

Statement of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the African National Congress (ANC): Lusaka, Zambia, 16 February 1990

The National Executive Committee of the African National Congress met in Lusaka, Zambia from February 14-16 1990 to consider the situation arising from the decisions announced on February 2 and 10, 1990, by Pretoria's state president, F.W. de Klerk, affecting the system of repression against the democratic movement which the white National Party regime had instituted during the 42 years of its illegitimate rule of South Africa.

As is known, de Klerk also spelt out policy positions of his party and government which he presented as being intended to address the issue of ending the system of apartheid.

During its deliberations, the NEC benefitted from the proposals submitted to its meeting by the President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, and other leaders of the ANC base within South Africa.

It reaffirmed the continuing urgent responsibility of the ANC and all other democratic and anti-apartheid forces, both South African and international, to continue the struggle to end the apartheid system as quickly as possible.

The NEC recognised the unbanning of the ANC and other organisations as an important factor which contributes to the creation of a climate conducive to negotiations. It also viewed in a positive light other measures such as the partial lifting of the press restrictions and the rescinding of banning orders affecting various persons.

It welcomed the suspension of the death penalty as an important first step which must, without delay, lead to the unconditional release of all political activists sentenced to death and an end to the barbaric practice of capital punishment.

The NEC however also concluded that the Pretoria regime has not as yet created a climate conducive to

negotiations, as has been called for by the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa and the international community.

It therefore calls on this regime specifically to release all political prisoners and detainees, end the state of emergency, repeal all repressive legislation, halt all political trials and remove all troops from the townships.

To help achieve these objectives in the shortest possible time, it resolved to meet Mr de Klerk as soon as possible to discuss with him the need to address these issues so that a climate conducive to negotiations is created. Its delegation will be composed of the leaders of the ANC based within the country as well as members of the NEC based outside the country.

The NEC also considers it of vital importance that it should meet the leaders of the ANC who are inside South Africa, as well as those of the mass democratic movement and other anti-apartheid forces. It therefore resolved to send a delegation into South Africa as soon as the necessary arrangements have been made.

It further resolved that it is important immediately to the work of re-establishing the ANC within the country. It has therefore constituted the leaders within the country into an organ under the NEC charged with the task of carrying out his work working under the chairmanship of Comrade Walter Sisulu.

The NEC calls on all members of the ANC as well as those of our compatriots who has already taken steps to constitute themselves into ANC units to work directly with and under this leadership collective.

The NEC resolved to take immediate steps to prepare for the organised return to South Africa of the leadership and membership of the ANC.



It also recognised that over the years, a serious brain drain has occurred with the emigration from South Africa of many people who were opposed to the apartheid system. It therefore resolved to take steps to encourage the return of these exiles as well so that they can contribute to the economic transformation of our country and make an effective contribution towards reconstruction and development of a post-apartheid South Africa.

In the light of the new developments, the NEC resolved that the next National Conference of the ANC will be held inside South Africa from 16th of December, 1990. The planned National Consultative Conference originally scheduled for June of this year will therefore no longer take place. Conference preparations will however continue, both inside and outside the country.

The NEC welcomed the unbanning of the SACP. It reaffirmed the importance of the alliance of the ANC, the SACP and the organised workers of our country. It resolved that this historic alliance will continue to function with the necessary restructuring having taken place to meet the new situation.

It also reviewed the relations of the ANC with other democratic and anti-apartheid formations within South Africa. As already indicated, it resolved to enter into discussions with these to assess the recent developments. It reiterated its view that at this stage, the UDF and its affiliates should continue to function and mobilise their respective constituencies.

The NEC is gravely concerned at the continuing violence especially in Natal and Uitenhage. It reaffirmed the necessity to take urgent steps to stop this destructive conflict. It therefore confirmed earlier decisions that the leadership within the country should intervene immediately to end this fratricidal carnage. It calls on all those who have previously blocked to find a solution to cooperate with these leaders in the interests of life itself.

The NEC reiterated the fact that the masses of our people continue to suffer under the apartheid system. It restated that even when a climate for negotiations is created, this will not mean that this system will have been abolished. Therefore the struggle for a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa must and will continue.

In this regard, it considered with all due seriousness, suggestions that it should unilaterally suspend the armed struggle. While appreciating the sincerity of purpose underlying

these suggestions, it however confirmed that the only just and correct way to approach this question is to adhere to the positions contained in the Harare and UN Declarations. It therefore reiterates that upon the creation of a climate conducive to negotiations, the ANC will seek to negotiate with the Pretoria regime a suspension of hostilities by both sides.

The NEC views with grave concern and strongly condemns the continuing campaign of repression carried out by the South African and bantustan police and armies. The state of emergency and repressive legislation, such as the Internal Security Act, which have been maintained, legalise and encourage this campaign of terror against the people.

The ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe have a responsibility to defend the people against this terror. There can therefore be no question of a unilateral moratorium or a suspension of the apartheid system continues unabated. The Pretoria regime has an urgent responsibility to take all the necessary measures to end this violence and thus create the situation when the present obligation on our part to act in defence of the people, arms in hand, will all way.

The NEC reaffirms the need for the continuation of mass political action to achieve the objectives contained in the resolutions of the Conference for a Democratic Future and the January 8th statement of the NEC, to realise the intention of this Year of People's Action for a Democratic South Africa.

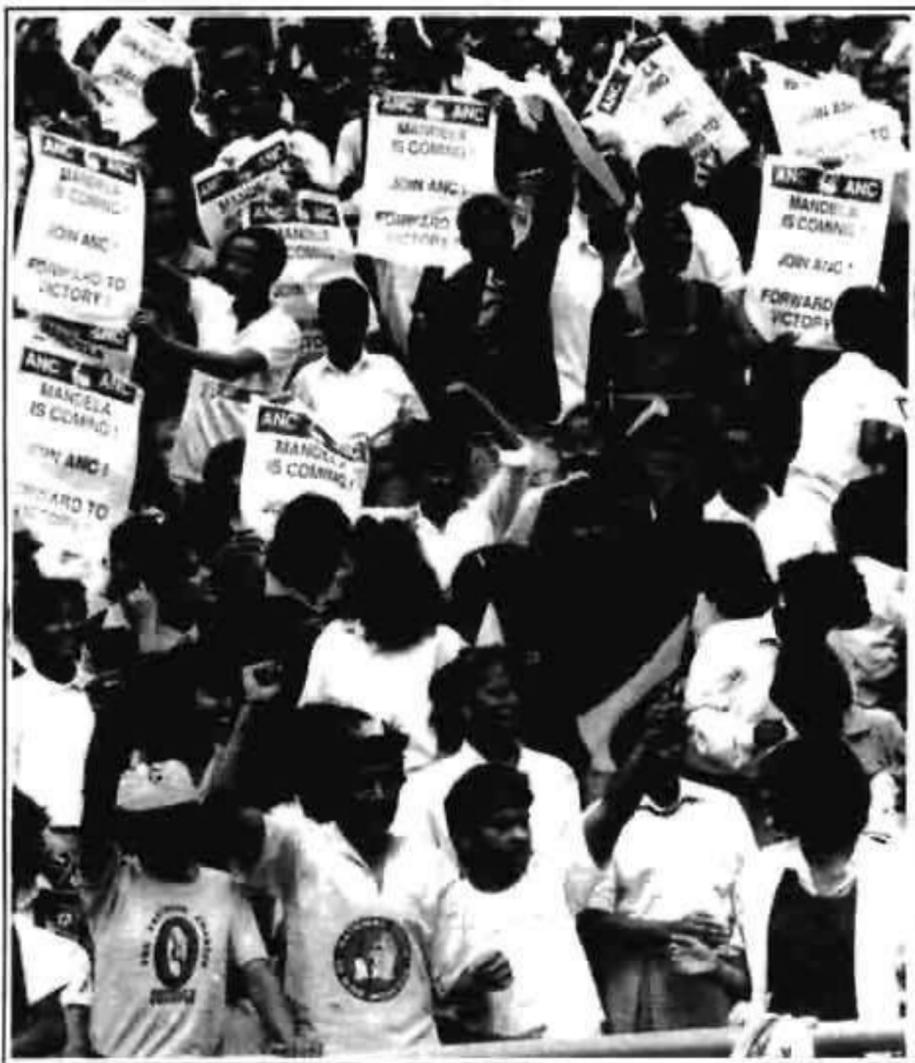
The international community imposed sanctions against South Africa with the express purpose of ending the apartheid system. There can therefore be no justification for lifting these sanctions at this stage. The NEC strongly condemns the positions taken by the British government on this issue.

These positions not only hinder the process leading to the speedy liquidation of the apartheid system, but are a betrayal of decisions of the European Community and the UN General Assembly, to which the British government is party, that sanctions would not be lifted until profound and irreversible changes had taken place in keeping with the objectives contained in the UN Declaration on South Africa adopted unanimously last December.

The NEC therefore calls on the forthcoming ministerial meeting of the European Community to reject the call of the Thatcher government to lift sanctions and thus repulse its efforts to weaken the international struggle to end the apartheid system.

The NEC reaffirmed that our country's problems can only be solved when South Africa has been transformed into a non-racial democracy, in which the fundamental rights of all our people, both black and white, would be guaranteed. It therefore calls on all forces committed to this perspective further to consolidate their unity and continue to act together to advance towards the common goal.

The struggle continues. The people's victory over the apartheid system is assured.



United mass action for a democratic South Africa!