

Speech

Thank you programme director.

Leaders and members of CHANGE;
All dignitaries and invited guests;
Friends;
Viewers at home;
Members of the media;
Fellow South Africans;

Good morning. I greet you all on this wonderful day. It is a source of great joy seeing you here as we start this exciting journey as a party.

Before I address you further, I would like to humbly request that we **observe a moment of silence in remembrance of the victims of crime**, especially our women and children, and members of the security forces who died in the line of duty so that we can be protected and enjoy those freedoms that are so easy to take for granted.

Thank you.

Being a deeply patriotic South African, as no doubt all of you are, my heart is bleeding as I stand here before you. A country with so much promise, so much going for it has become a disappointment to many of its citizens; internationally, where we were once looked upon as a lodestar in terms of our values and the ability to forge a nation out of the ashes of Apartheid, we have now become a source of ridicule. Many have lost hope, many only see a one track road, and that road leads to a failed state. But I am here to tell you that, much as we have been disappointed, **this country is still worth fighting for**, there is hope and that hope is captured in the spirit of our nation and in our preamble to the Constitution of our country.

I quote “

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 - Preamble

We, the people of South Africa,

Recognise the injustices of our past;

Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;

Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and

Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to –

- Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;*

- *Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;*
- *Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and*
- *Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.*

May God protect our people.

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika. Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso.

God seën Suid-Afrika. God bless South Africa.

Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika. Hosi katekisa Afrika.”

Close quote

Our **Constitution recognises the centrality of the citizen** in the conduct of the affairs of our Republic. It also recognises the need to bridge the divisions of our past in order for us to move forward as a nation. Nation-building is no easy task, it is a road full of thorns and many pitfalls. It requires self-less leadership, that is why on this day we salute all those South African, black and white, who were willing to give their all, and in many instances, they indeed paid the ultimate price – the likes of David Webster, Rick Turner, Stanza Bopape, Ahmed Timol, **xxxx, xxxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxxx**, and many South Africans whose names will never be publicised but they are by no means no less worthy.

We also salute the modern-day heroes and heroines who dare to swim against the tide of all that is wrong in our country, the cronyism, corruption and the subverting of institutions of State; these heroes and heroines continue to fight to ensure that the promise of a better future as embodied in our Constitution, is realised. I wish to pay tribute to one of South Africa’s finest sons and a gallant fighter in the war against corruption and lack of accountability in our public life, which continues to rob our people of their birthright, I salute and honour the memory of the late former Auditor-General of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Kimi Makwetu, may his soul rest in peace and may the Lord God Almighty comfort his family and give them strength.

So, why are we here today?

We are **here to introduce South Africa to CHANGE**...a political party which aims to be a catalyst for a shift in the political affairs of our nation. We are tired of sitting on the sidelines and watching South Africa scoring own goals – we have been let down too many times by people that we trusted to work on our behalf. It’s time to put power back in the hands of the people. That is why one of the things we will fight for is the

speedy reform of our electoral system to ensure that voting constituencies can hold their representatives accountable.

Over the course of the past year, we have consulted our people in communities through focus groups in order to get a sense of how, should we decide to launch a political party, we could better serve them. This consultation process culminated in a consultative conference last year in October here in Gauteng. We are very excited that this baby called CHANGE has been born.

As CHANGE **we aim to work with like-minded parties and organisations** to restore South Africa's standing internationally – and ensuring that Parliament becomes a house of accountability and source of pride for South Africans.

It has become fashionable by those with power and their supporters to blackmail those with the conscience and courage to speak out against the ills of our society and abuse of power for self-enrichment.

We are told, “you are just lackeys of white people...”

“...you have forgotten who fought for your freedom”

“...do you remember how bad Apartheid was?”

It has to be a sad day indeed and one that calls for us to hang our heads in shame if we have to use the Apartheid government as a benchmark when it comes to morality. A government of a free and democratic South Africa is supposed to have the interests of its people at the core of its activities.

It is time for South Africans to truly join hands walk the path of nation-building. Every South African has to feel that they belong...

...a black child born in rural South Africa should not have to feel that the benefits of a being a South African are not for them but they are for the children of the rich, powerful and previously advantaged;

...a white, coloured, Asian and Indian child born in South Africa should not have to grow up and feel that the country does not belong to them and they cannot participate in its affairs. They do not have to feel that to reach their full potential they need to emigrate.

Given the serious challenges that South Africa faces, we cannot afford the luxury of fighting amongst ourselves...

...there will always be differences of opinion but surely building a winning South Africa is more important than our differences?

What happened to that country that surprised the world just 27 years ago and pulled off a 'miracle' transition when the expectation was that we would be plunged into a never-ending racial war?

As CHANGE we are saying, we are still that same country...the same country that after being a pariah of the world, was sought after to share its experiences of transforming enemies into governing partners.

Before we can hold our heads high again as a nation, there are things we need to fix, and fortunately this is not rocket science. We just need the political will.

South Africa currently faces challenges that we all know, with the most obvious ones being:

- Rampant crime;
- Poor border control;
- Sliding development indicators and a slow descent into a failed state unless we change course;
- Moral decay in the home, school, community, business arena and public service – our government is also fueling this sad state of affairs by promoting concepts such as comprehensive sexual education (CSE) which is corrupting our learners;
- Power is not in the hands of the people but those of party bosses – hence the recycling of corrupt politicians and officials;
- Loss of South Africa's international standing;
- Corruption which has become a very rewarding industry;
- A shrinking economy that struggles to create jobs, which has been further damaged by the gutting of our critical state owned entities through corruption;
- Failing public services such as health, education and housing, today even 3 year olds know about load-shedding;
- The growing sense of marginalization of South Africans who feel that foreigners are taking their opportunities and that their political leaders are only looking after themselves;
- A rising tide of intolerance for religious freedom, marked by the harassment of churches by municipalities and bodies such as the CRL which apply collective punishment to all churches for the wrongs of the few.

