

**AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

**From resistance to  
reconstruction  
and nation-building**

**Strategy and tactics**

**49th National  
Conference**



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**CONFERENCE DISCUSSION DOCUMENT**  
**ANC STRATEGY AND TACTICS**

**(A) RESISTANCE**

**1.0) Colonisation Process (1652-1912)**

1.1) The establishment of the outpost of the Dutch East India Company in the Cape Peninsula in 1652 marked the beginning of a long history of imperialist expansion and colonisation in South Africa. The establishment of this outpost was a direct consequence of economic expansion in Europe and the emergence of a new mercantilist class. This class was either at the helm of or was acting in collusion with governments which saw imperialist expansion and the colonisation of foreign markets as one of the ways of developing their own economies as well as alleviating internal economic, political and demographic problems in their countries.

1.2) A series of resistance wars against colonialism was waged by our people at every possible frontier. Ultimately, the victory of the coloniser over the indigenous majority resulted in the establishment of what we characterised as "colonialism of a special type". This form of colonialism was so described because of the coexistence within the same territory of both the "colonial power" and the colonised.

1.3) The defeat of our people in the wars of resistance was largely a result of the following factors: Firstly, this was the time of the ascendancy of imperialism as a world system. It was a system founded on and backed by a more developed economic base, a superior weaponry system and a more established political force. Secondly, the indigenous people resisted as divided, fragmented and at times fratricidal tribal and ethnic groups. Thirdly, there was no developed political leadership and organisation that could forge political cohesion and national consciousness amongst the different groups.

1.4) The Dutch colonists who originally occupied South Africa later came into conflict with a new colonial power, Great Britain. Great Britain finally established its colonial authority at the end of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902.

1.5) The Bambata Rebellion of 1906 was the last series of resistance wars by our people as fragmental tribal and ethnic groups. The defeat of that uprising opened the way for the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Through the establishment of that Union the victorious Great Britain ceded political power to the white settler minority to the exclusion and against the interests of the African majority.

**2.0) Peaceful Resistance (1912 - 1961)**

2.1) The African National Congress (ANC) was founded in 1912 with the purpose of uniting and mobilising the oppressed African majority in resistance against a political and constitutional Union which had totally excluded the African people from its framework. The strategic objective of this resistance was the establishment of a non-racial democracy in our country. From 1912 until 1960 this objective was pursued through various peaceful extra-parliamentary means.

2.2) In the course of that period of resistance the ANC forged a resistance pact with democratic organisations of the Indian and Coloured communities. This pact was dictated upon by the recognition of two important factors. Firstly, the recognition that these communities were themselves also politically and constitutionally oppressed. Secondly, the recognition that successive white minority governments were trying to co-opt these national groups into an undemocratic political and constitutional order as second-class citizens in order to bolster that order against the resistance of the African majority.

2.3) The ANC also forged a pact with the organisation of white democrats who shared the desire of the oppressed to attain a non-racial democracy. This pact was also dictated upon by the recognition that political and constitutional freedom of white people in our country was incomplete nor could it be guaranteed without the liberation of the African people.

2.4) The ANC entered into a resistance alliance with the left forces, represented by the Communist Party of South Africa (and later, the South African Communist Party), as well as the progressive trade union movement, ultimately represented by the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

2.5) These formations, the progressive political organisations of the various national groups, the working class and the trade unions became the basic organisational components in the alliance that was forged to ensure the mobilisation of our people into the struggle against Apartheid colonialism, for the establishment of a non-racial democratic order. This alliance also recognised the leading role of the ANC which derived from a common acceptance of the nature of the struggle as being characterised by the central objective of the emancipation of the oppressed African majority.

2.6) As the South African economy developed and urban life began to assert its preeminence, recognition also grew of the centrality of the urban African working class in particular and the working class in general to the struggle for national emancipation.

2.7) At that stage of national democratic resistance, the ANC identified the liberation of the African majority as the main content of the national democratic struggle. This strategic aim governed every aspect of the conduct of mass resistance.

2.8) In 1960 the ANC was officially banned. That development closed the avenue to the exclusive use of peaceful extra-parliamentary resistance and compelled the movement in 1961 to adopt a strategy of armed struggle.

