



# NATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL

## DECLARATION

**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!  
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## Introduction

1. We, the over 1500 delegates from structures of the ANC, together with our Alliance partners the South African Communist Party (SACP), Congress of South African Trade Union (Cosatu), and the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), the Mass Democratic Movement, as well as sister organisations from across the region, gathered for the 5th National General Council in Ekurhuleni, as an embodiment of our intensified Renewal Mission!
2. The NGC convened under the theme: Renewal to make the ANC a more elective instrument of the people to achieve the vision of the Freedom Charter: The People shall Govern! The People shall have in the country's wealth!
3. The 5th NGC took place at a critical moment in the history of our young democracy, with notable progress to build a better life over the three decades of freedom, which includes: a Constitutional order committed to equality, redress, human and socio-economic rights and a comprehensive social wage which includes the millions now having access to basic services.
4. At the same time, the legacies of the past still find expression in the triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. These challenges have been exacerbated by spatial under-development that remains stubbornly high, impacting negatively on millions of men and women, young and old, across the country.
5. The 5th NGC also convened as we celebrated 70 years of the Freedom Charter, 40 years since the launch of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and as we prepare for 30 years of the South African Constitution and the seventh local government elections in 2026.
6. We, the delegates to the 5th NGC, remain mindful that our movement and indeed the cause of social transformation continue to face an existential crisis, which has placed the very cause of national liberation at a crossroads. Consequently, we understand our struggle to be at a fork road, and thus:  
We can either Renew or Perish.  
We can Unite or Face Defeat.  
We can Return to Serving the People or Betray the NDR.
7. Mindful of this pregnant moment in our history, the Plenary and Commission sessions lived up to the expectation of our NGC as "the largest political school" of our movement. Venues were consistently full, and delegates discussed topics from the Base Document, Political Overview, Mid-Term Report and various thematic areas.
8. The 5th NGC delegates displayed utmost discipline and determination to learn, participate, and sharply raise matters of outmost concern to society, communities on the ground and the ANC membership. The work done on the ground through the ANC Foundation Course and the preparations by the Provinces and the Leagues towards the NGC, made a positive impact on the quality and depth of debates.
9. The 5th National General Council affirmed the ongoing relevance of the NDR as the shared theory, strategy and programme of the ANC-led Alliance and democratic movement. The NGC reaffirmed the thorough-going socio-economic transformation as a fundamental foundation for the South Africa We Want and



the means of achieving it. NGC agreed that the strategic objectives of the NDR as articulated in the Strategy and Tactics document remain relevant. Attaining these objectives will lead to the fundamental transformation of South Africa into a National Democratic Society – a truly united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous nation – based on the vision of the Freedom Charter.

10. The NGC acknowledged progress of the NDR in the empowerment of the motive forces. These gains can be seen in the significant growth of Black professionals and middle strata, and to an extent Black-owned and Women-owned businesses in many sectors of the economy reserved for white males under apartheid. Workers have also made enormous gains in terms of labour rights and the social wage, including the minimum wage. The youth are the primary beneficiaries of massive public investment in the expansion of basic education and higher education. South Africa women have also made gains regarding the social wage, political representation and economic empowerment – South Africa occupies the second place in the G20 countries on women empowerment.
11. At the same time, despite progress, the NGC concluded that the NDR stands at a crossroads, because of the following:
  - Incidents of corruption on the capacity, legitimacy and authority of the state.
  - Tendencies of Ideological and organisational degeneration in the ANC and Alliance structures, especially the sins of incumbency, factionalism, crass materialism, social distance and outright service delivery failures.
  - The Apartheid-colonial political economy remains largely intact: the unequal distribution of economic opportunities between Black and White, men and women, urban and rural and high levels of
  - unemployment and economic exclusion remain a dominant pattern of South Africa’s political economy and spatial landscape.
  - The impact of neo-liberalism, an ideology and policies that seeks to limit the role of the state in driving a developmental agenda. Thus, outsourcing and “tenderisation” of state functions have weakened the democratic state’s capacity and orientation to drive development.
12. The NGC admitted that the cumulative impact and toxic combination of these factors, and the deterioration in, inequality and unemployment rates as well as slow progress in reducing poverty, have led to the 2024 electoral setback and the crossroads of the National Democratic Revolution. These factors also contributed to the emboldening of counter-revolutionary forces at both domestic and global levels.
13. The 5th NGC therefore declared that for fundamental socio-economic transformation to be advanced and accelerated, organisational renewal must be sustained and must go hand in glove with national rejuvenation and renewal, in the following four areas:
14. Firstly, Renewal of the ANC as the leading Agent of Change – to rebuild the leadership, organisational and ideological capacity to drive transformation. This renewal must be all-encompassing, and will require strict organisational management of the ANC, the adoption of a Renewal Charter Towards 2032, with performance targets and indicators across a range of issues identified by NGC, which should include the reconfiguration and renewal of the Revolutionary Alliance.

