



AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS 55TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

1. The 55th National Conference reaffirms that the strategic objective of the ANC is the fundamental transformation of South Africa into a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society. This strategic objective derives from the character of the national democratic revolution and the three basic and inter-related contradictions of national oppression, class super-exploitation directed at Black workers and the oppression of women.
2. The vision, values and principles of the national democratic society we seek to create are well articulated in the basic documents of the ANC such as the African Claims, the Women's Charter, the Freedom Charter and the Strategy and Tactics document and they are enshrined in the Constitution of our country.
3. For the ANC to be an effective instrument and powerful vehicle for fundamental transformation or radical change, its members must distinguish themselves as the most loyal, ethical, committed and capable servants of the people of South Africa and agents for change in the struggle to build a better Africa and a more equitable global order, in line with the movement's longstanding tradition of Pan-Africanism and International Solidarity. The matter of the quality of an ANC members has become a strategic question upon which the survival and success of the movement depends.
4. The **55th National Conference** overwhelmingly adopted a **new Preface** to the **2017 Strategy and Tactics of the ANC**. Given the dynamic shifts and new developments in the domestic and global balance of forces, the current Strategy and Tactics document should be reviewed and reformulated by the NEC for presentation and consideration by the National General Council. This review will take into account, among others, the dynamics within the motive forces and the current strategic positioning of the forces opposed to the national democratic revolution.
5. On the **Global Balance of Forces** – The Conference identified some distinct developments and dynamic shifts that are reshaping the global order and influencing the prospects of Africa's Renaissance as well as the future of the national democratic revolution in South Africa:
 - 5.1. We live in an international era characterised by contradictory political-economic trends. On the one hand, there is a **deepening crisis of neo-liberalism and a resurgence of populism and right-wing nationalism** in the Global North. On the other hand, China's rise as a global player is gathering pace; India is increasingly becoming more assertive as demonstrated in its positions in the run-up to the G20 Summit it will chair; the re-emergence of progressive governments in Latin American countries and key economies in the Global South is providing a counterweight to imperialist hegemony. Most significantly, the ANC welcomes the victory of the progressive forces in the recent Brazilian elections. This victory augurs well for the strengthening BRICS and other progressive forces in the Global South. The BRICS bloc, which will be chaired by South Africa in 2023, is gaining momentum as a new centre of influence - more countries in the Global South are showing keen interest in joining BRICS in order to push back the neo-liberal agenda and Western imperialist hegemony. The **rise of China and the growing influence of BRICS** are being countered by the US and other countries in the Global North through the intensification of geopolitical tensions and trade wars.
 - 5.2. The ongoing war in Ukraine has strategic geopolitical and economic consequences for all

the peoples of the world. This can no longer be described simply as a Russia-Ukraine war – it is primarily a conflict between the US and US-led NATO military alliance and Russia in pursuit of the objectives of the Wolfowitz doctrine. According to this doctrine, the US should not allow that any country in the world should have the possibility, in the post-Cold War period to challenge its interests and hegemony. In this regard, its geopolitical strategy has identified Russia and China as the two powers that must be contained. The dividends of peace and globalisation promised at the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a human security ethos towards the new millennium, have been shattered. The doctrine of unilateral domination of every region, is being advanced not through multilateralism and equitable globalisation, but through expansionist military strategies, a persistent unjust and unequal global trade and economic architecture and through regime change. There is a conspicuous failure of the current global multi-lateral institutions to resolve conflicts fairly, justly and equitably in order to safeguard the interests of all nations. The Ukraine war has caused major disruptions to people’s lives all over the world – the disruption of supply chains of food, fuel, fertilizer and energy, sky-rocketing inflation, the cost-of-living crisis at a global scale and the threat of nuclear escalation. **This war must come to an end now!**

- 5.3. The ANC’s attitude and posture regarding conflicts and wars has been shaped over many years of struggle. During the anti-apartheid struggle, **the ANC has been part of the non-aligned movement. We are also part of the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial forces.** The ANC remains firm in its view that all conflicts should be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy. We totally reject gun-boat diplomacy. Coming from a continent whose structural transformation is hampered by conflicts sponsored by imperialist interests, we know from experience that war is costly, and that without peace, there can be no sustainable development. As a matter of principle, the ANC is opposed to imperialist wars. We will therefore continue to resist joining those who beat the drums of war. We want a peaceful, just and more equitable global order. Under the leadership of the ANC, South Africa will continue to lead peace-keeping missions and contribute to negotiated resolution of conflicts as part of building a better Africa and a better world.
- 5.4. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted global affairs, posing a serious existential threat to humanity. The