### **3.0) Armed Resistance (1961 - 1990)**

3.1) From 1961 onwards methods of resistance of our people led by the ANC were characterized by the adoption of a strategic approach which recognised the importance of four pillars of our struggle in the conduct of resistance. In the conduct of resistance these four pillars were utilised in a dialectically intergrated manner which ensured mutual reinforcement of one another and the more effective advancement of the liberation struggle in its totality.

3.2) The ANC led a campaign of mass political education and agitation from the underground. It was a campaign aimed at achieving mass political rejection of Apartheid in all its forms. As a longer term objective, the campaign sought to make the country ungovernable and Apartheid unworkable. It sought to empower the masses politically, to enable them to take their future in their own hands and to replace Apartheid structures with structures of mass resistance and popular governance.

3.3) Already from the end of the 1940's, the joint involvement in the struggle of the oppressed national groups began to shift the subjective understanding of the objective of the struggle from being the "liberation of the African majority" to "the liberation of the black people in general and Africans in particular". The evolution of the struggle over the last four (4) decades in particular further emphasized the objective of the emancipation of the black majority as a whole.

3.4) The formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961 opened a chapter of underground armed resistance and placed on the agenda the perspective of the seizure of power by the people from the white minority regime.

3.5) The ANC mission abroad coordinated an international political campaign. Its objective was to ensure political, military, economic and cultural isolation of the Apartheid regime. It was aimed at mobilising political, material and human resources for the national liberation movement.

3.6) The liberation alliance led by the ANC created a network of underground structures inside and outside the country to ensure the realisation of all the strategic and tactical goals of the liberation movement.

### **4.0) Negotiations (1990-1994)**

4.1) In 1990 the Apartheid regime was forced to lift the ban on the ANC and other organisations. This constituted a strategic victory for the movement, leading to the creation of political conditions which made it possible to pursue the objective of the transfer of political power to the people by other means.

4.2) Negotiations aimed at establishing a new and inclusive constitutional order began in earnest. Of particular importance with regard to these constitutional negotiations and their outcome are the following considerations, that:

4.2.1) The negotiations took place in a situation in which, as a result of the internal and external struggle and changes internationally, the balance of forces had shifted decisively in favour of the movement for national liberation;

4.2.2) In the course of that struggle, neither the national liberation movement nor the forces of white minority rule had emerged as an outright victor, thus obliging these two opposing forces to enter into certain agreements with each other;

4.2.3) During the negotiations, the liberation forces were further inhibited by the fact that the constitution-making body was not elected and therefore could not use the power of a convincing election victory further to ensure the imprint of the views of the majority on the constitutional process;

4.2.4) The negotiations culminated in an agreement which established institutions and processes which would lead to a transfer of political power to the people while leaving the old state machinery in place and enabling the political representatives of the old order to participate in governing the country; and

4.2.5) The negotiated settlement imposed constitutional procedures or "rules of the game" on all political forces within the country through which these forces, including the national liberation movement, could effect such social changes as they may wish to bring about.

4.3) The April 1994 elections, held in terms of the provisions of the Interim Constitution, gave expression to the strategic objective of the transfer of political power to the people, ending the system of white minority rule which derived from the European colonisation of the country.

4.4) This election confirmed the ANC as the principle political force in the country, the representative of the majority of the people and the vehicle for the exercise of the democratic principle of majority rule.

4.5) Nevertheless, given the conditions under which negotiations took place, this representative of the majority had to enter into a Government of National Unity which, for five years, must operate in a manner which recognises both the principle of majority rule and effective participation in government by political minorities.

## **(B) TRANSFORMATION**

### **5.0) Strategic Objectives**

5.1) The strategic objective of the ANC is the transformation of our country into a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist and prosperous society. It must be understood that this objective, which visualises the reconstruction and development of South Africa, can only be achieved through struggle.

