

# **ADVANCE TO NATIONAL DEMOCRACY**

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**Guidelines on  
Strategy and Tactics  
of the African  
National Congress**

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**February 1991**

## **I. INTRODUCTION:**

**1.0. After 30 years of illegality, the ANC is once more able to operate within South Africa as a legal organisation. This also holds true for our ally, the SACP, which was banned for 40 years, as well as other organisations. Political prisoners are being released and those who had been driven into exile are returning. The ANC has moved back into the country its national Headquarters and leading organs.**

**2.0. These developments reflect the deep, all-round crisis afflicting the apartheid system. The South African economy is in a shambles, and the majority of the people refuse to be governed by a regime not based on their will. The apartheid regime and the ruling National Party have been forced to openly admit that the system of white minority domination and exploitation has failed and can no longer be maintained. They have accepted that it is necessary to enter into negotiations with the national liberation movement for the elaboration and adoption of a new constitution.**

**3.0. Apartheid stands condemned by the world community of nations as a crime against humanity. The international community is at one in seeking an end to the system of apartheid and the creation of a society based on the will of all the people.**

**4.0. All these developments represent a major victory for the forces, led by the ANC, which have struggled for many decades for the destruction of the system of white minority domination and the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country. South Africa is entering a phase of transition towards national democracy. The immediate issue on the agenda is the question of political power. To effect the transfer of power into the hands of the people as a whole is the most crucial and immediate challenge facing the national democratic movement.**

**5.0. Despite the strategic advances made by the liberation movement, the regime still retains the capacity to implement counter-measures on a whole range of fronts. The white ruling group has entered the negotiations process with its own agenda: a radically reformed system of apartheid which will retain the essentials of white domination of the economic, political and social institutions of our country. Its attempts to interpret agreements in a manner that would constitute surrender on the part of the ANC; delays in the implementation of agreements reached; and the systematic use of violence**



and other repressive measures against the people - all these are part of Pretoria's arsenal to weaken the ANC and its allies and derail the struggle for national liberation.

6.0. In the words of the OAU (Harare) Declaration, many factors are at play "which, if there is a demonstrable readiness on the part of the Pretoria regime to engage in negotiations genuinely and sincerely, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations." Whether or not this process unfolds towards the desired end, depends primarily on the strength of the national democratic movement, the main function of which is the people in political motion.

## II. BALANCE OF FORCES:

**7.0.** The mid-1970s witnessed the commencement of a process that has led to the passing of the initiative in Southern Africa from the forces of colonialism and reaction, to those of national liberation and democracy. The defeat of Portuguese colonialism, the fall of the Rhodesian colonial regime and the decolonisation of Namibia have placed the seal of permanence on these changes. The Pretoria regime's campaign of destabilisation and blackmail against neighbouring states has exacted great dislocation and losses in the form of life and property. But it has failed to roll back the frontiers of African liberation. Today, South Africa is the only country in which white domination, rooted in the colonial past, is maintained.

**8.0.** The crisis of apartheid colonialism is also the result of concerted campaigns by peoples of the world against this system, and in solidarity with the struggling masses of South Africa. It is these mass-based campaigns which brought pressure to bear on the governments of Western Europe and Northern America to take some practical measures to isolate the apartheid regime. The limited sanctions, the cultural, academic and sports boycott, as well as disinvestment and pressure on financial loans were also influenced by the struggles within South Africa and the unfavourable economic climate resulting, in part, from these struggles. The status of the ANC among the peoples and governments of the world has grown, and it is recognised by friend and foe alike as an alternative power within South Africa.

**9.0.** The collapse of a number of governments in Eastern Europe, and the crisis facing the socialist system has somewhat weakened the camp of forces opposed to apartheid. The fact that these countries have been among the closest allies of the ANC and the struggling people of South Africa on its own warrants that the national democratic movement should draw relevant lessons from these experiences. This applies in particular to the question of rooting the anti-apartheid campaign among the mass of the people in all countries of the world. Related to this is the tendency among some governments to relax pressure on the apartheid regime. Such a measure can only have the effect of weakening the national democratic struggle and thus slow down the process of peaceful transition to a new democratic order in South Africa. At the same time, the liberation movement must creatively utilise the positive developments in the international arena, such as the relaxation of tension among the developed countries, and the enhanced role of the United Nations Organisation.

