



NATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL

CLOSING ADDRESS BY ANC PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA TO THE ANC 5TH NATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL

11 December 2025

Birchwood, Gauteng



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!



**ANC National Chairperson, Cde Gwede Mantashe,
Deputy President, Cde Paul Mashatile
Secretary General, Cde Fikile Mbalula
Members of the National Executive Committee,
Former President Thabo Mbeki,
Former Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe,
Leadership of the ANC Veterans League,
Women's League and Youth League,
Representatives of the MK Liberation War Veterans,
Representatives of the Alliance and democratic movement,
Members of Fraternal Organisations,
Delegates,
Comrades,**

We have come to the end of the 5th National General Council of the ANC. In the finest traditions of our movement, this NGC has been an opportunity for *umrabulo*, an opportunity for thorough political debate.

Most importantly, it has been an opportunity to outline a clear path ahead to give effect to the decisions of the 55th National Conference and to advance the historic mission of our movement.

In the commissions I attended, I was impressed to hear how delegates had come to this NGC well prepared, informed and with their inputs grounded in real research.

The delegates reminded us that the ANC must always be led by evidence, principle and the real needs of our people – not by slogans, popularity or convenience.

When we engage from a researched point of view as many delegates did in this NGC, our policy becomes realistic, implementable and

focused on impact.

The high level of debate is underpinned by the culture of reading, analysing, listening and thinking.

This thoroughgoing preparation by members, structures and delegates to the NGC is indicative of a resurgent ANC. The movement must continue to build on these green shoots of renewal.

When we read, analyse and think, we decide better. And when we decide better, our people live better.

Throughout the NGC, the commissions were packed to capacity and delegates debated in a calm and comradely atmosphere.

Delegates have remained focused on the tasks at hand.

They have refused to be distracted by issues outside of the purpose of the NGC.

As a result, we leave this NGC with agreement on the actions we need to take to make the ANC a more effective instrument of the people to achieve the vision of the Freedom Charter.

This mid-term evaluation has been characterised by honest and critical reflections.

We evaluated the work being done by the ANC in communities, in government and our historic role in fundamental social and economic transformation of South African society.

Reflecting on the mood of the delegates present here over the past four days, we can say without a shadow of doubt that you, our delegates, came here to genuinely renew and rebuild our movement.



Throughout the discussions and debates there was an emphasis on the urgency of implementing our policies and decisions.

We can summarise the central message of this NGC as: **Disciplined implementation is the number one priority.**

We agreed that since the 1994 democratic breakthrough, a lot has been done in changing South Africa's political and legal landscape. We have a transformative Constitution, a progressive Bill of Rights and democratic institutions that safeguard the rights and freedoms of citizens and ensure that government is based on the democratic will of the people.

Successive ANC-led administrations have qualitatively improved the lives of millions of South Africans though expanded access to basic services and infrastructure.

They have expanded access to housing, healthcare, education, electricity, water, sanitation and a social security net to those who need state support.

We have witnessed a significant growth of black professionals, black-owned and women-owned businesses in many sectors of the economy.

The NGC supported the decision to form an inclusive ANC-led GNU as a tactical intervention that doesn't change the ANC's long-term strategy for fundamental transformation.

While supporting the NEC intervention fully, the NGC correctly noted that some parties have been using the GNU to try and undermine the transformation of our country as mandated by the Constitution, the supreme law of the land.

Accordingly, the NEC has been mandated

to strengthen the ANC's capacity to drive a progressive agenda in the GNU and ensure delivery of immediate results on jobs, inclusive growth, tackling poverty and inequality, and fighting crime and corruption.

The NEC should continue to monitor and assess the performance of the GNU and make necessary interventions to ensure the GNU serves the interests of the people of South Africa.

The subjective organisational weaknesses of the ANC and its Alliance partners and the increasingly difficult objective economic conditions of the motive forces require a combination of both organisational renewal and national renewal.

We must therefore renew, rebuild and rebuild both the ANC and the Alliance with a specific focus on inclusive economic growth and the safety and security of citizens.

We salute the more than 125,000 members from 1,600 branches who have already completed the Foundation Course.

Our aim is to ensure every ANC member and every ANC leader understands the core principles, values and policies of our movement. This will lay the basis for vibrant branches and upgrade the quality of our cadres.

We also take heart from the substantial progress we have made in developing our new membership system and the many branches and members who now have access to this important mechanism to ensure an effective membership system.

Vibrant active branches with consistent community outreach programmes are the foundation of a renewed ANC. Our process of branch functionality audits will ensure we



are monitoring the rebuilding of our structures and sharing good practice throughout the organisation.

Every branch must conduct an audit of ward-based challenges and issues which will in turn inform the branch's programme of action to focus on the resolution of local issues. No ANC branch can claim to lead a community that is not rooted in the daily struggles of that community for a better life.

Rebuilding a culture of integrity and ethics is central to our renewal process. In this regard we want to salute the important work of the ANC Integrity Commission on guiding our approach to these difficult matters.

We note that the step aside decision is now being implemented with greater consistency across our structures.

