

Comrades, Friends and the people of Soweto at large, I greet you in the name of the heroic struggle of our people to establish justice and freedom for all in our country.

I salute our President, Comrade Oliver Tambo, for his leadership of the ANC that has put our organisation and the hopes of the people it represents on the political centre stage in South Africa.

I salute our rank and file members and combatants of the ANC who have sacrificed all for the love of their country and their people.

I salute the South African Communist Party for its consistent and determined contribution to the struggle for a democratic government in South Africa. Our alliance is built on the unshakable foundation of our united struggle for a non-racial democracy.

I salute the United Democratic Front, the Congress of South African Trade

I salute the courage and the heroism of the youth of South Africa, organised under the South African Youth Congress. At this point I wish to pay tribute to comrade Hector Petersen who together with hundreds of young activists were mowed down by apartheid bullets in 1976. We gained inspiration by your courage and conviction during our lonely years on the island.

Today, my return to Soweto fills my heart with joy. At the same time I also return with a deep sense of sadness. Sadness to learn that you are still suffering under an inhuman system. The housing shortage, the schools crisis, unemployment and the crime rate still remain.

I am even more proud to be a member of this community because of the pioneering role it has played in the struggle for the democratisation of local government. You have built democratic structures of local government in Soweto such as street

committees and civic organisations that give practical import to our desire to let the people govern.

I fully support the call made by our people for democratic systems of local government that will have a single tax base. In this regard I believe that the campaigns for open cities must receive our active support.

As proud as I am to be part of the Soweto Community, I have been greatly disturbed by the statistics of crime that I have read in the newspapers. Although I understand the deprivations our people suffer I must make it clear that the level of crime in our township is unhealthy and must be eliminated as a matter of urgency. It is through the creation of democratic and accountable structures that we can achieve this. I salute the Anti-crime Campaigns conducted by our organisations.

The crisis in education that exists in South Africa demands special attention. The education crisis in black schools is

a political crisis. It arises out of the fact that our people have no vote and therefore cannot make the government of the day responsive to their needs. Apartheid education is inferior and a crime against humanity.

Education is an area that needs attention of all our people, students, parents, teachers, workers and all other organised sectors of our community. Let us build disciplined structures, SRC's, a united national teachers organisation, parent structures and parent-teacher-student associations and the National Education Crisis Committee.

It has been the policy of the ANC that though the school and the entire education system is a site of struggle, the actual process of learning must take place in the schools. I want to add my voice, therefore, to the call made at the beginning of the year that all students must return to school and learn. We must continue our struggle for peoples' education within the school

system and utilise its resources to achieve our goals. I call on the government to build more schools, to train and employ more teachers and to abandon its policy of forcing our children out the schools system by use of various measures such as the age restrictions and their refusal to admit those who fail their classes. We have consistently called for a unitary non-racial education system that develops the potential of all our youth.

As I said when I stood on the dock at the Rivonia Trial 27 years ago and as I said on the day of my release in Cape Town, the ANC will pursue the armed struggle against the government as long as the violence of apartheid continues.

Our armed combatants act under the political leadership of the ANC. Cadres of our Peoples Army are skilled, not only in military affairs, but act as the political commissars of our movement.

We are therefore disturbed that there are certain elements amongst those who claim to support the liberation struggle who use violence against our people. The hijacking and setting alight of vehicles, and the harassment of innocent people are criminal acts that have no place in our struggle. We condemn that. Our major weapon of struggle against apartheid oppression and exploitation is our people organised into mass formations of the Democratic Movement. This is achieved by politically organising our people - not through the use of violence against our people.

I call in the strongest possible way for us to act with the dignity and discipline that our just struggle for freedom deserves. Our victories must be celebrated in peace and joy. In particular I call on our people in Natal to unite against the perpetrators of violence. I call on the leadership of the UDF, Cosatu and Inkatha to take decisive steps to revive the peace initiative and end the scourge on our

proud history. Let us act with political foresight and develop bold steps to end this mindless violence.

