



N E L S O N M A N D E L A

8 January 2009

Dear Comrades

I am greatly privileged at the age of ninety being able to add my voice to those congratulating our organisation, the African National Congress, as it celebrates its 97th year. Those were ninety seven years of exceptional leadership to our people and our country, through trying times and often under extremely difficult circumstances. I join in saluting the organisation of which I had the honour of being a member for the greater part of my lifetime and that totally shaped my life.

For ninety seven years the African National Congress has been at the forefront of the struggle to liberate all of South Africa's people and to prepare for a better life for all. The organisation, its members and leadership, can look back with pride at its exceptional achievements over these decades.

I wish the organisation well in its deliberations as it celebrates its past and reflects on its future, both immediate and long-term. The primary challenges for our country remain the consolidation and deepening of our democracy and the fundamental improvement of the lives of all South Africans. The role of the ANC in all of this remains crucial.

There had been lot of speculation about my position with regards to recent events within the organisation. I have chosen – and made that publicly known – not to become involved in those or other political matters. It is the task of a new generation to lead and take responsibility; ours has done as well as it could in its time.

The year ahead promises to be both challenging and exciting for our nation. We once more look to the ANC to provide leadership in creating the circumstances for our people to enjoy and exercise the democratic rights for which we all fought so bravely and with so much sacrifice. Let our organisation at all times conduct itself with the dignity in keeping with its proud history. And let the good of our people always remain supreme in all our considerations.

Comradely yours

N R Mandela

Private Bag X70 000, Houghton, 2041, Johannesburg
Tel: +27 (0) 11 728 1000 Fax: +27 (0) 11 728 1111