pandemic has eroded some of the gains which were being made on the Sustainable Development Goals. Levels of poverty, inequality, vulnerability, gender-based violence, racism and precarity have increased, thus placing the lives and livelihoods of large sections of the poor, working class, women, youth and middle strata in both developed and developing countries at great risk. At the same time, a small global elite in the pharmaceutical and technology companies have massively increased their wealth, cashing in on the devastating human disaster occasioned by the pandemic. The global response to COVID-19 was characterised largely by the assertion of dominant geopolitical interests which gave rise to what was described as “vaccine nationalism” or “vaccine apartheid”, instead of international solidarity and multi-lateral collaboration. Under South Africa’s leadership, Africa’s response was driven by a collective agenda of common concern for humanity. As Africans, we will invest in our own scientific, industrial and state capabilities to deal with pandemics, climate disasters, peace and security as well as economic development challenges and ambitions.

- 5.5. In the past five years, the **increasing intensity of the climate crisis poses an existential threat to biodiversity and human progress.** Climate change is neither a hoax nor a conspiracy. It is a real threat that continues to devastate economies and destroy livelihoods. Many communities across the world, including in our country, have been experiencing more frequent extreme weather events – floods, fires and droughts and greater levels of water-energy-food insecurity. People in the Global South bear the greatest burden of the climate crisis, whilst industrialised countries of the Global North that are largely responsible for this crisis are attempting to shift costs towards the developing countries. The Just Energy Transition towards a low carbon future is necessary to save the planet. However, the Just Energy Transition must be fair and just, and its place must put at the forefront the needs of the developing countries of the Global South, rather than being determined by the geoeconomic and geopolitical interests of the Global North. Developing countries have to prevent yet another plunder of their rare earth minerals and develop their own technologies so that they can be central players in the production of renewable energy resources.
- 5.6. **Rapid technological change** including the fourth industrial revolution is changing economies, societies, politics, forms of organisation, ways of thinking and the battle of ideas

in unprecedented ways. There is a need to further strengthen relevant policy that will enable skills development and create opportunities for educational and economic development. New digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Blockchain, Machine Learning and others have created new economic activities that can expand job creation and self-employment. The key public policy agenda is to promote access to digital infrastructure and deploying new digital technologies to solve problems in the economy and broader society, such as the development of new productive forces and enhancement of the innovative delivery of public services such as healthcare, education, community safety and food security. The progressive forces need to ensure that the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) and the consequent digital transition is not appropriated by elites to displace workers and marginalise poor people; it must not reproduce and sustain existing global, regional and national inequalities and injustices; the risks such as displacement of workers, increased cyber-crime and cyber insecurity as well as violation of privacy should be addressed proactively. Tackling the digital inequalities and harnessing the transformative and developmental potential of new technologies to empower the youth, women, the working class and the poor is one of the defining features of what it means to be progressive in the 21st century. The developmental state we lead must invest in science, technology and innovation, digital infrastructure and massive skills development to equip workers and young people with new knowledge and digital skills for the new economy and society.

- 5.7. **We in Africa are severely impacted by the unfolding global developments.** Africa is not a neutral observer or a disinterested bystander on global politics. We are deeply interested in the kind of global order that will safeguard our common interests. We belong to the progressive family of nations and regions that seek to free themselves from neo-colonial capture and imperialist plunder. We have suffered from slavery, colonialism and imperialism. We seek to carve our own democratic and developmental path that puts the interests of the people and the sustainability of the planet first. As the world undergoes multiple transitions and crises, we urgently need a more inclusive, equitable and just system of global governance. Africa will insist on the restructuring of multilateral institutions to safeguard equity, justice and redress as we deal with pandemics, climate change, peace and confliction

resolution as well as trade and investment. Progressive global forces must ensure that countries in the Global South are not marginalised, exploited or left behind. Africa will also continue to insist that the destiny of our continent is in our own hands, that we will build the Africa we want, as set out in the African Union Agenda 2063.

