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**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR
BUILDING THE ANC
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Introduction

The goal of our struggle is to destroy apartheid and transfer power to the people. The ANC has always combined many different forms of struggle to achieve that goal. For example mass action, underground organisation, armed struggle and isolating apartheid internationally, were characterised as the four pillars of our struggle in the period of our illegality. And it was understood that one or another form of struggle would dominate at different times depending on concrete conditions.

Since our legalisation in February the ANC has committed itself to building a mass based organisation. Since then the emphasis has shifted away from armed actions and moved more towards organisational questions related to the building and upgrading of MK. This process culminated in the suspension of the armed struggle to assist the negotiation process. This is because conditions allow for this and not because we have stopped being "revolutionary". The process of negotiations is a new method of trying to win people's power. But this only serves to highlight the necessity of furthering and consolidating mass struggles and carrying out international campaigns.

The apartheid government has only decided to talk to the ANC because of the organised strength of the resistance of the people. But it continues to use repression to attack and weaken the ANC and all the democratic forces. The balance of forces which made the beginning of negotiations possible is not necessarily the balance which would lead to a genuine resolution of the conflict. Negotiations therefore are a terrain of intense struggle - a terrain of contest about the fundamental question of the national democratic struggle, the issue of the transfer of political power.

Since the August 6 Pretoria Summit of the SA government and the ANC, there has been an upsurge of violence directed primarily against black communities. In the sense that it reflects and affects the strategy and tactics both of the ANC and the government, the violence is redefining the political terrain. It is not a separate and incidental factor in an otherwise smooth transition. Neither is it ancillary to negotiations about a new constitution. It is linked to the longstanding strategy of apartheid to use terror to destroy democratic opposition. It is clear that de Klerk has not distanced himself from this strategy - Vlok and Malan are still in place, Liebenberg has been appointed head of the SADF. The violence shows that the shadowy CCB type machineries continue to operate, despite the alleged dismantling of the CCB. Under a different guise the mini JMCs continue to plot the elimination of our activists in the

townships.

While the issue of multifaceted self defence (both political and military) is central to the approach of the liberation movement, it is crucial for the democratic forces to assume an offensive posture. The violence has in fact created a set of conditions allowing for a strategic advance on the part of the liberation movement on a variety of fronts. We refer here inter alia to the creation of self defence units and the formation of a broad front against violence.

In order to make this strategic advance, we need to be able to understand how and why the regime has seized the tactical initiative in the contest characterising this phase of struggle.

The regime is pursuing a political programme with the following main objectives:

- * to regain legitimacy in the eyes of the mass of the governed and the international community
- * to present itself as a force indispensable to the process of transition both as the manager of this process and the force best placed to secure it
- * to shift the ideological terrain by depriving the national democratic struggle of its national liberation character and present it as a contest between "free enterprise" and "socialism"
- * to pacify our people and engender the psychology among us of being passive spectators.

Understanding this, we then have to weigh afresh the levers at our disposal in pursuit of our political objectives. Our capacity to wield and effectively utilise the mass support we enjoy is crucial.

ANC is the vanguard

The unbanning of the ANC has opened up new space and new opportunities for us to organise. We need to build a powerful, mass based ANC.

The first step on this road is to create regional structures which are able to build powerful branches. This is not a technical or mechanical task but a political one. It is not a question of just setting up branches and signing up members. We must adopt strategies here for organising, and for engaging the masses in struggle around our main political objectives. In this way we will advance and our membership will grow beyond a paper one and into a mighty lever.

The strength we need to win our freedom through negotiations will come from united mass struggle. To defeat the enemy's attacks on our movement and to be strong enough to win our goal of people's power, the ANC must mount big campaigns that mobilise

and organise the masses of our people across the length and breadth of our country in active struggle around our main demands. That is how the ANC will really grow, and that is the best way to move forward to a democratic South Africa.

We need to plan our activities together with our allies, the SACP and Cosatu and ensure a co-ordinated thrust of the entire MDM concretising the revolutionary alliance.

We also need to mobilise a broad front of AA forces on issues like ending apartheid violence and the demand for a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist SA, interim government, and a constituent assembly.

We need to look at specific strategies for mobilising different sectors of our people for example miners, factory workers, nurses, the white community etc. We must pay special attention to drawing in and empowering those sections of our people who are the most oppressed, the most voiceless and the most disadvantaged: women, rural people and the unemployed.

We must begin the process of meeting structures engaged at grassroots level. We must create forums where mass formations come together, share experiences and plan together. We must be very clear about the different roles of different kinds of organisations and how they relate to each other - ANC branches, civics, and trade unions. How does the ANC take up mass struggles in a way which is different from mass organisations while respecting the independence of mass formations such as civics and Cosas? To understand this we have to be able to articulate the root causes and the political aspects of mass issues.

We must broaden our base pulling into the ANC, through activity, previously unorganised sections of our people. All this can only be done by building a powerful machine capable of organising and leading our people - the ANC.

The Organising Committee - engine of the ANC

We believe that the ANC can only be effective if the branches are part of a strong national organisation, which has a clear programme of action and leads the struggle in a nationally co-ordinated way.