**10.0.** The crisis of apartheid stems, first and foremost, from the objective contradictions rooted within this system. It is due to the system of capitalist exploitation based on colonial racial relations that the South African economy is today experiencing a deep structural crisis. While the system of super-exploitation of the black majority



all along fully served the interests of big business and the state, this has become a brake on the development of the economy as a whole. Negative growth rates, low investor confidence, spiralling inflation, shortage of skilled personnel - all these are the fruits of apartheid. The problems of massive unemployment, shortage of housing, high prices and others, resulting from this crisis, cannot be resolved within the ambit of the apartheid system. The state and big business are neither willing to, nor capable of, curing these ills.

**11.0.** The struggles of the masses, led by the ANC, are the primary factor which has precipitated the crisis of apartheid.

**11.1.** The mass revolts of the 1980s were characterised by the following major factors:

- \* protests around day-to-day issues and united mass action consistently linked to the primary question of national liberation;
- \* mass uprisings in urban and rural areas challenging apartheid power relations and leading to the emergence of rudimentary organs of people's power;
- \* progressive merger between mass and armed actions reflected in street battles and barricades and the emergence of popular combat groups;
- \* emergence of sectoral democratic organisations such as the youth, students', women's and cultural organisations and civics, and their coalition into a front for national democracy, the UDF;
- \* the emergence of a broad coalition of anti-apartheid forces on a minimum platform against tyranny and the effects of national oppression; and
- \* the growth of anti-apartheid forces within the white community, including elements close to the ruling establishment.

**11.2.** A crucial role in these developments was played by the African National Congress from the underground. This was complemented through the open contacts established with various anti-apartheid forces and those elements who did not agree with all our policies but shared the desire to see to the normalisation of the situation on the basis of the eradication of apartheid. Increasingly, the ANC gained acceptance among forces opposed to apartheid as the leader in the struggle and the alternative to the present government.

**11.3.** The armed struggle waged by Umkhonto we Sizwe contributed immensely to the deepening of the crisis of apartheid. By giving the much-needed cutting edge to the mass uprisings, it helped to weaken the apartheid establishment and to mobilise the masses into militant action. The support armed struggle enjoyed among the oppressed people, and their growing involvement in various forms of armed activity, helped to shape the struggle towards becoming a generalised people's war against the apartheid regime.

**11.4.** It is a combination of all these factors which deepened the crisis of the ruling class. Faced with a subject population unwilling to be governed in the old way, the Pretoria regime resorted to repression and petty reform, in order to reassert its authority. All these attempts failed to quell popular resistance. This crisis of policy helped to deepen conflict within the white ruling bloc. Confusion and uncertainty within the white community, and desertion by leading ideologues of apartheid further undermined the ideological platform of the ruling group.

**12.0.** It is against the backdrop of these developments that the regime has been forced to introduce some changes. These changes constitute a strategic defeat for the apartheid regime and an open admission on its part that all its counter-revolutionary efforts, both inside and outside the country, have failed to suppress and crush the national liberation movement of our country. The strength and invincibility of this movement, the justice of our cause and the adherence of the overwhelming majority of our people to the democratic perspectives represented by our movement are being borne out by history.

**13.0.** The regime has completely failed to achieve its central objective of the perpetuation of white minority domination through the use of state terrorism. Its attempts to divide and weaken the oppressed through the balkanisation of the country and the conduct of a campaign of aggression and destabilisation in the sub-continent have not resolved the problems of apartheid. Nor have its earlier attempts to co-opt the oppressed people through the tri-cameral parliament, town councils and such so-called negotiations fora as the National Council and Great Indaba.

**14.0.** The liberation movement has set the stage and defined the agenda of the current phase of struggle. Having taken the initiative to define the terrain within which genuine negotiations should take place, the democratic movement also ensured that its approach enjoys the unanimous formal support of the international community, as reflected in the OAU (Harare) and UN General Assembly Declarations. However, it should be emphasised that the balance of forces which has made the beginning of negotiations possible is not necessarily one which can lead to a genuine resolution of the conflict.

**15.0.** While the liberation movement set the arena for the present phase and thus enjoys the strategic initiative, the balance of forces is not a static phenomenon. The regime seeks to minimise the impact of the general crisis of apartheid on itself, and to regain the strategic initiative. In fact, in the months particularly after the August 1990 Pretoria Summit between the ANC and the government, the regime utilised the terrain of negotiations more effectively than the liberation movement. Combined with the devastating campaign of violence against African communities, this led to situations in which the liberation movement was losing the tactical initiative to the regime. This was compounded by the sense among the people and the international community that the talks and contact with the regime implied a de-escalation of



struggle against apartheid. In this regard, "talks-about-talks" and negotiations must be seen as a terrain of intense struggle.