15. Secondly, national renewal and rejuvenation must be anchored by an elective Developmental Path for Growth and Social Equity – that re-industrialize the economy for mass employment creation, transform the racialized and gendered patterns of ownership and control, build productive rural areas advancing land and agrarian reforms, urban centres as drivers of economic growth and innovation; safe communities, quality basic services, climate-smart infrastructure and a state that is effective, trusted and ethical.
16. This must include strengthening the local sphere of governance through the Local Government Action Plan, to accelerate service delivery, infrastructure development and maintenance, and reconnecting with the people. This will require ward-based monitoring & evaluation systems and deploying the best amongst us in the 2026 Local Government Elections.
17. Local government is the sphere of government closest to the people, where the injunction of the Freedom Charter that “the people shall govern” must find most direct expression. This must also be reflected in the demarcation of local government structures. The National General Council directed the NEC to work with communities negatively affected by recent decisions by the Local Government Demarcation Board to address their concerns.
18. Thirdly Nation-Building, Social Cohesion and Empowerment of the People – to unify society behind the cause of transformation manifested in a better life for all.
19. Finally, navigating a complex global situation – to protect and advance our national interests and the African agenda amid global shifts.
20. The 5th NGC, in a range of Commissions reviewed implementation of 55th National Conference resolutions, challenges and new issues, with recommendations on accelerating implementation towards 2027 when the 56th National Conference convenes and 2032, when the ANC will turn 120 years.
21. The 5th NGC instructs the NEC to strengthen the recommendations and immediately translate these recommendations into a Renewal and Rejuvenation Action Plan, with marching orders to ANC deployees in executive authorities, public representatives, NEC, PEC and RECs members, and above all in the basic unit of the movement, the ANC branches across the length and breadth of the country.
22. The 5th National General Council calls on all ANC leaders, members and supporters to put shoulder to wheel to implement this Renewal and Rejuvenation Action Plan, as we take part in the National Dialogue, engage with communities, sectors and the Alliance, and advance service delivery, economic transformation in the ANC-led GNU, Provincial and Local governments, and from opposition benches.
23. We approach the 30th anniversary of our Constitution in 2026, following closely on the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter. The Constitution is the supreme law of our republic. It is a democratic 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, asset ownership, shelter and security are not privileges, but rights.



24. For three decades, it has anchored democratic governance, built independent institutions, expanded access to justice, and enabled major social advances in housing, education, healthcare, water, electricity and social protection. It has empowered decisive action to dismantle the legacies of racial, gender and class oppression.
25. 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, globally and domestically, including a targeted campaign against the continuing process of liberating the majority of South African from the legacy of white patriarchal supremacy.
26. 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. The movement must lead a year-long 30th Anniversary programme that ignites mass constitutional education, active citizenship, youth mobilisation, and cultural programmes, while confronting corruption, disinformation and democratic disengagement.
27. The ANC affirms, for all our country and the world to know, that the Constitution is the people's covenant, a powerful instrument of renewal, justice and shared prosperity.
28. The 5th National General Council rises with the ANC and the border progressive movement re-energised, inspired and determined to translate the commitments and resolutions into practical action not only to inform the actions of our members and supporters; but to impact on the lives of South Africans in practical ways.
29. In this regard, we solemnly reaffirm the profound commitment enshrined in the Freedom Charter: These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives until we have won our liberty.

**AMANDLA!**



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