



LET'S RISE TO THE CHALLENGES OF ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL!

*Organisation-Building Towards the ANC
Centenary and Second Decade of Freedom*

[ANC Gauteng PEC Discussion Document (2nd Draft)]

19th October 2009

CONTENT

1. Introduction
2. The imperatives of organisational renewal
3. The ANC's primary mission, character, values and principles
4. Historical context for renewal in the ANC and key lessons
5. Current challenges and context for renewal
6. Polokwane: a watershed for renewal
7. The 2009 election campaign: lessons for renewal
8. Focus areas for organisational renewal
9. Areas of focus for renewal of governance
10. Conclusion



Introduction

- One of the main resolutions - in fact the first among the nine resolutions - adopted by the 52nd National Conference held in Polokwane in 2007, focused on Organisational Renewal (OR). The resolution concludes that the ANC needs to place organisational renewal at the centre of its overall work in the run-up to its Centenary in 2012.
- The Polokwane Conference mandated the incoming NEC to declare “a period of renewal” and “put in place mechanisms to vigorously combat negative tendencies occasioned by being a ruling party”. Due to the preparations for the 2009 elections, the movement was not able to launch a campaign to vigorously combat tendencies that are gradually eroding the positive image, integrity, character, culture, values and principles of the ANC. In the process, damage was continuing!
- The PEC Lekgotla of May 2009 kick-started a political debate on Renewal of both the organisation and governance by releasing a discussion document to structures. Over the past five months, many discussions have been taking place in branches, regions, the Leagues and national workshops on organising and political education. The PEC of October 2009 reviewed the document and agreed to release the revised draft (2nd Draft) which will be further debated in the structures.

THE IMPERATIVES OF ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL

- In a space of three years, the ANC will be a century-old organisation. This is no small achievement, given the difficulties that the movement had to overcome during the different phases of its historical evolution in the course of the South African people's struggle for national liberation.
- As we prepare for the Centenary celebrations, we are forced by necessity to ask ourselves fundamental questions about the past and future of our movement and the revolution it has led fairly successfully over the first century and get ready for the challenges and tasks of the next century.
- On the one hand, we seek to grasp the essence of our past and its lessons: what the earlier generations did to ensure the survival and success of the ANC as the people's movement and agent for change up to its First Centenary.
- On the other hand, we have to answer questions about posterity: what the current generations need to safeguard the ANC's legacy, maintain and renew those elements in its character, principles and values that will enable it remain the source of hope and agent for change during its Second Century of existence. This is no small challenge, given the current bold signs of decay!

THE ANC'S PRIMARY MISSION, VISION AND CHARACTER

- **The ANC's primary mission and vision remains:** to unite the people, especially the Africans, and serve them loyally in the quest to build a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa in which everyone enjoys a better quality of life.
- **Character:** The ANC is a multi-class movement with a bias towards the working class and the rural masses. It is a democratic, mass-based, non-racial, non-sexist and internationalist organisation. Membership determines policy direction and holds leadership accountable through active participation in branches . Cadres play a pivotal role in the political life of the movement.
- **Core values, principles and culture:** unity, selfless service, collective leadership, democratic centralism, internal debates, humility, honesty, hard-work, constructive criticism and self-criticism, discipline and mutual respect.
- Over time and in the crucible of struggle, the ANC developed clarity of its vision and primary mission and its character, values and principles evolved into a force for unity and cohesion. Renewal is a call to action against tendencies and practices that threaten to erode the very nature and essence of the ANC.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF RENEWAL