- 5.8. There are **three significant developments** that warrant strategic attention in the African continent. Firstly, as Africa, we had to weather the multiple storms of COVID-19, the Russia-Ukraine war, climate change, rapid technological change, the global economic slowdown and rising geopolitical tensions. **Africa's response to COVID-19** was commendable: coherent leadership, better coordination and good execution, offering many lessons for our future response to other development challenges. Secondly, the **signing of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)** is one of the most positive developments of this decade, marking a historic era that offers real prospects and opportunities for increased levels of economic integration, industrialisation and trade between countries on the continent. Thirdly, there is a worrying development in our continent: **the resurgence of conflicts and military coups in some countries and regions** is a serious reversal of the gains made since the establishment of the African Union twenty years ago. The ANC hereby underscores the importance of peace and human security. Silencing the guns is an urgent development imperative for our continent. In this regard, the ANC will do its part to ensure that African leadership across the different sectors work together to advance Africa's renewal and renaissance, prioritise peace, economic integration and industrialisation.
- 5.9. The ANC must pay persistent attention to the strengthening of party-to-party relations and solidarity work with progressive forces, including liberation movements as well as emergent progressive parties and movements. We must build relations with those that share our vision for Africa's renaissance and win more forces over towards the implementation of the AU Agenda 2063, including those in opposition. We must play our full role in ensuring that African continental institutions are strengthened to enable our continent to advance self-reliance, solidarity, collaboration and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 5.10. Globally, women and young people, especially in the Global South, suffer the most in pandemics, wars, climate disasters and socio-economic

conomic ills such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, violence and crime. Strengthening the women’s movement and taking forward the Gender Agenda 2030, as well as the Global Youth Agenda are strategic imperatives of all progressive forces in the 21st century. In this regard, the ANC welcomes the launch of the Young Women of Africa (YWOA) in 2021, which is convened by South Africa. The progressive forces should lead national, continental and global campaigns to genuinely and effectively integrate women and the youth into the sustainable development agenda, including challenges such as migration, developing a common African language and fighting against trans-national organised crime such as drug and human trafficking.

5.11. In summary, we live in an era where the world is in the midst of multiple crises that cannot be resolved through a unipolar and unilateral dominance by the Global North: the multiple crises of the current international situation are pointing to a shift back to multipolarity and multilateralism. Developing countries and progressive forces, through platforms such as BRICS and G20 as well as other global platforms, are pushing for a more inclusive, equitable and balanced global order that will guarantee humanity’s collective survival and success, buttressed by strong multilateral collaboration and international solidarity. This is the best way through which we can tackle multiple existential problems humanity faces.

6. With regard to the changing **domestic balance of forces** and current developments in South Africa, Conference identified the following as the key trends and developments that have profound implications for the future of South Africa:

6.1. Conference noted, with a profound sense of reflection, that South Africa reaches the milestone of **30 years of democracy in 2024**. This will be an important moment to boldly review the journey of our country’s transition from apartheid colonialism to a national democratic society – the indisputable and irreversible progress; serious setbacks and reversals we have suffered and areas in which we have reached stagnation. This, we must do, in order to guarantee the forward march to build a better life for all and rid our society of all vestiges of apartheid colonialism.

6.2. As a starting point, we move from the premise that South Africa has made **significant gains since the dawn of our democracy in 1994**. The gains of our democratic breakthrough include the following:

- the adoption of a transformative Constitution that guarantees fundamental freedoms and human rights to all citizens and the establishment of democratic institutions that function in accordance with the Constitution;
- expansion of basic services and infrastructure to millions of people who now have access to housing, education, health, water, energy and income support through a social security net;
- and kick-starting the first phase of economic transformation by introducing laws and policies on worker rights, employment equity and Broad-Based Black Empowerment and some level of GDP growth.

6.3. Conference is of the unanimous view that the gains of our freedom and democracy must be defended, consolidated and advanced by ensuring that all citizens enjoy a better life as demanded by the Constitution of the Republic. Ours must become a people-centred and people-driven democracy in practice – what the veterans refer to as *“a democracy with South African characteristics where the interests and well-being of the people must come first”*. Whatever debates we can have on the shortcomings of our constitutional democracy, one thing must be clear: the narrative propagated by conservative and neo-liberal forces – defenders of white privilege and the colonial legacy – that life was better under apartheid colonialism, is rejected with all the contempt it deserves. Similarly, the ANC rejects the notion, by peace-time armchair critics, that our constitutional democratic order is a sell-out of the revolution. We will continue to defend and advance our longstanding ideals of transformative constitutionalism, while working hard to translate these ideals into a better life.

6.4. Conference noted the conservative and neo-liberal forces opposed to the fundamental transformation of South Africa – those who want to retain white domination, patriarchy and colonial privilege in the post-apartheid socio-economic reality have been gaining confidence and expanding their zone of influence. These counter-revolutionary forces are pitching for a moral and intellectual claim on how to take South Africa out of the current multiple crises. Their common strategic agenda is to stop or derail the national transformation project in South Africa. They hope to do so by undermining the authority of the democratic state and questioning the moral legitimacy of the ANC as a force for change. They use the

demoralisation and discontent of the motive forces to achieve their counter-revolutionary and racist agenda. They have used the democratic institutions skilfully to try and sustain racial privilege in the economy and broader society.

