

**SPEECH BY SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION, ON BEHALF OF THE
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC) AT THE MEETING OF
SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**‘THE NEED FOR AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL – DEFEATING
INEQUALITY IN THE WORLD ECONOMY’**

02 JULY 2016

**Second Theme: Defending and securing democracy: supporting the
struggle for rights and freedoms where they are under threat**

Comrades President, Secretary General and fellow Comrades

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Comrades,

We would like to express our warm words of appreciation to being part of this important gathering of Leaders of the Socialist International, We would particularly like to begin by extending the warmest fraternal greetings to this Council, from the President of the African National Congress (ANC), Comrade Jacob Zuma, the Secretary General, Comrade Gwede Mantashe, on behalf of the leadership of the ANC, whom we are honored to represent here today.

We strive to realize our vision of a better, more prosperous, and more egalitarian world against the backdrop of a world that is increasingly characterized by conflict, widening inequality, and geopolitical power play.

We strive to realize this vision as many of our countries continue to be affected by the convulsions in the global economy, which are vastly impacting our ability to drive progressive, pro-development policies at a national level.

We strive to realize this vision as the gulf between the have's and the have not's continues to widen.

A recent report by OXFAM has laid bare the vast gulf between the worlds richest and poorest. According to this report, 1% of the world's richest people, which is approximately 62 billionaires, own as much wealth as the remaining 99% combined.

It is within this reality that we locate our national interest as nations committed to a socialist vision.

It is with this sobering reality in mind that we, as a collective, as progressive forces of change, are being called upon by our people to realize this vision of a more egalitarian society; to challenge colonial-era patterns of development that relegated the majority of the world's population to the periphery, and turned many of our countries into reservoirs for cheap labor, and exporters of raw materials.

Compatriots,

It has been just over six months since the post-2015 Development Agenda encapsulated in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

The SDG's 'address the unfinished business' of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) that were adopted 16 years ago. The adoption of the SDG's can rightly be lauded as a momentous occasion in our history: as their adoption represented for the first time, a situation where global leaders have pledged common action across such a broad and universal policy agenda. We agree with the President when he reminded us yesterday that these SDGs represent a Socialist Agenda that we as an Organisation would like to see the realization of.

The SDG's include the eradication of poverty and hunger, ensuring access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy, the building of safe, resilient and sustainable human settlements, the protection of ecosystems, and achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

The ambitious transformational agenda outlined in the SDG's is to be welcomed, especially considering that the declaration takes into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development: respecting national policies and priorities.

The global vision: of “ a world in which every country enjoys inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all...” – is in alignment with the ANC’s vision of a National Democratic Society, which is contained in the ANC Strategy and Tactics document as amended and adopted at the organization’s 53rd National Conference in 2012.

The question before us now is how to give effect to the SDG’s through meaningful action at a national level and international levels?

How will we as countries that are committed to a socialist vision for our respective societies, harness the potential of our pro-poor, pro-development policies in our respective countries in order to reduce inequality?

In considering all of these, we must recognise that each of us has followed different development paths that in many respects are similar, but in other respects, divergent.

Compatriots, the answer lies in advancing the principles of sustainable development, as we the global progressive movement unite around the common vision of People, Planet and Prosperity.

It is a position advanced by Helen Clark, the administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in 2015 following the adoption of the SDG’s: where she rightly noted that the ambitious Global Goals are a catalyst to motivate people to work for a common cause.

Her optimism was echoed by delegates to the 2015 meeting of SI to endorse the SDG's, where delegates highlighted the important role of sustainable development.

Further to this, there was consensus that the SDG's are aligned with many of 'the fundamental objectives of social democracy.'

SI has long advocated for sustainable patterns of development as being key to reducing poverty and inequality as noted in our 2015 declaration in support of the SDG's, that they are 'in line with the values of the global social democratic movement', and that member parties must be at the forefront of a global drive to achieve these goals over the next 15 years.'

Comrades and Compatriots,

Delivering on genuine development necessitates that our communities are our partners in progress. The eradication of poverty has always been the focus of the work of SI, and as such, we have to advance policies and programmes that place people at the center of development.

As noted by Joseph E. Stiglitz in "Making Globalization Work" – "Development is about transforming the lives of people, not just transforming economies."

In pursuit of the attainment of the SDG's, we must strengthen our relations as progressive forces of change. We must learn from each other and draw on each other's experiences on how best to advance the sustainable development agenda.

It is about developing, strengthening and driving plans and strategies which will ensure that sustainable development is integrated into all aspects of government and societal planning.

To orient our respective countries' development along sustainable lines is to begin to steadily chip away the causes of poverty and inequality in our societies.

Many of our countries have made significant strides towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). However we all recognize and acknowledge that limited capacity and resource constraints may have played a role in us not attaining all the MDG's.

If we are to achieve the egalitarian society we strive towards, then we need to ensure that our national policies are both developmental and transformational.

The sustainable development agenda isn't only about reducing and eventually eradicating the poverty that is the breeding ground for desperation and hopelessness and causing our people to despair.

It also offers the opportunity to build our respective countries' skills base, create and sustain a market for innovative locally-developed technologies, empower and capacitate local macro and micro-economies.

We must continue to be cognizant of the reality that there are some of our sister countries where democracy is under threat, for reasons ranging from ‘dictatorship to terrorism. We do need to ensure that we continue to fight for socio-political rights of all citizens and the stability in our countries. We must be resolute to work harder in supporting such countries to resolve those challenges.

In this regard, we would like to request this Council to express our support to the Comrades in Gambia for on the torture to death of their national organizer. We further send our condolences to the people of Turkey who recently experienced the worst type of terror attack in recent times, killing ordinary citizens.

In his famous 1987 speech, “Revolution is a Perpetual Teacher”, the revolutionary Thomas Sankara highlighted the need for constant introspection by the parties of revolutionary movements.

Assessing how far one has come, and where one is going, wrote Sankara, is not to ‘mechanically laud our successes’, or for the purpose of ‘triumphal and superficial balance sheets’, but ‘to better draw the lessons and clarify the road to further progress.’

There is much cause for introspection in Sankara’s words.

Though we may certainly mark our successes as socialist oriented countries, we have to learn from what we have not done well or could perhaps have done better, and forge ahead, united by our common vision.

As progressive forces for change, we know that the task ahead of us is a formidable one. ‘We have undertaken and completed many concrete transformations that have benefitted the masses,’ said Sankara, ‘not because our equipment is more plentiful or exceptional in quality’; but ‘they are due to the actions of men; men who yesterday were resigned to fate, mute, and passive. Today these same men are on their feet and engaged in a concrete revolutionary struggle in different workplaces.’

Drawing on our collective strengths, united by our common vision, and confident in the knowledge that ours is the only true path to not just prosperity, but true, sustainable and **shared** prosperity, we have within our grasp the means, through the SDG’s, to work towards that society to which we all aspire.

I thank you.