



**Acceptance Speech by Kgalema Motlanthe on the Occasion of His
Election as President of the Republic of South Africa on September 25,
2008 in Parliament, Cape Town.**

Date: Thursday, September 25, 2008

Today, I make a solemn pledge that I will do all to live up to these expectations and to undertake this task to the best of my ability.

I wish to record my sincere thanks and appreciation to the outgoing President Thabo Mbeki, in whose Cabinet I have had the honour to serve these last few months.

I know that I speak on behalf of all the people of this country SA when I say that we have been privileged to have you as our President these last nine years. There is no value that we can place on the service he has rendered to our country, nor any tribute that can adequately capture his contribution to building this nation.

For all that you have done for South Africa, for our continent and for the advancement of the global community, we remain forever indebted.

Madame Speaker,

I wish also to express my gratitude to my cabinet colleagues, most of whom were appointed in 2004 in my presence while I was Secretary General of the ANC, and with whom I have been part of a team in government.

I am grateful to the African National Congress for the tasks and responsibilities it has given me over several decades, for providing the political and analytical grounding that is so essential for effective public service.

The African National Congress is a movement with a rich political tradition. While conditions have changed, and tactics have had to be adapted, the policy orientation of the ANC has remained consistent for over 50 years.

The vision espoused in the Freedom Charter remains at the core of the work of this movement, reflected in the mandate of this government.

Even when faced with difficulty, and confronted by unanticipated challenges, the ANC has remained unwavering in its commitment to advance the interests of all the people of South Africa.

This has been reflected in the policies of three successive ANC governments, as it will continue to be reflected in the final months of this, the country's third democratic national government.

In 2004, the people of this country gave a clear and unequivocal mandate to this government to forge a people's contract to create work and fight poverty. It placed on this government the responsibility to use all means at its disposal to ensure that by 2014 we would be able to reduce poverty and unemployment by half.

When its term ends next year, this government will be able to report to the people that indeed it has done as it was mandated.

It will be able to report on an economy that has sustained a pace of growth unprecedented in recent South African history, that has created jobs at an accelerated pace, and that has enabled government to dedicate greater resources to meeting the basic needs of our people.

It will be able to report on significant progress in pushing back the frontiers of poverty. This government will be able to report on tangible advances in the provision of housing, electricity, water, sanitation and other basic services to millions of our people. And it will be able to report on major improvements in the access of poor South Africans to health care, education and social security.

South Africans across the length and breadth of the country will attest to these and many other achievements.

But they know too that much work still lies ahead. They know the challenges our country faces, and the hardships that many of our people continue to endure.

To them, and to the world at large, we say that we shall not falter in leading the national effort to build a society in which all South Africans, regardless of their background, race or gender, have equal access to an expanding array of opportunity.

To them, and to the world at large, we say that this government will continue, as it has done under the leadership of President Thabo Mbeki, to dedicate every day that it remains in office towards the achievement of this goal.

The resolve of this government will not slacken. The pace of implementation will only quicken, and the fulfillment of its mandate will only ever draw closer.

Madame Speaker, We are able to make such pronouncements with neither hesitation nor doubt, precisely because the policies we are charged to implement are the policies of the African National Congress.

These policies, which government will continue to implement unchanged, are the product of an extensive consultation and decision-making process.

These policies are the property of a collective. They do not belong to any one individual. And it is not for any one individual to change them.

The policies of this government are clear.

They are based on the 2004 Manifesto of the African National Congress, enhanced by the decisions of both the ANC's Policy Conference as well as its 52nd National Conference held in Polokwane in December 2007.

Mine is not the desire to deviate from what is working. It is not for me to reinvent policy. Nor do I intend to reshape either Cabinet or the public service.

We will not allow that the work of government be interrupted.

We will not allow the stability of our democratic order to be compromised.

And we will not allow the confidence that our people have in the ability of the state to respond to their needs to be undermined.

At this moment in our history, as we stand poised to make still further advances towards the achievement of a better life, it is as important as ever that we stand united as a nation.

It is as important as ever that we retain our faith in the resilience of our constitutional order and the vibrancy of our democracy.

Though we may at times experience difficulty, though we may suffer moments of doubt and uncertainty, we have both the will and the means to rise above the challenges of the present, and to forge ahead with our historic mission to liberate all our people from discrimination, oppression and want.

Therefore, we stand here to send out a message that government remains on course to deliver on its commitments to the poor, who rely on us daily for the fulfillment of their basic needs and for the provision of important services like health, education, and social security.

We remain on course to halve unemployment and poverty by 2014.

