



**SPEECH BY ANC PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA
AT THE MAYIHLOME MANIFESTO RALLY**

**MOSES MABHIDA STADIUM, ETHEKWINI
24 FEBRUARY 2024**

Comrade Gwede Mantashe, ANC National Chairperson,
Comrade Paul Mashatile, Deputy President,
National Officials and Members of the ANC National Executive Committee,
Comrade Solly Mapaila, General Secretary of the SACP,
Comrade Zingiswa Losi, President of COSATU,
Comrade Richard Hlophe, President of SANCO,
Representatives of the ANC Veteran's League, Women's League and Youth League,
Representatives of the Umkhonto we Sizwe Liberation War Veterans,
Veterans and Stalwarts of our Movement,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Leaders from the Religious Sector,
Traditional Leaders,
Comrades and Friends,
People of South Africa,

We gather today in the city of eThekweni in the proud province of KwaZulu-Natal to launch the election manifesto of the ANC.

This province occupies an important place in the history of South Africa and the struggle for liberation, and the ongoing process of transformation.

This is the birthplace of the great warrior, King Shaka; the first President of the ANC, Dr John Langalibalale Dube; the most pre-eminent founder of the ANC, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme and the home of the first African Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Chief Albert Luthuli.

eThekweni is also the birthplace of Dr Monty Naicker, a freedom fighter and prominent leader of the Natal Indian Congress and the Congress Alliance. He, together with ANC President Dr AB Xuma and Dr Yusuf Dadoo, leader of the Transvaal Indian Congress, formed the Doctors Pact on 9 March 1947. This created momentum for non-racial co-operation and the importance of the strategic alliance that still exist today.

KwaZulu-Natal was also the home of Victoria and Griffiths Mxenge, human rights lawyers who were brutally murdered by the apartheid regime, Victoria Mxenge was a leader of the UDF and of the Natal Organisation of Women, KwaZulu-Natal is also the birthplace of Mam Dorothy Nyembe, a leader of the ANC Women's League, a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe, who led the Natal Women's Revolt and the Potato boycott, and was only the second woman after Lilian Ngoyi to be elected to the NEC of the ANC in 1958. It is also the birthplace of Fatima Meer, activist, author and academic, who dedicated her life to freedom and justice of the people.

We meet at the Moses Mabhida Stadium, a gigantic public facility named after one of the most outstanding patriots and pre-eminent leader of the ANC, SACP and trade union movement.

Paying tribute at the funeral of Moses Mabhida in 1986, President Oliver Tambo had the following to say:

“It is rarely given to a people that they should produce a single person who epitomises their hopes and expresses their common resolve as Moses Mabhida did. In simple language, he could convey the aspirations of all our people in their magnificent variety, explain their fears and prejudices of the unorganised and sense the feelings of even the most humble among our people.

“Moses Mabhida could do all this because he was of the people, a product of the stern university of mass struggle and the life experience of the exploited and downtrodden workers and peasants of our country.

“None among us was more conscious than he was that the ANC could only carry out its historic mission if it maintained the character it had come to assume; that of a parliament of the people of our country, the representative of our future, the negation of the divisions and conflicts that racial arrogance and capitalist greed have imposed on our people.

“That is why comrade Mabhida fought hard and long to ensure that nothing should turn the ANC into a rabble of black chauvinists or a clique of leftist demagogues. He battled against all conspiracies designed to weaken the ANC as a fighting organisation of the people, a true national movement loyal to the great principles which inspired its creation and have guided it to this day.”

As we criss-cross our country over the next three months, we will explain to millions of our people in their magnificent variety, or as we would say, diversity, in simple language characteristic of Moses Mabhida, why the ANC remains the party of first choice in the 2024 elections.

In the past week, we joined hands with our activists and volunteers on the ground here in KZN to work for a new mandate in the forthcoming elections so we can continue the work we began 30 years ago when we put an end to the dark era of colonialism patriarchy and apartheid. We will continue to return to this province to convey the message that the ANC has solid support here, as it has all over the country.

