

Statement of the National Executive Committee on the Occasion of the 106th Anniversary of the African National Congress

January 8, 2018

Fellow South Africans,

The African National Congress turns 106 years this year.

We are in the Eastern Cape, the home of legends. As the newly elected leadership of the ANC, we visited and laid wreaths at the graves of the first ANC President, John Langalibalele Dube and former Presidents Chief Albert Luthuli, Josiah Gumede, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela. We shook their bones and sought their blessing as we take the ANC into an era of unity and service to the people. We take this opportunity to reaffirm the ANC's commitment to the values and principles to which so many of our legends dedicated their lives. January 8th Statement 2018.

The African National Congress was formed to heal the wounds that had been inflicted on our people by colonial conquest. Our organisation belongs to the people of South Africa and it is our duty to safeguard and nurture it. The core ideal that is the reason for the ANC's existence – the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, prosperous and equitable society – is yet to be fully realised. As its newly elected leadership, we commit to our membership that we shall remain faithful and diligent custodians of this glorious vision.

This year, we mark the anniversaries of several milestones in the history of our struggle for democracy:

It is 210 years since the 1808 rebellion of slaves in the Cape seeking a free state and freedom for all slaves. The rebellion, which was quashed by the colonial authorities, was one of the earliest instances of organised multi-racial resistance to tyranny and injustice in South Africa.

It is 105 years since the 1913 Land Act and 95 years since the Native Urban Areas Act, two pieces of legislation that were central to the deprivation of black South Africans of their land, assets and livelihoods. The effects of these laws continue to be felt today.

It is 100 years since the formation of the Bantu Women's League, a forerunner of the ANC Women's League and the first organisation in the country to take up the struggle of South African women.

It is 75 years since the adoption of the Africans' Claims in South Africa document, which set out the demands of black South Africans for equal rights and self-determination. This seminal document January 8th Statement 2018 2 was a precursor to the Freedom Charter, the ANC's Constitutional Guidelines and the country's democratic Constitution.

It is 65 years since the Bantu Education Act was introduced, effectively depriving generations of black South Africans of quality education and skills and consigning them to grinding poverty. n It is 55 years since the start of the Rivonia Trial, during which Nelson Mandela and other leaders of Umkhonto we Sizwe were sentenced to life imprisonment for having the courage to take up arms against the apartheid state. We use this opportunity, today, to pay tribute to the two surviving Rivonia trialists, Isithwalande Andrew Mlangeni and Dennis Goldberg.

It is also 55 years since the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity, which was formed to help bring about independence from colonialism and promote the unity and solidarity of the African continent.

It is 45 years since the Durban strikes, which signaled the start of a new era in the struggle of the Black working class and in the broader struggle against apartheid.

This year, we mark the 25th anniversary of the assassination of Chris Hani, whose murder at the hands of right-wingers on the eve of our democratic breakthrough remains a source of pain and anguish to our nation. We also mark the passing, two weeks later, of that giant of our struggle, former President Oliver Tambo.

The ANC has produced many great sons and daughters who lived lives of extraordinary activism in service to the people of South Africa.

This year, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest leaders this country, this continent and the world has known – Isithwalandwe Seaparankoe Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

We shall celebrate his centenary not only as the people of South Africa, but also as a continent and as the broader global community. We shall pay tribute to the contribution that he made, over the course of his 95 years, to the struggle for freedom and the cause of building humane social relations across the globe.

We shall draw lessons and inspiration from his life as we confront the challenges of the present. We shall use this historic occasion to unite, rebuild and renew the movement to which he dedicated his life and intensify our work to build the free and equitable society for which he fought.

As we do so, we shall reflect on the past year, in which we commemorated the life of his friend and comrade, former President Oliver Reginald Tambo, and the profound impact that that centenary had on every aspect of the political work of the ANC and the Alliance.

This year, as we celebrate the centenary of the birth of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, we shall intensify our efforts to realise his vision of a united South Africa in which all live in peace with equal rights and opportunities.

