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PAPER DELIVERED AT THE EAST LONDON CITY FUTURES CONFERENCE
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THE ~~REAL~~ PERSPECTIVES ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF THE MDM ARE INFORMED BY THE OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS AMONGST OUR PEOPLE AND THE DAY-TO-DAY PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY THE MAJORITY OF S. AFRICANS LIVING IN THE GHETTOS CREATED BY APARTHEID. OUR PERSPECTIVES ARE ALSO INFORMED BY DEVELOPMENTS AT NATIONAL POLITICAL LEVEL.

IN LOOKING AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT, WE MUST CONSIDER BOTH THE PROCESSES TOWARDS A NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM, ^{AND} AS ~~AT~~ THE SYSTEM ITSELF.

MY INPUT WILL THUS ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING:-

- * ROLE OF CIVIC ORGANISATIONS IN CURRENT LOCAL LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS.
- * SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENVISIONED, BY THE MAJORITY ~~AND~~
- * ~~AND~~ THE PROCESSES TO ACHIEVE SUCH SYSTEM.
- * ROLE OF CIVIC ORGANISATIONS IN A POST APARTHEID S. AFRICA WITH NEW SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.
- * RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS AND NATIONAL DYNAMICS
- * CONCLUDING REMARKS.

1) ROLE OF CIVIC ORGANISATIONS IN CURRENT LOCAL LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS

WE BELIEVE IT IS CORRECT FOR LOCAL CIVIC ORGANISATIONS TO INTER-ACT WITH LOCAL-LEVEL GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF OUR PEOPLE AND WIN DEMANDS ARTICULATED BY OUR PEOPLE.

CIVIC ORGANISATIONS MUST LEAD SUCH NEGOTIATIONS SINCE THEY ARE BROAD MASS-BASED ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL RESIDENTS OF A TOWNSHIP. WE BELIEVE AGREEMENTS PERTAINING TO DAY-TO-DAY ISSUES, EG; RENT, SERVICES, AFFORDABILITY, ETC. CAN BE CONCLUDED - TO THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY. HOWEVER, CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES SHOULD NOT BE FINALISED IN ISOLATION OF TALKS IN

PROGRESS AT NATIONAL LEVEL. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO PROBLEM IN MAKING VARIOUS PROPOSALS TO INFORM CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS NATIONALLY.

WE MUST EMPHASISE THAT CIVIC ORGANISATIONS WILL NEGOTIATE WITH EITHER THE WHITE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND/OR THE REGIONAL AUTHORITY; NOT WITH BLACK COUNCILLORS OR INDIAN AND COLOURED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES. THESE STRUCTURES WERE FOISTED UPON OUR PEOPLE; THEY ARE UNREPRESENTATIVE, CORRUPT AND UNVIABLE. WE WILL TOLERATE THEIR PRESENCE IF OUR CONSTITUENCIES BENEFIT FROM NEGOTIATIONS; HOWEVER, WE SEE THEM AS PART OF THE LOCAL WHITE AUTHORITY OR REGIONAL AUTHORITY DELEGATION. WE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE WITH THESE PEOPLE AS SEPARATE ENTITIES.

WE ALSO NOTE ATTEMPTS BY REGIONAL AUTHORITIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE TVL; TO ISOLATE WEAKER CIVIC ORGANISATIONS AND FORCING THEM INTO PREMATURE NEGOTIATIONS RESULTING IN AGREEMENTS VERY UNFAVOURABLE TO THE COMMUNITY. THE FORCE USED IS USUALLY THE CUT-OFF OF POWER OR THREATS TO DO SO. IT IS CRUCIAL TO GUARD AGAINST THIS AND REGIONAL CIVIC BODIES SHOULD NEGOTIATE PARAMETERS WITHIN WHICH LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS MUST LIMIT THEMSELVES; THIS DEVELOPING COMMON PRINCIPLES AND PROTECTING WEAKER CIVIC ORGANISATIONS.

2) SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENVISIONED BY THE MAJORITY AND THE PROCESS TO ACHIEVE SUCH SYSTEM.

THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, BOTH BLA'S; AND COLOURED AND INDIAN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES AND WHITE LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES, IS RACIALLY-BASED, UNDEMOCRATIC AND UNREPRESENTATIVE AS FAR AS THE MAJORITY OF S. AFRICANS ARE CONCERNED.

OUR VISION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS ONE IN WHICH A UNITARY LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE WILL BE ELECTED ON THE BASIS OF ONE PERSON, ONE VOTE, ONE VALUE. LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES MUST NOT BE BASED ON RACE, BUT ON EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE LEGACIES OF APARTHEID. WE WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEMS WITH A MULTI-TIERED LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM, PROVIDED ALL TIERS ARE REPRESENTATIVE, DEMOCRATIC AND NON-RACIAL.