The Organising Committee is not a technical committee which supervises the account books and reports on membership figures to the National Executive at the end of every month.

The Organising Committee is not only the implementation body of the ANC. It has been charged with the task of giving direction, inspiring, guiding and supervising the organisation of our people into structures with a capacity to act. This cannot be realised in a vacuum or by a magic wand. The OC must continually draw from the rich experiences of the regions, it must tap the wealth of potential and initiative that comes from the ground and

from there develop its overall organisational strategy. It has to report on progress in this regard. It has to see that all regions by a certain date have a constitutionally elected leadership and that that leadership is being exercised and is guiding the creation and development of branches. That branches function democratically and are able to lead local struggles and link into national ones. That every member of the ANC has a right and duty to participate in and formulate policy. Similarly regions should seek to learn from the experiences of the branches. This means that our movement would have to encourage initiative in the branches and participation by the general membership in the activities of the ANC.

The advantage of local initiative is that branches and regions would not have to wait passively for the Head Office to develop campaigns for them. This will unchain the creativity of the membership ensuring that they do not become spectators but active participants. Each member would become a recruiter for the movement and a leader of the people. Only in this way can we achieve our task of organising the masses of our people into structures capable of creating conditions for the transference of power.

This will ensure the meaningful growth of our organisation into a two way process developing from bottom to top and from top to bottom. For the leadership of the ANC to be able to make the right decisions and know that the mass of our people are behind them, in other words to be able to exercise leadership they must know the realities on the ground. They must know what the issues are facing our people and the problems of implementing policy. It is the task of the OC to see to it that those views are tabled and considered. In the same way decisions of the leadership must be transmitted to the regions, branches and membership. New positions must be explained, tactics altered to meet differing specifics and guidance on problems must be offered.

Central to this process is the quality of the relationship between the Organising Committee and the regions. Regional committees must be in dynamic contact with the OC enabling the OC to service and direct the regions (and therefore the branches) actively and creatively.

Activities in regions must be reported promptly so that our propaganda machinery can move and report on local struggles, enabling other parts of the country to be kept up to date.

Political problem areas must be identified so that the DPE can make input and continually upgrade regional education officers.

When members realise that their problems come to the notice of the leadership, when their successes are acknowledged, when they are part of the formulation of policy and decisions, then we can say we have a living, breathing, democratic vanguard.

Organisers - the key to organisation!

Branch and regional organisers are the key to the whole process we have outlined. You are the comrades who link the masses to the political vanguard through its structures. You are the comrades who transmit ANC policy and use our propaganda to conscientise our people. You are the comrades to whom branches and members will refer when there are problems. You are the comrades on the ground who have to assist our branches to find solutions to problems. Above all, it is you comrades, who must inspire our branches and our people.

How your work, what you need to make your work more effective, how you relate to your regional executive committees in guiding them as to what issues need to be taken up nationally and what needs to be taken up locally, how you relate with your civic, trade union and party counterparts, all these questions we should be dealing with and providing some answers for at this workshop.

For how ANC members perceive their organisation is through you and how they develop into participants is through your work and is dependent on the depth of your political understanding of your tasks.

Setting achievable goals

This workshop should agree on guidelines for regions to set themselves achievable goals based on their concrete conditions. [Some regions have already begun this process]. For example, a region may set itself a goal of recruiting one million members by the end of June next year and the creation of 250 branches within the stated period. In other words we must set goals and time limits. We re-iterate, these must be achievable goals. We should not set unrealistic goals because if we fail dismally to achieve them we may become demoralised.

Once we have set our goals and the time limits, we should then proceed to develop a plan of action. The plan of action should guide the organisers or branches on the steps that have to be taken and the resources necessary to achieve those goals.

What are our strategic priorities?

- * building of democratic regions and branches
- * developing a national programme of action which takes into account different specifics in the regions
- * ensuring mass participation in our campaigns
- * broadening consultation with other mass formations and concretising our alliance on the ground
- * developing a dynamic recruitment plan and locating that within various sectors.
- * ensuring that negotiations becomes an active terrain of mass struggle

ensuring that the slogans "constituent assembly" and "interim government now" become and stay alive in the hearts and minds of our people

- * we have to ensure democratic participation in all our structures

Where does leadership begin?

Leadership does not start and finish at NEC level. Regional Committees must be consulted on all major decisions, policies and actions by the NEC.

Regional committees must give leadership at a regional level. We must start to encourage political initiatives to be taken at regional level. A region, the NEC, the ANC in toto, is as strong as its branches. With the guidance of the regions branches must start to reach into every home and work place in South Africa. Our policies must be known everywhere so that our support will grow not only quantitatively but qualitatively.

When we raise the slogan AMANDLA NGAWETHU we know we are mobilising thousands of our people whose hope of freedom rests with us. In order to realise that slogan we have to create the kind of organisation not only that represents the interests of our people, but also that gives those people power to decide on their future, what that future should look like and how it can be achieved.

In conclusion, the quality of our deliberations of this workshop, the correctness of our understanding of the urgent task of building a mass based ANC and, our capacity to implement our organisational strategy will open up fresh opportunities for the transference of power to the people.

Let us therefore organise, and organise and organise!

**ORGANISATION IS THE
KEY TO POWER!**