- **Difficulties of the formative decades:** From the late 1920s to the mid-1930s, the ANC was moribund and weak due to the debilitating ethnic and tribal conflict among key leaders under Seme's leadership; in 1937, Mahabane and Calata launched a campaign to "resuscitate" the ANC travelling all over the country; these efforts ushered in the era of renewal of the 1940s under Xuma's leadership in which there was a major re-organisation of the ANC into a more unitary and membership-based organisation; the formation of the ANCWL; the role of the militant ANCYL and increasingly assertive trade union leadership and African communists in the transformation of the ANC into a mass movement.
- **1949 to 1969: period of mass struggle, armed struggle, exile and prison:** The adoption of the 1949 POA and election of a critical mass younger, energetic leaders (including Sisulu, Mandela and Tambo) set the stage for a more active and campaign driven ANC that led the Defiance Campaign, mass campaign towards the adoption of Freedom Charter, Treason Trial and banning orders of the 1950s under Luthuli's leadership; the banning of the movement in 1960; adoption of armed struggle and formation of MK in 1961; imprisonment of High Command and departure of key leaders for exile; the heroic Wankie campaign and its setbacks; and the critical self-reflection and self-correction at the 1969 Morogoro Conference that led to decisive action to renew the ANC and redirect its machinery to take the struggle back home.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF RENEWAL - continued

- **1969 to 1989: period of rebuilding, mass resurgence and un-governability:** Post-Morogoro, the ANC started to rebuild its underground machinery in SA; the release of some of its experienced leaders from the Robben Island helped this process; the 1973 Durban workers strike and the 1976 student uprisings challenged the ANC underground to contest the space that was being occupied by a very assertive and youthful Black Consciousness Movement; Post-1976, the ANC was the most successful movement that harnessed the anger of the youth to rejuvenate and renew its underground and MK machinery; the 1978 seminal visit to Vietnam resulted in a major re-organisation around the four pillars of struggle which prepared ground for the formation of the UDF in 1983 and ushered in a period of open defiance and surge to un-governability led the youth, women, trade unions and civics, inspired by daring operations by MK units and mounting international pressure against the apartheid regime. It is this all-round offensive under Tambo's leadership that forced the regime to seek a negotiated settlement in the late 1980s and ultimately unban the movement and release its leadership in 1990.
- **Challenges of rebuilding after unbanning between 1990 and 1993:** In the midst of the negotiations and violence, the movement re-established itself as a legal movement that should prepare for the first democratic elections under hostile conditions of state-sponsored violence aimed at dislodging the ANC.

Key lesson of History

- The secret behind the ANC's survival and resilience is built on five pillars that constitute its internal defence mechanism ("immune system"):
 - 1) **Capacity for self-reflection and self-correction:** this enables the ANC to be its harshest critic so that it can identify distortions and correct them swiftly before they acquire a destructive momentum.
 - 2) **Principled adaptability and tactical agility:** ability to take advantage of and respond to major changes in the domestic, continental and global environment, while maintaining its primary mission, vision and character.
 - 3) **Skilful management of internal contradictions:** ability to manage and harness the contradictions among the motive forces and class forces in its ranks, keeping them united around common objectives during each phase of the struggle.
 - 4) **Pivotal role of the membership:** ability of the rank-and-file membership to act decisively in defence of the movement when the situation so demands. Constant and dynamic interaction between leadership and membership at all times.
 - 5) **Centrality of the people:** ability to place the objective interests of the people above narrow personal and short term party-political interests. "Batho Pele" has been the abiding principle that has always guided the ANC.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND CONTEXT FOR RENEWAL

- The 1994 democratic breakthrough ushered in new conditions of freedom and democracy. The ascendancy into power imposed new strategic and organisational imperatives such as the need to develop new skills around political management of governance, running election campaigns, involving the people in governance and mass work on the democratic terrain.
- State power is a potent instrument for transformation of society. It gives the legitimate authority, power, influence and resources to make our agenda, vision and policies those of the entire nation and gives us the instruments to realise the dreams of our forebears as outlined in the Freedom Charter. Serious revolutionaries need state power to drive fundamental change of society.
- Coming to power through democratic elections in which an overwhelming majority of the citizens freely voted for the ANC gave us the legitimate authority to use state power – its resources, instruments, laws – to make the NDR agenda the chosen agenda of our nation. Incumbency gives the ruling party and progressive allies in civil society the possibility to shape and drive a progressive agenda in society. This depends on whether the instruments and resources of the state are in the hands of conscious and conscientious cadres who use them to serve the people and for the common good, instead of pursuing selfish or personal interests.



