

NMO/010/0019/47

ANC NATIONAL CONFERENCE JULY 1991 DURBAN REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS FROM BUILDING ORGANISATION COMMISSION

A. REPORT - BUILDING THE ORGANISATION

PREAMBLE

We need to take a critical and constructive look at our organisation. This can be effectively done by adopting a strategic analytical approach which will reveal our strength and weaknesses; the opportunities and threats - real and perceived - against the ANC. Once this process has been gone through, an effective way forward can be charted.

THE SWOT-ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Organisational experience and experienced leadership
- Large middle leadership stratum
- Very large mass support amongst the lowest strata of the oppressed (which could be easily transformed into disciplined membership)
- Diversity of skills, expertise and experience from the following strands in the Movement:
 - Ex-political prisoners
 - Military/underground
 - World wisdom and
 - Mass democratic organisation

Weaknesses

- No proper analysis of recruitment targets
- No break-down of the composition of the membership
- Ill-trained organisers, unable to explain ANC policy
- Some interim REC members were very unpopular: this impacted negatively on our movement
- Insensitivity to the perception of non-ANC members, particularly non-African communities
- Inability to take the Tripartite Alliance to the grassroots
- Failure to project a united, purposeful image
- Failure to translate reading materials to accessible languages, thus difficulty drawing in elderly people from rural areas
- Poor communication between HQ and regions on the one hand; and, between regional offices/RECs and branches on the other
- Lack of clear political strategy and tactics that can sell amongst professionals, business and other establishment institutions
- Lack of a comprehensive political education programme internally
- Perceptions amongst the grassroots membership of a lack of internal democratic practice
- Gross administrative inefficiency at national and regional levels hampers effective organising and organisation
- Lack of resources in the branches especially, in rural areas
- Restricting organisation to offices, organisers, committees and some activists rather than taking it to the people

Reasons for weaknesses

- State-sponsored repression and propaganda
- Bantustan tyranny and repression
- Conservative reactionary alliances being formed by the state
- Failure of the national leaders to take account of local dynamics in dealing with bantustan leaders

- National leaders support bantustan leaders who continue to be repressive on the ground
- State and commercial media propaganda
- Regime initiated conservative/reactionary alliances and parties
- Bantustan tyranny creates fear amongst people, and recruitment problems amongst organisers
- Lack of communication between leadership on contacts with bantustan leadership - leading to confusion amongst rank and file, anger/frustration amongst organisers and activists
- Tensions with Civics could be used by the enemy to weaken our base
- Violent outbreaks other than those classified as political, associated with ANC members, dent the image of the ANC
- Misconceptions about the nature of the alliance with the Party, amongst the rank and file
- Growing perception amongst non-African communities that De Klerk's NP is becoming the most appropriate vehicle to the future
- Abuse of position, political arrogance, internal factions and cliques - all alienate masses
- Inability to mould the diverse skills, expertise and experience which may lead to factions, mistrust and slander with damaging political consequences
- Growing perception which is being used by the enemy, of the ANC as an African - even tribal - organisation
- Black middle stratum's negative perception of mass action especially consumer/rental boycotts - keeping this layer away from the ANC
- Mass/activists depoliticisation as a result of lowering morale due to lack of being taken on board about all issues, especially on issues of strategy and tactics
- Inability to channel assistance from international allies for assistance to the organisation inside the country

Opportunities

- Huge potential membership from both Women's and Youth Leagues
- Huge potential membership in the organised trade unions
- Large support amongst traditional leaders and religious institutions
- Extensive international contacts
- Extensive organisational infrastructure built prior to the unbanning of the ANC

B. RESOLUTIONS

Having examined in depth and critically the strengths and weaknesses of the Movement; having identified the opportunities and threats to the ANC, the Commission therefore

Resolves that

1. On the Youth League membership
 - 1.1 A special commission should be set up to investigate our inability to draw in all the Youth League membership into the ANC;
 - 1.2 The DAC should initiate sports and cultural activities to generate excitement that will attract the youth.
 - 1.3 Clarity must be given by this Conference on the implications and meaning of the concepts "autonomous and independence" with regard to the ANC Leagues.
2. On the Tripartite Alliance
 - 2.1 A joint commission with the two other members of the Tripartite Alliance should be set up to investigate the reasons for the inability of the Alliance to function effectively at the grassroots level, and make recommendations for the redressal of the situation. The investigation should include reasons for our inability to attract COSATU membership into the ANC.

3. **On the Civics and Local Government**
 - 3.1 The ANC should develop a clear policy on local government with special reference to the roles of Civic and branches in this regard, leaving in mind that the Civics have been the formations occupying this terrain of struggle;
 - 3.2 The Department of Local Government should establish clear structural-functional relations with the Civics to obviate tensions and resultant confusion;
4. **On Strategic Campaigns**

