

From: <anctoday-admin@lists.anc.org.za>
To: "ANC Today" <anctoday@lists.anc.org.za>
Date: 2006/10/20 01:50:09 PM
Subject: ANC Today 20 October 2006

DOC 2057-58

ANC Today

 Volume 6, No. 41 . 20-26 October 2006

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Honouring our global responsibilities

On 16 October the General Assembly of the United Nations elected South Africa, Italy, Belgium and Indonesia to serve as non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for two-year terms starting on 1 January 2007. As we go to press, voting is still continuing to elect one representative from Latin America and the Caribbean. When we take our seat, South Africa will join the Republic of Congo and Ghana as the third African non-permanent member of the Security Council.

South Africa was voted into the Security Council by 186 countries, well beyond the two-thirds (125) that is required to secure the UNSC seat, with no country voting against or abstaining (Italy was similarly voted into the UNSC by 186 countries).

When we were elected, our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma issued a statement welcoming this development. She said:

"South Africa is greatly privileged and honoured by its election by the general membership of the United Nations to serve on the UN Security Council in a non-permanent capacity. In this regard, South Africa extends its gratitude to the peoples and government of Africa and the world for the confidence bestowed upon us to serve the people of our continent and indeed the world in the UN Security Council.

"Accordingly, and on behalf of President Thabo Mbeki, the government and people of South Africa we humbly accept the mandate thrust upon us by the peoples of Africa, the South and the world in general in electing us to this position of responsibility. We do so conscious and convinced that the multilateral system of global governance remains the only hope for challenges facing humanity today.

"As a consequence thereof, we declare our readiness and preparedness to serve the peoples of Africa, the South and the World in this capacity. South Africa, commits itself thus, fully cognisant of the challenges that will certainly arise from the responsibilities that will attend to the membership of the UN Security Council as an instrument of our collective peace and

security.

"In pursuance thereof, South Africa will strive in conjunction with the African Union, to create synergies between the work of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council with a view to the prevention of outbreaks of violence and conflict in the continent of Africa.

"We shall work with all members of the Security Council, and regional organisations in pursuit of peace and stability in all regions of the world especially in the Middle East. In addition, South Africa shall continue to work with all members of the United Nations General Assembly in pursuit of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations including the reform and expansion of the United Nations Security Council."

This Statement correctly identifies our country's approach to the work we will have to do as members of the UNSC over the two years 2007 and 2008. It correctly reiterates our long-established position that "the multilateral system of global governance remains the only hope for challenges facing humanity today". The UNSC occupies an important and unique place in this multilateral system, with its tasks defined in the UN Charter.

The Charter says: "In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility, the Security Council acts on their behalf. In discharging these duties the Security Council shall act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations."

Of fundamental importance to the tasks that face the UNSC is the need to respect the Principles reflected in the Preamble of the UN Charter. This Preamble says:

"We the Peoples of the United Nations determined:

- * to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind;
- * to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- * to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- * to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."

All the foregoing explains the critical importance of the UNSC in terms of ensuring that the peoples of the world live in conditions of peace and security. This is not just a matter of peace keeping through the deployment of UN military and other forces in cases where war has broken out, important as this task is.

In all the work we have done especially on our continent since we attained our freedom 12 years ago, to contribute to the achievement of the goal of peace and security in Africa, we have indeed proceeded from the position that it is very important to address the underlying specific causes of conflict and war in any country faced with this problem.

In many instances these include the issues mentioned in the Preamble of the UN Charter, such as fundamental human rights, equality within and between nations, respect for international law and the struggle for access to the

resources that everybody needs to achieve "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom", as the Preamble says.

In this regard, a 2000 Report of a Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, which was chaired by Mr Lakhdar Brahimi, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria, said:

"There is a pressing need for the United Nations and its Member States to establish a more effective system for long-term conflict prevention. Prevention is clearly far more preferable for those who would otherwise suffer the consequences of war, and is a less costly option for the international community than military action, emergency humanitarian relief or reconstruction after a war has run its course. As the Secretary-General noted in his recent Millennium Report (A/54/2000), 'every step taken towards reducing poverty and achieving broad-based economic growth is a step toward conflict prevention'.

"In many cases of internal conflict, 'poverty is coupled with sharp ethnic or religious cleavages', in which minority rights 'are insufficiently respected [and] the institutions of government are insufficiently inclusive'. Long-term preventive strategies in such instances must therefore work 'to promote human rights, to protect minority rights and to institute political arrangements in which all groups are represented...Every group needs to become convinced that the state belongs to all people'".