16.0. The victories we have scored pose many challenges to the liberation movement. Objectively, we are operating under conditions in which most institutions of apartheid remain intact. The state machinery still possesses the capacity to wreak havoc. Resources of all kinds, including funds and the media, remain in the hands of a white minority establishment. Subjectively, our movement has not been fast enough in establishing its organisational machinery and adapting to the new terrain of struggle.

To understand the essence of this terrain, it is necessary to examine the basic issues around which negotiations revolve.

### III. NATURE OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY:

**17.0.** The space won by the liberation movement and the possibility of negotiations do not change the essence of apartheid power relations. The South African regime remains a racist, colonial state, specifically created as a result of the pact concluded between British imperialism and the white settler minority in 1910. In spite of various modifications, its main characteristics remain.

**Firstly**, it is a system of minority rule in which the black majority are by law excluded from the central organs of power. Except for some marginal delegated powers, political power is explicitly the monopoly of the white minority. Further, this system is rooted in the policies, traditions and practices of male domination.

**Secondly**, it is based on the dispossession of the indigenous peoples of their land and its wealth. The formal repeal of the Land Acts and commercialisation of ownership rights only entrench this act of dispossession.

**Thirdly**, it is a system of labour coercion, based on the deliberate impoverishment of the African people and regulations designed to compel them to avail themselves as sources of cheap labour.

**Fourthly**, it is a system in which access to productive capacity and property, as well as distribution of income, are racially defined, with the real property-owning class drawn exclusively from the white minority.

**18.0.** The principal beneficiaries of the system of race domination are the class of monopoly capitalists who control most sectors of the economy. Together, the top six companies account for almost 90% of all shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

Because of the material benefits accruing to the white community as a whole and the ideology of white supremacy, the ruling class has over the years forged an alliance with other classes and strata within this community. The strain that has emerged within this alliance is a reflection of the economic and political crisis of apartheid: primarily, the increasing failure of the system to provide plenty to the white community and to guarantee them all-round security. Sections of the white community, including forces within big business, have come to accept the need for fundamental change. Others are vowed to fight against this, as shown in the growth of right-wing parties and para-military organisations.

**19.0.** One of the chief elements in the regime's strategy has been to seek auxiliaries



from among the oppressed themselves. The bantustan system was the first comprehensive attempt to create a caste of black junior partners to whom the regime would delegate some powers of social control and repression. Through the tri-cameral parliament and local government structures the regime has sought to expand the base of collaborators. It is a reflection of the depth of the crisis of the system, that more and more forces from the ranks of the bantustan and other local government functionaries have abandoned the ship of apartheid and seek to align themselves with the democratic movement. These forces include elements within the civil service, the army and police, and therefore constitute an important loss to the regime.

20.0. The contradiction between the oppressed black majority and the white oppressor state is the most visible and dominant within South Africa. Conflict within our society derives from the system of oppression and exploitation. This contradiction cannot be resolved by the apartheid state reforming itself. Attempts by the ruling Nationalist Party to change its image and on that basis draw around itself a coalition of forces primarily from the black community are aimed at blunting this contradiction on a platform of modified white domination.

21.0. The sense of national grievance against oppression and the fight against exploitation constitute the driving force of the national democratic revolution. The liberation movement faces the challenge of harnessing these elements into a mighty force to sweep aside the apartheid state and create a united, non-racial and democratic society. Attempts by the regime and its allies to divert the masses from this reality, and to confine the terrain of debate and contest to areas conveniently defined by the champions of oppression and exploitation must be resisted.

#### **IV. CHARACTER AND FORCES OF TRANSFORMATION:**

**22.0.** The victories scored by the democratic movement do not change the strategic aims of the struggle. Our central objective remains the transfer of power to the people as a whole, and the use of that power to construct a socio-economic system that will meet the aspirations of all the people of our country. The guidelines outlining the society we wish to build are contained in the Freedom Charter, a document which has become the property of the broad movement for democratic change. The broad perspectives the movement puts forward towards the realisation of these goals are:

**22.1.** The adoption, through negotiations in an elected Constituent Assembly, of a constitution based on the principle of one-person one-vote in a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

**22.2.** The guarantee of the fundamental human rights of all South Africans, including their rights to life, liberty, language, culture, religion, freedom of the press and freedom from racial abuse. This will be underpinned by such means as an entrenched Bill of Rights, a multi-party system of government, a representative and independent judiciary and regular elections to all relevant organs of government.

