite Alliance. History has determined this concrete reality, and so shall it be!

I wish you well in your deliberations. May the federation emerge from this Congress stronger than ever in all aspects!

Viva COSATU Viva!!

Long Live the Spirit of Elijah Barayi Long Live!!

Long Live the Spirit of JB Marks Long Live!!

Long Live the Spirit of Moses Kotane Long Live!!

Long Live the Spirit of Moses Mabhida Long Live!!

Amandla!! Awethu!!

Issued by:

African National Congress

PO Box 61884

Marshalltown

2107

18 September 2006