

DRAFT RESOLUTION
COMMISSION ON DEVELOPMENT
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1. Preamble

In the current period there is tremendous interest in the issue of 'development'. Each of the major forces is advancing their own view on what development is and how it should take place. Each is entering the development field with their own political agenda and with their own vision of what the new South Africa should look like. The reforming apartheid state, the private sector and the democratic movement are some of the key actors

In line with their strategy of 'revolution from the top', and despite their rhetoric about democracy and popular participation, the state and the private sector remain committed to a 'top-down' process of development - and have not yet accepted the need to transfer political power to the majority.

We in the democratic movement are committed to a participatory process of development that will result in fundamental political and economic changes.

The challenge facing the democratic movement is to build a coherent development policy which would ensure the national liberation of the oppressed majority and guide the democratic movement as we move towards the creation of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. Our overall aim should be to redress the racial, class, gender and spacial imbalances in the distribution of economic, social, and political power.

It is therefore crucial that we orient our organisations and our struggles towards the understanding that development and fostering a development consciousness is both a part, and a logical continuation of, our struggle for the national liberation of the oppressed majority.

Black people, who have been, and are still being denied access to basic needs, will inherit a situation in which even a future democratic state will find it difficult to provide the millions of jobs, houses for all, proper education and health services that are needed.

This points to the need for a national development plan which includes participation by the state, the private sector, community organisations, non-governmental organisations, international governments and development agencies.

We need to ensure that this participatory development process is effectively controlled by the the democratic movement, and that South Africa's political, economic and social transformation is carried out in the best interest of the majority.

2. Defining development

Development is a process which involves three inter-related aspects.

(a) Firstly, it involves changing the social and power relations that exist at the moment, so that power is distributed equally among all the people. This must allow people to have greater democratic control over the social, political and economic aspects of their lives. This will allow them to participate fully and empower them to take decisions that affect their lives at work, in their communities and the country as a whole. These processes of democratic participation by people in decision-making need to become institutionalised to guarantee their continued existence. This points to the need to continue to promote mass-based community organisations such as civics, youth and women's organisations, as well as non-governmental development agencies such as service organisations, professional bodies and research groups that can work for and be accountable to community structures. This can be referred to as the strengthening of civil society

(b) Secondly, alongside the process of building real democracy, there needs to be an improvement in the material conditions of the majority, ensuring greater access to food, clothing, shelter, incomes, jobs, health, and education for all. These improvements must be achieved through a process which involves the maximum participation and control by the people who benefit, and which encourages greater sharing, equality and a spirit of community. The people must control the process and the product.

(c) Democracy and an improvement in the quality of life must be related to a fundamental restructuring of the economy along a new growth path, to allow for a sustainable process of change and growth in the economy.

It is clear that a process of development requires all these three aspects to be equally emphasised.

3. Towards a developmental approach

During the current period, we will have to fight many struggles against the state which is largely unsympathetic to development initiatives for the urban and rural poor. However, at the same time, we need to move beyond short-term reactive approaches to development work and adopt a more transformational process.

We should be thinking about development needs at national, regional and local levels and should be trying to prioritise within this. We should be trying to ensure that our approach to development shifts from one in which isolated development projects are seen as constituting development, to one in which we develop programmes based on an assessment of the overall needs for a particular community, district, region etc.. This would mean that project priorities would have to be set within the context of an overall development plan and projects would be part of a coherent development programme.

Such development programmes would be based on a combination of projects in a variety of different sectors, i.e. urban, rural, housing, health, education, literacy etc. and would involve a process of networking within and between sectors.

There is a need to ensure that development programmes be built around community participation and control. For this to be effective, resources, time, information, education and training are required, so that communities can take informed decisions, and participate from a position of strength. Training and human resource development need to become part and parcel of all stages of the project cycle.

Such a process would assist our local NGO's, service organisations and other project holders from within the democratic movement to make the transition from being 'alternative' to becoming 'mainstream' actors, capable of challenging the 'top-down' processes of the state and the private sector.

4. Engaging with progressive development actors

Within the mass democratic movement there exists a range of organisations involved in development work. These include the ANC, trade unions, community based organisations, service organisations, NGO's, churches, academics and researchers, professional and private consultants, information banks and libraries, and progressive international development agencies and networks.

There is a need for liaison between these development initiatives, build and strengthen each of these and share information, resources and views on strategies and tactics.

5. Engaging other development actors

In terms of previous strategies of resistance a common attitude of the democratic movement was to boycott various state, parastatal and private sector institutions. There had, however, been engagement/negotiations in order to more effectively put pressure for demands to be met.

The main negotiation protagonists had included the state and its various structures (provincial administrations, local authorities, Eskom, Rand Water Board etc), The Development Bank of Southern Africa, the Independent Development Trust, private corporations and corporate social responsibility funds, private housing developers, financial institutions, Urban Foundation, Consultative Business Movement etc.

6. Conclusion

In order to have the strategic initiative and prevent 'top-down', welfarist conceptions of development from dominating, it is essential that the issue of development be put on the agenda in all our structures and at all levels.

The key to successful development is the extent to which the ANC, other progressive organisations and the people they represent, feel that they are in control of the development process and are responsible for its viability and success.

Resolutions:

- That the ANC in general, and the Projects Department in particular, play a role in initiating the creation of development forums at the local, regional and national level. These forums should in the first instance unite democratic forces, but also engage in a structured manner with the state and private sector development actors in the interest of promoting empowerment and development of our communities.
- That the ANC work together with COSATU, SACP and allied organisations in developing an overall development approach and strategy which includes integrated strategies for each specific sector.
- That the ANC facilitate or initiate the creation of development commissions which involve as equal participants the government, the private sector, political organisations, trade unions, mass organisations and service organisations in the areas of education, health, rural development, housing and welfare. The aim of these joint commissions is to produce short-term policy that can be implemented through the next state budget for example.
- That the ANC support and initiate projects that will contribute to the creation of a development cadre with skills in development management, planning, project feasibility assessment, evaluation and implementation.