

Statement by President Jacob Zuma marking 50 day countdown to Census 2011, Union Buildings, Pretoria, Tshwane

22 Aug 2011

Minister Trevor Manuel,
Ladies and gentlemen of the media,

Today, 22 August 2011 we begin the 50 day countdown towards the National Census.

The Minister responsible for Statistics South Africa, Minister in the Presidency, Trevor Manuel, has today gazetted the counting of South Africans, which will begin on 10 October 2011.

This will be the third census under democratic rule. A lot of preparation has gone into this task, and we call on all residents of South Africa to get ready for the count, as we launch the 50 day countdown today.

Population projections suggest that the population of South Africa could be around 50 million. We need to know if that is true and how that population is distributed in terms of our settlements.

Not only do we need to know our numbers nationally, but we need to know these at the level of every village, suburb, farm, ward, municipality and province.

We need to know where the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the employed and the unemployed, the learners, the educated and the uneducated live, work and play.

The information collected will help government to plan for the future. We must obtain answers to questions such as what must the South Africa of tomorrow look like?

How many schools are we going to have to build to ensure quality education for all children?

How many hospitals or clinics do we need for our sick and the infirm? How much food must we produce now and in the future to eradicate hunger?

To obtain answers to these questions and others, thousands of census enumerators are going to visit every part of the country.

They will visit communities, going door to door in almost 15 million households, in all eleven official languages plus French and Portuguese to cover immigrant communities.

We have seen the value of this national conversation in the past.

The last census took place in 2001 and the findings were very helpful. We discovered that while in 1996 access to electricity was 58%, by 2001, 70% of South African households had access to electricity. The Community Survey of 2007 placed access to electricity at 80%.

We also knew that in 1996, there were 40.5 million people in South Africa.

By 2001, the number had risen to 44.8 million people living within our borders.

So Census 2011 will present us with another opportunity to understand how far we have gone and what challenges including new ones need to be attended.

Census 2011 will also help us know how far we are with regards to achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, adopted by Heads of State in the year 2000.

The eight MDGs are aimed at achieving the following:

- Eradicating hunger and extreme poverty
- Achieving universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development.

By undertaking a census today, we prepare a legacy for our children, a legacy built on evidence and facts, a legacy whose development and growth can be sustained.

We urge all our citizens to open their doors to the census enumerators who will engage in this count.

Sicela bonke abantu baseNingizimu Africa bazilungiselele loluhlelo lokubalwa kwabantu oluzoqala ngomhlaka 10 ku Okthoba nonyaka.

Loluhlelo luzosisiza ukuthi sazi ukuthi abantu baseNingizimu Africa bangaki, bahlalaphi, ikuphi lapho kudingeka khona izidingo, nokuthi zidingo zini ezidingekayo ezindaweni eziningi.

Let us all “Stand up to be counted”

I thank you!

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