CURRENT CONTEXT OF RENEWAL - continued

- Improperly managed, state power brings stresses and strains on the values, culture, character and practices of the party in power. As a general principle, all ruling parties have to struggle against and overcome sins of incumbency. Otherwise, the party degenerates and decays. Hence, upon resumption of state power, any ruling has to ensure that the party develops mechanisms to resist the corrosive and corruptive effects of power on its cadres and members. To be “ready to govern” as we said in the early 1990s, we must be alive and fully prepared to deal with the profoundly negative effects of incumbency on the movement itself.
- Incumbency (holding political office), has destroyed some of the best cadres and most progressive parties or movements in history. Political power brings negative tendencies such as bureaucratisation of the party and state; development of social distance; arrogance of power and its abuse; moral and ideological degeneration among rank-and-file marked by a rise in careerism and corruption; use of state institutions to settle inner-party battles. We refer to these negative effects of state power as sins of incumbency precisely because of their destructive and corrosive impact on even some among the most progressive parties. Sins of incumbency need to be resisted and vigorously combated if the revolution is to succeed!

CURRENT CONTEXT OF RENEWAL - continued

- Within a few years of coming to power, the movement identified began to experience its share of incumbency challenges. While the 1994 Bloemfontein Conference did not say much about these challenges, the subsequent conferences and NGCs between 1997 and 2002 were dominated by the lament about how sins of incumbency are undermining the culture and traditions of the movement. The 2002 Stellenbosch Conference called for a comprehensive review of the organisational design of the ANC to reposition the movement in line with the demands of the post-1994 situation. The mistake was to think that this is a design problem rather than a deeper crisis that touches every aspect of our organisation.
- The distortion of the ANC's mission and character and erosion of its values was accelerating as we reached the first decade in power. A vibrant organisational culture and inner-party ideological discourse is replaced by incessant battles for control of the state and resources that go with it. In the process, new ways of lobbying emerged wherein money, the media and state institutions would be employed to seek to influence the outcomes of leadership elections and decision-making processes of the movement. The politics of power have had a damaging effect on the character, values and organisational culture of the ANC and its allies.



POLOKWANE – WATERSHED FOR RENEWAL

- It is in this context that we must objectively assess and locate the role and place of Polokwane Conference. Polokwane was very significant in that, after a through process of self-reflection, it took some self-corrective measures by:
 1. **Reasserting the centrality of the people:** the ANC remains a liberation movement that exist primarily to serve the people. As a ruling party, the ANC should therefore use access to state power to change both the state and society in order to benefit the people and improve their quality of life. Polokwane therefore overwhelmingly rejected any attempt to turn the ANC and the state into instruments for self-enrichment and self-aggrandisement.
 2. **Reaffirming the pivotal role of the membership and grassroots:** defended the democratic character of the ANC, especially the critical voice of the rank-and file membership and grassroots structures in giving direction to the ANC. Leadership should be humble and accountable to the base and it serves at the pleasure of the membership and branches.
 3. **Clarifying the relationship between the party and state:** the ANC is a strategic centre of power that should lead both the state and society in the transformation

f SA.



POLOKWANE – A WATERSHED FOR RENEWAL - continued

- It is against this background that the 52nd National Conference is a historic Conference of the ANC in terms of having made a clarion call for renewal. However, Polokwane Conference's historical significance is whether it would be a turning point to arrest and reverse the danger of revolutionary decline and decay posed by sins of incumbency.
- It is for this reason that President Jacob Zuma has consistently called on the structures of the movement to pay attention to organisational renewal. During his inaugural address as the President of the Republic in May 2009, he declared that “this is a moment of renewal” for South Africa, going beyond organisation to tackle renewal of governance and society. This makes renewal a key theme of his presidency.
- It is, however, disturbing to note that a year after Polokwane called for renewal, the factional battles for control of power and state resources continue to rage.
- Surely, renewal is not going to be an easy struggle to win: those who benefit from the current chaos and decadence will resist renewal. It requires firmness and decisiveness from the leadership, as well as high level of commitment, vigilance and political consciousness from the cadreship and membership of the ANC.



THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN: LESSONS FOR RENEWAL

- The ANC can only truly fulfill its primary mission if it is a united, cohesive and disciplined force for change. Unity, cohesion and discipline are critical success factors. The campaign teaches us an important lesson that when the ANC is united, no enemy can defeat it – the founders and sponsors of the breakaway group should have known and do know by now.
- This campaign saw the most innovative and creative forms of organising and campaigning to reach out to different sections of the population – youth, professionals, township and village rallies, traditional leaders and healers, churches and mosques. The use of technology, aggressive branding like the bikers, the helicopter and billboards. Door-to-door work remained the principal pillar of our campaign strategy.
- The leadership's emphasis on building genuine unity prevented a temptation to purge those with whom one disagreed in the run-up to the National Conference and other conferences in regions and provinces.
- The confidence that ordinary people place in the ANC arises from its proven track record and ongoing commitment to improve the quality of their lives.



THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN: LESSONS FOR RENEWAL - continued

- The success of the campaign has also sharply demonstrated the ANC's ability to adapt its organisational forms and campaign methods to new conditions and appeal to new social forces – this is how we won the youth and black middle strata in the recent elections in the face of breakaway group's attempt to profile itself as a representative of these sectors of society!
- It is clear that our branches and other structures, systems and processes need a major replenishment if we are to keep pace with the times and remain a movement that is deeply rooted among the masses of our people, including reaching out to the youth and emerging Black middle strata.
- Renewal should point to the weaknesses in our grassroots structures that inhibit the movement's capacity to deepen the roots and influence of the ANC among its core constituency of the working class, the poor and new emerging strata such as youth and the black middle strata and professionals.
- We must continue to rely on tried and tested methods of interaction with the masses and constantly engage them in finding solutions to their problems.



FOCUS AREAS FOR ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL

- 1. Ideological renewal and cadreship development** – step up the political education of the general membership in branches and ensure ANC members live the values and principles of the movement in their daily lives. We also need to produce “New Cadre” fully prepared and equipped with the right skills, knowledge, attitude and tools of analysis. The ANC needs capacity to resist attempts from different class forces to change its multi-class character.
- 2. Renewal of Branches and improving their organisational, mobilisation and campaign capacity:** build a campaign-driven ANC and introduce forms of organising and methods of mass work that root the ANC among the people of SA. Build dynamic branches that influence and lead communities more effectively and the custodians of the ANC’s legacy and policy at all times.
- 3. Build and renew leadership:** Constantly build and renew leadership collectives, drawing from among the most committed and talented cadres from different generations, facilitating smooth leadership transitions. The internal democracy of the movement must always enhance the voice of the rank-and file and grassroots structures in leadership elections. Regulate lobbying, punish ill-discipline, fraud and use of money to buy votes.



FOCUS AREAS FOR ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL - continued

4. **Membership growth and development:** overhaul the membership system so that it is modernised and efficient. Ensure branches fulfill their constitutional role in the way they recruit members, educate and assign them tasks. Build a larger and activist membership base by doubling the size of each branch, region and province in line with the One Million Membership Campaign. Branch programmes should politicise and empower members so that they can become agents for change, always seeking to unite and serve.
5. **Modernise the administration systems and renew personnel:** accessible and welcoming offices, better infrastructure, skilled, motivated and professional human resources and efficient administration systems, including putting in place a credible and efficient membership system.
6. **Enhancing the governing capacity of the ANC:** capacity for monitoring and evaluation of government in meeting our manifesto commitments. Ensure the ANC, including branches, builds capacity to monitor and address service delivery issues working together with different spheres of government. Ensure policy renewal in areas of less success such as the economy and human development.



