

COMMISSION PAPER FOR THE DONDR'S CDNFERENCE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE gnsw:

lhTRDDUCTIDN:

The apartheid system of racial discrimination in South Africa has given rise to many social ills within the South African Society. The African National Congress has as a result, decided to establish the Department of Social Welfare in order to look into the possible solutions to these social ills, borne Of the apartheid policies and to the best of its ability, attempt to alleviate some of these social stresses and strains, deriving from this system.

It is however evident that the extend to which the ANC as a Liberation Movement can provide material resources in the alleviation of social problems, can only be a limited one.

It is therefore essential for the DSN to determine its priorities in terms of its present duties and functions and in evolving and developing an equitable Social Welfare policy for the country.

1.2. SCOPE AND PARAMETRES:

By virtue of the fact that it is not feasible for the DSH of do attempt to deal with all categories of social problems in S.A it is therefore necessary to draw parametres, within which the DSN will function and to indicate the scope of problems the Department will

There are five basic areas with which the Department of Social Welfare will concern itself. These will be the Social Welfare requirements of :-

- (a) returning political exiles and their families,
- (b) ex - political prisoners, political prisoners, and their families.
- (c) Victims of political violence and their families
- (d) Internal refugees.
- (e) And the establishment of a Social Welfare Research Unit

In all the above criteria from (a - d) the following categories of social services will have to be provided.

- (1) Necessary assistance for the physically disabled.
- (ii) Necessary treatment and assistance to psychiatric patients.
- (iii) Necessary assistance to the chronically ill.
- (iv) Provision for children in need of care.
- (v) Medical care
- (vi) Assistance with housing and accommodation
- (vii) Assistance with education
- (viii) Provision of counselling services.
- (ix) Assistance to Pensioners
- (x) Assistance with employment

#### 1.2.2 RETURNING POLITICAL EXILES

Whereas Government has to bear responsibility for the plight of political exiles, the ANC is also obliged to facilitate the reintegration of its Cadres into the South African communities. Once political exiles have been repatriated they will find themselves confronted with a myriad of social problems.

Firstly, Counselling is necessary for the returnees and their families. Secondly, housing and accommodation are urgently required, employment is also a problem, especially for the returnees who have received no education or skills training necessary for the job market in South Africa.

There is a small voice in the country in some circles that the returning exiles should not be seen as privileged in relation to social services. This opinion of course ignores the fact that the great majority of the oppressed perceive the returnees as heroes and liberators. Secondly, it is not unusual for special provision to be made for soldiers from war, even the soldiers of the SADF still receive special attention upon return from active service. Returning political exiles should be regarded in that same manner.

Further, the political and social consequence of not assisting highly trained soldiers to smoothly reintegrate into society, could be very dire indeed.

Among those who have already returned, these frustrations are already beginning to emerge and therefore resources are urgently requires to alleviate the stresses and strains of returning home from exile.

#### 1.2.2.1 THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED

The war has taken its toll upon the community of exiles. There are about 200 cases of Cadres physically disabled by war. TD varying degrees all these people require special services upon return. In most cases, the families are totally unable to cope with the special needs and requirements of these cadres, and urgent assistance has to be provided both for their upkeep and care.

The same is also true for the chronically ill and psychiatric patients.

#### 1.2.2.& CHILDREN:

Arrangements have to be made for orphaned and displaced children in need of care. An intensive process of investigation is required in order to determine the best method of reintegrating these Children to be properly reintegrated into society.

#### 1.2.2.4 EHF'LDYMENTEL EDUCATLQN AND SKILLS TRAINING

These essential for effective reintegration. These areas have to be coordinated and the necessary resources properly identified and utilized.

#### 1.2.2.5 HOUSING

The issue of providing housing and accommodation for the returning exiles is proving to be one of the most intractable ones. A lot of resources will have to be channelled in this direction and imaginative schemes will have to be devised for providing affordable houses for returnees.

#### EX -POLITICAL PRISONERS:

The social problems of ex - prisoners are very similar to those of returning exiles, and the services provided to returning exiles at the level of reintegration, have likewise, to be provided to ex - prisoners as they are faced with very similar conditions.

