

# **Report of the Alliance Summit**

**3 - 7 April 2002**

## **Consolidated Report of Commission Discussions**

### **The NDR, Balance of Forces and Building the Alliance**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This report summarises discussion in all six commissions on the NDR, Balance of Forces and Building the Alliance. The comprehensive commission reports will form part of post-summit background information for utilisation at various levels of the Alliance.
2. The discussion document on "The NDR and Balance of Forces" (save for the issues flagged in this report and comments submitted by COSATU and SANCO) broadly captures the approach of the Alliance to these issues. However, all the Commissions agreed that the Discussion Document on "Building the Alliance" contained substantive issues on which there was no agreement.
3. The discussions in all the commissions were informed by the commitment to ensure that the common strategic outlook of the Alliance on the NDR informs both our assessment of the balance of forces and the programme of the Alliance.

#### **THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION**

4. All components of the Alliance agree that the primary task of the current period is the implementation of the NDR. This common objective is the strategic political and ideological foundation of the Alliance. The character of the NDR is articulated in key policy documents such as the Freedom Charter and the Strategy and Tactics documents of the ANC.
5. This characterisation is underpinned by the following key issues:
  1. The NDR seeks to overcome the deep-seated legacy of apartheid by creating a united, non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous and democratic society.
  2. At the core of the NDR is the liberation of black people in general and Africans in particular, and these therefore constitute the motive forces of the NDR.
  3. Critical to the NDR is the fundamental altering of apartheid property relations. The NDR is not simply aimed at replacing a ruling white elite with a black elite. It is aimed at changing the material reality of apartheid colonialism, to change the conditions under which the majority of our people live.
  4. The working class is the leading social motive force of the NDR.
  5. The ANC is the unifying embodiment of the collective of organised forces that seek to resolve the national contradictions within South African society. It is, for this reason, the leader of the NDR, and leader of the Tripartite Alliance.
6. The NDR is aimed at building a national democracy. Socialists take part in the NDR because, in their view, this is the key national task facing us, and this project creates the most conducive conditions for socialism. The current task of socialists and non-socialists alike is the creation of a national democratic society.

#### **BALANCE OF FORCES**

7. All components of the Alliance agree that regular review of the balance of forces is critical in determining the programmes that the Alliance needs embark on to attain the objectives of the NDR. Our task as revolutionaries is to constantly struggle to shift the balance of forces.

8. The Summit agrees that the balance of forces within SA has shifted fundamentally in favour of the forces of change, since the democratic breakthrough of 1994. Currently, many factors allow for decisive movement forward in implementing the objectives of the NDR. These include the following:
  1. The ANC-led Alliance has consolidated critical elements of political power, and it is in a position to transform the state in the interest of all the people, and to use state power to introduce socio-economic programmes to the benefit primarily of the poor
  2. The ANC-led Alliance enjoys mass support among the majority of South Africans, on account both of its transformation programmes and its programme of mass mobilisation
  3. The programme of social transformation reflected in the RDP and Freedom Charter enjoys hegemony within South African society and insignificant forces openly challenge its essence
  4. The democratic state and the motive forces control huge resources, or have the potential to do so, in the form of the fiscus, state capital and "social capital" including pension and provident funds
  5. Business forces have different perspectives about the agenda they wish to pursue, and important sections are becoming sensitive to the threat which our social and economic problems pose to their interests.
  6. Political representatives of the forces opposed to change have not developed a coherent and effective strategy to challenge the direction of social transformation
  
9. However, there are also negative features that need to be confronted, including the following:
  1. The nature of the apartheid economic structure we inherited is such that a few conglomerates control major sectors of the economy; and combined with the operation of financial markets, these forces have attempted to destabilise and redirect the programme of economic change
  2. Critical sectors of the means of public discourse, including the media and the cultural sector are either owned, or controlled in terms of editorial content by, forces which do not share or understand the objectives of the NDR
  3. The conditions of poverty, inequality and unemployment ♦ the eradication of which is a complex and protracted process ♦ as well as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, weigh heavily particularly on the poor
  4. The combination of weak structures of the Alliance and the divisions that have manifested themselves particularly in the recent past have weakened the capacity of the motive forces to take full charge of the process of change
  
10. While the international balance of forces is less favourable than the domestic balance, positive developments have taken place in the latter half of the 1990s allowing for greater assertion of the agenda of developing countries and the poor worldwide:
  1. The difficulties faced by the global system of capitalism, including the growing gap between rich and poor within developed countries, and the occasional crashes of financial markets have created a basis for a re-examination of the "virtues" of unbridled market capitalism. However, the tendency in many instances is to tinker with the margins of the system in the interest of the rich.
  2. The impact of global capitalism on the developing countries and the growing united voice against this afford progressive forces worldwide the space to posit new approaches to the global financial architecture and trade regimes. However, much more work needs to be done to unite developing countries around a different agenda.
  3. There is a growing international movement against the rampant effects of global capitalism. However, the character of some of the forces campaigning against unbridled global capitalism and the counter-strategies of rightwing forces have the potential to

undermine this movement, if this international terrain is not given direction by the democratic forces.

