

**NEC address to the provincial conference on the occasion of the provincial conference of SANCO to be held on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

**Delivered by Lemias Mashile : Deputy President**

Leadership of the Province

Comrade Delegates

I am here on behalf of the National Leadership of the South African Civic Organisation, of which you are part of. It is nice to be part of a conference where there is a sense of legitimacy and credibility. You should take serious note that you are the first province that seeks renewal of mandate since the national conference in 2008. You should know that all other provinces are watching you how you conduct your provincial conference. You are therefore, called upon to do everything in the best way possible within our constitution.

Your conference will conclude by electing the new leadership for the next term. As evidence is gathered elsewhere, conferences get undermined by individuals who deliberately refuse to create space for leadership to lead. I hope that the kind of leadership that will emerge will be a democratic outcome suitable for your programme, and you will do everything in your power to support them through their term of office. This leadership will connect the province with the national leadership. Only programmes and community activities will cement the link and relationship.

Comrades,

**Who are we?**

**Which space do we occupy in the political and social landscape of this country?**

**What role do we play in this landscape?**

**Are we still relevant to the national democratic revolution?**

**How much do we assist the democratic forces to shoulder the revolution?**

Some of these questions may not be applicable in your province, but they are collectively relevant to all our provinces. Some other provinces are literally dead while others are functionally dead. Those provinces that are either literally or functionally dead, equally have no meaningful contribution to the national democratic revolution. We need to establish and form strong structures across the country. The struggle need a strong SANCO that will answer questions posed hereinabove. Only when we are strong, that we can overcome some of the challenges that the African National Congress have. Certain areas, the ANC is losing bi-elections like nobody's business. You also have an experience yourselves in Tembisa where you lost a bi-election. You know what you did there. The question that begs an answer is;

**How are we going to ensure that we do not have a repeat of that?**

**How are we going to assist the ANC as our ally to continue to lead the revolution in government?**

Only a strong and informed SANCO will assist the ANC to deliver the revolution.

Comrades, as we move towards the 2011, local government elections, we need to engage the ANC on the nomination and selection of ward candidates. We should guard against match fixing that produce mediocre councillors who have no regard for their constituencies. We need knowledgeable men and women who command respect and trust within their constituencies. It is embarrassing to see the councillors that we campaigned for being booed or calling for their recall by the same constituency that voted for them. Our community have had enough of mediocrity. They have lost patience. We need to play our role to ensure that right horses are put on right courses. How this will be done, it will depend on circumstances and conditions in each province.

We need to embody the above into our programme and become an activist civic organisation. There are many civic issues which are taken by other interested forces. The price fixing on bread, the electricity tariffs etc, reside in our duty as a civic organisation.

Comrades, political issues that are in the public domain require our input to influence the final outcomes for the community. Although, we are non-political, we have interest in politics because of the impact politics have on our members. The debates around the value of rand, inflation targeting, inequality, nationalisation, transformation, lifestyle audit, corruption, safety and security, decent work, access to higher education, beneficiation, etc need our well thought input. Your conference should pay attention on these matters. As an alliance partner to the ANC together with SACP and Cosatu, we need to resign our ignorance and naivety of the debate on the strategic political centre. We were part of the summits that resolved that the alliance is a strategic political centre. The turnabout of the ANC to question that takes us aback and cast suspicion on any resolution that we will take in future. As we don't contest elections ourselves, we seek to do so by influencing the ANC. This conference has to speak to this issue how SANCO across the provinces can have certainty in resolutions arrived at during summits. The alliance summits cannot be reduced into "sqamto" forum with resolutions that cannot be implemented. Note that this issue is a virus at this juncture within the alliance. It has the potential to shake or test the unity in the alliance.

Comrades, I am raising these issues for you to consider and resolve where necessary. We have been quiet since 2001 until now. Our quietness is a sign of non political and social issues. We should raise the level of engagement in our structures and alliance to a higher level. We should reclaim our space through programmatic work. Let our work on the ground empower our allies. Let us close the space for opposition parties by raising community issues with the ANC and government. This should however, be done in a principled manner without assuming the status of opposition parties. There is nothing wrong raising issues sharply with the relevant structures of government. If we do not do so, opportunistic forces will do so for other sinister reasons or political point scoring. You are not new to these issues. You are well versed with the socio-economic situation our people live in.

Comrades, the FIFA world Cup tournament is here, feel it. We are proud as a nation to be trusted to organise this tournament for the first time on African soil. We have tried to make this event an African showpiece. We wish the tournament everything a success. We wish our team Bafanabafana all the best in this tournament. We are proud of our boys.

Comrades, the National Executive Committee is at an advanced stage of launching the SANCO website to enhance our debates on national issues. You will be called upon as provinces to make sure that the site becomes a busy site for community issues. The site shall not replace your constituency work. It will be opened for trial on the first week (1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2010 to test its accessibility and functionality. Comrades will be expected to view and comment on content. After launching at later time in May 2010, it will take some time to populate the site.

Communities need us as their union. Let us rise up and serve them with distinction.

I thank you