**THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X1000, Pretoria, 0001

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**Question : 3969**

**Date published : 16 November 2015**

**Mr M G P Lekota (Cope) to ask the President of the Republic:**

 (1)     Whether his statement on 8 November 2015, that his political organisation comes first, represents his policy position as the President of the Republic of South Africa; if not,

(2)     whether he will unreservedly retract the specified statement and apologise to the nation for devaluing the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which he is sworn to uphold through the specified statement; if not, why not; if so, (a) when and (b) how is he going to apologise;

(3)       Whether he will make a statement on the responsibility of the President of

South Africa to place the interest of South Africa above every other endeavour; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**REPLY:**

1. I made the statement that the ANC comes first at an ANC Provincial Conference in my capacity as the President of the ANC. Since its founding in 1912 the ANC has been at the forefront of the struggles to defeat apartheid colonialism, and since its election into power in 1994, to liberate South Africans from the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Like many South Africans, I joined the ANC to contribute to the achievement of its historic mission of building a non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous and democratic society. Given this important role that the ANC has played and still plays in leading this society towards the achievement of these goals, and considering that a large number of citizens have put their faith and hopes on the ANC to lead them to a better life for all, it is important that the work of building the ANC into a stronger organization that can continue to lead society is vigorously pursued.

There is therefore nothing wrong or untoward in saying the ANC comes first. It does not mean I love my country any less. It is in fact because of the love of my country and my commitment to its success that I believe that the ANC should be stronger so that it can lead us to a united and prosperous society.

1. The statement I made does not devalue the Constitution of the Republic in any way, nor does it contradict the Oath of Office which I took when I was sworn in as the President of the Republic of South Africa. There is therefore no reason to retract the statement I made.