

'LEAVE SUCCESSION DEBATE ALONE'

President emphasises ANC unity

Taschica Pillay

PRESIDENT Jacob Zuma said people should refrain from discussing the party's succession process.

Zuma made the comments when he made a surprise appearance at the ANC's 105th anniversary celebrations in KwaDukuza yesterday on the KwaZulu-Natal north coast.

The president emphasised that it was not his intention to address the crowd yesterday but to just attend the event as he was in the area attending the funeral of a relative.

Zuma said there were people obsessed with positions, and "we know the reason why".

"We want this to be discussed during the policy conference in June. Let's refrain from discussing succession. That time will come. We're not saying people shouldn't express themselves, this is a democracy.

"But how you express yourself tells what kind of a leader you are. There are leaders who unite and leaders who sow division because there are different kinds of leaders," he said.

He emphasised the issue of unity,



President Jacob Zuma, first lady Bongki Ngema-Zuma and ANC treasurer general Zweli Mkhize at the KZN January 8 anniversary celebration in KwaDukuza.

PHOTO: THULI DLAMINI

and said it was imperative for the party's members to be more united.

The KwaDukuza recreational grounds was filled with thousands of ANC supporters who braved the scorching heat to join in the celebration.

Also present was ANC treasurer-general Zweli Mkhize, Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Bheki Cele, Minister

of Arts and Culture Nathi Mthethwa and former KwaZulu-Natal premier Senzo Mchunu.

Mkhize called on South Africans to fight against factional tendencies and divisions.

He said when they go to the next conference there is no faction that can win in the conference and then win the election for the ANC.

"The conference must be won by the ANC. As young people you must

refuse to be drawn into factionalism. When we say something you must ask us how is that going to unite the ANC. And never agree to be recruited into factions.

"We depend on you as young people of taking over the leadership of the party in a way president Oliver Tambo did. He started when he was young," Mkhize said.

"The issue of unity when we appeal to the spirits of Tambo is the

message that we send to you.

"Let us deal with unity and make the ANC very strong.

"Let us fight against factional tendencies, fight against divisions. All the problems we have in the country arise particularly from that.

"The ANC was formed to unite the people of South Africa. It cannot be you and me who divide the ANC," said Mkhize.

The party's provincial chairman Sihle Zikalala, said it was the ruling party's firm conviction that the 54 national conference will produce a strong and united leadership to lead a third decade of freedom.

"The ANC was established to unite and lead South Africa to freedom. It was not established to serve personal gain," said Zikalala.

Zikalala said they will take back the provinces they lost in the last local government election.

The ANC lost three metros – Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay – during the August local election.

Zikalala also called on South Africans to fight racism and called for a speedy process to criminalise racists.

He said the Expropriation Bill must be finalised into law.

"At least 70% of land must be expropriated into the ownership of the state," he said.

On Saturday Mkhize and Zikalala paid homage to ANC stalwarts, Chief Albert Luthuli and General Justice Maqina "Gizenga" Mpanza by visiting their homes before laying wreaths at their graves.