- 6.5 Racism and sexism remain prevalent in all spheres of society. The racists are attacking, victimising, harassing and hounding Black people out of important sectors and critical spaces. We need to strengthen the instruments to fight racism and ensure that there is no place for racists in our constitutional democracy. In a similar vein the war against women, manifested in pandemic-level incidences of gender based violence and femicide and against LGBTQI persons, is a backlash against advances in tackling gender oppression. We must remain resolute in our determination to dismantle patriarchy and build a truly non-sexist society.
- 6.6. The 55th National Conference reaffirms the assertion of the 50th National Conference, the ANC-led Alliance and the broad progressive movement in our country must be conscious of the activities of **organised counter-revolution** in our country, whose objective has always been *“to disorganise, weaken and destroy the ANC from within and from outside and to weaken the state institutions responsible for realising democratic gains”*, and in the face of this, be persistent in safeguarding the people’s interests. This Conference also reaffirms the view of the 54th National Conference Strategy & Tactics resolution that *“on the other hand, there is a possibility that the mass of the people can, by commission or omission, precipitate an electoral outcome that places into positions of authority, forces that can stealthily and deceitfully chip away at the progressive realisation of a National Democratic Society...Further, it cannot altogether be ruled out that the liberation movement itself can be so corrupted – in terms of its objectives, policies, value system, as well as composition and conduct of leadership – that it becomes a bed of counter-revolutionary infestation.”* In order to defeat counter-revolution and guarantee the continuity of our National Democratic Revolution, we must pay serious attention to the socio-economic reality of the people and prioritise the fundamental renewal and re-invigoration of the ANC alongside strengthening state capacity to meet the socio-economic needs of the people.
- 6.7 Conference therefore calls on the NEC to ensure that, wherever we govern, there must be demonstrable urgency and decisiveness in dealing with the pressing social and economic problems facing the people

of South Africa. Unless we urgently deal with the pressing problems of the people in general, and the motive forces of the NDR in particular, the transition to a National Democratic Society will be aborted and the forces opposed to change will be victorious.

- 6.8 These problems include the following:
- chronic poor performance of the economy and the resultant high rates of unemployment, poverty and inequality;
 - the collapse of many municipalities and poor maintenance of infrastructure across government undermining service delivery;
 - the energy crisis undermines growth, investment and job creation efforts and further hampers delivery of education, water, healthcare, safety and other social services;
 - rising cost of living makes it difficult for households to meet their most basic needs such as food, transport and clothing;
 - increasing levels of lawlessness, criminality and violence, including gender-based violence and racism erode social cohesion gains made over the years.
- 6.9. In summary, the developments on the domestic front point to the conclusion that the NDR is facing grave danger: unlike in the earlier period of our transition to democracy, the balance of forces is shifting away from the progressive force and the motive forces are getting demoralised and demobilised. For reasons outlined in the Renewal Commission document, the ANC-led democratic movement is increasingly losing the strategic initiative and moral high-ground, while counter-revolution is gaining confidence about the possibility remove the ANC from power and ultimately derail the transformation of South Africa.
7. The 55th National Conference strongly reaffirmed the resolutions of the 53rd and 54th National Conference on the **sustained renewal of the ANC** to regain the moral, intellectual and political high-ground as the leader of society. There is no turning back on the fundamental renewal of the ANC and radical socio-economic transformation of South Africa. Conference delegates share a common commitment to arrest any negative tendencies and decisively correct errors that threaten to overshadow and reverse the gains of our democracy and frontiers of freedom.