THE PROCESSES TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUCH A SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MUST BEGIN WITH THE COLLAPSE OF ALL RACIALLY-BASED STRUCTURES. WE COULD THEN FORM INTERIM NON-RACIAL STRUCTURES TO RECOMMEND THE RESTRUCTURING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO A NATIONAL CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, ELECTED ON A ONE PERSON, ONE VOTE SYSTEM. THIS INTERIM STRUCTURE COULD PLAY A SIMILAR ROLE TO THAT OF AN INTERIM-GOVERNMENT AT NATIONAL LEVEL.

3) ROLE OF CIVIL ORGANISATIONS IN A POST-APARTHEID S. AFRICA WITH NEW SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

WE ENVISAGE CIVIL ORGANISATIONS REMAINING INTACT AND ACTIVE IN A POST APARTHEID S. AFRICA. CIVIL ORGANISATIONS SHOULD REMAIN INDEPENDENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND STATE STRUCTURES. WE DONOT ENVISAGE CIVIL ORGANISATIONS TAKING THE PLACE OF BLACK LOCAL AUTHORITIES OR INDIAN AND COLOURED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES.

WE BELIEVE CIVIL ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE ABLE TO REPRESENT THE GRASS-ROOTS ASPIRATIONS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE, UNDER ANY GOVERNMENT. CIVIL

ORGANISATIONS COULD PLAY THE ROLE OF A "WATCHDOG" OVER LOCAL GOVERNMENT. OBVIOUSLY, WE ANTICIPATE A CONCILIATORY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVIC ORGANISATIONS AND FUTURE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, UNLIKE THE CURRENT ANTAGONISTIC ONE.

4) RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS AND NATIONAL DYNAMICS.

I HAVE ALREADY ALLUDED TO THIS RELATIONSHIP AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL LEVEL. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT ONLY CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES THAT MUST INFORM NEGOTIATIONS AT THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS. WE CANNOT ESCAPE THE FACT THAT THE PRIME CAUSE OF THE DAY-TO-DAY PROBLEMS OF THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN OUR COUNTRY IS APARTHEID. POLITICAL ISSUES WILL THUS FEATURE IN LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS. THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF RESOLVING SUCH POLITICAL ISSUES AT LOCAL LEVEL; WHERE THEY MOST AFFECT PEOPLE, MUST OF NECESSITY INFORM NATIONAL TALKS.

ON THE FLIP SIDE, BROAD PRINCIPLES AGREED AT NATIONAL TALKS WILL ALSO INFORM THE SCOPE OF LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS.

IT IS WITHIN THIS CONTEXT THAT WE REJECT ONE OF THE PROPOSALS ESPOUSED BY MINISTER KRIG RECENTLY, THAT LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER NATIONAL TALKS AND WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DEVELOPE AND PUT INTO PLACE NEW SYSTEMS BEFORE NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES ARE DECIDED. IT IS OUR CONTENTION THAT LOCAL AND NATIONAL TALKS GO HAND IN HAND AND MUST INFORM EACH OTHER.

5) CONCLUDING REMARKS

WHILE CIVIC ORGANISATIONS FULLY SUPPORT THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS INITIATED BY THE ANC; WE MUST MAKE IT CLEAR THAT SUCH TALKS AT NATIONAL LEVEL AND NEGOTIATIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL ARE A TERRAIN OF STRUGGLE. WE ARE ALSO CLEAR THAT THE STATE HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO THE TABLE BY THE MASS STRUGGLES OF OUR PEOPLE. THE HISTORY OF OUR STRUGGLE HAS TAUGHT US THAT THE STATE RESPONDS TO MASS UNITED ACTION ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE. IT IS CRUCIAL THAT ALL ACTORS INVOLVED IN LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS AND INITIATIVES ACCEPT THAT THE MASS COMPONENT OF OUR STRUGGLE IS AN IMPORTANT FACET OF LOCAL STRUGGLE AND WILL BE INTENSIFIED UNTIL APARTHEID, IN ALL ITS FORMS, IS STRICKEN FROM THE STATUTE BOOKS. SUCH MASS ACTIVITY MUST NOT BE SEEN AS DETRACTING FROM THE ROLE OF THE MDM IN LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS AND INITIATIVES; BUT COMPLEMENTING SUCH INITIATIVES BY ADDING PRESSURE ONTO THE STATE SO AS TO PUSH THEM TO MOVE FASTER TOWARDS A S. AFRICA I TRUST ALL IN THIS ROOM WANT TO GET TO - A NON-RACIAL, DEMOCRATIC AND UNITARY COUNTRY.