We shall renew our focus on comrade Mandela's vision of a non-racial society in which the social and economic barriers that have separated black from white are torn down. We shall redouble our efforts to build a society in which black poverty and white privilege are consigned to the past, replaced by respect, solidarity and non-racial equality.

We shall place at the top of our agenda Madiba's vision of a non-sexist society in which the oppression and exploitation of women – whether in the workplace, in communities or in the home – is eradicated. We will work to ensure we achieve comprehensive development of women in all spheres of life so as to ensure that there is equality between women and men.

We shall work to rekindle Madiba's vision of a democratic society in which all citizens have equal opportunity to determine their own destiny. We shall achieve this not only through strengthening the instruments of representative and participatory democracy; but also by ensuring that people have economic opportunities and the ability to make choices about their own lives. We shall work to strengthen organs of civil society, including street committees and other community-based organisations, understanding that they provide the means through which people can participate fully in changing their lives for the better.

In 2018, as the African National Congress, we shall work to restore the confidence of the South African people in a shared vision for radical social and economic transformation. We shall confront, together, the lack of broad-based economic participation and the social marginalisation of millions of poor and landless people.

This we shall do, proceeding from the understanding that, an equitable society is in the interest of all South Africans, whatever their race, gender or social status.

Drawing on the wisdom of Madiba, and led by his example, we shall focus all our efforts on improving the lives of all South Africans, especially the poor.

This year, we will also celebrate the centenary of the birth of Albertina Nontsikelelo Sisulu, a stalwart of our struggle who is remembered for her strength, compassion and tireless commitment to the people of this country. As a prominent leader of the ANC, ANC Women's League, Federation of South African Women and the United Democratic Front, Ma Sisulu represented the epitome of selfless service to the people. We will use this year to remember her life and outstanding contribution to the cause of freedom and democracy.

Renew the ANC as the Vanguard of Transformation

At the centre of all our efforts this year must be the fundamental renewal and revitalisation of the African National Congress.

The ANC's 54th National Conference, which met in Johannesburg in December 2017, recognised that the movement has become deeply divided through factionalism, patronage, corruption and competition for resources. Structures of the movement have been weakened and the confidence of the people in the ANC has been eroded.

This, and the development of social distance between elected leaders and the electorate, has damaged the bond between the ANC and the masses of the people.

Conference decided that the ANC should embark with immediate effect, on a far-reaching programme of organisation-building and renewal aimed at making it a more effective instrument of social and economic change. This will also involve extensive engagement with formations with which we used to work in the mass democratic movement and with organised civil society. We will reach out to our people as a whole through the various structures in which they are organised, from sports bodies to chambers of commerce to community based organisations and faith based groups. We will reach out to the veterans of the movement to ensure that they play a meaningful role in rebuilding the ANC and restoring its values. In doing this, we will build unity of purpose, ensuring that the ANC is strengthened as a vanguard of the process of social transformation.

In electing the new national leadership of the organisation, delegates at the 54th National Conference gave the new leadership a clear and unequivocal mandate to unite the movement, the Alliance and the people of South Africa.

Progress in Improving People's Lives

We find ourselves at a critical time in the history of the country, in the life of the African National Congress and in the course of the National Democratic Revolution.

Together with our Alliance partners and with the support of broader society, we have, over the last 24 years, qualitatively advanced the National Democratic Revolution.

We have made significant progress in forging a unitary democratic state founded on a Constitution which guarantees equal rights for all.

We have done much to dismantle the political, social and economic features of colonial exploitation and apartheid oppression, establishing enduring democratic institutions that are able to champion the will of the people.

We have directed public resources towards tackling poverty, building houses for the poor, electrifying houses, providing water to millions of additional households, redistributing land, improving education and health, and providing more than 17.4 million social grants to almost 12 million South Africans.

In 1994, we inherited a dysfunctional economy that had been in decline for many years. As the incoming government, we were forced to make some difficult decisions to turn around an economy in decline, and this at precisely the moment that our people's expectations were at their greatest.

For much of the first two decades of democracy, the ANC-led government managed to ensure sustained economic growth, macroeconomic stability and prudent management of public resources, while pursuing redistributive policies.