5.2) The elections of April 1994, the establishment of the GNU led by the ANC and the adoption of the transitional constitution amount to a qualitative historical moment in the course of transfer of political power from the white minority to the democratic majority. This moment marked a decisive but not complete transfer of political power. The democratic majority has won only some of the important elements of that political power necessary for the advancement of the struggle towards the completion of the current phase of the democratic revolution.

5.3) The creation of a non-racial society, a central objective of the democratic revolution, requires that the movement should set short, medium and long term targets and adopt a programme of action aimed at the genuine deracialisation of South African society in all its elements - the dismantling of Apartheid. This should include affirmative action, to enable the disadvantaged sections of our population to catch up with those previously advantaged by colonialism and Apartheid.

5.4) Similar targets and a programme of action should be adopted to address the issue of creating a non-sexist society, preceding from acceptance of the strategic concept that without the emancipation of woman no society can be said to be truly liberated. The struggle for the emancipation of woman is also interlinked with the offensive to create a non-racial society as well as the fundamental objective radically to improve the quality of life of the working people on a sustainable basis.

5.5) Another central objective of the democratic revolution is the achievement of national unity. This requires that though we should continue to recognise the ethnic and racial diversity of our population, we should seek to build a united society which would not be torn apart by competing and antagonistic ethnic and racial demands. This requires among other things, that we should continue to oppose any "federal" solutions which seek to distribute political, economic and state power on the basis of race and ethnicity or which seek to distribute power among the regions in a manner that would create antagonistic interests among these regions. At the same time, we must continue to uphold the principle and the practice of bringing government as close to the people as possible, to ensure popular participation in governance.

no federal

### **6.0) Character and Tasks of the ANC**

6.1) The results of the April 1994 elections confirmed the correctness of the ANC's characterisation of itself. The results also confirmed the correctness of the characterisation of the main content of our national democratic revolution plus the correct identification of the main motive forces of that revolution. As a leader of the process of reconstruction and development the ANC should analyze the present phase of our revolution and seek to find a correct identification and characterization of all these elements.

6.2) The ANC is the vanguard political movement at the head of this process of transformation. The character and strength of the ANC must continue to reside in its mass base. It must strive to remain a broad democratic movement by accepting into its ranks all those who accept and abide by its policies and objectives. The character and strength of the ANC also reside on our ability to mobilize and organize the ANCWL and the ANCYL.

6.3) The ability of the ANC to continue to champion the struggle for the emancipating of our woman and lead the struggle towards the establishment of a non-sexist society depends on our success in integrating the objective of non-sexism in all our transformation programmes, as well as ensuring that all our organisational

structures are politically and organisationally empowered to pursue this goal in a consistent manner. The ANCWL represents a section of our society which, over the decades, has been oppressed and exploited as a nation, a class and as woman. True social transformation of our society will only have meaning if it addresses their plight at all these levels. The ANCWL should continue to broaden its base and to deepen its political organisational strength. It should place itself at the centre of the struggle of woman's organisations and at the centre of the programs of the Gender Commission.

6.4) The African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) should continue to function as an organisational and political preparatory school for young activists of our movement. The organisational autonomy of the ANCYL broadens the organisational and the political human resource base of the ANC. The ANCYL always provides organisational vibrancy and that necessary youthful political debate imperative to a revolutionary organisation. It should continue to broaden its base and to deepen its political and organisational strength. It must strive to galvanize and to place itself at the centre of the broadest spectrum of youth organisations for reconstruction and development. It must play an influential role in the program of the Youth Commissions.

6.5) The character of the ANC should continue to derive from the correct characterisation of the current phase of the democratic revolution. The main content of this phase continues to be the all-round political, economic and social emancipation and upliftment of the black majority. It is this section which, over the decades, has been politically and economically deprived by decades of Apartheid rule.

6.6) The character of the ANC should also derive from the main motive forces of this democratic transformation. These forces are represented by the black working class, the black rural poor and the significant section of the black middle strata. These are the forces which possess the best political and ideological potential to lead and defend the process of transformation.

6.7) At the same time we must recognise the fact of the social differentiation of these black masses which will, at times, and with regard to various issues, lead the various strata and classes to express different aspirations and pursue separate objectives. While continuing to strive to represent the black people as a whole, the movement must however ensure that at all times and in the first instance, it represents the interests of the ordinary working people, who constitute the majority of the people of our country.