Joint initiatives at local, regional and national levels between the parties concerned must call for restraint. The security forces must be compelled to act with absolute impartiality and to arrest those offenders who continue with violence.

We are disturbed that attempts are being made to disrupt the unity of the oppressed by stirring tensions between African and Indian communities of Natal. Let us build on the proud tradition of unity in action as embodied in the Dadoo/Xuma/Naicker Pact which was fully endorsed by our great hero Chief Luthuli.

I am also concerned by the ongoing violence perpetrated by certain sections of the security forces against our peaceful marches and demonstrations. We condemn this.

I understand that implementing apartheid laws has made it extremely difficult for many honest policemen to fulfill their role as servants of the public. You are seen in the eyes of many of our people as an instrument of repression and injustice.

We call on the police to abandon apartheid and to serve the interests of the people. Join our march to a new South Africa where you also have a place. We note with appreciation that there are certain areas where policemen are acting with restraint and fulfilling the real role of protecting all our people irrespective of their race.

Much debate has been sparked off by the ANC policies on the economy relating to nationalisation and the redistribution of wealth. We believe that apartheid has created a heinous system of exploitation in which a racist minority monopolises economic wealth while the vast majority of oppressed black people are condemned to poverty.



South Africa is a wealthy country. It is the labour of black workers that has built the cities, roads and factories we see. They cannot be excluded from sharing this wealth. The ANC is just as committed to economic growth and productivity as the present employers claim to be. Yet we are also committed to ensure that a democratic government has the resources to address the inequalities caused by apartheid.

Our people need proper housing, not ghettos like Soweto. Workers need a living wage - and the right to join unions of their own choice and to participate in determining policies that affect their lives.

Our history has shown that apartheid has stifled growth, created mass unemployment and led to spiraling inflation that has undermined the standards of living of the majority of our people, both black and white. Only a participatory democracy involving our people in the structures of decision making at all levels of

society can ensure that this is corrected. We will certainly introduce policies that address the economic problems that we face.

We call on employers to recognise the fundamental rights of workers in our country. We are marching to a new future based on strong foundations of respect for each other achieved through bona fide negotiations.

In particular we call for genuine negotiations to achieve a fair Labour Relations Act and mechanisms to resolve conflict. Employers can play their role in shaping the new South Africa by acknowledging these rights.

We call on Workers, black and white to join industrial trade unions organised under the banner of our non-racial progressive federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, which has played an indispensable role in our struggle against apartheid.

A number of obstacles to the creation of a non-racial democratic South Africa remain and need to be tackled. The fears of whites about their rights and place in a South Africa they do not control exclusively, are an obstacle we must understand and address.

I stated in 1964 that I and the ANC are as opposed to black domination as we are to white domination. We must accept however that our statements and declarations alone, will not be sufficient to allay the fears of white South Africans. We must clearly demonstrate our goodwill to our white compatriots and convince them by our conduct and arguments that a South Africa without apartheid will be a better home for all. A new South Africa has to eliminate the racial hatred and suspicion caused by apartheid and offer guarantees to all its citizens of peace, security and prosperity.

We call on those, who out of ignorance, have collaborated with apartheid in the

past, to join our liberation struggle. No man or woman who has abandoned apartheid will be excluded from our movement towards a non-racial united and democratic South Africa, based on one person one vote on a common voters roll.

Our primary task remains to unite our people across the length and breadth of our country. Our democratic organisations must be consolidated in all our sectors. Democratic political practice and accountable leadership must be strengthened on all fronts. Our struggle against apartheid, though seemingly uncertain must be intensified on all fronts. Let each one of you and all of our people give the enemies of peace and liberty, no space to take us back to the dark hell of apartheid. It is only disciplined mass action that assures us of the victory we seek.

Go back to your schools, factories, mines and communities. Build on the massive energies that recent events in

our country have unleashed by strengthening disciplined mass organisations.

We are going forward. The march towards freedom and justice is irreversible. I have spoken about freedom in my lifetime. Your struggles, your commitment and your discipline has released me to stand here before you today. These basic principles will propel us to a free non-racial democratic united South Africa that we have struggled and died for.