Over the past thirty years, the people of South Africa, led by the ANC, have been at the forefront of a movement to construct a new South Africa.

This endeavour remains rooted in the vision outlined in the Freedom Charter, the Reconstruction and Development Programme and our transformative constitution which serve as key expressions of the values and aspirations of the people.

Our country has come a long way. We have made incredible strides and achieved so much. However, even after thirty years of freedom and democracy our journey towards creating the South Africa that our people truly desire is far from over.

We still have many more hills to climb.

We will climb them together! Leaving no-one behind!

In the 2024 elections, we will go beyond celebrating accomplishments and focus on the future.

We will focus on six priorities which are critical to transform the economy and create jobs: our jobs plan; building our industries to include an inclusive economy; tackling the high cost of living; investing in people; defending democracy and advancing freedom; and building a better Africa and world.

By renewing the mandate of the ANC, we will build on the foundations of the 30 years of freedom, and continue the journey to the next 30 years to build a better life with opportunities for current and future generations alike.

Together, we will do so much more.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF DEMOCRACY TOGETHER

Our nation, and the millions across the world who supported our liberation struggle, will celebrate 30 years of freedom in South Africa this year. It is important to reflect on the significant milestones and achievements that shaped our nation's journey towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

Since the historic democratic transition to democracy in 1994, South Africa has made progress in a number of areas:

Firstly, we celebrate 30 years of constitutional democracy:

The first democratic elections on 27 April 1994 was a turning point in our country's history, demonstrating our shared commitment to nation building, freedom, social justice and democracy.

Together we ended centuries of colonial and apartheid rule and established a new South Africa founded on a progressive constitutional democracy with equal freedoms and rights for all. Today, we have vibrant democratic institutions, a free media, an active civil society, regular, free and fair elections, and respect for the rule of law.

South Africa has integrated its institutions of traditional leadership, subjugated and marginalised by apartheid colonialism, into its democratic system of governance.

Over the 30 years it has resulted in the recognition of kingdoms and one queen, the establishment of over 880 traditional councils in rural areas, and the formation of the Houses of Traditional leaders. Traditional leaders are therefore taking their rightful place in the governance of rural development, social cohesion and nation-building.

Secondly, we celebrate 30 years of nation-building:

Apartheid sought to divide us by race, nationality, ethnicity or gender. A democratic South Africa seeks to unite us in our diversity and build a common national identity.

Despite the persistence of racism and sexism, inequality and poverty, our nation has steered through the pain of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, celebrated the achievements of our sporting and cultural heroes, debated and expressed our opinions on transformation policies and programmes, agonised about gender-based violence and femicide, and emerged more resilient from the devastating impact of both HIV/AIDS and Covid-19. .

We have made progress in bringing together our people from diverse backgrounds, to work towards a common vision of a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and more equal South Africa. Together we have worked hard to transform the socio economic conditions of the majority of South Africans. Our journey to build social cohesion, social solidarity and nation-building must therefore continue.

Thirdly, we celebrate 30 years of meeting basic needs:

President Mandela at his first SONA in 1994 announced the RDP priorities, such as free health care for pregnant women and children under five; free housing for the poor, and a massive roll-out of water, sanitation, and electricity for those previously excluded.

Our first democratically-elected President emphasised the protection of workers' rights as well as the focus on the rights of women, youth, people with disability, children and older persons.

Thirty years later, South Africa has achieved remarkable progress in providing a social wage and universal basic services across the country.

We will do more to consolidate, advance and modernise our basic services to leave no-one behind.

Fourthly, we celebrate 30 years of economic transformation:

Despite persisting challenges, we made progress in economic transformation, with initiatives to promote job creation, infrastructure development, broadening economic opportunities and investment.

Our economy has tripled in size since 1994 and the rate of poverty reduced. While unemployed has remained high, the number of people in employment has more than doubled from 8 million in 1994 to 16.7 million today.