We remain determined to stamp out crime, violence and abuse, wherever it affects and wherever it manifests itself. We remain committed to building safer communities and protecting the vulnerable in our society from abuse. But in doing so, we need all our people to work with, and within, the criminal justice system so that together we stamp out crime.

We are here to assure all those on our continent and in the world that we will continue to meet our international obligations. We will continue to play a positive role within international institutions and forums. We will continue to provide whatever assistance we can in the pursuit of peace, security, democracy and development in Africa.

We remain on course to host in 2010 the best FIFA World Cup ever – An African World Cup. We fully expect to meet every commitment our nation has made to the football world.

In a turbulent global economy, we will remain true to the policies that have kept South Africa steady, and that have ensured sustained growth.

We will intensify the all-round effort to accelerate the rate of growth and job creation, and ensure that the benefits of growth are equally shared by all our people.

In the spirit of building a united democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa, I look forward to a constructive relationship with all parties within this assembly, even as we begin preparations for next year's elections. I hope to benefit from the critical eye that a vibrant and alert opposition brings to politics.

We will continue the regular engagements between government and the various working groups representing vital sectors within our society. These, together with initiatives like the nation wide Izimbizo programme, provide a crucial opportunity for enhancing popular engagement with the highest levels of government.

Members of the Executive

Cabinet

1. The President of the Republic: Mr KP Motlanthe
2. The Deputy President: Ms B Mbete
3. The Minister of Foreign Affairs: Dr NC Dlamini-Zuma
4. The Minister of Defence: Mr C Ngakula
5. The Minister of Finance: Mr TA Manuel
6. The Minister of Provincial and Local Government: Mr S Shiceka
7. The Minister of Transport: Mr JT Radebe
8. The Minister of Social Development: Dr ZST Skweyiya
9. The Minister of Public Enterprises: Mrs BS Mabandla
10. The Minister of Communications: Dr IF Matsepe-Casaburri
11. The Minister of Public Service and Administration : Mr R Baloyi
12. The Minister of Labour: Mr MMS Mdladlana
13. The Minister of Public Works: Mr GQM Doidge
14. The Minister of Intelligence: Mr S Cwele
15. The Minister of Health: Ms B Hogan
16. The Minister in The Presidency: Dr ME Tshabalala-Msimang
17. The Minister of Correctional Services: Dr BMN Balfour
18. The Minister of Housing: Dr LN Sisulu
19. The Minister of Safety and Security: Mr EN Mthethwa
20. The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development: Mr ME Surty
21. The Minister of Education: Mrs GNM Pandor
22. The Minister of Arts and Culture: Dr ZP Jordan
23. The Minister of Sport and Recreation: Rev MA Stofile
24. The Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism: Mr MCJ van Schalkwyk

25. The Minister of Trade and Industry: Mr MB Mpahlwa
26. The Minister of Science and Technology: Mr MA Mangena
27. The Minister of Mineral and Energy: Ms BP Sonjica
28. The Minister of Home Affairs: Ms NN Mapisa-Nqakula
29. The Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry: Ms LB Hendricks
30. The Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs: Ms LM Xingwana

DEPUTY MINSTERS

1. Foreign Affairs: Mr AGH Pahad
2. Science and Technology: Mr DA Hanekom
3. Safety and Security : Ms S Shabangu
4. Agriculture and Land Affairs: Adv DC du Toit
5. Environmental Affairs and Tourism: Mrs TR Mabudafhasi
6. Health: Mr M Sefularo
7. Arts and Culture: Ms NGW Botha
8. Provincial and Local Government : Ms NE Hanganana
9. Social Development : Dr J Swanson-Jacobs
10. Justice and Constitutional Development: Adv JH de Lange
11. Defence: Mr F Bhengu
12. Home Affairs : Mr KMN Gigaba
13. Communications: Mr RL Padayachie
14. Foreign Affairs: Ms SC van der Merwe
15. Public Works : Dr NM Kganyago
16. Sport and Recreation: Mr CG Oosthuizen
17. Trade and Industry: Dr RH Davies
18. Trade and Industry: Ms E Thabethe
19. Correctional Services: Ms L Jacobus

We live in challenging times. We see before us many mountains that are yet to be climbed, and numerous rivers that still need to be crossed.

Yet, for all the challenges that lie ahead, the incontrovertible truth is that never before has South Africa been closer than it is today towards the achievement of a better life for all its people.

We therefore have a shared responsibility to build on these results and to strive together – sparing neither courage nor strength – towards the achievement of a better life and a better South Africa, a better Africa and a better world.

I thank you.