Those members who are stepping aside voluntarily while the matters that could bring the ANC into disrepute are being processed are to be applauded. The issues that impact on the integrity of the ANC are being taken to heart by the membership. This is to be welcomed.

This NGC has raised deep concerns about the negative impact of the current state of the Alliance on the ability of the progressive forces to execute a revolutionary agenda, to defend and advance the NDR.

Accordingly, this NGC has supported the NEC's assessment that the SACP's resolution has not only tactical implications, but also strategic implications for the Alliance as a whole and the prosecution of the NDR.

It has been agreed that the Alliance leadership must meet urgently and develop a common approach to the reconfiguration and renewal of

the Alliance in a manner that safeguards unity and cohesion and avoids further confusion, division and conflict among the rank-and-file on the ground.

The ANC, as the leader of the Alliance and the NDR, should not give up on its historic responsibility and effort to unite the Alliance, including continuing to engage the SACP to ensure that we approach the elections the way we have always done, on a common platform.

However, as we continue to persuade each other, we will need to request SACP members to recuse themselves from our joint election structures.

Economic Transformation

The country has made significant progress in addressing the network industry infrastructure shortcomings, with an emphasis on stabilising energy supply, which has enabled us to end load shedding and to now focus on grid expansion.

We are also seeing an improvement in the tonnage of goods that are transported on our rail network and exported and imported through our ports. We are seeing greater efficiencies and rising productivity in our network industries.

The NGC noted that economic growth and employment performance are showing positive trends but remain significantly lower than the required levels. The ANC must focus its actions towards achieving a 3% growth rate in the medium term.

The NGC has re-affirmed the focus and priority areas of the 'Ten Point Plan' as the guiding framework for economic implementation and action to improve growth and employment rates.

The Ten Point Plan is already demonstrating effectiveness in streamlining implementation



of our Conference resolutions and Manifesto priorities in a measurable and time-bound manner.

In this regard, the NGC welcomed the progress made on energy security, as well as interventions on electricity tariffs in the ferrochrome sector, as well as port and rail network transformation.

The NGC stressed the importance of enabling private sector investment in our national infrastructure revitalisation programme through a variety of mechanisms, while maintaining effective and strategic asset ownership and regulatory control by the state.

The NGC re-affirmed the importance of a social compact that enjoins government, labour, civil society and business around a coherent national investment strategy to increase the momentum of growth and development.

The NGC emphasised the importance of Cabinet developing a coherent and transformative investment philosophy to guide public investment activities across all levels of government.

The NGC places emphasis on strengthening the project and contract management capability of government to execute projects in line with public interest priorities.

Acknowledging the challenges confronting small enterprises in our townships, rural and village areas, the NGC mandates government to ensure access to finance and appropriate skills training.

Recognising that there remains a challenge in the skills ecosystem, the NGC has mandated government to institute a review of the SETA system in relation to industry requirements. The NGC agreed that we must proceed to implement the dual skills acquisition system to foster a skills revolution.

The NGC reaffirms its commitment to a broad-based structural transformation and all socio-economic redress policies and mandates government to ensure local content targets are implemented to support re-industrialisation in the steel and other sectors.

Local government

Local government remains the level of government closest to the daily lives of citizens. Accordingly the role of local government in both social and economic transformation is central to the developmental agenda of our country.

Accordingly, the NGC has affirmed today that municipal administration must be ethical and capable, and that professional administration is insulated from undue political interference.

The NGC has agreed that as the process of review of the White Paper on Local Government unfolds, our structures must ensure that the new document meets all the objectives of developmental local government .

We reaffirm the important role traditional and Khoi-San leadership must play in local government to ensure joint planning between municipalities and Traditional Councils. be institutionalised.

The NGC mandated government to ensure that the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development and the institution of Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership must resolve outstanding land reform matters.

Once again we affirm that the District Delivery Model is the primary mechanism for integrated planning, budgeting and accountable service delivery across all spheres of government so our slogan must be: One Plan, One Budget, One Approach.



In less than a year we will contest the 2026 Local Government Elections. This will be an important test of the extent to which we have managed to renew the support and confidence of the electorate.

To win decisively the ANC must field our most dedicated, honest and competent candidates. We must work tirelessly in voting districts going door to door to explain why the ANC remains the only party that can meet the needs of all our country's people.

Peace and stability

Crime and corruption remain a central concern of all communities.

The Madlanga Commission will assist us to establish facts and help us to reset the South African Police Service and the criminal justice system over the next decade.

The classification of gender-based violence and femicide as a National Disaster signals a firm commitment to tackling this societal scourge through an all of government and all of society approach.

The recent adoption of an integrated strategy to deal with gang violence in the Western Cape and Gauteng, together with the allocation of substantial financial resources must ensure we stamp out the endless cycle of killings and violence that terrorise communities and devastate families every day.

The resolutions of this NGC explicitly recognise porous borders as a threat to territorial integrity and link them to illegal mining, terrorism, narcotics trafficking and transnational organised crime.

While the Border Management Authority has been established and initial deployments have begun, financial constraints remain a critical enforcement limitation. Accordingly the NGC mandates government to look at ways to strengthen the Border Management Authority.