**22.3.** The restructuring of the economy, as a mixed economy, to ensure that while it achieves high rates of growth, it also meets the fundamental needs of all the people by abolishing poverty and racial inequalities in the distribution of wealth. The economy must enable all the citizens of our country to enjoy a rising standard of living. This will demand of all sectors of the economy - state-owned, private, co-operative and others - to allocate resources and implement policies in keeping with this common national requirement.

**23.0.** The main content of the national democratic revolution is the liberation of the black people in general and Africans in particular. The oppressed black masses objectively stand to gain from the victory of this struggle. Among this coalition of national and social forces, the African people are the most adversely affected by the policies of apartheid. Victims of armed conquest and land dispossession, and the chief object of racial policies, they carry the main burden of the edifice of white domination.

The regime, in its counter-revolutionary schemes, has targeted the African people to foment divisions and weaken the liberation alliance in its entirety. To defeat these schemes demands a principled, creative and flexible approach on the part of the democratic movement. This demands of the African people that they take the lead



in combatting any notions of racial or ethnic chauvinism and create the basis for the emergence of a common South African national identity.

**24.0.** The Coloured and Indian people are also victims of national oppression and share with the African people a desire for national emancipation. These oppressed communities are an integral part of the motive forces of the struggle. Over the years, through differential treatment, the white minority regime has sought to attach these communities to itself. The resounding rejection of these schemes by the Coloured and Indian people in struggle, is a fitting rebuff to the regime. Unity of the black people on the basis of unequivocal equality is a vital condition for the success of our struggle.

**25.0.** It has always been the view of the ANC that the system of apartheid is to the detriment of the South African people as a whole. The entrenchment of racial hatred and mistrust between black and white, economic dislocation, international isolation, subjection to the warped doctrines of racial superiority, constraints on human freedoms - all these affect the white community as well. The existence of an oppressed and restive majority is also a source of great insecurity; and whites cannot claim to be free and at peace when the rest of their country-men and women are oppressed. The insecurity among sections of the white community is compounded by the fact that the Nationalist Party is increasingly aligning itself with positions of big business to the relative detriment of the lower classes and strata of the white population.

The ANC has consistently worked for the unity of all anti-apartheid forces, black and white, for the realisation of a future of democracy, peace and equality. The growth of the movement for democracy within the white community is an indispensable factor in the realisation of the victories scored by the liberation movement and for future advance. It is in the theatre of struggle that the foundation of the South African nation is being forged. As the genuine alternative to the apartheid system, the democratic movement must marry, in splendid combination, the tasks of forging black unity and consolidating the non-racial content of the struggle.

**26.0.** Various classes, strata and social groups constitute the coalition of forces struggling for national democracy. Black workers occupy a special place among these forces. As a class subjected to exploitation, and responsible for the creation of the greater part of social wealth, they will be among the chief beneficiaries of fundamental transformation. In the field of organisation and struggle, they have emerged as the leading force. Alongside them have been students, the rural poor, professionals, black business-people, traditional leaders and others. The ANC considers it crucial to organise and mobilise various sectors of the population - women, youth, the religious community, cultural workers and others - into active struggle against apartheid. While these forces occupy varied positions on the economic ladder, this does not subtract from the fact of their oppression as blacks. It is the task of the ANC to unite all these forces, on the basis of their specific

grievances and a shared desire to rid our country of apartheid and all forms of inequality into a mighty force for national liberation.

**27.0.** These tasks are being carried out in a situation in which new possibilities have emerged for the widest organisation and mobilisation of the forces for fundamental change. Given the legal space conquered in struggle, the ANC must strive to reach out to all our people, black and white. The desire of the overwhelming majority for a peaceful transition, which the ANC is sincerely pursuing, affords the movement ever wider possibilities to assert itself as the force representing genuinely national patriotic interests. The movement must at all times exercise maximum creativity and take advantage of new possibilities to unite the people as a whole and speed up the process towards the creation of a just and peaceful dispensation which will be in the interest of all of society.

