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TRAINING FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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The education level of the majority of South Africans is of such a nature that many do not have the basic requirement to enter into formal training programmes that lead to skills development.

The kinds of subjects taught at secondary school are in the main arts related and very few schools have Mathematics and Science offered at matriculation level. Many school-leavers proceed to university thus unprepared for training in the fields of science and technology.

This deficiency in basic education perpetuates the difficulties in skill training at all levels of artisan, technician and engineer/scientist to such an extent that not only are there very few graduates in these disciplines who could be employed in the various sectors of the economy, but there is a remarkable shortage of instructors and teachers who could develop the skill potential of the young school leaver.

As many young people leave school even without the matriculation certificate, (eg 34% pass rate in 1990). they enter the labour market as "unskilled" workers and will stay unskilled for long periods, before being arbitrarily reclassified as "semi-skilled". On the other hand, the less fortunate remain as the unemployed who oscillate between "place jobs" and informal sector economic activity. The vocational schemes that presently exist in the country are varied. They range from state-run training institutions to private and in-company training schemes.

Vocational training offered in the country is thus not standard. The state runs trade tests for the training institutions, but only for those trades it recognises and has no set curriculum for all institutions to follow. In the and companies opt for job-related training with no certification. and fly-by-night schools mushroom all over the place with bogus qualifications offered.

Technical training is restricted to state-run technical which have an overall low enrolment of blacks and low output than the needs of the economy.

University education still has a heavy leaning towards science and technology degrees. More than half the universities especially black ones have no engineering faculties. Changes have to be introduced into the training system if the people have to be able to experience the advantages of liberty and democracy. They have to experience this through

an improved standard of living which can only come about by greater productivity of employed labour. This implies better skills among the people. A new approach has to be adopted in order to bring about new and rapid skills development.

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9.1 It is clear that in spite of pronouncements by the regime of its commitment to skills development, there is no significant change in the way skills development is tackled. More funds have not been committed to the process, except for basic education.

9.2 The ANC sees it as part of its task of creating national democracy, to ensure that skills development does take place even before the establishment of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa.

9.3 Priority has been given to training programmes that will firstly enable the ANC to have the suitably qualified personnel that it could employ to minister to the growing needs of the people. Such training is conducted in the form of short upgrading courses that last from 3-18 weeks. This the ANC has to fund from its own resources.

9.4 The upgrading programme: of those workers with limited skills (unskilled/semi-skilled) has been developed. The scheme is based on determining the skill limits of all the workers in this category and documenting it fully. Discussions are underway to use the state-run trade-test centres in the country to determine the nature of the skill limit. The ILO modular training procedures will be made use of to train persons in those skill areas which have been shown by the trade test to have been deficient. Training will be done at the different industrial council training centres, which up to this moment are specialised in job-specific training. Agreement with some centres exist, but they insist that trainers will have to be paid for by agencies other than the industrial council, and that facilities will be provided at nominal rates.

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Rural skill development demands an integrated approach. This type of approach has to involve production, training and project management: a package to enable the rural dwellers to start their own enterprises, run them efficiently and have enough income to sustain a comfortable and prosperous life. Variants of different training schemes which have been applied in other countries are being developed as part of a research programme of the Department of Manpower Development (DMD). At the same time training proceeds on a need basis for community organisations and groups that need

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it. Funding is necessary to complete the research and to accelerate rural skill development that will best answer the needs of the people on the land.

9.6 The development of skills at middle-level occupation has to be well in line with the Association of Career Guidance Centres, the DMD is conducting an exercise into making young people aware of the importance of technicians in society, as well as mobilising support for the development of material that could be used for this purpose.

9.7 Professional training is a key problem.

Not only are the South African institutions not suitably endowed with the kinds of courses that are of critical importance, but there are no funds to sponsor one for the studies. More than at any other time, we need funding for training in managerial, scientific, technological and administrative skills that have to be developed. Some universities have offered tuition waivers as a form of contribution. but this presents a problem and a challenge to us. to find the necessary funds that could cater for the other needs of the students.

As the changes in the country increase, so does the number of ANC and other South Africans who are returning increase. 'the task of the DMD in this case is to find suitable employment for the returnees and training for those who have no ready skills. This demands staff who will liaise with employment agencies, companies and training institutions. There are definite administrative costs. which must be covered.

For those with entrepreneurial skills and inclinations, the DMD is working on a small scale business development as well as a cooperative scheme that will enable those who would like to be in new enterprises to do so. Capital for start up of these projects is very scarce. There is need to establish a new base for lending and project development.

Above all there is need to have a coordinated skill development programme that will involve all the donor agencies that have an interest in the future of South Africa. This can best be done through a network of donor agencies with each other and the ANC to maximise the cost effectiveness of training programmes in the country.

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