FOCUS AREAS FOR ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL - continued

7. **Renewal of the Leagues and full integration of ex-combatants:** the election campaign has provided useful experiences on how the ANCYL was successful in drawing new generation of young voters actively into ANC politics. The ANCWL's outreach programmes and work among young women bear important lessons for renewal. The launch of Veterans' League and full-integration of ex-combatants into ANC structures are crucial.
8. **Enhance internal and public communication capacity:** improve the ANC's capacity to communicate effectively with the rank-and-file members and ordinary citizens by harnessing and deploying the ICT revolution.
9. **Build financial sustainability:** ensure that by 2012 the ANC finances itself at different levels, especially the branches. The ANC should protect its integrity and image. Ensure accountability and proper financial management.
10. **Act decisive and swiftly against ill-discipline and wrongdoing:** Tighten disciplinary procedures and take firm action against ill-discipline, corruption, incompetence and abuse of power in the ranks. In particular, be consistent and firm in acting against abuse of leadership positions for personal gain or factional interests.



FOCUS AREAS FOR ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL - continued

- 11. Improve the management of cadre deployment process:** in addition to the guidelines adopted by Polokwane Conference on deployments, further ensure there is a more objective and transparent process in the deployment and redeployment of cadres, enhance their accountability to the organisation and introduce regular performance appraisals. This includes reviewing the list process ensure that we deploy the most committed, skilled, talented, ethical and incorruptible cadres capable of and willing to advance the agenda for transformation. Incompetence and corruption should be punished severely. The management of the deployment processes should be transparent, predictable and objective so that tensions and suspicions on deployment are minimised.
- 12. Renewal of the Alliance and democratic forces:** ensure the Alliance, MDM structures individually and collectively confront the imperatives of their own internal renewal so that they rise to the demands and tasks of the post-1994 period. This includes building relations with new social movements and progressive civil society.



AREAS OF FOCUS FOR RENEWAL OF GOVERNANCE

- As the President's pointed out in his Inauguration Speech, renewal is at the core of the current term of government:
 1. **Reaffirming** the Freedom Charter as the centre-piece of our vision and programme for transforming our society and constantly review the progress we are making on each clause, especially in the run-up to the Centenary (2012) and Second Decade of Freedom (2014).
 2. **Institutional renewal:** re-organise government machinery and resources around five priorities of the ANC manifesto. Build capacity for coordinated planning, monitoring and evaluation at all levels.
 3. **Democratic renewal:** ensure the realisation of the people shall govern – popular involvement of the masses in governance. We have a serious deficit with regard to popular involvement of the masses in governance.
 4. **Renewal of values of governance:** integrity, honesty, service, ethics and accountability among civil servants and public officials. There must be consequences for incompetence, corruption and lack of accountability.

AREAS OF FOCUS FOR RENEWAL OF GOVERNANCE

5. **Policy renewal:** we must continue with policy successes of the past fifteen years whilst boldly infusing new ideas where our social and economic policies have not given us the desired outcomes, especially in addressing increasing inequalities and the human development deficit.
6. **Renewal of partnership between the state and society:** we must build creative partnerships between the developmental state and key sectors of society in working to achieve the change we need. This partnership should be built around our transformative and developmental agenda.
7. **Renewal interventions to build activist and developmental local government:** constantly improve and support the local government capacity to address service delivery and economic development of communities, local towns and cities.
8. **Develop an activist approach to parliamentary and constituency work:** build the capacity of public representatives at all levels to do political oversight on government and help to strengthen the mass character of the ANC among the people in their constituencies through an activist approach to parliamentary and constituency work.

CONCLUSION

- The 52nd National Conference was not only about the leadership question. It was a moment for self-reflection and the beginning of a process of self-correction. It has helped to create an environment to squarely confront the sins of incumbency.
- However, we have not been able to sustain the momentum and enthusiastically rise to the challenges of renewal. We have not enthusiastically seized the moment to unleash an educational campaign that captures the imagination of our membership and society in general on the urgent necessity for renewal of our movement and the nation as a whole. Polokwane's call for organisational renewal is yet to be responded to by cadres. President Zuma's call for national renewal is yet to be responded to by different sectors of society. The time to respond is now!
- Post-election and as we move to the First Centenary, let us unveil a comprehensive campaign and programme of renewal at all levels, across all sectors of society.
- For renewal to succeed, it requires three things – 1) a resilient, courageous, principled and decisive leadership; 2) a committed, skilled and fearless cadreship; 3) politically conscious and active membership.

Forward with Renewal! Forward to the Centenary of the ANC!

