

Declaration and Programme of Action of the National Social Cohesion and Nation Building Summit, held at Kliptown, Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication

5 Jul 2012

Preamble

At this summit we are reminded of the symbolism of our National Coat of Arms and the Flag:

"It is both South African and African, it is both African and Universal. It serves to invoke our distant past, our living present and our future as it unfolds before us. It represents the permanent yet evolving identity of the South African people as it shapes itself through time and space. Through this new Coat of Arms we pay homage to our past. We seek to embrace the indigenous belief systems of our people, by demonstrating our respect for the relationship between people and nature, which for millions of years have been fundamental to our self-understanding of our African condition".

Declaration

We, representatives from all sectors of our society, gathered at the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication, Kliptown, Soweto, on 4 and 5 July 2012 to participate in the National Summit on Social Cohesion and Nation Building, under the theme "Working together to create a caring and proud society."

We came here representing the diversity of our nation, black and white, women and men, rich and poor, young and old, urban and rural, speaking different languages, with a diversity of beliefs, coming from many different places, seeking to fulfill the injunction of our Constitution "diverse people's unite."

We came together to renew our commitment, mobilise and unify society in our ongoing national movement of healing the divisions of our painful past and establishing a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

Informed by the deliberation of the summit and inspired by our forebears, who assembled at this Freedom Square 57 years ago to adopt the Freedom Charter, we hereby declare:

1. That our discussions were informed by our common commitment to the injunction in the Constitution of the Republic South Africa, adopted in 1996, that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, both black and white, united in our diversity."
2. That South Africa is a unitary and sovereign state based on democracy, the rule of law, pursuit of equal human rights, non-racialism, non-sexism and the equality of all persons.
3. That our past was based on racial and ethnic divisions devised to systematically exclude the majority of South Africans from full and unhindered participation in all aspects of national life and left deep and persistent social, cultural and economic divisions and inequalities in society.
4. That advances have been made to entrench and consolidate human rights and restore the human dignity of all South Africans.
5. That the task of uniting diverse peoples to work together to build a caring and proud society is complex and challenging:

- Slow economic growth and transformation result in wide-spread unemployment, poverty and inequality and exclusion based on race, age and gender.
- Landlessness and homelessness among many South Africans and the persistence of apartheid spatial divisions, perpetuate patterns of disproportionate land-ownership and segregation.
- The burden of disease in particular HIV and AIDS and tuberculosis exacts a heavy toll on communities and society at large.
- Uneven access to quality education and training which deprives young people the knowledge and skills needed for social and economic development.
- High levels of crime, the abuse of the elderly, women and children, affect communities and threaten safety and security.
- Gender inequalities in households, the workplace and society hinder the advancement of women and gender mainstreaming.
- Racism and xenophobia perpetuates divisions and conflict in communities.
- Service delivery failures in local communities lead to social instability, disintegration and conflict.
- Perceived and actual corruption in the public and private sectors erode confidence and trust.

1. This summit recognises that social cohesion depends to a large measure on our ability, as society, to address these challenges. On the other hand, we need as society to cohere around a vision of a better South Africa, the attainment of which would not be possible if we do not work together. Consequently to effectively address these challenges, we the delegates resolve:

- To mobilise society in its entirety to work together to build a caring and proud society based on shared values and a vision informed by the following principles:
- Constitutional democracy
- Ubuntu
- Human rights and equality
- Non-racialism, non-tribalism and non-sexism
- Inclusivity and social justice
- Redress and transformation
- Intercultural and community cooperation
- Social solidarity
- Empowered, fair, inclusive and active citizenship
- Civic responsibility
- Unity in diversity
- National consciousness and identity.

2. To work towards the implementation of the recommendations of the 2030 National Development Plan as a long term vision which should serve as a basis for partnerships across society to attain the South Africa of our dreams, eloquently articulated in the constitution.

3. To ensure that social cohesion and nation building underpins all national, provincial and local government strategic priorities, inclusive of integrated economic and social development, education, health, human settlement, land and rural development, safety and security, immigration policies and programmes, arts, culture, language and heritage development and preservation, technological innovation, research and development.

4. To promote and preserve all indigenous cultures and knowledge.

5. To accelerate change in improving the quality of life of all people, with special attention to the needs of the youth, women and people with disability.

6. That the state must continue to build capacity to drive the socio economic agenda in the country, including absorbing young people and women into economic activity,

employing professionals, investing in skills required by the economy, and investing in research and development to respond to the demands of the knowledge economy

7. To continue to fight any forms of discriminations, which are threats to social cohesion and nation building.

8. To respect human dignity and equality; promote freedom, the rule of Law and Democracy; improve material well-being and economic justice; enhance sound family and community values; uphold honest, integrity and loyalty; ensure harmony in culture, belief and conscience; show respect and concern for all people; strive for justice, fairness and peaceful co-existence; and protect the environment as contained in the Charter of Positive Values adopted by the Moral Regeneration Movement in 2008.

9. To expand existing national, heritage and other honours and awards to recognise individuals, organisations and communities who have contributed significantly to social cohesion and nation building.

10. To develop a Nation-Building Project Management Manual and Toolkit for application by practitioners at all levels and to convene social cohesion and nation building summits at provincial, local and community level within the next twelve months.

11. To convene a National Social Cohesion Report Back and Monitoring Summit in 2014, as we celebrate 20 years of our freedom and democracy, and thereafter at five year intervals to report on progress.

12. To develop a detailed plan arising from the proposals made during this summit, to be presented to the President and Cabinet on our behalf, by a group of eminent South Africans.

In pursuit of these objectives, we wish to commit ourselves, and all sectors of society represented at this summit, to work together to realise the ideals enshrined in our constitution, and to assert that each of our organisations and institutions will strive to contribute all we can to realise our common national objective to attain a decent and improving quality for all, in a society united in its diversity.

We depart from this historic venue united in our commitment to building a nation that is caring, dignified and with a great sense of humility and mutual respect for one another.

Conclusion

As set out in the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme:

No political democracy can survive and flourish if the mass of our people remain in poverty, without land, without tangible prospects for a better life. Attacking poverty and deprivation must therefore be the first priority of a democratic government.

As representatives from all walks of society we are determined to fulfil the vision of the 2030 National Development Plan:

We have created a home where everybody feels free yet bounded to others; where everyone embraces their full potential. We are proud to be a community that cares.

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