Many people who had been excluded from playing a key role in the economy, including workers, the middle strata, youth, women and persons with disability, are now actively participating in the economy.

Yet there are still too many South Africans unemployed, too many who live in poverty and income and wealth inequality persists.

Economic transformation therefore remains our foremost task.

Fifthly we celebrate 30 years of better education and health care for all.

The ANC has vastly improved access to education and health, transforming the lives of millions of South Africans.

South Africans are more educated, empowered and healthier than they were under apartheid. From pre-schools to schools, colleges and universities, there has been massive increase in people who are attending our non-racial educational institutions, many of which are fee-free for the majority of learners.

We will further improve education and health outcomes to overcome inequality and build capabilities of all.

The lives of millions of South Africans have improved.

We can say with certainty that there is hardly any place in South Africa that has not been touched by the dividends of freedom and the footprints of the caring, inclusive and humane society we set out to build.

The lives of millions of South Africans have improved.
But, we cannot take this progress for granted.
We need to do more and better. Together.

OUR PLAN FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

PRIORITY 1. Put South Africa to work: Our Jobs Plan

While job creation has shown positive growth since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, the unemployment rate, especially among young people, remains extremely high.

There is no shortage of work to be done to make South Africa a better place. In every street, community and village, people are ready and willing to contribute to social and economic development. Through public and social employment programmes, industrialisation and support for small enterprises and cooperatives, we can create jobs at a much faster pace.

Over the next five years, the ANC will implement a Jobs Plan, with the first pillar a massified public employment plan, by:

Creating and sustaining 2.5 million work opportunities delivering public goods and services in communities. This includes work for unemployed graduates.

Increasing support for small enterprises, entrepreneurs and cooperatives, especially in townships and villages, providing an additional one million work opportunities

We will increase support for small enterprises, entrepreneurs and co-operatives, especially in townships and villages through our public procurement programmes with set asides for women and youth, and our small business support programs so that these businesses can, provide **one million** work opportunities.

We will continue to promote and monitor employment equity to ensure that black people, women and persons with disabilities are represented in the public and private sector, in the professions and artisanal sectors towards the growth of a vibrant, non-racial and non-sexist middle strata, which is critical to national development.

PRIORITY 2. Build our industries to achieve an inclusive economy

To deepen the transformation of our economy, the ANC will drive industrial growth, innovation and job creation.

We will advance industrialisation with active support for localisation and labour intensive industries. This includes protecting strategic industries like steel and advance industries of the future. We will expand our black industrialist programme to reach 2000 beneficiaries over the next five years.

Our industrial strategy will involve targeted masterplans to revitalise and diversify the manufacturing sector. No society can prosper without investing in the capabilities of all its citizens. The ANC will improve our national skills plan and reskill workers as part of this industrial strategy.

Our strategy will also meet the new global challenge of climate change. A balanced just transition to a cleaner, greener future can lead to new jobs and secure the competitiveness of our exports.

To ensure we have growing markets for our manufactured goods we will increase exports to global and continental markets leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area (AcFTA), BRICS Plus and other bilateral relationships.

As a central tenet of our strategy, we will continue to fix the current constraints in the energy, transport and logistics sectors. These are important network industries and strategic national assets, critical to industrialisation, growth and development.

Investing in infrastructure, especially energy infrastructure, roads and railways, is critical for inclusive economic growth. Investment in energy, in particular, is necessary to end load shedding and ensure a secure supply of electricity.

To finance industrialisation and economic development, we will continue to transform the structure of our financial sector so that it provides affordable credit, invests in industrialisation, infrastructure and job creation, facilitates financial inclusion and prioritises domestic investment. We will better align monetary, fiscal and trade policy, to support job creation and industrialisation.

To ensure industrialisation promotes inclusive growth we will integrate small businesses, cooperatives, township, village, youth, people with disability and women's enterprises across all value chains. We will encourage empowerment, employment, entrepreneurship and training through the set-asides in the public and private sectors.