We sustained high levels of investment in education and skills development, ensuring that 77% of learners in public high schools enjoy free basic education. There are currently almost a million students enrolled in higher education, up from just over 500,000 in 1994. We have directed resources to meet the needs of the poor while improving their prospects for access to opportunities. Government provides free meals to nearly 12 million school children every day, that is more than 75% of learners in more than 20,000 public schools.

South Africa is also poised to make more significant contributions in the technology field, for instance, through our work on the Square Kilometre Array, which, when completed, will be the world's largest radio telescope, significantly expanding our ability to study space and answer fundamental questions of science. We were awarded the bid to build 65% of the SKA in 2012; and through the Meerkat telescope which will be completed in March 2018 South Africa and the continent at large will host the largest and most sophisticated research infrastructure. This is a scientific first for Africa and South Africa.

The number of people in employment in our country rose from 8.9 million in 1994 to around 16 million today. Even in the aftermath of the global financial crisis which started some 10 years ago, we were able to invest over R1 trillion in infrastructure over the last 5 years. As a consequence of these efforts and through our broad-based Black economic empowerment policies, we have seen the Black middle strata grow from approximately 1.7 million to 6 million.

Despite the progress we have made, we know that the most difficult challenges still lie ahead. As we noted in the National Development Plan, South Africa remains a highly unequal society where too many people live in poverty and too few have access to economic opportunities.

That is why the ANC's 53rd National Conference in Mangaung declared that we were now entering the second phase of our transition, with a methodical focus on socio-economic emancipation.

Yet, despite the attention we have given to socio-economic transformation, our economy has not performed well. Economic growth has remained low, unemployment has remained high, and some of the advances we made in reducing poverty are in danger of being reversed. Levels of investment have dropped, our budget is under pressure, business and consumer confidence is low, and we have recently suffered a number of credit rating downgrades.

In the main, this is the result of an economy whose structure is largely unchanged since the end of apartheid. Over the last few years, this has been exacerbated by the effects of the global financial crisis, lower demand for our commodities and domestic challenges such as infrastructure constraints, low skills levels and the erosion of our manufacturing capacity. Our economy has also been severely undermined by corruption and state capture, institutional instability, policy inconsistency, poor performance of state-owned enterprises and a sense of drift within the ANC.

Therefore, if we are to turn the economy around and get the National Democratic Revolution firmly back on track, we need to work with urgency and seriousness to address these challenges.

We are encouraged by recent signs of faster growth following the country's emergence from a technical recession and the recent stabilisation of our currency, the rand. We have noted indications from a number of investors who are expressing renewed confidence in our country and are looking at new investments that would lead to job creation.

A Programme for Accelerated Radical Socio-Economic Transformation

The ANC 54th National Conference, which was held in Johannesburg last month, addressed many of these issues and adopted policies to accelerate the fundamental transformation of our society.

While it is undeniable that the ANC has made significant strides in meeting the basic needs of the people, it is equally true that the legacy of colonialism and apartheid still remains deeply entrenched in our society. We therefore require a programme of fundamental and radical socio-economic transformation that will ensure that, in the words of President Mandela, political freedom goes side by side with ‘freedom from hunger, want and suffering.’

Guided by the National Development Plan, we aim to restore our focus on building an economy in which all South Africans can flourish, an economy which benefits the people as a whole, rather than a privileged few.

We seek an open, dynamic economy that embraces technological innovation, pursues higher productivity, creates jobs that pay better and improves the quality of life of our citizens. We recognise the challenges of modernisation and the imperatives of structural change in all sectors, especially in mining, manufacturing, agriculture and finance.

Our vision is an economy that encourages and welcomes investment, offers policy certainty and addresses barriers that inhibit growth and social inclusion. Our commitment is to build strong partnerships in which efficient and accountable government agencies, responsible citizens and businesses, effective trade unions and civil society work together for the common good.

Fundamentally, we are determined to build an economy that reverses apartheid injustices and corrects continuing patterns of deprivation and inequality.