4. South Africa enjoys respect across the globe both for the nature of our programme of social transformation and the quality of interventions we are able to make on critical world matters. However, as a small open economy in the global sense, we are subjected to negative market dynamics and deliberate strategies to undermine our influence.
  5. A new confidence and determination is emerging across Africa to mobilise for the reconstruction and development of the continent. However, capacity to implement these programmes is limited in many countries, many conflicts remain unresolved and the progressive movement in Africa is weak.
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11. The constraints listed above, however, are not fixed. They are subject to ongoing contestation and mobilisation by ourselves, and other progressive forces. We therefore should adopt approaches which strengthen our capacity to engage.
  12. What then are the challenges emerging from this characterisation of the NDR and the assessment of the balance of forces?
  13. The Alliance needs to sharpen its tools of analysis of balance of forces, and how systematically to shift this balance in favour of social change. This should include an assessment of the impact of globalisation on the nation-state and our own democratic state in particular.
  14. The Alliance, having analysed the balance of forces, needs to collectively assess how to move forward, and whether tactical shifts are required to deal with particular obstacles to the NDR.
  15. At a strategic level, the challenge is to consolidate democratic control and use to maximum effect the various levers of power in order to accelerate change, and contribute to building a movement for a humane world order. This includes:
    1. Utilisation of such instruments as social capital, the fiscus, parastatals, worker's provident funds, trade union investments and co-operatives to speed up economic growth, job-creation and poverty-eradication.
    2. Deepening and broadening democracy, in the implementation of people-centred and people-driven programmes, among others by improving our work in the legislatures and the state in general. At the core of this approach should be the mobilisation of the people to be actively involved in the programme of change.
    3. Strengthening all components of the Alliance and re-building the MDM and ensuring that we give leadership to all the motive forces in active struggle for fundamental change.
    4. Winning over other sectors of South African society, including the white community, behind a programme aimed at improving our economy, deepening democracy, eradicating poverty and ensuring safety and security for all South African citizens.
    5. Briefings and discussions should be held within the Alliance on NEPAD and the African Union. This should be done with the view to consolidating the movement of progressive forces across Africa in order to mobilise for the implementation of programmes to reconstruct and develop the continent.
    6. Consolidating alliances worldwide around the programme of poverty-eradication and development, and in pursuit of peace and humane world order. Alliance partners need to play an active role in various international fora together with other progressive forces.

## **BUILDING THE ALLIANCE**

16. The major issues discussed by commissions under this topic were:

- The character of the Alliance;
- Managing the challenges that arise out of intra-Alliance relations;
- Strengthening the co-ordinating structures of the Alliance;
- The role of the Alliance in policy development and implementation; and
- Developing a common Alliance programme of mobilisation.

## **17. Character of the Alliance**

1. Commissions re-affirmed the broad perspectives of the discussion document characterising our Alliance. The Alliance is a political alliance founded on a common national democratic programme, based on the ideals of the Freedom Charter, and programmatically elaborated in the ANC's strategy and tactics. All organisations that are part of the Alliance accept that the ANC is the leader of the Alliance. The Alliance consists of separate and independent organisations, with their own objectives, identities, policy-making mechanisms and internal arrangements. Each component respects the independence of its allies. The components are united, nonetheless, by their common commitment to a single NDR.
2. SANCO is participating fully in this Summit, and it has been involved in many Alliance structures and processes over many years. SANCO shall continue participating in the Alliance structures at all levels. However, the exact status of SANCO within the Alliance requires further clarification. The secretariat of the tripartite and the secretariat of SANCO must take this process forward, including the role of the Alliance to give political leadership to the entire MDM formations.

## **18. Managing challenges that arise out of intra-Alliance relations**

In general, commissions agreed that a variety of challenges, including multiple mandates, do not and should not present insuperable problems either to the effective management and consolidation of the Alliance, or to the independence of our separate formations. The perspectives elaborated in the discussion documents, and the lessons we have learnt over the last period, should be taken forward across the Alliance and, where more appropriate, within our individual formations.

## **19. Strengthening the co-ordinating structures of the Alliance**

1. It was noted that there have been serious problems in the operation of the Alliance. It was agreed that the Alliance should not be reduced to crisis management mode, or to an electoral machine, and that it needs to proactively drive the transformation process. Managing intra-Alliance challenges can be greatly facilitated if there are effective and regular meetings of leading Alliance structures. Our previous agreement was that :
  - The Alliance secretariat should meet twice a month;
  - The extended secretariat plus Presidency should meet monthly;
  - The officials should meet every two months;
  - The Ten-a-Side should meet twice yearly; and
  - There should be one Alliance Summit annually.
2. This constitutes a framework within which we should endeavour to ensure consistency and regularity of Alliance meetings. We should also ensure that the Alliance co-ordinates effectively at all levels – provincial, regional and local- and that we establish these structures where they don't exist.

## **20. Alliance Programme and role in policy development and implementation**

1. It is agreed that Alliance involvement in policy development and implementation is of critical importance for taking forward the NDR and ensuring effective governance. It is also agreed that there are many challenges and shortcomings in this area, including on how best to co-ordinate this policy development and implementation. The structured mechanism, co-ordinated by the Alliance Office Bearers, will oversee this question. There

is agreement that the Alliance has a critical role to play in policy development and implementation, and needs to develop a comprehensive programme in this regard.

2. The structured mechanism above should determine the modalities of these interactions; and develop guidelines and protocols on how to deal with these matters of Alliance co-ordination on policy questions.

### **21. Developing a common Alliance programme of mobilisation**

Commissions agreed that, in addressing the challenge of building the Alliance, we should increasingly move away from simply managing difficulties towards placing much greater emphasis on developing a common Alliance programme of mobilisation of the motive forces of the NDR. It was noted that, in recent years, our Alliance has often functioned most effectively during electoral campaigns. We need to build on this experience, and more effectively mobilise also for social and economic transformation. In doing this, we need to strengthen each other's existing campaigns (for example the ANC's *letsema* campaign), and we need, increasingly, to relate our campaigns to the challenge of accelerating growth and development, and to local level transformation.

22. The Alliance secretariat must take this work forward