It is a matter of urgency that we move with speed to update our legislative environment to deal with new realities in our migration environment.

Health and Education

Universal health coverage is a key aspiration of the Freedom Charter.

The NGC has agreed that we must proceed to implement NHI and strengthen all aspects of our health system towards the achievement of affordable, equal and quality health care for all our people.

Gender-based violence and Femicide

Delegates called on the ANC to intensify its commitment to the Freedom Charter's call that *"There Shall Be Houses, Security and Comfort."* Delegates welcomed the classification of gender-based violence and femicide as a national disaster, but highlighted poor police response, secondary victimisation and long case backlogs as amongst factors exacerbating gender-based violence and femicide in our society.

The NGC agreed that the harmful practice of ukuthwala – the forced marriage of young girls – must be condemned without ambiguity.

There was agreement the movement must urge its deployees in the state to strengthen and fast-track legislative and other measures aimed at enhancing the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Plan and Femicide.



Delegates emphasised mandatory training for SAPS on the National Strategic Plan, in particular. Those in the criminal justice system must take care and be trained to prevent further harm to survivors and victims.

A better Africa and a better world

The ANC should continue to revive and strengthen its ties with sister liberation movements and progressive parties across the world, including the anti-apartheid movement, and share lessons and experiences on successful party renewal.

We must continue to mobilise international solidarity campaigns with the people of Palestine, Western Sahara and Cuba.

South Africa must continue to diversify economic ties and strengthen trade relations with countries in our own continent, the Middle East, Asia and Central and South America, in addition to the relations we have with Europe and North America.

The NGC has agreed that we must continue to anchor all our economic recovery and inclusive growth efforts in Africa.

We must strengthen the Global South to strengthen Africa's role in global economic institutions like the IMF and World Bank.

We must promote multilateralism and continue to place the United Nations at the centre of the resolution of international disputes.

Commissions called on the NEC to hold all Ministers, MPs, Premiers, MECs, Mayors and councillors accountable and ensure they to address poor service delivery, the collapse of infrastructure and ensure our economy grows and creates work for especially for women and young people.

This NGC has resolved that we must prioritise nation-building, social cohesion and empowerment of the motive forces to unify society behind the cause of transformation and a better life for all.

This informs our endorsement of an inclusive and citizen-led National Dialogue.

We have agreed that our participation in the National Dialogue should be guided by four core principles: transparency, inclusivity, objectivity and action orientation.

We need to ensure that all sectors have a voice in shaping the dialogue, and the National Dialogue produces measurable outcomes.

From this NGC, we have a clear line of march. The delegates to this NGC have acknowledged the great challenges that confront our movement and our country.

But we are not daunted by these challenges. We are not cynical.

We can see how far we have come. This gives us hope. It inspires us to carry on, to work harder, to do better.

While we have much further to travel, the renewal of our movement is gaining momentum. It is moving forward and will soon be unstoppable.

We are resolved to see the fundamental renewal of our movement through to its conclusion.

We are resolved to hold our 56th National Conference as a transformed organisation, an organisation that is united, that is cohesive, that has the confidence and the trust of the masses of our people.

We are resolved to become an ever more effective agent for fundamental social and economic transformation.



Next year, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the adoption of our democratic Constitution.

The Constitution is a revolutionary framework that mandates and guides the fundamental transformation of our society into a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous nation.

It affirms that the people shall govern, that all shall be equal before the law, and that dignity, work, shelter and security are not privileges, but rights.

For three decades, it has empowered decisive action to dismantle the legacies of racial, gender and class oppression.

Yet this anniversary takes place at a time of ever more strident attacks on constitutional values, the rule of law and a rules based international order.

The task of the ANC and all progressive and patriotic South Africans is therefore twofold: to defend and deepen constitutional democracy, and to ensure it delivers more decisively for the poor and the marginalised.

This NGC has confirmed that central among the tasks of the moment – to give effect to those aims and objectives – is to drive inclusive economic growth, create jobs and tackle poverty.

We have embarked on a path of economic recovery and transformation.

Like the renewal of our movement, this recovery is gaining momentum.

The difficult years are yielding to a new era of progress, confidence and hope.

We can see the effects of our efforts in important economic indicators.

Our task now is to ensure that South Africans

see the effects of these changes in their lives.

They must feel the benefit of jobs being created, new businesses starting up, young people getting the skills they need, services being reliably delivered, social infrastructure being built.

People must feel safe in their homes and on the streets. Public services must work. Officials must be honest and helpful. Public representatives must be accountable.

As we depart this NGC, as we go home to our communities, let us be more determined than ever to bring about the changes that our country needs.

I wish to extend thanks to the staff of the African National Congress, who despite the known challenges, showed up and performed their duties for our organisation. Your hard work and dedication remain unparalleled.

I also want to thank the SGO, TGO and the entire NGC Preparatory Team for organising an inspiring forum for debate and assessment.

Finally, I wish to thank all delegates and other participants for their constructive contributions and debates.

As our forebears did 70 years ago, let us pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes set out in the Freedom Charter have been won.

I wish everyone a peaceful and blessed festive season.

And safe travels as you head home.

Amandla!