It is for this reason that the resolutions adopted at our 54th National Conference focused on the measures we need to take now to significantly advance growth, development and transformation.

Critical to the success of these measures is strong collaboration among all social partners. While such collaboration has been essential to the success of many of the milestones of our young democracy, we must acknowledge that we have not sustained these partnerships in recent years.

Guided by the decisions of Conference, the ANC aims to forge a social pact between government, labour, business and communities urgently to reignite economic growth and accelerate the process of transformation. Each of the social partners needs to make specific commitments on the contribution they will make to promote far greater levels of investment and job creation.

While this social pact will be wide-ranging, it will need to focus in particular on youth unemployment, whose devastating impact on young people is cause for major concern. Despite the progress, we have made in expanding access to education, millions of young people do not have the skills that the economy needs. Even those with skills lack the work experience and readiness that most employers look for. Conference therefore agreed to prioritise effective public employment programmes, internships, job placement, youth entrepreneurship and set-aside programmes.

Critical to the expansion of access to economic opportunities is the implementation of a free higher education for students from poor and working class backgrounds whose household income is less than R350,000.

This will be implemented by providing full bursaries for tuition and study materials to qualifying South African students at public TVET colleges and universities, and subsidised accommodation or transport capped at specific levels for those who qualify, starting with first time entry students in 2018. For returning existing university NSFAS funded students, in 2018 and going forward, their loans will be converted into full bursaries.

This historic decision, which vindicates many decades of struggle for free education for the poor, will be implemented in a phased approach to ensure sustainability of government finances and radically expanded access to education.

This is a critical contribution to ensuring that students from poor backgrounds are able to access the kind of skills required for meaningful participation in the economy. This is giving effect to our objective of a skills revolution, which requires that we sustain our significant investment in basic education. This will enable us to modernise our economy, improve the beneficiation of our natural resources and prepare our workforce for the fourth industrial revolution.

The concentration of ownership of our economy in the hands of a white minority constrains sustainable growth and transformation. We will work to change the ownership structure of our economy through, among other things, ensuring access to, and ownership of, financial institutions by Black people, youth and women. This will include new approaches to regulation and licensing in the financial sector to foster diversified ownership and competition.

Development finance institutions and state banks should be directed to give greater emphasis to employment creation, empowerment, industrial diversification, and the development of small businesses and cooperatives.

The Reserve Bank plays a critical role in the life of any nation with regard to monetary policy and safeguarding and promoting the value of its currency.

The ANC once more reaffirms the role, mandate and independence of the Reserve Bank. As mandated by Conference, we call on government to develop proposals, in line with international practice, to ensure full public ownership of the Bank.

South Africa needs to pursue a multi-faceted growth strategy. Among the efforts to promote job creation on a far larger scale, we need to revitalise our manufacturing sector through a number of measures, including preferential procurement in both the public and private sectors to stimulate demand for local goods and to reduce domestic manufacturing costs. Learning from the experiences of other emerging markets, our industrialisation strategy should focus on sectors with the greatest potential for growth and where we can make most effective use of our resources including in tourism, agricultural and mineral resources.

In order to reduce concentration of ownership and control in the economy and to open the market to new, Black-owned companies, we have agreed to expand the mandate of the competition authorities. These institutions will have the responsibility and the means to reduce monopoly control of our economy and increase competition. State procurement and the award of concessions are going to be used more effectively to promote broad-based Black economic empowerment and encourage greater worker ownership and board representation.

Another critical element of broad-based Black economic empowerment are the ongoing interventions that are aimed at promoting township and rural economies. Our rural areas and townships were designed as labour dormitories. It is pleasing that work is already underway in many parts of the country to develop such areas as economic centres.

Through targeted investment, improved infrastructure and the creation of a conducive regulatory environment, more townships and rural areas can become sites for manufacturing and the expansion of the services industry.

We are pleased that agreement has been reached on the national minimum wage, which will be implemented on 1 May 2018. While recognising that the starting minimum wage is not a living wage, it is nevertheless a significant mechanism to immediately improve the lives of as many as 6.6 million low paid workers and establish a platform for further measures to reduce income inequality.