So as CHANGE, what do we offer? We believe that the time of blaming government is over, we gave them the power, LET US TAKE IT BACK.

For those who do not know, I will let you in on a secret, there is one thing that the politicians fear more than any other thing, and that is your ability to make a choice and expressing it in your vote.

Our ideology is a simple one: **PRAGMATISM**.

In other words, what drives us is “**what works for South Africa**”? And what is in **the national interest**?. Our approach is underpinned by republicanism...we have had all the “isms”, it is time for a scientific approach to governance, we need to stop being too wedded to political dogma and seek solutions that deliver results.

We no longer have time and the luxury of tentative measures in policy implementation...

...it is time for CHANGE, it is time for bold action.

- It cannot be right that a citizen should live in fear in their home;
- It cannot be right that our borders have to be as porous as they are and expose us to all sorts of security hazards;
- It cannot be right that South Africa continues to slip in international competitiveness ratings and development indicators;
- It cannot be right that we run elections and that we have elections and the only accountability that representatives have are to corrupt party bosses;
- It cannot be right that billions are looted and no one gets arrested;
- It cannot be right that South Africans walk the streets when foreigners are holding down jobs that could be performed by unskilled South Africans;

CHANGE says...

- Bring back the death penalty, let criminals know that South Africa is a country of the rule of law. Enough of the gender-based violence, cop killing, human trafficking and other crimes. Our people are being impoverished in the rural areas due to stock theft – why doesn't the law back them?;
- Remove corrupt elements in the criminal justice system;
- Deal decisively with cop killers and gender-based violence culprits; prison has to be transformed from the current dens of luxury to places where criminals really serve their time and pay debt to society;
- Control the border. There can be no country without immigrants, and we love and welcome our brothers and sisters from other countries but the current state of affairs where one can come in and go as they please cannot continue. We must stop this thing of South Africa being black-mailed when we talk about foreigners who come here to commit crime – we must call a spade a spade, if foreign syndicates are committing crimes we must call them out on it. All countries have laws, South Africa is no exception, South Africans in foreign countries are subject to those countries laws, foreigners will obey our laws;
- Make the public service a meritocracy. Do away with cadre deployment. For us to win in the increasingly competitive global sphere, we need the best to run our public service. We need to strengthen ties with South Africans abroad and tap into this resource. They are not our enemies – they have global networks that we can use and many still love South Africa, they left because we let them down, we did not fight crime as we should have and they made a rational choice.
- Make it easy for our citizens to access public services, why should a citizen have to queue from 5 am just to stand a chance to apply for an identity document?
- Aggressively go after looters of state funds and use the funds for development.
- Reform the tender system and bring accountability. We should not have officials who are hired to do a job and yet they issue tenders for service providers to do their work.

- Raise the bar on accountability of those that are given the responsibility to serve the public – suspensions are no longer enough. We need a clean sweep of all the crooks in our public service. In other countries a public representative resigns for not declaring a gift that cost measly sums. Why can't we be the same?
- We need to protect whistle-blowers.
- Tenders should be adjudicated openly for transparency.
- Forget political dogma and make South Africa attractive to investors. Sell loss-making state-owned entities and provide incentives for continued investment in areas of low economic activity and townships.
- **Make councillors accountable to the communities that they serve – they must consult and give constant feedback to their constituency and not just show up during the election season.**

I would like to end by making an invitation. We have many political parties in South Africa, and we thank God for them but the fact remains that voter turnout has been declining over the last 3 elections, from 77% in 2009, 73% in 2014, and 66% in 2019.

In 2019, of the 36 million that are eligible to register to vote, 9,2 million did not register. Which points to a disenchantment with the political process. Clearly, there is a vast portion of our fellow citizens that has become disillusioned with our politics. We are hoping that this group and other politically active citizens will choose to make CHANGE their political home. **If you believe in a stable country, run on conservative values:**

- Godly principles at the centre of governance;
- where you are free to make choices about how to run your home – discipline your children;
- where your government encourages you to nurture your potential as a youth instead of bribing you with grants;
- supports equality by pushing for equal pay for the same work across colour lines;
- smart foreign policy that puts the national interest first: should we continue to antagonise Israel when we can work with them for our benefit across many spheres of our national life?, do we want to be kow-towing to China and antagonise our other trading partners?;
- an education policy and system that treats you as a parent and your child as customers?;
- a results-based economic policy that seeks to create jobs and restore the dignity of all South Africans?;
- bringing back morality and discipline in our homes and schools, instead of having teachers and parents fearing their children and learners?;
- protecting our farmers and farm workers;
- protecting religious freedom and Christianity;
- no marginalisation of any language in the halls of power and places that matter in South Africa and a very strong stand against racism and hatred of other groups;

- decent housing;

Put simply, anyone that calls the Almighty God their Father is welcome in CHANGE.

We are inviting the churches in all their denominations, civil society, like-minded political parties and ordinary South Africans, let's join hands and continue to fight for the South Africa that we want. **Because this country is worth it.**

We are working hard to position ourselves to represent South Africans in the next local government elections in 2021 and in the provincial and national elections in 2024.

We are here to stay, give us a chance. Watch this space – for a new brand of politics and fearless advocates for your rights.

Lastly, let us all be safe and keep each other safe, remember to maintain social distancing and observe all the health protocols so that we can defeat this enemy called Covid-19.

God bless you, God bless South Africa and may His Kingdom come.