Because of the nature of the mandate of the UNSC, members of the Council have to be on standby to attend meetings of the Council on a 24-hour basis, given that conflict that threatens international peace and security may begin to emerge, break out in full force or escalate anywhere in the world, at any time.

This means that our government will have to build up the necessary all-round capacity both in Pretoria and New York in particular, to enable our government and its diplomatic service properly to discharge their responsibilities, so that our country does everything necessary to meet its obligations as a member of the Council.

This means that we must put ourselves in a position fully to understand each and every issue that might come under the purview or is already on the agenda of the UNSC. It is only on this basis that we will be able to take properly informed and independent positions on any of these issues.

In addition, as our Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out in her Statement, we will also have to take the necessary measures to ensure that we regularly consult the African Union and other regional organisations, especially on issues that affect these regions.

Currently, for instance, the African issues of which the UNSC remains seized include Western Sahara, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia and Eritrea with regard to their border dispute.

There are, of course, other important issues that continue to serve on the agenda of the UNSC, to whose resolution we will have to make our own contribution. These include Palestine and Israel, Lebanon and Israel, Iraq, Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Haiti and Cyprus.

The mere listing of these issues brings sharply into focus the challenge we will face from 1 January 2007, properly to live up to the inspiring confidence in our country shown by Africa and the rest of the world community when they decided at the UN General Assembly, virtually

unanimously, that our country should serve on the UNSC as a non-permanent member.

During the first twelve years of our liberation, Southern Africa, Africa and the rest of the international community have repeatedly shown their confidence in democratic South Africa as a reliable partner in the global struggle for a just and peaceful world.

Accordingly, among others, we have served as Chair of the South African Development Community (SADC) and the AU, Chair of the Commonwealth, Co-Chair of the Africa-Asia Forum, President of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Chair of the G77 + China. We have also hosted various important international conferences, such as the founding conference of the AU, the Commonwealth, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the UN Conference on Racism, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

This global confidence in democratic South Africa has also found expression among others in the area of sport. We have accordingly hosted the Soccer African Cup of Nations, the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF), the Rugby and Cricket World Cups, and the golf President's Cup. Of course, we have now been given the responsibility to host the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup.

Within the African context, we have acted on behalf of the continent with regard to Lesotho, Comoros, Burundi, the DRC, Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan. We are also privileged to host the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Secretariat and the Pan African Parliament.

Our virtually unanimous election by the nations of the world, organised as Members of the UN General Assembly, to serve as a non-permanent member of the UNSC has confirmed and underlined the confidence that the peoples of the world have in democratic South Africa.

What this means is that we must continue to do the things in our country that have given the nations of the world confidence in our country as an important force in the struggle to build a new world order that would stand for the good of all humanity.

These include our deep seated respect for democracy, human rights, peace and stability in our country, non-racialism and non-sexism, our commitment to eradicate poverty and otherwise respond continuously to the challenge to ensure the upliftment of the poor in our society and the world, the success of the African renaissance, peace in the world and the peaceful resolution of international disputes, an equitable world order, and ensuring that globalisation serves the interests especially of the poor of the world.

As a movement we have always sought faithfully to honour our commitments to our people. Throughout the 94 years of our existence, we have sustained the loyalty and attachment of the masses of our people in good measure on the basis that our leaders and members have opted voluntarily to work as members and leaders of the ANC solely and exclusively to serve the interests of all the people of our country, with no expectation for any personal or selfish reward.

Similarly, the peoples of Africa and the world have, in the ways that we have mentioned already, consistently demonstrated their confidence in our country despite the fact that our democracy is a mere 12 years old. Again, this confidence is based on the understanding that we say and have said for 12 years about a just world, and what we have done in this regard is genuinely meant, with absolutely no intention to gain any selfish benefit

for our country.

The responsibility facing our government as a member of the UNSC, to live up to the expectations of the African people and the rest of the world community, does not rest solely with the government.

It is a national task to which we must respond in unity, inspired by the sentiment native to all our people, encapsulated in the spirit of ubuntu, that with regard to all humanity, we are truly one another's brothers' and sisters' keepers.

Pride in ourselves and our country and a shared and new patriotism must surely tell all of us, regardless of any political or other affiliation and identity, that when we end our privileged tour of duty as a member of the 15-member UNSC on 31 December 2008, we will be immensely honoured to hear all humanity saying - thank you South Africa for everything you did to strive to make ours a better and safer world for all!