6.8) The process of reconstruction and development is taking place at the time when labour organisations have reached an unprecedented level of organization and political maturity. This is the time when rural communities, more than at any time in the past, are acutely aware and are reclaiming their right to land. This is the time when we are witness to a multiplicity of democratic organizations of civil society both in urban and rural areas. These are sections of our society most eager to see a thorough-going process of social transformation.

6.9) The continued predominance of the national question in our social and historical motion points to the amount of work we still have to do in organising and mobilising among the white community. To a certain extent the same reality applies to the Coloured and Indian communities. It is an indication that we still have to convince these communities that the policies and programs of the ANC, in the long-term, guarantee the best interest of the country as a whole as opposed to the short-term sectional economic interest devised by the grand Apartheid strategy of the past.

6.10) Various sections among the white community share an objective interest in the abolition of the old order, the creation of conditions of stability and peace and the establishment of a truly democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous society. These sections must also be mobilised to come over to the side of the democratic transformation.

6.11) Continued predominance of the national question in our social motion is also an indication of the road we have to traverse towards the attainment of a truly non-racial democracy. The process towards the attainment of this objective is inseparable from our ability to manage the reconstruction and development program in such a way that we eliminate Apartheid artificial barriers and remove socio-economic disparities based on race and thus open the way for our march towards a fully non-racial and non-sexist democratic society.

## **7.0) Building Organisational Capacity of the ANC**

7.1) Our ability to maximize organisational capacity of the ANC depends on our ability to marshal the widest possible base of our people for the main political task. Over the decades the strategy of building political alliances has proved to be an indispensable prerequisite in pursuit of this objective.

7.2) The Tripartite Alliance is situated at the centre of this broad political and organisational front, which recognises the leading role of the ANC and is united around the perspectives contained in the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

7.3) Historically, the Tripartite Alliance owes its existence to a shared interest in the victory of the national democratic revolution on the part of the national democratic movement, the party of Socialism and the progressive TU movement.

7.4) While maintaining their independence, these forces continue to recognise the need to retain this alliance to ensure united action in meeting further objectives of the national democratic revolution, in conditions in which political power has been transferred into the hands of the people. To this end, they have agreed on a common platform, as contained in the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

7.5) Each component part of the Alliance has a responsibility to organise and mobilise its social base and any other forces allied to it, for the defence of the democratic revolution, the implementation of the RDP and the mobilisation of the people as a whole for their constructive engagement in the process of the fundamental transformation of the country.

7.6) The ANC continues to encourage the growth and consolidation of mass democratic organisations of civil society (civics, village committees, cultural organisations, NGO's, CBO's, religious formations, sectoral organisations, etc.) as popular vehicles for change.

7.7) It is in the pursuit of this broad political task that the formation of the Patriotic Front should also be understood. It is designed to provide a broad political framework which is so vital in lending to our struggle a broad political and moral mandate.

7.8) It is imperative that we intensify the work of building ANC organisational structures in the localities. These structures should be sufficiently organized to guide and deliver reconstruction and development. This task should be performed in a manner consistent with our understanding of what comprises the main content of transformation and who comprise the main motive forces for this transformation.

7.9) The historical process of social transformation which the ANC leads requires that the movement should pay special attention to the all-round development of a core of cadres who must play a central role as organisers and activists, capable of strengthening the capacity of the movement to discharge its responsibilities during the current phase of the struggle.

7.10) Similarly, care must be taken to ensure a balanced deployment of cadres to ensure our effective intervention on all fronts, including the governmental, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, with proper coordination among all these, to ensure that we act as one movement, united around a common policy and bound by a common programme of action.

7.11) Conscious and systematic efforts will also have to be made to ensure that our membership truly reflects the broad mass base which the movement represents, both in the rural and urban areas.

7.12) Consistent political work among this membership will also have to be carried out to ensure that it is fully empowered to play its role as a conscious force for the reconstruction and development of the country, in keeping with the policies of the movement.