**28.0.** At the same time, new dangers have emerged, with the regime desperately seeking to win over as many people as possible to its camp. By attempting to present itself as a force for change, while weakening the forces of opposition, it hopes to undermine the liberation struggle and reverse the popular gains achieved at much suffering and sacrifice on the part of the mass of the people. Underpinning the regime's approach is a perspective to impose, by hook or by crook, a constitution which entrenches apartheid in a new and disguised form. Attempts to limit the powers of a new government, and entrenchment of white privilege in property and land ownership and distribution of income, are cunningly designed cloaks under which to perpetuate the system of white minority domination. Their implementation will leave the lot of the black people unchanged. The democratic movement faces the challenge of ensuring that the struggle for fundamental change is not undermined or derailed by means of subterfuge, violence and any other actions by the forces in power.



## **V. OUR APPROACH TO THE TRANSITION:**

**29.0.** The historic period into which we have entered is one of transition from white minority rule to democratic government. As a result of the change in the balance of forces brought about by the national democratic movement and the struggling people as a whole, the possibility has emerged to effect this transition by peaceful means.

**29.1.** The strategic challenge this period poses is that, as much as the national democratic movement led and continues to lead opposition and resistance to apartheid, it must lead the process of transition to a democratic South Africa. We must not concede such leadership to the very same forces that are responsible for the establishment and perpetuation of the system of apartheid.

**29.2.** At the same time, the national democratic movement has a responsibility to ensure that the forces of reaction do not reverse the gains it has scored. The irreversibility of these achievements and the peaceful process as a whole, is a function of the strength of the democratic forces, primarily the masses in active struggle, and not the goodwill of those who continue to benefit from the system of apartheid.

**29.3.** It is in the true interest of the ANC and the masses of our people that transition to a democratic order should take place as soon as possible so as to end the apartheid system without delay. Speed is therefore an essential element in all our efforts to realise this objective. On the other hand, the representatives of apartheid are interested to draw out the process of change to give themselves time to evolve schemes intended to compromise the depth of the process of democratic transformation.

**30.0.** Our approach to the process of transition entails in the main:

**30.1.** The immediate and permanent normalisation of the political situation by an end to all forms of repression and protection of the people from all acts of violence. All hindrances to free political activity, which includes such normal democratic practices as the rights to demonstrate peacefully and to go on strike, must be removed. The process of normalisation includes the release of all political prisoners, ending all political trials, repeal of repressive legislation, the return of exiles and the termination of the practice of detention without trial.

**30.2.** The establishment of an Interim Government, acceptable to the widest

spectrum of the people, to supervise the process of transition from white minority rule to a democratically elected government

**30.3.** The convening of a Constituent Assembly, elected on the basis of one-person one-vote on a common voters' roll, to draw up a new and democratic constitution for our country

**30.4.** An end to the campaign of aggression and destabilisation directed against the independent states of our region

**30.5.** A congress of all parties with a proven constituency should be convened to work out the broad and basic principles to underpin the new constitution as well as to agree on the modalities for the establishment of an Interim Government and a Constituent Assembly.

**31.0.** To achieve these objectives requires that the national democratic movement marshals all anti-apartheid forces, both within the country and abroad, and defeat the schemes of the regime to tailor the transition in a direction suited to the interests of white minority domination. These schemes include attempts by the government to portray itself as the establishment best suited to supervise and direct the transition. At the same time, Pretoria is bent on weakening the national democratic movement by fomenting divisions within the democratic alliance, by attempting to delegitimise popular mass actions, side-lining the national democratic demands of the people by narrowing the terrain of political contest into confines defined by itself and by dividing the most oppressed African masses along ethnic lines.

**32. 0.** The campaign of violence directed against the black population, which aims at fomenting fear and despondency among the people is also intended to weaken the democratic movement. Under cover of inter-communal conflict, generated primarily by forces within the state machinery, these forces have introduced devastating counter-revolutionary banditry characterised by selective as well as indiscriminate attacks against anti-apartheid forces and African communities in general. While some of the elements involved in this campaign seek to undermine the whole peace process, others aim at debilitating the liberation movement as a negotiating partner. It is crucial that the movement, using a multi-pronged strategy of political and military self-defence, reduces the capacity of the state to act against the people.