Whereas there is the Association of ex-Political Prisoners, with which the DSW cooperates, the DSW is still obliged to cater for the needs of prisoners who are ANC members. '

#### 1.2.4 VICTIMS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The violent system of apartheid breeds more violence. In the past few months since February End, the country has seen some of the worst outbreaks of political violence. This violence inspired and instigated by elements within the ruling bloc, was maliciously termed " Black on Black Violence" by its perpetrators and instigators. Victims of this violence wherever it has occurred have appealed to the DSN for assistance with social problems which arise from the violence. Some families have been rendered destitute by a loss of a bread winner; others have lost several family members with some maimed. Many have had their houses burned, properties stolen and or destroyed. The vast majority of these people have been victimized for the membership, support or sympathy for the ANC. The ANC's DSN is therefore obliged to provide what assistance it can to the victims of Apartheid violence. These people cannot turn to the present regime for assistance, since they are in the final analysis victims of the regime's agents. They therefore turn to the AND for assistance as they regard the AND as the alternative to the present regime. Appeal for help has come to the DSW from all regions, from Natal, the PNV, Western Tv1, and other spots of conflict.

#### 1.2.4 INTERNAL REFUGEES

The violence described in the above section and the repression of the Bantustan Regime, especially that of Lucas Mangopse, I has given rise to a large number of internal refugees. The biggest problem is of course in Natal. But the Western Transvaal, BraakLaagte and Leeufontein areas has several thousand refugees.

The DSN had not contemplated dealing with this matter, but the reality of the pleas of thousands of these people to the ANC has compelled the DSN to be involved in this complex matter. More systematic statistics are yet to be compiled about this problem. The deliberate failure of the Government to address this matter is left the AND and its allies no choice but to organise the alleviation of the social problems of internal refugees.

## 5 SOCIAL WELFARE RESEARCH UNIT

As has already been pointed out, a National Liberation Movement like the ANC does not have the capacity to deal with all the Social ills of the system of apartheid. However it is essential that the DSN should be able to identify these social ills, to concretely establish how they are presently handled for instance the white disabled have better facilities than their black counter parts and to formulate the policy as to how to deal with these Social problems in a way which may be termed fair and democratic.

In order to bring this about, it is necessary to establish a Social Welfare Research Unit. This unit will professionally conduct empirical research into problems of Social Welfare, the available resources, formulate policy on how equitably to make maximum utilization of the available human and material resources for social welfare. For instance, there are many resources which are either under utilized or not at all utilized due to racial discrimination while there are black people in dire need of those resources.

Further, there is urgent need for a formulation of a Social Welfare policy in the period of transition and for post - apartheid South Africa.

In other words the unit would provide research material for determining how to tackle social problems in the present and in the future. Some of these problems the DSN cannot deal with at present, it can at least indicate possible solutions, and how it would handle the problems given the resources presently hoarded by the Government.

### 1.2.5.2 SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

The DSN prepares to organise seminars and workshops at two levels, firstly, for the people on the ground who deal with a variety of social problems, such as Advice Centres. To hear from them the nature of problems brought to them and generally get from the ground what sort of social problems people would like a Social Welfare policy to deal with. Secondly, another seminar would be that of professionals and academics, in the related areas who now use the requirements of the people on the ground as articulated by the first seminar, to formulate a broad social welfare policy.

### 1.3 CDeDRDINATIUN

There has to be a close cooperation between the DSW and the Departments of Health, Education, Manpower Development in particular and others in general. This should facilitate referral from the DSN to the relevant departments.

Finally, it is the intention of the DSN to as soon as possible call all the available Social Welfare resources in order to establish a relationship which will facilitate cooperation and coordination.

Where there already exists a service organisation for a particular service, it might be more cost effective for DSW refer people there for that particular service rather than create a new structure. Both SABSWA and ADSSA services should be tapped where it is possible and suitable. All other relevant structures should be identified and their cooperation accordingly requested.

### QUNCLUSIDN

The DSW has got to evolve a Clear policy and define in more clear terms the parameters within which it will operate. When that process has finally been concluded, all the relevant structures shall have been contacted for their input in order to ensure the emergence of a comprehensive, popular and democratic Social Welfare Policy from the ANC.