7.13) Today the task of building the organisational capacity of the ANC is inseparable from successful implementation of the RDP. This capacity cannot depend only on ANC organisational structures. Of themselves, these structures are inadequate for the task. The organisational capacity of the ANC for the task ahead should be seen in its widest possible sense; as the leader of the Tripartite Alliance and the mass democratic movement, as the vanguard movement of the MDM, as the leading political party in the GNU and as the main articulator of the reconstruction and development programme of the government. The ANC should pursue its strategic political objective by exercising effective organisational and political leadership at all these levels.

7.14) The next test of the organisational and the political strength of the ANC and the demonstration of the social composition of its support base will arise in the context of the forthcoming local government elections. Winning those elections is one of the most important and urgent tasks facing the movement. It is at this local level where community involvement and empowerment can be realised. It is at these levels that deliverance which reaches the most needy must be effected.

## 8.0) National Consensus

8.1) All key sectors of our community were elated over the manner in which political power was transferred to the democratic majority. The process of national democratic change, however, did not end with April elections. This moment of national unity should be translated and extended to a national consensus, a new patriotism built on the realisation and acceptance by all major sectors of our society that it is in the interest of the country as a whole to promote and consolidate that democratic settlement.

8.2) The leadership role in promoting that national consensus falls on the shoulders of the ANC. The class and political foundation of that social consensus should be the GNU, the TU movement, the civic movement and the private sector. The most convincing illustration of the possibility and potential for the ANC to build and consolidate the social consensus is the extent of the support the RDP has received from all sectors of our society.

8.3) The challenge of forging a lasting national consensus, to the extent possible uniting the social entities

mentioned above, is closely linked with the challenge of forging a common approach towards the transformation of the economy. It is vital to understand that the vision contained the RDP as a whole is impossible to realise without accomplishing some definite economic goals. The common approach we seek must include such elements as:

- \* rapid and sustainable economic growth and development; restructuring and modernisation of the economy;
- \* ending poverty; redistribution to ensure race, gender and geographic equity with regard to the distribution of wealth, income and opportunity; and,
- \* finding a proper place within the regional, continental and world economy on the basis of mutual benefits, on a sustained basis.

*Business must contribute*

8.4) Conditions should be created to ensure that business contributes to the successful implementation of the RDP both in its own interest and in the common effort to ensure stability and sustainable economic growth.

8.5) Among the issues that must also be addressed in this context are:

- \* An end to our status as a net exporter of capital, to ensure radically increased rates of investments;
- \* An end to monopoly domination of the economy which results in stifling competition, blocking the emergence of new entrepreneurs and discouraging foreign direct investment;
- \* The renewal of all sectors of the economy to ensure that they are internationally competitive with regard to all factors of production; and,

*Open S.A market to more dynamic trade & capital flows*

- \* further intergrating the South African economy into the world economy by opening the South African market to more dynamic trade and capital flows in a manner that will ensure greater and continuously increasing prosperity for all our people, on the basis of rigorous economic growth and development.

*land*

8.6) Central to the task of forging this consensus and creating a stable and democratic socio-economic base for the RDP is the speedy resolution of the land and agrarian question in our country. Land restitution is integral to building a new democratic nation. To the majority of our people who were forcibly dispossessed of their land, land restitution is one of the main gateways to family life, social coherence, personal freedom, social security and the right to property. The government should advance an adequate legal and political framework designed to address this question. It is only on the basis of a proper strategy on this question that the agrarian question can properly be situated within the broader socio-economic strategy for reconstruction and development.

8.7) The RDP document was drafted by the mass democratic movement led by the ANC. Today that document has become the main policy guideline of the GNU. The ANC strategy of reconstruction and development has assumed a hegemonic status providing a global framework to every conceivable aspect of social activity. The fact of the leading role of this policy framework enjoins the ANC with political responsibility over a constituency as broad as South African society itself. In the real and practical sense of reconstruction and development the constituency of the ANC is the entire South African society.

## 9.0) Transformation of the State Machinery

9.1) The act of restructuring and transforming organs of state power constitutes one of the most important tasks in the process of broadening and consolidating the national democratic settlement. It is with the completion of this process that the revolution can truly be said to set firm foundations for its permanent Defence.