## VI. FORMS OF STRUGGLE:

**33.0.** The new situation demands a sober and balanced assessment of our approach to various forms of struggle as well as their inter- relationship. We have, in the past, under a different set of conditions, characterised our struggle as a protracted people's war in which partial and general uprisings would play an important role. Led by the ANC underground, mass and armed actions were to dovetail and merge in a process leading to seizure of power, in which the armed element would occupy a crucial place.

Does this approach still hold?

**34.0.** The answer to this question cannot derive solely from a belief in the integrity or otherwise of those in power. Neither can it be seen as a static phenomenon holding out for all time. The most crucial considerations in this regard are:

- \* the depth of the crisis gripping the apartheid system and the extent to which it compels the regime to act in good faith;
- \* our capacity to deepen this crisis and ensure that those in power are dissuaded from the temptation or intention to derail the process of peaceful transition;
- \* the concrete conditions under which we operate, the basic among which is the depth and spread of the atmosphere of free political activity;
- \* the methods used by the regime and other right-wing forces against the democratic movement and the people in general; and last but not least,
- \* the line-up of forces within the ruling white establishment, including individuals, parties, organisations and the army and police.

**35.0.** The ANC has entered the path of negotiations at our own initiative, and not as a tactic with some hidden agenda. We did so because a negotiated transition to a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa is not only desirable to our movement and people; but it has become possible, at the instance of all-round struggle on a variety of fronts. Negotiations are and should be about the transfer of power to the people as a whole and the democratisation of our society in all spheres of life. They therefore do not constitute a departure from the strategic perspective held by the liberation movement over the years. Rather, they are a result of struggle and a terrain of intense struggle for the final realisation of the strategic objectives of the national democratic revolution.

**36.0.** While in the past we pursued the objective of seizure of power, and pledged to enter negotiations if the situation arose, the approach today has definitely

changed. We have entered negotiations as a viable mechanism for the transition to a new order, under the new situation, and we pledge to pursue the perspective of seizure of power - armed and/or otherwise - if the situation changes. Given the considerations outlined above, the situation is still fluid. The ANC cannot afford to sacrifice the aspirations of the millions of oppressed South Africans, the people of the region and the world, on the altar of wishful thinking and imagined possibilities. While we prefer a negotiated transition to a new order, it behoves the state and its allies to ensure that this becomes a reality.

**37.0.** How then does this affect the role of and balance among the "internal pillars" of our struggle?

**37.1.** Central to our approach to the transition and to counter the schemes of defenders of white domination is our reliance on the mass of the oppressed and anti-apartheid forces. In as much as the victories we have scored are a consequence primarily of this approach, and to ensure that what emerges in the end reflects their basic interests, the people must be the engine of the transition and be seen to take active part at all possible levels. This demands the continual strengthening of the ANC and other democratic forces, and mobilising the people to express, defend and advance their point of view through mass action. Negotiations do not mean that the people should be immobilised. Rather, the legitimacy of the process itself and therefore the permanence of its results, will, primarily, derive from the involvement of the people at all levels.

**37.2.** As part of the struggle to advance the process towards a speedy political settlement, the ANC decided to suspend armed actions. However, the armed struggle has not been terminated. The enemy still has the possibility to reimpose the conditions which necessitated that we resort to this form of struggle. A democratic constitution has not yet been agreed upon, and the regime and other forces in the country continue to maintain their own armed formations. The ANC therefore has a continuing responsibility to maintain its own combat formations, organised in the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe. It has the responsibility to ensure people's self-defence at all times.

**37.3.** Most of the tasks that had to be carried out from the underground can now be conducted openly. But the atmosphere of free political activity has yet to be fully realised, both in general terms and in relation to various parts of the country. Further, possibilities still exist for the reversal of the process of peaceful transition. In this regard, the ANC is duty-bound to maintain such underground structures as present-day conditions and future possibilities demand. The supreme political responsibility for work conducted at all levels rests with the leadership structures of the ANC as defined in its constitution.



## **VII. STRATEGIC TASKS IN THE TRANSITION:**

**38.0.** The fact that we have entered into a period of transition to a democratic South Africa does not mean that the struggle has come to an end. The forces responsible for the establishment of the apartheid system continue to pursue their own objectives which do not originate from any mandate but their own self-seeking interests. A struggle is therefore inevitable between the perspectives represented by these forces and by the democratic movement.