We applaud all social partners for having reached this historic agreement. We salute, in particular, our ally COSATU, which has struggled relentlessly for the realisation of this demand of the Freedom Charter.

The National Conference underlined how profoundly the dispossession of the indigenous people of this country of their land has contributed to poverty, hardship, unemployment and social dislocation. While important progress has been made in improving security of tenure and undertaking land restitution and redistribution, the pace has been too slow and the impact limited. There has also not been a sufficient link between the return of land and the provision of support to beneficiaries.

The 54th Conference decided that the historic injustice of land dispossession, therefore, needs to be addressed with greater urgency. There was overwhelming support at the Conference that the ANC must pursue the expropriation of land without compensation.

We will do so in a manner that not only meets the constitutional requirement of redress, but also promotes economic development, agricultural production and food security.

At the same time, we will pursue the enormous potential of agriculture to promote industrialisation, create employment and transform our economy. By modernising agricultural production and developing a substantial pool of skills in this area, we would not only improve food security, but also develop agro-processing, the manufacture of agricultural inputs and increase exports. This would have a profound effect on the sustainability of rural communities.

We need also to act with urgency and purpose to restore state owned enterprises (SOEs) as drivers of economic growth and development. Several key SOEs are in financial distress, threatening not only their own operations, but the national fiscus. Many of these enterprises have experienced serious governance lapses and poor delivery of their mandate. These challenges have been exacerbated by state capture, through which billions of rands have been illegally diverted to individuals. Governance of these state owned enterprises has been severely weakened and confidence in the public sector generally has been undermined.

Building on the work already underway in government to reform SOEs, we will act urgently and decisively to improve governance, financial management and performance in all SOEs and protect them from improper interference.

Corruption in SOEs and other public institutions has undermined government's programmes to address poverty and unemployment, weakened key institutions, discouraged investment and contributed to division within the ANC and the Alliance. The ANC therefore welcomes the announcement by President Jacob Zuma of the establishment of a commission of inquiry in line with the findings of the Public Protector's report on state capture.

Anti-corruption efforts within the state must be more effectively coordinated and all forms of corruption must be exposed and prosecuted. This includes corruption, collusion and other criminal activity in the private sector, which must be fought with equal diligence and determination.

Strong and efficient law-enforcement agencies are critical to the fight against corruption and crime generally, and to the restoration of the integrity and legitimacy of the state. In this regard, the ANC is of the firm view that the country's intelligence services, the police and prosecutorial authorities should be strengthened and fortified to act with professionalism, and without fear, favour or prejudice. They should continue to be at the forefront of the fight against corruption and state capture, and work with communities to deal decisively with acts of criminality that threaten to tear communities apart. These include child abuse, genderbased violence, substance abuse, human trafficking and many contact crimes that have been on the rise.

Improving access to justice and accelerating the transformation of the judicial system remains a key priority for the ANC. Conference reaffirmed the imperative to continue enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of the legal services across all levels of government.

There was a further commitment to widen the allocation of the State's legal work for broader participation by Black people, in general, and women in particular.

We will intensify efforts to improve the health of our people, particularly in the context of the devastating impact of the AIDS epidemic and the emergence of other diseases. As South Africans, we must never accept as permanent or irreversible our status as the country with the world's biggest HIV epidemic. We need to take decisive steps to bring an end to the epidemic through systematically implementing the 90-90-90 strategy, which will entail, among other things, the addition of two million more people to our antiretroviral treatment programme.

We are alarmed by the dramatic growth of non-communicable or lifestyle diseases. We need to launch a sustained national campaign against cancer and intensify our efforts to reduce smoking, alcohol and sugar consumption.

The present outbreak of listeriosis, a disease that has been in South Africa for the past 40 years and has suddenly grown into an epidemic, is worrying. While the Department of Health and scientists are searching for the source, we call upon South Africans to heed the advice of the World Health Organization and the Department of Health, which have five key commandments for food safety. These are to keep clean and wash hands before and while preparing food; to separate raw and cooked food; to cook food properly; to keep food at safe temperatures; and to use safe water and raw materials.

