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OPENING ADDRESS TO THE CONSULTATIVE SEMINAR ON DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Delivered by Comrade Sindiso MFENYANA

5-7 November, 1990, JOHANNESBURG

Dear Comrades and Friends,

We are gathered here as representatives of the liberation movement the ANC, representatives of the MDM, local non-government development agencies and funding bodies, with a view to arriving at a co-ordinated approach to project development.

Already a similar consultation was held in Harare attended by 60 delegates from similar organisations. We are holding such a meeting for the first time in our country and that very geographical fact has meant that the consultation is more broader and widespread than our previous one.

We can attribute this to the successes that have been scored in the last few months by our joint efforts of creating a climate of confidence to process of negotiations,. Our meeting is therefore symbolic of the growing successes of our efforts towards the liberation of our country.

We have on several occasions in the past outlined the need for such a consultative gathering. Our last consultation produced a policy document on funding which outlined firstly guidelines for a national fundraising policy, secondly investigated structures and mechanisms required for effective co-ordination and accountability and lastly, identified priority areas for funding. A plan of action was also agreed upon.

Most importantly we analysed the present situation of our struggle and movement and observed that we will require to embark on more fundraising, better co-ordination and more effective structures and mechanisms to achieve these objectives.

For this reason, I shall not deal much with the present political situation but shall rather focus on the tasks confronting our gathering during these coming three days. It would however be necessary to draw the attention of our gathering to two major aspects related to fundraising.

The first is that our priority at this stage remains the eradication of the apartheid system. Now as in the past we have been able to receive funding from donors who have sympathised with this position and have directly or indirectly assisted towards achieving our aim. To a very large extent these sources still remain.

However the success of our struggle is beginning to create a situation where not only do these sources seek to direct the funding away from political to developmental programmes, but also new funding is beginning to come from sources which have not been willing to contribute to the political struggle.

It therefore becomes more important that we thoroughly examine the motives of funding with the aim of ensuring that the priority of fundraising is not lost to our donor agencies or our own funding agencies, and that we are more watchful of Trojan Horse funding.

The second is that we have to continue to find ways of being more creative in our own fundraising efforts within the country so that one can maintain the principle of self-reliance and independence.

On number of occasions we have raised the need to bear in mind the maxim 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'.

Co-ordination of Funding

We now have to examine the various topics of our consultative seminar in relation to the following aspects:

1. To articulate a development strategy for projects.
2. To examine the present state of projects in South Africa, their mechanisms of functioning and donor relations.
3. To investigate ways and means of maximizing experience, skills, and resources in support of new project initiatives.
4. To create new structures, networks and mechanisms for effective coordination and accountability to both project holders and donors.

5. To examine future training needs.
6. To agree on a coordinated approach for fundraising and review it periodically.

In discussing our strategy for the development projects I would like to refer to the three categories outlined at our Harare consultative workshop on funding needs which were identified as follows:

1. Resources for the ANC and MDM to rebuild their structures;
2. Resources for repatriating and resettling our compatriots from exile; resettling our compatriots from jails and assisting internally displaced people; and
3. Resources to begin the process of building effective institutions and infrastructure which support our organisations and the masses of our people. This we called development work or the process of reconstruction. It has two dimensions:
 - a) providing infrastructure to overcome the effects of apartheid, and
 - b) promoting actively the empowerment of all our peoples.

In working out plans for providing funds for the needs identified above, we propose that we initially look at, from a national perspective, programmes that would be necessary to cover these needs. Based on these programmes, various sectors of the community could then present projects that would seek to fulfil the implementation of the programmes in a concrete way.

This approach would then take the national structures from the specifics to the broader objectives and leave the lower structures to look into the projects.

It would seem therefore that in looking at the projects in South Africa we ought also to look at how they would fit in with the programmes that have been evolved in order to fulfil our broad categories of funding as part of the strategy for development.

Our greatest challenge and indeed our major task at this consultation, and an important and urgent follow-up to our Harare consultation would be to create the necessary structures, network and mechanisms for effective co-ordination and accountability to both the project holders and the donors.

In Harare we agreed on the framework of the structures and mechanisms. These would have to be subject to the need to ensure that 1) they facilitate the effective implementation of the programmes that have been evolved and that 2) the projects are carried out by the community-based organisations.

The structures would obviously require skilled personnel to be effective. We would therefore have to maximise the experience, skills and resources gained over the many years in support of new programmes and projects.

The enormous inadequacy of skills will however mean that as we expand our programmes and projects, particularly to the areas and sectors which are mostly in need of development assistance and political organisation, i.e. disadvantaged communities in urban locations and squatter camps, women and communities in rural areas, we shall have to develop skills particularly among these needy areas and communities. There would have to be affirmative action to pass on available skills from those who have them amongst us and our donor agencies to those who have been deprived by the apartheid system of these skills. A massive programme of education and training would have to be evolved.

We therefore have to examine, during our deliberations, future training needs of project officers in the liberation movement and other democratic formations, particularly the civic bodies.

Finally, in the earlier part of this address, we raised concerns that may arise in the area of fundraising, through foreign donor agencies, particularly in relation to our defined priority areas of funding which are those arising out of:

1. political needs
2. organisational requirements, and
3. development needs for community development in health education, housing, etc.,.

Government and inter-government agencies such as the Japanese Development Aid, US Aid, the UN agencies and so on, may seek to lay emphasis on funding our third priority area.

There will therefore be fewer agencies willing to assist in the first or even the second priority areas.

In considering our code of practice for fundraising we ought to come up with more creative ways of fundraising that can cover these inadequately funded priority areas which are fundamental to the solution of the problems in the third category and priority area. There can hardly be many long-term or permanent solution to the problems of development within our country or the whole of our region without removing the very cause of these problems and that is the system of apartheid.