Thabo Mbeki

PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Growth in spending contributes to improved quality of life

Increased spending by provinces and municipalities has translated into tangible improvement in the quality of life of all South Africans, particularly the poor. This emerged from a review of provincial and local budgets published by the National Treasury this week.

Budgets have grown in both the provincial and local government spheres since 2002, with particular growth in capital expenditure, and with further growth projected in the period up until the 2008/09 financial year. For the first time, information on local government finances has been produced in a separate review. While the work of the two spheres is closely aligned, the two reviews enable a specific review of the extent to which each sphere is contributing to the mandate to build a better life for all.

"A very positive feature emerging from the trends in [the review of provincial budgets] relates to strong growth in capital expenditure, which nearly triples over the seven-year period. This should make a positive contribution to economic growth and employment creation," according to the review.

But it cautions that underspending, which amounted to around R1bn in 2005/06, indicates that some sectors do not have the capacity to deliver infrastructure in line with the available resources. This shortcoming is being addressed under the umbrella of the infrastructure delivery improvement programme.

The performance of provinces is particularly important, since they are responsible for the delivery of concurrent functions - together with national government - including school education, health, social welfare services, housing, agriculture and transport. Each of these functions is critical to the alleviation of poverty and the promotion of economic development.

Trends in provincial expenditure have contributed to a situation in which access to the school system has improved with gradual improvement in matric pass rates. Maths and science enrolments are increasing, as is the number of

children passing these subjects. Access to public health care services continues to rise due to additional health facilities and rising employment of health professionals.

Housing delivery is accelerating and there is a particular focus on creating sustainable human settlements. Nearly 200,000 households have benefited from the land reform programme and agricultural support to emerging farmers has been improved.

"Investment in economic infrastructure continues to grow rapidly as some of the capacity constraints are being addressed through various technical support initiatives. Through its expanded public work programmes in roads, government has created 47,530 jobs and built the requisite skills to beneficiaries to find sustainable employment," it said.

Social services, including education, health and social welfare, make up almost 75% of total provincial expenditure in the current financial year. Spending on these services nearly doubles over the period of the review, from 2002/03 to 2008/09. Most of this goes to services aimed at meeting the needs of the poor, and therefore make an important contribution to the fight against poverty.

Non-social services are also important, especially in stimulating and supporting economic growth and employment creation. These include areas like public works, provincial roads and transport, housing, agriculture, sport and environmental affairs. Total spending by provinces in these areas grew at an average of just over 10% between 2002/03 and 2005/06: "Despite slowing down slightly, the strong recovery continues through to 2008/09."

Over the medium term, priorities in these areas include the newly approved comprehensive housing strategy that aims to speed up housing delivery with significant increases in resources over the next three years; the comprehensive agricultural support programme for emerging farmers; and the expanded public works programme to provide people with income earning opportunities and skills.

The review concludes that provincial finances are stable and progress is being made in extending the outreach of pro-poor services. However, it also shows that "despite this progress, further steps need to be taken to ensure that the quality of services improves... [D]espite a well-functioning intergovernmental fiscal system, it is not sufficiently used to ensure the efficient use of resources in delivering public services, particularly to the poor."

More resources for local development

In line with the strengthening of local government as a leading vehicle in social delivery, development and growth, the overall size of the municipal budget has nearly doubled over the last four years, from R64bn in 2001/02 to R119bn in 2005/06.

Significantly, most of the growth is in capital expenditure, resulting in greater investment in infrastructure. This was particularly evident in the metropolitan municipalities, where it grew by 42.9% annually over the period. Expenditure on infrastructure in particular grew by 80.3% annually over the period. "Capital investments in municipal infrastructure are essential if municipalities are to fulfil their mandates of development and basic service delivery," the review noted.

This increased investment has seen improvements in people's lives. The total number of households receiving basic services increased by almost 40% from

2002 to 2005. Over the next three years, R4.3bn will be made available to address electrification backlogs. The aim is to eliminate the electricity backlog by 2012.

Yet, while local government is critical to the success of the expanding effort to meet the needs of the people, it is the sphere of government that faces the greatest challenges in terms of financial management, revenue collection and effective spending.

The review notes that: "The municipal budget is an indispensable tool to focus the resources and capacity of a municipality on achieving its service delivery and developmental goals as put forward in the municipal integrated development plan.

"However, the current budgeting, accounting, financial reporting and financial management practices of many municipalities are experiencing a number of challenges, including poor revenue projection and credit control systems, unavailability of accurate financial and service delivery information. All of these are key to proper planning, budgeting and financial management.

