

THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR

5th March 2014

28 Rhodes Avenue
Parktown 2193
PO Box 96188
Brixton 2019
Tel: +27 11 727 3500
Fax: +27 11 727 3506
E-mail: gensec@presbyterian.org.za

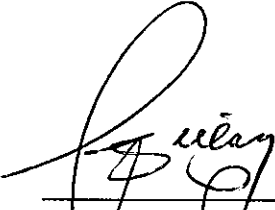
UPCSA RELEASE: Statement on upcoming General Elections in South Africa

It was recently announced that 7th May has now been officially declared as the day for General Elections in South Africa. In the light of this announcement, the UPCSA wishes to call on all its members in South Africa to exercise their democratic right to vote as citizens of this beloved country. There is no purpose in expressing negativity or dissatisfaction if you as a citizen do not use your democratic right to vote. Of course, the freedom to vote for the political party of your choice remains entirely with you. However, we request you to prayerfully discern what God might be saying in this regard rather than to simply follow the dictates of others with political agendas. As John Calvin taught, the sovereign reign of God should transcend every aspect of life and living, including the socio-economic and political areas. As Christians we are equally called to be responsible citizens, to uphold the rights of the poor and needy, to create a just and equitable society and to live out the ideals of the kingdom of God here on earth. As you assume your role as responsible and godly citizens we ask you to remember the words of Jesus in Luke 4:18-19, *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*

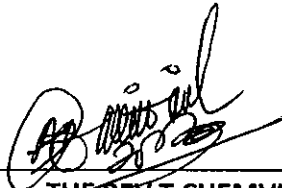
We call upon all Political Parties and Political Leaders to exercise restraint and caution as they go about their campaigning by not seeking to incite violence, smear other political parties and leaders, say irresponsible things or negatively stir the citizens of South Africa. We are concerned about the escalating violence in our land, especially in dissatisfied municipalities, and pray that reckless words and actions may not lead to any further violent eruptions. We commend the work the IEC has done in the past and hope that they will continue to do the same again as they roll out the election proceedings, set up the necessary infrastructure and mechanisms for the elections and hold political parties and leaders accountable to ensure a smooth, fair and free election.

We call upon the UPCSA leadership in Presbyteries and congregations to provide voter education where this might be required. In this regard our Church and Society Committee of the General Assembly will be able to facilitate these if requested. We encourage our ministers and congregational leaders to encourage members to vote without entering into any party political directions or persuasions. We call on our members to pray for a peaceful, free and fair election and to do all they can towards this end. We also call on you to pray for the work of the IEC in this regard and for all those who will be involved in the election processes from start to finish. We are mindful and pleased that many of our congregations will be availing the use of their property for voting; let us pray for protection and safety over them and every other place as well.

Further, we ask you to pray for Church Leaders in South Africa that they may watch and monitor the elections, exercise a prophetic witness when necessary, and offer ministry and hope to all South Africans at this time. We give thanks for our beautiful land, South Africa, and pray that we will choose godly and responsible Leaders to lead us on as we create and develop a land in which all may experience the 'fullness of life' in God (John 10:10).



THE REV PROF J PILLAY
GENERAL SECRETARY



THE REV T CHEMVUMI
CONVENER: CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Issued by the General Secretary and the Church and Society Committee of General Assembly