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Memorandum On:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

TO National Executive Of A.N.C.

Attention Cdes: Dep. Pres. Mandela, Sisulu, N20 and Nkobi

From Z. Skweyiya

1. The issues raised in this memorandum arise out of a workshop on Local Government organised by the ANC Legal and Constitutional Department, SASPRO and CD8 on July 15 1990, in Johannesburg.

1. ANC LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

The workshop strongly recommended to the NEC that an ANC . Local Government Committee be established. The reasons for this are more clearly spelt out in the document attached hereto. The task of this committee would be to

identify key issues which affect the development of policy on local government;

commission research and reports which are descriptive and comparative in focus and form and allow an understanding of the key dimensions of local

government and civic related issues;

provide guidelines based on research and consultation on the question of negotiating for restructuring of local government;

work out mechanisms of spearheading the transfer of power at local government level;

coordinate campaigns around issues of local government;

work out processes consultation and structural relations between ANC, research and service organisations e.g. SASPRO, CDS etc.. civic

associations and other grassroots organisations;

assess and oversee the human resource and training needs for local government for and in a non-racial democracy;

advise the NEC, the Constitutional Committee and the negotiating Task Force on all aspects of local government policy related issues. These include the political, socio-economic, legal and constitutional implications on and of local government;

2. NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It was further recommended that a National Consultative Conference on local government, preceded by regional conferences, be convened by this committee under the auspices of" the NEC of" the ANC. It is suggested that this conference be held no later than the end of September, 1990.

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2.2 The objectives of such a conference would be to
(a) formulate an integrated strategy and thus a common approach to policy related aspects of local government and planning;
(b) assess the different needs of groups and areas based on a common understanding of regional and local differences.

2.3 It was also recommended that the conference be structured under the following themes:

- a local government re-structuring
- b democratization
- c the role of civics and the questions of mobilization and organisation
- d financing
- e local government infrastructure and services
- f environment
- g gender issues
- h human resources training needs
- i state strategies and medium and long term responses.

3. ORGANISATION

3.1 It was recommended that in the interim, the SASPRO Local Government Study Commission serves as the Organising Committee for the conference under the leadership of Cde. Thozamile Botha as convenor of that commission in conjunction with the Office of the Secretary General;

3.2 the members of the SASPRO Local Government Study Commission are:

Thozamile Botha - Convenor
Zola Skweyiya -
Ivy Matsepe - Secretary
Billy Modise
Jaya Appelraju
Lulu Gwagwa

4. FINANCING

4.1 It was recommended that the SASPRO local government study commission fundraise internally and externally both the regional and national conferences.

4.2 The NBC and the TGO of the ANC should assist and facilitate the fundraising.

5. PREPARATORY WORK

5.1 The conference preparatory work should start immediately with regional conferences taking place before the end of August.

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I personally recommend that the SASPRO local government study commission and the local government commission of Constitutional committee should form the core of this new committee.

Negotiation Talks are indeed occurring at two levels viz.

(a) National Level - between ANC and the regime;

(b) Local Level, - between Civics and Local Authorities

Though the struggle at the civic front is intense and making good strides, there is however, no clarity of the relationship between ANC structures and Civic structures.

The situation described above has presented us with

(b) the local level negotiations must be informed by the philosophy, perspectives etc. at the national level.

The local level negotiations must be given political direction by the ANC and this direction is often

sought but not clearly given e.g. in the issue of the privatization of electrification in the townships of Uitenhage.

(c) the changes at the local government level are the kingpin of transformation of our society. It is at this level that the improvement of the social conditions of the masses of our people can best be seen and felt. However our opposing forces are presenting projects to the people for improving

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The above matter is made even more urgent by the fact that government through its minister Kriel, has already developed some models for a post apartheid local government structure and process, which will be pronounced on October 24/25th. Rather than react to that, we need to pre-empt their statement by developing our own broad perspective which should inform the negotiating team.

Changes that must necessarily be made at local government level, must therefore be central to and inform positions taken at the national level and vice versa. If local government structures and processes are left in tact, non-racialism will remain a farce from the perspective of the grassroots people as has happened elsewhere.

Because State strategy separates the two level:

(i) rapid changes are being brought about at regional and local level though there are clearly regional and local differences in these;

(ii) in addition, different strategies are used where civics are strong and where they are weak;

(iii) white local government authorities sometimes assess their own situation and try to take the best advantage by negotiating on their own e.g. in some of the very small towns especially where civics are not strong.

(iv) the different historical conditions, the different social forces on the ground and the shifts in those forces are also shaping some of the differences e.g. the differences between the Transvaal and Natal. In the former the gains achieved through the struggles at the civic front have led to

(a) rapid changes in land release and allocation;

(b) attempts to cancel rent arrears debts from which local government authorities lost t R60m per month;

(c) stopping development of site and service schemes in Alexandra;

In Natal, the fact that the money poured into Black local government authorities has not shown any political return (e.g, R3.5 billion given to Nkatha) has clearly caused a shift and a search for new forces to discuss with, hence the Delport attempts to discuss with the ANC.

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In the Western and Eastern Cape, especially in areas where progressive local government authorities exist, initiatives that have started have been thwarted by the fact that over arching national laws still govern local government, clearly proving what has been said in 4(d) above.

(v) In other areas, the presence of different governmental structures result in yet a different situation e.g.

a in East London, and Durban some townships in the same city fall under white authorities whereas others fall under homeland governments, whereas in P.E. the City is wholly under white l/g authority;

b in addition, the rural areas nearby some of these cities may fall under neither but under the Department of Development Aid (DDA) thus complicating the local situations even further

State strategy on the security in respect of the use of JMC'S is clearly also changing. JMC's have been re-structured and their operation has changed. It appears that one of their tactics is to initiate community projects. This raises tremendous problems in that these may be made to appear to articulate the needs of the people whereas they are intended to maintain the status quo. There is need for more research and great vigilance.

The one city concept has been floated and debated in some quarters. The concept is not commonly understood by the different groups. Furthermore, the private sector has used it mainly to further its own nest and has engaged in great swindles of the black population e.g. in P.E.

In P.E. the one city concept was accepted by the white local government authority at short notice, a move that was totally unexpected by the civics, leaving them unprepared to respond appropriately. Further, the lack of skills and resources among our people exacerbated the problem. The fact that Urban Foundation has been doing intensive research on the city and has developed its own models of the city, has placed civics under undue pressure.

Many of these problems have been researched by the structures that are not necessarily situated within the struggles of the people and are not accountable to them even though they may be supportive sometimes. Many are broad and very independent bodies. There is therefore urgent need that the ANC addresses the question of the political initiatives around local government and spearhead the coordination of that initiative and give it political direction.

Many progressive local government authorities and civics would like direction from the ANC on these issues. Therefore the leadership needs to

(a) Familiarise itself with the key issues in local government which confront the people. It should have a broad idea as well as idea of the urgent narrower local issues and situation.

(b) Ensure that the leadership at the local level is well versed with both the broad as well as the local especially the latter.

(c) Work out a broad national policy and strategy on many issues to guide at national and on local level.

(d) Urgently discuss and pronounce on who is "talked" to and when they talk; who "negotiates" with whom and for what.

(e) Work out linkages between ANC _ National, Regional and Local Levels and Civic - national regional and local levels especially in those cases where personalities at the local level may be the same.