**39.0.** The process of negotiations, at all its levels, represents a theatre of intense struggle. In this struggle, we aim to advance the demands of the mass of our people for the fundamental democratic transformation of our country. This form of struggle also requires that the movement should, at all times, keep close contact with the rest of the democratic movement and the people as a whole. The principle and practice of consultation, seeking mandates and reports-back must inform our approach to negotiations, both within the ranks of the democratic movement and in relation to the mass of the people. Those elected to serve in a Constituent Assembly would themselves have been mandated by the people to present a set of demands that would have been canvassed during the election process.

**40.0.** The ANC must firmly take the lead in ensuring the earliest adoption and enforcement of a genuinely democratic, non-racial and non-sexist constitution. This is the principal theatre of struggle during the period of transition to a democratic South Africa. It revolves around the central question of the exercise of political power, the decisive element in any revolutionary struggle.

**41.0.** The fact of the changes brought about by the struggle does not change the reality that the apartheid structures of government remain in place. These structures, at all levels, from the national to the local, are illegitimate. They represent a continuation of the apartheid system of white minority domination and cannot be expected to act as institutions that would facilitate the transition to a democratic South Africa. The ANC should therefore take all the necessary measures to ensure speedy movement towards the establishment and proper functioning of an Interim Government. At the same time, the liberation movement must resist as well as avoid involvement in dispensations that would in practice entail its co-option into apartheid structures.

**42.0.** The achievement and defence of the democratic gains which enable free political activity is also of crucial importance to the struggle. This will ensure that the peace process moves forward as rapidly and as freely as possible towards the

earliest adoption of a democratic constitution. The defence of these gains includes actions aimed at preventing the use of violence against the people. The ANC should therefore take all the necessary measures to contain and eliminate such violence, and develop the necessary organisational structures for the defence of the people. This should entail a multi-faceted campaign which brings to the fore our strategic political strengths as a liberation movement which seeks to unite the mass of our people for their own liberation, irrespective of their ethnic, racial and class origins. We must maximise the cost of such acts of banditry to the perpetrators and their allies.

**43.0.** The exercise of leadership in the transition also means that the ANC and the rest of the democratic movement must act more than just as a movement of protest. Already, during the mass revolt of the 1980s, the people had started to introduce alternative and popular expressions of government, education, culture, sports and so on. This task becomes even more crucial in the transition, and in a situation in which the balance of forces has shifted in favour of the democratic movement. It entails the building of people's organs from the lowest to the highest possible levels. It also means the clarity and foresight to put forward and implement viable alternatives in all spheres of life.

**44.0.** The ANC also faces the challenge of sharpening its strategy and tactics as well as strengthening structures pertaining to negotiations in the narrow sense. This means, first and foremost, ensuring consistent political leadership to our negotiating teams, the mastering, on the part of the movement as a whole, of the art and science of parley, ability to assess and utilise a given balance of forces to our fullest advantage as well as consistency and flexibility at the negotiating table. In order to ensure that we give leadership to the whole process, and not find ourselves responding to initiatives from the other side, we need to deploy such resources as are necessary to the area of negotiations and act with deliberate speed in the formulation of our policies and approaches to various issues.

**45.0.** The social forces interested in the democratic transformation of our country are composed of all the oppressed masses, including the majority of those who serve within apartheid state institutions. Also among these social forces are important sections of the white population, including the youth and students, the professional strata and significant sections of the business community. Our organisational work must enable us to reach all these social forces in their millions, ensure that they understand and support the political perspectives of our movement and draw them into action as a conscious and organised force for the realisation of their aspirations.

More attention than before needs to be paid to the organisation and mobilisation of the masses in the rural areas and bantustans, as well as the women and the youth. We must consciously transform into concrete support the sympathy and respect the ANC enjoys among functionaries within apartheid institutions, including the army



and police. These forces must be made to feel that they have got a place and a future in the ranks of the anti-apartheid movement.

**46.0.** To carry out all the tasks relevant to the entire process of transformation, including the formation of a democratic government, the ANC has to build itself into a strong and well-organised democratic, non-racial and non-sexist mass movement, able to reach all our people throughout the length and breadth of our country. This task is urgent. Its successful accomplishment is decisive for peaceful transition and the victory of the national democratic struggle.

The basic task facing the struggle remains the liberation of all our people. The ANC is not a political party, but a liberation movement. It must therefore remain the political home for all individuals interested in and committed to this future, without regard to ideological beliefs that are not in conflict with its basic policy positions and programme.