9.2) The process of restructuring and transforming the state machinery should essentially comprise of democratization at three fundamental levels. Firstly, such organs should reflect the national character and social content of our country. Secondly, it should affirm in favour of deprived social classes. Thirdly it should affirm in favour of and promote gender equality. We should strive towards an implementable and transparent process of restructuring.

9.3) Restructuring and democratization of organs of state power also involves retraining personnel both in terms of skills and in terms of outlook in line with the task of the current period, the kind of society we are trying to create and the demands of service to the people, transparency and accountability.

9.4) The civil service is located at a strategic interaction and communication point between the executive arm of government and the people. Its democratization is tantamount to opening more effective channels central to ensuring good governance, popular empowerment and effective delivery. In the end, we must create an effective and efficient civil service, free of corruption, geared to service the interests of the people and motivated to effect change rather than maintain the status quo.

9.5) We need to move with some speed towards the transformation of the armed forces, the police and correctional services, the intelligence agencies of the government in order to guarantee the defence of the constitution, protection of citizens of our country, protection of public and private property and preservation of

we should strive to bring the leadership of the ANC and the government closer to the people.

### **12.0) Peace and Stability**

12.1) Violence and social instability have been a feature of South African society from the beginning of the process of the colonisation of our country. This derived both from the direct process of colonisation and the impoverishment of individuals and communities resulting from the establishment of exploitative social relations.

12.2) The democratic order has inherited counter-insurgency forces and individuals who, as part of the older order, were organised, trained and indoctrinated as a reactionary force to resist the birth of a democratic society. Some of these are capable of and have been involved in the use of violence to achieve this objective and have the means to destabilise the new society through the use of force.

12.3) The democratic order has also inherited a situation of high level of criminal violence which reflects both the poverty of millions of our people, the social disintegration which derived from the illegitimacy of the government and the state and the moral crisis which mirrored the crisis of the Apartheid system as a whole.

12.4) The guarantee of peace and social stability is one of the fundamental objectives of the democratic revolution, without which it is impossible to realise the objectives contained in the RDP. It is therefore our duty to ensure that we destroy all centres of counter revolutionary violence and destabilisation that may still exist within our society and to reorient the security forces and the public at large to deal more effectively with the challenge of political and criminal violence.

12.5) Another objective we have to achieve is to work towards the restoration of a culture of respect for human dignity, the creation of a gun-free society and establishment of respect for and acceptance of the legitimacy of all state structures.

12.6) In our interest, we must also contribute everything we can to ensure that within our region in particular, but also in Africa and the rest of the world, in general, the masses of the people enjoy conditions of peace and stability, in defence both of life and development.

### **13.0) International**

13.1) The international campaign of the ANC against Apartheid and racism over the decades plus the role that the ANC has played in democratic international fora placed our movements amongst eminent world forces for change, democracy and peace. The manner and content of our democratic transition has helped to emphasize our organisational and political maturity as an integral part of these world forces. It has placed the ANC and the country on the high political and moral ground both on the continent and the world at large.

13.2) The political and moral stature of our leadership, in particular that of our Presidents, comrades Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, embodies that long tradition of the ANC as a formidable campaigner in the struggle against Apartheid, racism, colonialism, for human rights and peace. Today this leadership constitutes a political and moral voice of conscience articulating aspirations of many of the under-developed and developing countries.

13.3) The success of the RDP depends on a conducive regional, continental and international climate characterised, by peace, security, stability and prosperity. Our policy should place a high premium on regional cooperation with the aim of promoting democracy, peace, stability and prosperity in the sub-continent as a whole.

13.4) The future we seek requires that we participate in the global debate about the New World Order. It is a task we should execute with a sense of delicate balance between the national interest and the need to contribute to the effort to make our continent and the rest of the world a better place to live in. We need a New World Order which recognises the need for all humanity to contribute to the process of the reconstruction and development of the developing world, which recognizes that the world is highly interdependent, and that its common survival depends on the survival and development of all its peoples. This is a vision which both domestically and internationally must be firmly based on the concept of human solidarity.