The ANC 54th National Conference reaffirmed the ANC's vision of a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous society.

We must follow Madiba's example and become activists for the cause of non-racialism. This becomes particularly important at this time in our history when there is a seeming resurgence of racism and narrow ethnic nationalism across many parts of the world. The ANC must remain a beacon of hope for progressive values.

The 54th National Conference resolved on a range of measures aimed at building social cohesion and a common national identity. In this regard, one of the most important tasks of ANC cadres is to be effective leaders of change and be integrally involved in community dialogues and community fora. Members must have dynamic links with inter-faith organisations, sports and cultural leaders, the private sector and traditional leaders to enhance moral regeneration, social cohesion and nation building.

More importantly, every ANC member must fight the demon of racialism, guard against narrow ethnic nationalism and other backward tendencies such as xenophobia. As a country, we must condemn all acts of racism and work together to end all racist practices.

South Africa has made tremendous strides in the emancipation of women, but much more must be done. We must confront the seeming resurgence of patriarchy and backward attitudes towards the role of women in society.

Members of the ANC must be at the forefront of all campaigns aimed at engendering equality between men and women at all levels. We call on ANC men in particular to be activists in the campaign to eradicate gender stereotypes that not only oppress women; but also have the effect of keeping men in psychological bondage. Part of this campaign should be the socialisation of children to respect one another and to shun gender stereotypes.

Gender-based violence and violence against other vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQI community is a scourge that needs to be eradicated.

The ANC also commits to practical measures aimed at the full realisation of women's leadership potential.

In building a caring society that is cohesive and which protects the vulnerable, the 54th National Conference resolved that street, block and village committees, in which ANC members are active, are key vehicles of social cohesion and transformation. These committees must know exactly what is happening in each street in relation to violence against women and children, substance abuse, crime and be able to ensure that there are safe houses for victims, and that the police and social workers fulfill their functions. ANC branches must also be active in and strengthen the Community Policing Forums and Community Safety Forums. Members of the communities must know their neighbours and be concerned about their lives.

The above programmes must be backed up by practical measures such as making access to education easier for the girl-child by providing safe and reliable public transport for learners who live far from schools and providing free sanitary products to indigent learners and young women.

An important component of building a non-sexist society is to promote gender equality in sports at all levels and to enhance support for women's sport.

Madiba was resolute that because we live in an interdependent world, we must learn from and take advantage of what is happening in other parts of the world. He was fully aware that South Africa depended a great deal on international solidarity and was adamant that the ANC and South Africa will always stand with the oppressed and marginalised across the world.

Our membership of BRICS is an important tool to enhance multilateralism and we must leverage our 2018 chairpersonship of BRICS for the advancement of South Africa's national interests and the promotion of a more equitable world order.

The ANC has a long tradition of internationalism, based on the understanding that an injury to one is an injury to all. It has consistently lent its support to the peoples of the world living in situations of conflict, who have been displaced and who are subject to discrimination, oppression and exploitation. We are particularly concerned about the resurgence of slave trading in Africa and will work with partners on the continent and further afield to combat it. We salute those South African organisations and individuals that are actively engaged in international solidarity work and humanitarian assistance.

The ANC reaffirms the inalienable right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and independence. The ANC condemns the withdrawal of Morocco from the UN-led peace process and calls on the UN to bring all parties back to the negotiating table.

The ANC will continue with its work of supporting the peace process in Sudan and South Sudan so as to find lasting solutions to the outstanding matters on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and solutions to the border conflicts.

The ANC reaffirms its commitment to give practical support to the oppressed people of Palestine and we are of the firm view that the downgrade of the South African embassy in Israel to a Liaison Office would help to send a strong signal in this regard.

The ANC calls on the South African government to increase trade between South Africa and Cuba as a reinforcement of our international solidarity with the people of that country. We call on the United States to remove the illegal economic embargo against Cuba.

Tasks of the African National Congress

In giving practical expression to the resolutions of the 54th National Conference – and inspired by the life, contribution and vision of Nelson Mandela – the following priority tasks for the movement have been identified for 2018.