We will accelerate land reform and redistribution to reduce asset inequality and protect security of tenure; boost food security and agricultural production; as well rural and urban development and housing.

PRIORITY 3. Tackle the high cost of living

We will take steps to make everyday life more affordable for workers, unemployed, and the middle class by addressing key needs like food, housing, healthcare, and energy and wages.

We will prioritise food security, including VAT exemption on essential items, support for community and home gardens, and act against price fixing in all sectors.

We will maintain and expand subsidized basic services like water, houses for the poor, and indigent policies at local level. We will continue to roll our roof -top solar to indigent households.

We will strengthen the health services and implement the NHI to make health care affordable for all.

As required by law we will increase the National Minimum Wage every year, and as and monitor implementation by employers.

We will strengthen income support, through existing social grants, and utilise the Social Relief of Distress Grant as a mechanism towards phasing in the basic income support grant.

PRIORITY 4. Invest in people.

We will continue investing in South Africa's people by improving access to quality education and health, expanding the use of science and technology, and ensuring all people have decent housing and basic services.

We will continue to work together to ensure South Africans live long and healthy lives and that all people, regardless of their income, receive quality health care.

We will strengthen the overall health system by continuing to invest in the building and maintenance of hospitals, clinics and other health facilities, as well as providing relevant and effective training for health care professionals. We will develop a single electronic health record that will enable a seamless experience for all users of public and private health care.

We will implement the National Health Insurance, which will provide health care in both the public and private sectors that is free for all at the point of care. The NHI will be implemented in phases to ensure that it is affordable, sustainable and directs resources to where they are most needed.

We will give every child the best start in life by introducing two years of compulsory early childhood development and ensuring proper resourcing and support to ECD facilities in all communities.

The investment in early childhood development will support further measures in the foundational phase to enhance reading with meaning and improving numeracy.

To prepare young people for the economy of the future, we will increase enrolment in maths and science, expand coding, robotics and technology education, and expand technical and vocational training.

To address the crisis of young people not in employment, education or training we will reduce the number of learners who do not finish school and provide second chance opportunities to pass matric through community and TVET colleges.

We will continue the work we have already done to further reduce the cost of data to enable training of the young and old to develop and operate new technologies.

We will increase the availability of serviced sites with basic services close to economic centres for our people, especially young women, persons with disability, military veterans and the elderly. At the same time, we will continue to upgrade and formalise informal settlement and provide them with basic services.

We will give national and provincial governments greater responsibilities to support municipalities that struggle to provide reliable basic services to communities. Where our municipalities struggle to provide clean water, we will intervene to properly provide this service, build maintenance capacity and complete water infrastructure projects.

We will strengthen the role of families in supporting both young and older citizens, with special attention to the responsibilities in raising their children.

Strengthen the quality of services provided for older persons, including community based and residential care facilities, and afford them the necessary consideration and respect by society.

PRIORITY 5. Defend democracy and advance freedom

Over the next five years we must continue to promote and defend the rights of all South Africans against racism, sexism, gender-based violence, homophobia, discrimination and other intolerances.

This means we must remain resolute in advancing the rights and dignity of children, older persons, persons living with disability, the LGBTQI, the youth and continue the fight for women's emancipation and a truly non-sexist society, as part of our constitutional commitment to consistent equality.

We must recognise that rampant crime, drugs, organised crime, gender-based violence and femicide, infrastructure theft and vandalism, extortion and gangsterism pose a serious threat to the freedom and dignity of all South Africans. Together, we will take the necessary steps to ramp up the war on crime and make our communities safe.

We have to treat corruption as a crime against the people, improve public accountability, investigation and prosecution capabilities and consequences for corrupt activities in the public and private spheres.

We will build a social compact against corruption with law enforcement and citizens, launch public awareness campaigns to educate and encourage reporting, and support community involvement and whistle blower protection.