8. The principal contradictions and problems faced by the motive forces must be resolved as a matter of urgency by a more renewed and rejuvenated ANC that leads a state that is bold, ethical and capable of implementing a developmental and transformative agenda. Resistance to transformation must be crushed by the combined force of the people and the democratic state. Corruption is the enemy of the people and a counter-revolutionary act that must be defeated. Poor performance, laziness and incompetence are anti-people tendencies that must not be tolerated wherever the ANC governs. The ANC must take steps to re-invigorate its tactics for national democratic transformation through policy renewal, institution-building and enhancing the capabilities of the state. We must review policies and programmes that have not worked and boldly make changes. Our country, especially the motive forces, need a more assertive and emboldened ANC that is capable of defending the gains of our constitutional democracy and advancing the transformation agenda without any apology.
9. Conference noted that many progressive parties and movements are renewing themselves and re-imagining progressive politics and governance in the 21st century. As a disciplined force of the left, the ANC's renewal project is about positioning the movement to play a leading role in developing a humanistic, people-centred and ecologically sustainable response to all global issues such as climate crisis, the fourth industrial revolution, pandemics, conflicts and migration. Progressive forces should also have a common agenda about issues such as de-colonisation of education curricula, de-criminalisation of sex work and respect for the rights of all people, including members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Progressive forces should further harness the potential and power of social media to shape public consciousness and political discourse; and its potential to transform political organisation as we have known it. Social media must be used as a platform of connecting with the people, advancing progressive ideas and receiving feedback – rather than merely as an instrument for individual self-promotion. In this regard, there must be revolutionary discipline among the members of the ANC on how they conduct themselves on social media platforms.
10. Conference also reviewed the political state of the Alliance and the broad Mass Democratic Movement. These democratic forces were at the centre of our struggle for liberation and are part and parcel of the ongoing efforts to transform South Africa into a National Democratic Society. The Alliance has been impacted by the changes in the global and domestic environment over the past three decades. It also faces new strategic and organisational questions about relevance, renewal and reconfiguration. Critically, the NEC should ensure that the discussion on the reconfiguration of the Alliance is concluded, paying adequate attention to the theoretical underpinnings and organisational form that the Alliance may require as the new conditions of democracy take root.
11. In the past five years, South Africa is confronted by the question of unstable of coalitions in local government. The ANC and its Alliance partners have been found wanting in dealing with his new reality. As a matter of principle, our attitude and approach to government coalitions must be shaped by our overall perspective on the best way to advance and achieve the goal of building a national democratic society. Our failure to adequately theorise this issue places us at risk of entering into opportunistic and personality-driven coalitions that are completely out of sync with our immediate, medium and long-term objectives and core values. The ANC, the Alliance and allied progressive forces need to develop a more coherent perspective that is premised on safeguarding socio-economic transformation, sustainable development, service delivery, accountability and active citizen participation in democratic governance. Firstly, we must strive for and work towards a decisive victory in every election. Secondly, where we find ourselves, objectively, in a situation that requires establishing a coalition, we must ensure that any coalition we are part of must be based on certain principles that put the interests of the people first – a stable government with a minimum programme that can improve service delivery and push forward the transformation agenda from which the ANC will never retreat. Thirdly, the ANC must not participate in a coalition which is simply about the sharing of spoils of office by political parties where there's no chance of delivering any benefits to citizens. If we have performed badly in elections, we should be principled enough go into opposition and build anew than to be part of a coalition government that undermines the foundational principles and values of both the ANC and the Constitution of the Republic. The newly-elected NEC should urgently develop a guiding paper on the ANC's strategic perspective on this matter of coalition governments, learning from other progressive parties across the world.
12. All the issues and perspectives outlined in this resolution require ongoing and much deeper reflection not only in the ANC, but across the entire democratic movement and progressive forces in our

country, including social movements and civil society organisations that are genuinely committed to transformation. Accordingly, Conference resolves to mandate the newly-elected NEC to convene a series of representative, consultative sessions on issues of strategy and tactics in 2023 and after the 2024 elections. These strategy and tactics sessions will enable the ANC, the Alliance and the other progressive forces to review the changing global and domestic balance of forces and the tasks of the liberation movement in the current phase and beyond. This will also provide the platform to take forward the ideas contained in the report of the Renewal Commission, which were universally appreciated. As part of this process, research on these issues, including scenario planning, will position the movement in good standing as it pursues the renewal of the ANC and the Alliance.

13. The delegates to the 55th National Conference are at one: South Africa and the ANC, are at a moment of fundamental consequence. This moment requires clarity of thought, firm conviction and courage, decisiveness as well as an unshaken commitment to the ideals that have inspired gener-

ations of South Africa's freedom fighters who sacrificed and suffered so that our country can be free, and our people can live as equals, with their human dignity fully restored. We shall not allow the gains of our democracy to be eroded and reversed. We shall not allow the radical socio-economic transformation of our country to be aborted. Nor shall we allow the fundamental renewal of the ANC to be stopped or sabotaged.

14. The democratic renewal of our country and the fundamental transformation of our society and economy is a strategic goal from which the ANC will not retreat. As our country undergoes significant macro-social changes and the world experiences multiple disruptive transitions, the ANC and the progressive forces need to re-invigorate a vision of what it means to be progressive in the 21st century - with respect to strategy and tactics, policy, and methods of organisation – placing the well-being of all of humanity and the planet at the centre of our political life

We dare not fail!



Issued by the African National Congress, Chief Albert Luthuli House
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Produced by the ANC Department of Information and Publicity