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***PENS AND MISSILES DECLARATION***  
**OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**OF THE**  
**NATIONAL WRITERS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (NWASA)**  
**held virtually from 23 to 24 May 2026**

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**Following**

the General Assembly of the National Writers' Association of South Africa (NWASA)  
– convened virtually from 23 to 24 May 2026, with participation from across the country, the African continent and the globe.

**Gathered**

not merely as a meeting of writers but as a collective that reaffirms the enduring value and importance of the literary craft.

**The participants recommitted**

to advancing literature to sustain livelihoods, preserve memory, build legacies, nurture social cohesion, advance human rights, and serve as a tool for advocating for the dismantling of unfreedoms that place constraints on human development, dignity and the right to creative expression.

## **Reflecting**

on the journey we have traversed through the formative stages; the period of stronger activity and optimism; followed by lower activity and fragmentation, and now, the stage of cleaning and rebuilding.

## **Reaffirming**

the need to renew the strength, vision and dedication of the national writers' organisation, in all dimensions – the ability to be, to strategise, to do and to reflect.

## **Valuing**

the attentiveness of delegates, the contributions and the sense of purpose they brought.

## **Appreciating**

the wide range of attendees including members, guests, partners and stalwarts, reflecting NWASA's global stature and voice, informed by a postcolonial, decolonisation stance, but also a stance of universal connectedness around ideas of freedom and justice.

## **Inspired by**

all those who came before us, past and present, collectively and individually.

## **Reaffirmed**

the importance of the literary craft in service to the dual purpose of reflection and renewal, and the responsibility of both aspirant and established writers to shape the socio-political consciousness, cultural continuity, and collective future across the communities and borders of South Africa; and that the development of a committed writing practice and a judicious readership is thus sacrosanct in engaged citizenry, locally, nationally and internationally.

## **Recognising**

that world affairs and global dialogue are presently facing the most serious threats since World War II.

### **We are deeply concerned**

as writers, about the breakdown of multilateralism and global dialogue, including the voice-marginalisation and vilification of the Global Majority countries and of the UN, AU, BRICS and other international collectives.

### **And further concerned**

- about the results of this breakdown in the form of warmongering and war
- involving power plays by imperialism and nefarious oligarch-corporatism, which has revived all of the worst features of colonialism
- about the lawlessness and contravention of international law by the USA and Israel that has put countries like Palestine, Lebanon and Iran under siege
- about the use of aerial carpet bombing resulting in urbicidal destruction equivalent to a nuclear holocaust
- about the human carnage by means of genocide, collective punishment and war crimes, and
- the assassination, summary execution, sexual, physical and psychological torture of opponents and captives.

### **Especially concerned**

about the precedent set regarding the violation of the sovereignty of Venezuela and the blockade of Cuba, the imposition on it of poverty-inducing additional sanctions along with the threat of invasion and regime change.

**We writers call**

for a return to multilateralism, dialogue and peaceful resolution of global geo-political conflicts.

**Alarmed by**

by the rise in floods, drought and water and food insecurity faced by the Global South

**We call for**

an end to the reckless anti-environmental rhetoric and actions by some world leaders.

**Cognizant**

of the fact that artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly presenting a challenge to the writing, editing and publishing arena, which presents not just a technical challenge, but also a challenge in terms of freedom of expression, integrity of knowledge and information and thought control.

**And confronted**

by monopoly control of technology by techno-oligarchs with fascist anti-intellectual leanings who display a lack of emotional intelligence and antagonism towards social consciousness.

**We position ourselves**

as thought-leaders, acting collectively as a writers' association, who need to be at the forefront of raising consciousness about this contradiction, in which technological intelligence, as a result of monopoly techno-oligarch control of product advancement, poses a threat to human intellectual discourse and knowledge production.

**Observing**

the state of the nation of South Africa

- in particular, the decreasing rate of people who are voting
- the huge discrepancy between the population of voting age and registered voters
- the low rate of participation from registered voters.
- the increasing marginalisation of public participation in our constitutional participatory-democracy model of holding the executive and legislature to account in what should be a stakeholder society.
- the continued high levels of corruption in the political and business arenas

### **We call for**

a greater national dialogue under the management of civil society to deepen our democracy by strengthening accountability.

### **Further noting**

the rampant poverty, homelessness, water and food insecurity in South Africa and the unacceptably high rate of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment.

### **We believe**

that the seriousness of this fact requires a special intervention, such as:

- a public-private partnership to introduce universal artisan in-service training
- apprenticeship for all school leavers, championed by the trade unions, government, business and civil society leaders

### **Mindful that**

South Africa is subject to undercurrents of instability, which has many tentacles, that increasingly looks like what we used to call 'Third Force' activity, following a trajectory that promotes instability, including:

- the high profile of organised crime, including global organised crime in South Africa and its influence in the policing, security, political and governance arenas
- the mob activities around the issues of African foreign nationals, which go well beyond concerns about undocumented persons and involve Afrophobia and xenophobia
- the breakdowns in managing immigration affairs and effectively dealing with the undocumented, people smuggling and human trafficking

### **We urge**

- the government to deal urgently with crime at all levels in South Africa
- the government to deal effectively with the documentation and management of migration in a humane and dignified manner
- our people to stop mob approaches to dealing with these challenges because there are bigger forces behind such mischief that will ultimately see a greater breakdown of social cohesion and our economic conditions, and will see our people turning on each other.

### **Thus, the National Writers Association of South Africa**

#### **United**

in the belief that the literary arts need to play a crucial role in society and world affairs

#### **Re-commits**

to advancing its four inherent capacities:

- *The capacity to empower* writers with the craft of writing, of creating, producing, publishing, intervening and contributing meaningfully to cultural, social, political and economic transformation

- *The capacity to organise* through building sustainable literary support structures and platforms, institutional development, mobilisation of writers and resources, advocacy and strengthening of collective action.
- *The capacity to relate* through fostering meaningful and sustainable mutual connections across communities, nations and literary traditions and fostering collaborative dialogue.
- *The capacity to be* through the affirmation of the intellectual agency of writers and literary practitioners, creativity, identity and dignity.

#### **And commits all**

to supporting the newly elected National Executive Committee in its work in the coming years, between now and the third general assembly, to the development of the literary craft as a vehicle for human development, cultural continuity and the shaping of just futures

#### **And resolves**

to continue to work on the ground, giving voice to the voiceless; helping those without access to the power of the pen, the microphone or print assistance and support.

**Signed as adopted, 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, 24 May 2026, by:**

**President [Name]** Molaodi wa Sekake

**[Signature]**.....

**Secretary-General [Name]** Dr. Lebogang Lance Nawa

**[Signature]** .....