At the same time, the ANC must rapidly develop to master all the methods of political contest that operation under conditions of legality demand. It must deliberately prepare itself for the different challenges of the transition and the future, including work in an Interim Government, elections into a Constituent Assembly and so on. However, this must not be allowed to infringe on the main character of the movement as an organisation of the people, pursuing their aspirations, rather than an elitist cabal. We should also ensure that the ANC and its allies do not behave in such a way that they are seen by the people as formations which they should fear, because of such wrong methods of work as political intolerance.

**47.0.** The ANC has to encourage the formation and strengthening of independent, democratic mass formations of the people, including trade unions, civic associations, youth and women's organisations as well as other organisations representing various strata of our population, such as cultural workers, the intelligentsia, the business community and others. This is to ensure that all sections of the population are organised around the democratic perspective and are able to make their own independent intervention in the process of peaceful transformation of our country. The ANC should maintain a structured relationship with all these formations to ensure joint action in the common effort to bring about a just society. It is, however, in the interest of the ANC and the entire struggle that these formations should maintain their independence and operate on the basis of democratic practices determined by their members.

**48.0.** To ensure the widest possible organisation and mobilisation of our people for the achievement of the goal of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa, the ANC must build and strengthen relations with organisations which share some or all of its policies and perspectives.

**48.1.** The closest allies of the ANC are the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). This principled and

structured alliance, based on a shared commitment to, as well as the strategy and tactics for, the achievement of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa, should be continually strengthened at national, regional and local levels. Forged in the theatre of struggle, and based on the recognition of the leadership role of the ANC, the tri-partite alliance recognises and operates on the basis of the independence of its component parts and is shaped in accordance with the new conditions of legality in which we operate.

**48.2.** For the purpose of ensuring the fastest movement towards fundamental change, the ANC should work with all forces committed to the basic perspective of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa in a structured broad patriotic front. This front should act together to effect the transition from white minority domination to democratic rule.

**48.3.** Furthermore, the ANC must identify and seek co-operation with other political and social formations within the country who, because of their opposition to apartheid, can enter into even limited agreements with the ANC, aimed at facilitating the process of peaceful transition, the dismantling of the apartheid system and the transformation of our country into a non-racial democracy.

In the overall, we should ensure that all levels of the movement are well-vest in the theory and practice of alliances, and conduct our work in this terrain in such a way that we do not undermine our own base.

**49.0.** The international community remains seized with the issue of the abolition of apartheid and the transformation of our country into a non-racial democracy. The ANC must continue its work to ensure that this community sustains its pressure for rapid movement towards the realisation of these goals. The maintenance of such economic sanctions as presently exist, and the all-round isolation of apartheid South Africa, are conditional upon progress in the eradication of the system of apartheid. We must work for the intensification of efforts by the international community to extend political and material support to the ANC, the rest of the democratic movement and the people as a whole, to enable these forces to realise the political and socio-economic objectives which are a necessary component part of the process of change.



## **VIII. CONCLUSION:**

**50.0.** South Africa has entered a decisive stage in the struggle for national liberation. The balance of forces both within the country and internationally favours a rapid movement towards the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist country. The strategy and tactics of the ANC during this period of transition must ensure that this advance is as rapid as possible, leads to genuine democratic change and places the democratic movement in the vanguard of this process. At this critical and historic moment, the unity of the entire democratic movement around common perspectives and a common programme of action is of critical importance.

**51.0.** In this regard, the main tasks during the period of transition are:

**51.1.** A rapid advance towards the transfer of power to the people as a whole, through the adoption of a democratic constitution negotiated by an elected Constituent Assembly.

**51.2.** The establishment and maintenance of an Interim Government, acceptable to all the people, to supervise the transition to a democratic South Africa.

**51.3.** The defence of the democratic gains and the defeat of the efforts of the counter-revolutionary forces to take away the political space won through struggle.

**51.4.** The consolidation of the positions won by the democratic movement in all spheres of life, and its intervention to ensure that the masses increasingly run their own lives and improve their socio-economic conditions.

**52.0.** The optimism of the ANC constitutes a challenge to itself and the people in general to realise, sooner rather than later, the dream of millions of South Africans for freedom and democracy. It is primarily the strength of the ANC and its allies, including its ability to lead the people in active struggle, and not the integrity or otherwise of the forces in power, which will guarantee the success of the process of peaceful transition.

**THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!  
VICTORY IS CERTAIN!  
ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!**