The ANC should conduct door-to-door campaigns and house visits, especially in the middle classes in all communities – preferably by the highly disciplined and politically clear leadership in the latter sector – to explain the history and policies of the ANC;
5. **On Political Education**
 - 5.1 The Department of Political Education should develop a comprehensive national political education programme, with special focus on the history and policies of the ANC, in the languages understood and spoken by the people;
 - 5.2 Some commissars from abroad should be deployed to do political education work amongst the oppressed;
 - 5.3 An extensive political educational campaign/programme should be started to explain the need for, and the nature of a liberation front with other organisations like PAC, AZAPO;
6. **On the Public Image of the ANC**
 - 6.1 A mechanism, constitutional if need be, should be established to ensure that inter-departmental coordination, particularly at national level, to take place to obviate individualism and incoherence in public pronouncements on policy matters;
7. **On the Diverse Strands within the Movement**
 - 7.1 Conference should order the incoming NEC to develop a national programme to integrate the rich, but diverse, political and cultural experiences of our membership, to obviate the formation of a “them and us” syndrome which might have adverse political consequences on the image and unity of the ANC;
8. **On the International Contacts**
 - 8.1 The ANC should utilise its extensive international contacts to access skills and resources for educational and developmental purposes.
 - 8.2 As interest and support for the anti-apartheid cause diminishes, due to the De Klerk regime’s initiatives, the ANC has to examine ways and means of becoming self-reliant as quickly as possible.
9. **On Employment/Administrative Practices**
 - 9.1 The incoming NEC should evolve a staff code to ensure professionalism in the regulation and coordination of staff conduct in all offices of the ANC, at all levels.
 - 9.2 The Secretary General’s Office should develop a comprehensive basic administrative skills training programme to enhance the skills-quality of our office operatives.
 - 9.3 The Organising Department should establish simple procedures to deal with lost membership cards and the renewal of membership, with special reference to what the ANC’s membership year is.
10. **On Relations with Supportive Professionals and Businesspeople**
 - 10.1 Proper canvassing and consultations must precede mass actions, where these will affect supportive professional and businesspersons, for both logistical and political reasons.
11. **On the Rural Areas**
 - 11.1 The incoming NEC should start a development programme on rural areas based on strong

democratic organs of people’s power and accountable leadership.

C. THE WAY FORWARD

- Special commission to investigate reasons for inability to draw in the workers, youth and women.
- Recommend the review of membership fees with regard to students, pensioners and unemployed.
- Deploy some commissars from abroad to do political education among the oppressed.
- Start development programme in rural areas, based on strong democratic organs of people’s power and leadership.
- Extensive educational programme campaign to explain nature and need for a liberation front with other organisations eg PAC, AZAPO, etc.
- Establish clear structural-functional relations with civics to obviate tensions and resultant confusion.
- Door-to-door campaigns, house visits for especially the middle classes in all communities. The latter preferably by highly disciplined and politically clear leadership.
- Initiate sporting and cultural activities at all levels for the purpose of organising our people into the ANC and to inculcate certain value orientations in our communities.
- Proper canvassing and consultations must precede mass actions where these will affect the supportive professional and business sectors – for both logistical and political reasons.
0. Identify specific recruitment target groups and formulate appropriate strategies and/or tactics for that particular group.
1. Develop a clear policy on local government with special reference to the political role of branches, bearing in mind the fact that the civics have always occupied this terrain of struggle.
2. Develop a national programme of integrating the rich and diverse political and cultural experiences of our membership.
3. Establish a mechanism, constitutional if need be, to close the gap between the National Organisation, Regional Organisations, Branches.
4. Develop a comprehensive national political education programme with special focus on the history and policies of the ANC (it cannot be assumed that people know these).
5. Establish a joint commission with the other members of the Tripartite Alliance to investigate the reasons for the inability of the alliance to function efficiently and make redressal recommendations. The investigation must include the reasons for our inability to attract COSATU members to the ANC.
6. Establish simple mechanisms and procedures to deal with lost membership cards, renewal of membership with special reference to what a membership year is.
7. Membership fees should be paid as a percentage of the total earnings of individual members.
8. Develop a comprehensive basic administration skills programme to develop the skills quality of our office operatives.
9. Establish a mechanism, constitutional if need be, to enforce interdepartmental coordination, particularly at national level, to obviate individualism and incoherence in public pronouncements on policy matters.
10. Utilise our extensive international contacts to raise funds for formal educational and skills development purposes.
11. Apparently insensitive clauses in the Draft Constitution, eg Clause B1 “Africans in particular” must be given a wider and historical context. (This could be annexed to the Draft Document and/or the constitution itself on approval by Conference).
12. Branch Organisers should submit regular reports to the Regional Organisers, and the latter should submit regular reports to the Regional Organisers, and latter should submit regular reports to the National Organiser.

23. The National Organising Department and the Department of Political Education should coordinate their work from national, through the regions, to the branches.
24. Full-time branch organisers should be employed, particularly to organise on farms and rural areas, where local experience is an essential prerequisite.
25. Where this is politically feasible, strong relations should be established with traditional leaders to gain access to the adult population in rural communities.
26. A strong disciplinary code should be formulated and be strictly enforced to safeguard the image of the ANC.
27. Clarification must be given with regard to the meaning and implication of the words/concepts "autonomy" and "independence" insofar as the relationship between the ANC and its Leagues.
28. Delegation of tasks by higher structures to lower ones should be the order of the day.
29. Staff Code (see resolutions).
30. DIP structures to be reproduced at regional and branch level.
31. M-Plan to be applied.
32. Set up branch offices.
33. Membership cards should be available to all members to recruit others.