We shall undertake a deliberate programme of organisational renewal that decisively addresses problems of division and dysfunction within the organisation. This will include concrete steps to empower members of the ANC to determine the direction of the movement and to decide – free from manipulation and coercion – on who should lead the movement. They need to guide its policies, priorities and programmes informed by the needs and concerns of the communities in which they are located. We shall therefore work to get rid of the gate-keeping, vote buying and undue interference that strips ANC members of their rights, responsibilities and influence. We will build a membership system that is transparent, efficient and credible.

We shall work to restore the integrity and credibility of the ANC. We need cadres who are committed to serve no other interest than the interests of the people, who seek no advantage for themselves or their families from the positions they occupy, and who safeguard public resources. We shall strengthen the Integrity Commission to deal with matters of ethics in the organisation and finalise its standing and the status of its decisions by June this year.

We shall undertake measures to bring the ANC closer to the people, building our branches as vibrant, dynamic units that take up the most pressing social and economic challenges in our communities. Our branches need to attract the most active, brightest, most upstanding, and most committed members of our communities – young and old, women and men, black and white – and thus become examples of the best citizens that our society offers.

The ANC will work with renewed determination to unite all South Africans – regardless of race, class or affiliation – around a shared vision of fundamental transformation. We need to restore the unity of purpose and sense of common destiny that was forged under the leadership of Nelson Mandela.

We shall mobilise all social partners, in particular government, labour and business, behind an economic recovery plan. The urgency of this task is underlined by low levels of growth and job creation, constrained public finances, ratings downgrades and corruption which undermine efforts to tackle poverty and inequality. It is only through working together, in pursuit of a common objective underpinned by mutual respect and trust, that we shall be able to turn the economy around.

We shall confront corruption and state capture in all the forms and manifestations that these scourges assume. This includes the immediate establishment of a commission of inquiry into state capture. The investigation and prosecution of those responsible will be given top priority. Mechanisms for the appointment of individuals to senior government positions, state owned entities and law enforcement agencies will be strengthened to improve transparency, prevent undue influence and ensure adequate vetting of candidates.

We must work to restore the credibility of public institutions, including state owned enterprises and law enforcement agencies, by addressing excessive turnover in senior positions, undue political interference, poor coordination and corruption.

As part of the work needed to improve access to relevant quality education, we must urgently develop and implement an affordable and sustainable funding model to ensure that poor, working class and 'middle class' students progressively receive free higher education. We must do this not only to promote social justice and redress the inequities of the past, but to ensure that we produce capable graduates on a scale that feeds economic growth and social development.

We shall implement a comprehensive approach to land reform and agricultural development that utilises a range of mechanisms to accelerate the redistribution of land to black South Africans and to provide the necessary support to ensure that this is accompanied by an increase in agricultural production and food security. The NEC will develop proposals with regard to expropriation of land without compensation as part of the mechanisms available to government. These are the central tasks that must occupy all ANC structures, leaders, cadres and members during the course of 2018.

As we work to implement all the resolutions of the ANC 54th National Conference, we are resolute in our commitment to make this the year in which we rebuild our movement and turn around the South African economy.

Tribute to Fallen Heroes

The ANC honours the courage, dedication and selfless service of those activists who passed away over the past year.

We display our banner in honour of Ahmed Kathrada, Major General Mxolisi Petane, Sindiso Magaqa, Emma Mashinini, Essa Moosa, Laloo Isu Chiba, Mochubela Seekoe, Ronnie Mamoepa, Kay Moonsamy, John Ncinane, John Pilane, Reverend Jakes Alberts, Andimba Toivo ya Toivo, Keorapetse Kgositsile among others.

Their contribution to the struggle for humane social relations must continue to guide and inspire our actions.

In recognition of the enormous responsibility we have to unite, rebuild and revitalise the movement and lead an urgent programme of economic growth, job creation and transformation, the NEC declares 2018 as '100 Years of Nelson Mandela: The Year of Renewal, Unity and Jobs.'