"Financial sustainability requires municipalities to ensure that their budgets are balanced... Budget choices must balance effective subsidisation of the poor with creating an enabling environment for sustainable growth and development."

The review shows that the increasingly significant role of local government is being matched by the resources committed to the performance of its functions. However, to make local government work effectively for the people, the work currently underway to strengthen the capacity of municipalities needs to be deepened and intensified.

MORE INFORMATION:

Provincial and Local Government Expenditure Review, October 2006
<http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/ifr/2006/index.htm>

SPORT AND RECREATION <Viewpoint: Fikile Mbalula>

Ensuring representivity across all sporting codes

The amendments to the National Sport and Recreation Act of 1998 need to express and reflect our common conceptualisation as a nation around the issues it seeks to address.

Having been aware that the institutional changes that have taken place in the sport arena primarily necessitated this amendment process, the ANC Youth League nonetheless reiterates what we have been saying over the years on sports and recreation in South Africa. While the Act cannot be a panacea for all the sports and recreation challenges, we must ensure that whatever programme the various sporting bodies independently and democratically pursue, the ideals of the broader transformation agenda are met. These include the promotion of non-sexism and non-racism, while also ensuring the maximum participation of our people in sport and recreation.

It is common cause that the economic inequalities brought about by decades of apartheid misrule have ensured that the social well-being of our people reflects these racial inequalities. Thus we particularly applaud the specific insertion and therefore enactment in the Act of the principles of

representivity across population groups to address the scourge of racial inequality and gender inequality, as well as the divide between urban and rural areas through the massification of participation in sport and recreation.

The ANC Youth League will continue to lobby the various sporting bodies to effect programmes that would reflect these ideals as would be enacted through this new Act.

Some of the challenges and problems we have confronted in effecting transformation in the arena of sport and recreation have arisen from the balance between the autonomy or independence of the bodies that runs the various sports and recreation activities, and the cohesion needed to ensure we meet national developmental goals.

For instance, intervention in soccer could be limited by the stringent FIFA rules on the autonomy from governments of national soccer associations. We have seen how certain countries have been reprimanded by FIFA for interfering in the national soccer associations.

This, we could assume, informed the modality of the language used in crafting the envisaged intervention by the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) as the umbrella sports and recreation body in South Africa. We are particularly unhappy with the use in many instances of the word "may" when referring to the probable intervention by SASCOC or the Minister to ensure compliance by national sport and recreation bodies with national developmental goals. However, in most instances where the word "may" has been used, it should be replaced with the word "must" to reflect the inevitability of interventions to effect transformation.

There are still those who believe that certain sports are reserved for a certain race or gender or geographic location. Such beliefs are inconsistent with our developmental agenda of inclusivity. For instance, the new amended clause 6 (a) (1) is intended to read thus: "The Minister may, after consideration of proposals made by SASCOC from time to time, determine the general policy to be pursued with regard to sport and recreation".

Clearly this is an example wherein the word "may" must be replaced with the word "must", to give the Minister an unequivocal obligation to set out this anticipated policy paradigm, but also to dispel the notion among those resisting change that this is not an option but an inevitable agenda that would be pursued in sport and recreation in South Africa. Thus the autonomy or independence of the sport and recreation bodies to democratically express their creativity without hindrance must itself not be a barrier and neither should our adherence to international standards, norms and obligations be similarly a barrier towards effecting transformation in sport and recreation.

To allay any fears that this bill would introduce draconian laws inconsistent with international standards, norms, practices and obligations by both our country and the relevant national sport and recreation bodies, we must seriously consider a clause that specifically stipulates that this bill would be subject to such obligations, where these are stated unequivocally.

Another clause unequivocally encouraging national bodies to independently and democratically, through the organs of their respective constituencies, arrive at own developmental programmes must be stated to allay the fears that the Minister and SASCOC would make interventions without the feelings and views of the people directly affected in the running and benefit of the

various sports and recreation.

As the ANC Youth League, we will continue to encourage national reconciliation in the differences and disparities in the access of opportunities through national consensus, but we believe the Act must be the benchmark so that when consensus fails, the Act unequivocally stipulates how things must be done to effect transformation.

** Fikile Mbalula is President of the ANC Youth League. This is an edited extract from the league's submission on the National Sport and Recreation Amendment Bill.

MORE INFORMATION:

National Sport and Recreation Amendment Bill

<http://www.srsa.gov.za/Legislation.asp>

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