We must build a capable and developmental state, re-organising the way government interacts with the people, rebuild and improve local government, a professional and developmental public service based on Batho Pele principles, and strengthen cooperative governance through the district development model.

We must reinforce the contributions of arts, heritage, languages, culture, sports and the creative sector more generally to nation-building, social cohesion and national development.

PRIORITY 6. Build a better Africa and World

The ANC will continue to play an active role in promoting peace, development, and justice globally. Over the next five years we will continue to support the operationalisation of African Continental Free Trade Area to increase South Africa's trade and manufacturing within Africa.

We will Promote peace, security, and development in SADC and beyond and advance solidarity with Palestine, Western Sahara, Cuba, and others.

We will continue to strengthen developing countries' voice in the UN and other institutions and promote South-South cooperation and global governance reform as we address climate change, global poverty, and inequality

Our transformation journey must be led by honest and dedicated leaders.

The challenges of our struggle for a better life for all are difficult and diverse. Transformation requires honest and dedicated leaders.

We have on several occasions stated publicly that we have made some mistakes as the ANC.

Now the ANC is working hard to restore your trust and your confidence in us as the leader of fundamental socio-economic transformation in our society.

At its last two national conferences the ANC vowed to address society's challenges and to serve the people with discipline and integrity.

The ANC is committed to developing and, where necessary, correcting its members and leaders. However, as renewal gains momentum those whose conduct is in conflict with our values and principles - the criminals, the corrupt, the careerists and factionalists, and those who actively work against the organisation - will find themselves outside the ANC.

There will be no compromise on the fundamental matters of organisational discipline and integrity.

In this election the ANC is ensuring that our candidates represent the finest leadership qualities. The ANC Electoral Committee adopted stringent and transparent rules and guidelines for electing leaders and selecting candidates to be public representatives.

All leaders and public representatives, once elected, must be held accountable through the rigorous monitoring and evaluation system adopted by the NEC.

We will ensure our candidates work in a focused and disciplined manner to address the pressing challenges facing our people in every community. There will be no excuse, there will be no delays!

Every public servant will, in the spirit of Batho Pele, work hard, be ethical and competent and put the people first so that we enhance the performance of state institutions. We will engage public service unions to work together so that we build a developmental and ethical state.

The ANC government is already taking measures to ensure that competent and ethical professionals are appointed to the public service on merit, and are given space to do their job and account on our transformation and developmental objectives.

In delivering this year's January 8th Statement, I made reference to the fact that the anti-transformation forces are converging, hoping to stop and reverse the progressive agenda for fundamental socio-economic change.

In so doing they have adopted many strategies and tactics. One of these tactics is the ideological attack on cadre policy and deployment strategy of the ANC. These forces spread a false narrative that this policy is unconstitutional and unlawful and aims to appoint unqualified black people and women in government.

Cadre policy is about appointing suitably qualified professionals who share our transformation vision as mandated by the Constitution of our country. That is why the judgement of the Gauteng High Court concluded that:

"There is nothing unconstitutional about a political party influencing the policy direction of a government, including the appointment of senior personnel to public service, so long as the public service is protected against being misused for partisan purposes."

In the next five years, the ANC will invest in rigorous training of deployees, public servants as well as every ANC member to ensure our manifesto and other organisational programmes are implemented.

Building on the foundations of the past three decades, we are poised to tackle the challenges ahead as we approach 2030.

The ANC remains committed and resolute to pursue the transformation agenda in order to build a better life for all, leaving no one behind.

We will do so in a manner that will ensure that when we celebrate the centenary of the Freedom Charter in the next 30 years, the legacies of apartheid, colonialism and patriarchy which still loom so large in South Africa, will be a matter of history.

Our confidence rests on the fact that:

We've achieved the impossible together.

Our biggest victories we've won together.

Our deepest sorrows we've felt together.

Our biggest strides, we've made together.

The biggest odds, we've defied together.

And so today we can say with certainty:

We will do better, we will do more, and we will do it faster. Together.