

DOCUMENTATION CENTRE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL	
ACCESSION No	DOC 1256/418
BRN
CLASS No

2.6 THE ALLIANCE AND MDM

One of the major strengths of our revolution is the existence of an Alliance representing the broad liberation movement and organised union and working class formations. It was this Alliance that led and coordinated the struggle against the apartheid regime and acted as the centre for all democratic forces. Given that the 1994 democratic breakthrough did not mark the completion of the tasks of the national democratic revolution, but instead opened a bridgehead to take forward the transformation of our society, the Alliance was identified as a crucial vehicle for the reconstruction and development of our society.

It was against this background that the Mafikeng Conference reaffirmed the continuation of the Alliance around a common programme of reconstruction and development, thus taking forward and deepening the struggle for the consolidation of the gains of the revolution.

At the Conference we developed elements of a programme for the Alliance, which was consolidated in the Alliance Summit of October 1998. A further programme of the Alliance was developed in the December 1999 10-aside meeting, identifying five key pillars for a joint Alliance programme – Jobs, campaign against HIV/AIDS, local government transformation and elections, rural transformation, and fighting against crime and corruption.

One of the features of the Alliance after the 1994 democratic breakthrough has been a common, coordinated approach to fighting election campaigns. The 1999 election campaign marked a high point in unity and common mobilisation of our constituencies and our people to vote for the ANC. Outside of election campaigns, however, the Alliance has failed to implement any significant common programme around the mobilisation of our people behind reconstruction and development.

At provincial and lower levels there is generally no coordinated Alliance activity. There is unevenness in the functioning of the Alliance at these levels, and an absence of any central guidance on issues and a common programme of action. Discussions and decisions of national Alliance meetings are rarely fed to lower Alliance structures in any systematic manner. In some areas there are tensions between the alliance partners and also with SANCO.

The Alliance need to make time for more in depth political discussions in order to clarify the different roles of each component in the current phase. Equally important will be to understand the role of ANC members who lead and belong to other organisations, such as trade unions, civics, sports bodies, cultural bodies and other mass formations; that such members must participate in the implementing the programme of action of the ANC and therefore be in a position to provide leadership wherever they are.

Part of the problem is the uncertainty in all Alliance structures of how to relate to the democratic state led by the ANC and thus how to mobilise our people around matters of governance.

All the Alliance partners are politically and organisationally weak. These weaknesses impact negatively on the political cohesion and leadership capacity of the Alliance. As a result of the organisational weaknesses of the ANC, it has not been able to effectively and positively give leadership to the Alliance.

We need to analyse the challenges facing the other Alliance partners. For instance, COSATU – often regards government simply as an employer and not as its ally, capable of being persuaded and influenced. This at times presents itself as tensions around the issue of the tactics it employs as a trade union movement to forward its members immediate interests and broader transformation objectives. Managing this tension, which is not necessarily an unhealthy one, has in itself led to misunderstandings, within the Alliance as a whole.

The SACP – as the party for socialism – has the special role of challenging capitalist ideology and the capitalist character of South African society. However, this should at all times also reflect the need for identifying sources of capital and methods of mobilising and accessing it for transformation, even as large volumes of it move from country to country.

The commitment to mobilise all those forces committed to transformation into a broad front has not