

# AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

## DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

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### ANC STATEMENT OF THE EXTENDED SESSION OF THE NATIONAL WORKING ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND SOUTH AFRICA'S RESPONSES

*"We Must do Whatever it Takes"*

The National Working Committee of the ANC met this morning - via video-conferencing - in an extended session that included all NEC members and Provinces, to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the country and its people.

The meeting received reports from government, ANC structures and public representatives on efforts to combat the spread of the pandemic. It also considered proposals, formulated with our Alliance partners, aimed at mitigating the adverse social and economic impact of the pandemic.

Since the first confirmed case on 5 March 2020, we have succeeded in restraining the rate of infection to about four percent per day, down from a daily doubling in March. This was achieved through decisive leadership, commitment, sacrifice and collective action by all South Africans.

The ANC expresses its gratitude to citizens across the country, who have answered the call: "Protect yourself, Defend each other, Let's do it together!" – often under difficult circumstance and at great cost to themselves and their families.

The meeting extended its condolences and solidarity with the millions of people who are sick, have lost loved ones, in this global calamity.

It extended its gratitude and appreciation to the heroic health care, security and essential service workers who risk their lives on a daily basis in the frontline trenches of the battle against this silent enemy.

#### **Pillars of our National War on COVID-19: Leave no-one behind**

The NWC acknowledges that the pandemic exacerbates and, in turn, is exacerbated by the triple fault lines of poverty, inequality and unemployment, and their race, gender and spatial dimensions. Consequently, both the pandemic and measures intended to combat its spread place a disproportionate burden on poor communities. In particular, the 8% of households still living in informal settlements, the unemployed - especially young unemployed, informal and casual workers, as well as small businesses and the informal sector

Led by our government, all sectors of South African society must ensure that our responses are holistic and we act in unison, confronting this crisis as a nation, united in diversity, and committed to solidarity with one another.

We must do so in a manner that recognizes our realities, and leave no person behind. In whatever we do, in all our responses, we must act according to the spirit of and commitment to social equity and justice as advanced by our Constitution.

<b>PRESIDENT</b> CM Ramaphosa	<b>DEPUTY PRESIDENT</b> DD Mabuza	<b>NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON</b> G Mantashe	<b>SECRETARY GENERAL</b> ES Magashule	<b>DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL</b> JY Duarte	<b>TREASURER GENERAL</b> P Mashatile
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**THE YEAR OF UNITY, SOCIO-ECONOMIC, RENEWAL AND NATION BUILDING**

**#Khawuleza**

**#BeTheRenewal**

**The ANC and its Alliance partners will therefore spare no effort in mobilising the broadest range of sectors towards a social compact against Covid-19, based on the following pillars:**

- 1) The public health plan to halt the spread of the virus, to prepare our health services, hygiene and isolation, mass screening and testing, and work by our scientific community on treatments and a vaccine.
- 2) Social relief and Fighting hunger: to assist indigent families and households with food; assistance to the homeless; access to water and sanitation; and relief for the unemployed through the expansion of the UIF system.
- 3) Protect workers, assist small and informal businesses, to retain jobs, income and revenue, whilst we deal with the pandemic.
- 4) Assist businesses, small and large, with bridging finance and other measures to allow them to continue to operate, to retain jobs and markets and function when the lockdown is eased.
- 5) Social mobilization of all sectors and communities to support government efforts, to change behaviour, protect and support each other in the spirit of ubuntu and solidarity.
- 6) Effective communication and information on the Pandemic, its impact and measures of government; and
- 7) International action as part of the African and global community to combat the pandemic and its impact.

Extraordinary measures to mitigate the Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic, coming on the back of an already faltering global economy, is likely to lead to a global depression in 2020.

The South African economy, already suffering from poor growth and high unemployment under the yoke of a technical recession, is also likely to experience a depression – with dire consequences for jobs, businesses, and workers.

The NWC commended the package of interventions introduced by government to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. However, the meeting shared the concern expressed by President Cyril Ramaphosa that although these are measures in the right direction, constituting less than 0.1% of GDP, is insufficient given the magnitude and intensity of the crisis we face.

The NWC, echoing the Alliance Political Council, therefore calls for an effective stimulus package that will enable us to effectively respond to the crisis.

The extended NWC also support the immediate measures proposed by the Alliance, including providing greater capacity for the UIF and calling on employers and unions to assist workers to access the fund; expand and ensure effective food security for indigent households; and to widen the social net of current social grant recipients. There must be targeted social support for the unemployed. In this regard, the extended NWC support the proposal of the Alliance Political Council that government must look at a minimum income support grant that covers those currently falling outside of social grants, particularly informal workers and the unemployed.

The NWC also noted consultations led by the Departments of Basic Education and Higher Education with relevant stakeholders to look at the 2020 school and academic year. The overarching concern should be to protect children, teachers and their families from infection, through a phased approach and using other platforms, including e-learning and broadcasting classes. There should be engagement with the public broadcaster and the private sector to ensure digital and electronic learning channels reach as many learners and students as possible. The extended NWC observed with dismay the increase incidents of Gender-based violence during the lockdown.

The ANC and its Alliance partners will ensure that all its structures continue to monitor this, to campaign against GBV and to advocate for arrests of perpetrators and measures to protect women, children and the elderly.

On all these proposals and measures, government led by President Cyril Ramaphosa will make announcements in due course.

### **United we Stand. Divided we Fall**

The depth of the public health, social and economic crisis requires maximum unity as a country. It requires that we all play our role in the spirit of solidarity and caring for each other.

The vandalization of schools; defiance of the ban on the trade in alcohol; and the isolated incidences of undue use of force by security forces against communities, fly in the face of this maximum discipline and unity required at this point in the crisis.

The NWC expressed its abhorrence at acts of defiance and ill-discipline by some of its own members, public representative, and leaders. It instructed its structures to investigate and act swiftly and decisively against any cadres who have defied lockdown regulations, looted food and supplies meant for poor households, and subverted procurement process through corrupt practices. It has instructed its provincial structures to proceed decisively.

The ANC headquarters will monitor and provide weekly reports to the Officials on immediate actions taken against these transgressors. These breaches do not in any way reflect the ethos of the ANC, and the movement, its government and public representatives will continue to serve the public with integrity.

The extended NWC reaffirmed the statement issued by the ANC headquarters that no protective clothing, masks or food parcels should be branded with or distributed with ANC symbols. The extended NWC condemns the partisan use of food parcels and warns that any ANC employee who undermines the dignity and unity of the people, will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

### **Now is not the time for politicking!!!**

Our country, using any objective metric, is on the right track in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. We are doing it together as South Africans, united in our diversity. We must continue to do much more and remain resolute and focused.

As President Ramaphosa said to the Alliance Political Council, '*we must do whatever it takes*' to confront this crisis.

### **Protect Yourself. Defend Each Other. Let's Do it Together.**

**Issued by the Secretary General of the African National Congress  
Comrade, ES Magashule on behalf of the Extended NWC**

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