



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**REMARKS BY PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE NAFCOC CONFERENCE
Johannesburg**

**Ms Lindiwe Zulu Minister of Small
Business Development**

**Kgosi Pilane President of
CONTRALESA**

**Mr Patrice Motsepe Former
President of NAFCOC**

**Mr Lawrence Mavundla President
of NAFCOC**

**Ms Monga Phaladi NAFCOC
Secretary General**

**His Excellency Suprpto
Martosetomo Ambassador of the
Republic of Indonesia to South
Africa**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening to you all.

**Thank you for inviting me to share
this occasion with you.**

**The story of NAFCOC is a story of
a people's resilience and
inevitable triumph over racial
exclusion and economic injustice.
It is a story of a people who
decided to take their destiny into
their own hands. A story of
vukuzenzele!**

It is a story of resilience and determination by ordinary men and women who forged their path and lay claim to an economic legacy once viciously denied them and their many of their compatriots.

It is indeed a story of pride and fond memories to empower present and future generations.

With the laws of the land and economic policies heavily stacked

**against them and policies
destined to squeeze them out of
economic activity, members of
NAFCOC rose to become business
icons of our nation.**

**As we celebrate this milestone
and as we look back to 50 years of
NAFCOC's history, we salute the
black business icons and stalwarts
like Dr Sam Motsuenyane, Mr
Richard Maponya and many**

**others who made their mark in
pursuit of black economic
emancipation.**

**We must tell their story to the
youth, so that they may learn
from the resilience and
determination of great men and
women who forged their place in
time, to lay claim to an economic**

legacy which was viciously denied to them.

By putting their collective shoulder to the wheel, the founding leaders of NAFCOC have helped to lay a solid foundation for economic justice and broad-based black economic empowerment. They did this at a

time when the environment was just too hostile to any form of progressive business engagement.

The National Confederated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NAFCOC) has been an integral part of our liberation struggle. In this regard, I am humbled to be sharing this platform with stalwarts of this organisation who bravely

confronted the harsh realities of apartheid and the policies that sought to keep our people in economic bondage.

We learn from our history that NAFCOC has its origins in the 1940s when informal black trader organisations in and around Johannesburg decided to improve their business knowledge and skills. During subsequent years, more of these trader

organisations began to emerge around the country.

History further tells us that these developments led to the formation of the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce despite the Apartheid Government's objection by formal injunction against the formation of a multi-ethnic chamber of commerce in South Africa.

This period was characterised by the Apartheid State's aggressive pursuit of its policies of segregation by driving deeper and deeper wedges between ethnic groups as part of the promotion of its homelands. Furthermore, the apartheid state continued with its efforts to undermine and stifle any business and

entrepreneurship activities among black people by passing many laws and regulations including the pass laws.

Under such a system, black people were thrown into the periphery to run small businesses outside of the mainstream economy. Despite all this, or, more accurately, because of all this, the 70s and 80s were marked by NAFCOC's increased struggles for black business people to obtain their

space in the mainstream South African economy.

In 1979 black people were finally allowed to trade in their own areas but not in white areas.

Things only began to change more significantly when in February 1992, Nelson Mandela was released from prison and political parties were unbanned. After the democratic elections of 1994 and the swearing into power of a black-led democratic government, NAFCOC once more prepared itself

to play a role within the new economic landscape of a liberated South Africa.

Today as we have a government that responds to the needs of its people. Undaunted by the legacy of our ugly past, our democratic government sought to address the plight of our people by crafting the White Paper on Small Business as early as 1994 followed by the Small Business Act in 1995.

The White Paper provides guidelines, not only on businesses, themselves but on Business Membership Organisations. In this regard, prior to the formation of the Department of Small Business Development, the dti established strong partnerships with organisations such as NAFCOC and many others. To this end,

structures such as CHAMSA emerged to address the challenges of the day.

Government also entered into agreements with the likes of NAFCOC and FABCOS to provide support on skills training and capacity building. Some of these arrangements are still active and are constantly being reviewed.

A proposal is on the table to extend this kind of support to township, rural and other emerging chambers by forming partnerships with the large established chambers like NAFCOC, AHI, Cape Chamber, Durban Chamber and so forth. The new department of small business development is exploring this proposal.

More recently a draft Chamber Support Guidelines document was drafted and circulated among targeted stakeholders. The document is undergoing some revisions based on the feedback received. Once completed, the document will be able to provide proper definitions of membership-based organisations including chambers. It will outline the different kinds of organisations by

**size, sector, profession, location
and so on.**

**The guidelines will also propose
sound approaches for supporting
different kinds of organisations so
that ultimately all will benefit.**

**Thus far, a partnership approach
for the bottom-up development
and strengthening of intermediary
structures is on the cards.**

This is a very good story to tell especially today as we look back to fifty years of history.

Beginning with its incorporation in 1964, but tracing its existence and activism to those early days of the Orlando Traders Association in 1940, this is a summary of NAFCOC's engagement with challenges and opportunities over the years:

- **NAFCOC vehemently opposed the apartheid government on a number of laws and regulations designed to undermine the establishment and growth of viable black businesses and undermined the black community.**
- **It adopted and intensified the call for sanctions to bring**

about pressure for change on the apartheid state.

- **In 1990 the two, three, four, five, six policy was developed as a guide for the implementation of the black empowerment strategy for the democratic government in terms of directors, share ownership, management and outsourcing.**

- **It developed and disseminated key policy documents in support of the new government on issues regarding land ownership policy; Economic policy; Barriers to entry to trade; Investment Climate and related matters.**

- **It undertook one of the first excursions by a national organisation in South Africa to visit the ANC in exile and discuss matters affecting the country and its economy.**
- **NAFCOC continues to partner with government on policy and advocacy-related matters on an ongoing basis for the**

**benefit of members and
constituencies.**

**We believe that the original
mandate of NAFCOC fifty years
ago of driving black economic
empowerment and emancipation
still lives.**

**Both NAFCOC and government
proceed from the same premise -
that black economic
empowerment should form a
critical component of our national**

**effort to banish poverty,
joblessness and inequality.**

**Government will enhance this
mandate through a structured
partnership with NAFCOC and
like-minded organisations.**

**We must continue to ensure that
our model of black economic
empowerment does not have a
base of beneficiaries that is too
narrow. Also its reach must
extend even to the most**

vulnerable in our society, the poor, the youth, rural women and people with disabilities.

As partners in the radical economic transformation of our society, we must continue to prioritize job creation and poverty eradication over self-enrichment and uncontrolled greed.

We will do whatever it takes to promote access to economic opportunities for all historically

marginalised people of our country.

We will do this in order to give practical meaning to the pledge we made during our struggle for liberation that we will never consider our mission complete and our liberation achieved, if the people of our country are still not freed from economic exclusion and deprivation.

Twenty one years since our freedom, the participation of black people in the country's economy is still less than adequate.

That is why the African National Congress has made a commitment to set the country on a path of radical economic and social transformation in order to deal with the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Government will unapologetically advance the needs and aspirations of small businesses and co-operatives in South Africa, the majority of whom are NAFCOC's core constituency.

The Department of Small Business Development, assisted by other Departments, will continue to lead

**our efforts in providing the much
needed support.**

I thank you.