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# RECONSTRUCTION & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

*The new South Africa*



President Nelson Mandela was inaugurated on 10 May 1994, as the first ever democratically elected Head of State of South Africa. His election was the culmination of decades of struggle against the system of apartheid which the United Nations declared to be a 'crime against humanity'. Yet the scars of apartheid – its legacies and injustices – still run deep in South Africa:

- ◆ up to 50% of the population are living below the poverty line, almost all are Africans;
- ◆ some 25% of the African population are living in squatter camps or crude temporary housing;
- ◆ functional literacy amongst Africans is estimated to be well over 50%;
- ◆ some 25% of African children of school-going age are not receiving any formal education;
- ◆ 8% of South Africa's population (the overwhelming majority of them white) account for 90% of personally owned wealth.

South Africans now share a new vision for the future of their country – a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. And they have a programme to make this a reality. It is the Reconstruction and Development Programme, known as the RDP.

Drawn up and developed by the African National Congress (ANC) and its allies, especially Cosatu – South Africa's main non-racial trade union federation – through an extensive process of consultation, it was published as a 150-page document just prior to South Africa's first non-racial elections. It now serves as the cornerstone of the policies of the ANC-led Government of National

Unity. The people of South Africa need the RDP, for, as it states:

'Our history has been a bitter one dominated by colonialism, racism, apartheid, sexism and repressive labour policies.

**'The RDP should be understood as an all-encompassing process of transforming society in its totality to ensure a better life for all. It addresses both the principle goals of the transformation and ways of managing it.'**

Nelson Mandela

The result is that poverty and degradation exist side by side with modern cities and a developed mining, industrial and commercial infrastructure. Our income distribution is racially distorted and ranks as one of the most unequal in the

world – lavish wealth and abject poverty characterise our society.'

The RDP seeks to transform South Africa on the basis of what it describes as 'an innovative and bold philosophy based on a few

simple but powerful ideas'. 'An integrated programme, based on the people, that provides peace and security for all and builds the nation, links reconstruction and development and deepens democracy – these are the six basic principles of the RDP'.



**Central to the Reconstruction and Development Programme are its five policy programmes:**

**1 Meeting basic needs**

Attacking poverty and deprivation is the first priority of the RDP through a major programme designed to meet the basic needs of the people. The RDP includes specific proposals to generate jobs; redistribute a substantial amount of land to the landless people; build over a million houses; provide clean water and sanitation to all; electrify 2.5 million new homes and provide access for all to affordable health care and telecommunications.

Full involvement of the people in the decision making and implementation of these infrastructural programmes is required. These programmes will stimulate demand in the economy both through increased employment and an increased requirement for materials such as bricks and steel.

**2 Developing human resources**

The RDP is committed to the rapid development of South Africa's human resources so that the full potential of its people can be realised. Its underlying approach to education and training is that these should be available to all from cradle to grave.

There will be a need to develop new skills to enable people to participate fully in decision making, benefit from new job opportunities, and to be involved in the management and governing of the new country. A key focus will be on ensuring a full and equal role of women in every aspect of the economy and society.

The RDP envisages one education and training system, as opposed to the old, racially segregated one. It proposes that children will receive ten years of free compulsory education, whilst an adult basic education programme, involving employers, trade

unions, and all levels of government will be launched.

For the full development of human resources there will be a special emphasis on arts and culture, sport and recreation, and a focus on the youth. This will unlock the creativity of the people, and allow for the enjoyment of a rich diversity of recreational activities.

**3 Building the economy**

The South African economy is in a deep seated structural crisis, since for decades the white minority have used their exclusive access to political and economic power to promote their own sectional interest at the expense of the black majority. The resulting economic deprivation has created a fertile basis for violence, instability and crime.

The RDP envisages the transformation of the economy through an economic policy based on democracy, participation and

development. Key elements will include:

- ◆ an integrated process of reconstruction and development – instead of depending on economic growth to make development possible since this would result in leaving all the structural injustices of the apartheid economy intact;
- ◆ the restructuring and modernisation of industry, trade and commerce to meet the challenges of a changing world and the needs of the people, including support for micro, small and medium enterprise and the need for a special focus on women and the rural areas;
- ◆ the upgrading of infrastructure including electrification, telecommunications and transport;
- ◆ reform of the financial sector including a new regulatory framework and measures to prohibit discrimination in the provision of loans and other financial services;
- ◆ the extension of labour and workers rights including

a living wage and affirmative action to address race and gender discrimination.

The RDP aims at a 5% growth rate, and to create up to 500,000 jobs in industry, trade and commerce within five years. To help achieve this it is proposed that mineral rights will be returned to the government; and tourism, agriculture, forestry and fishing are to be developed.

#### 4 Democratising the state and society

The apartheid regime was unrepresentative, undemocratic and highly oppressive and corrupt. In past decades the state became increasingly secretive and militarised. For the RDP to succeed, the concept of democracy must be extended and deepened, and institutions must be developed to increase the capacity to deliver services.

'The people shall govern' is the vision of the RDP. Democracy is intimately linked to reconstruction and development; without it the

whole effort will lose momentum.

The RDP sets out a perspective for the further democratic transformation of South Africa. This includes the drawing up and adoption of a fully democratic constitution; transforming and ensuring the democratic accountability of the security forces including the police; the restructuring of the public service; the creation of fully democratic and non-racial structures of local government; and the building of a vibrant civil society.

#### 5 Implementing the RDP

The first major policy programme of the RDP is the very process of its planning and implementation. It proposes the establishment of RDP structures in government at a national, provincial and local level.

These will be capable of determining priorities, co-ordinating resources and inviting all major stakeholders to participate in the

determination, implementation and evaluation of policy.

Generating the necessary financial resources will be fundamental to the successful implementation of the RDP.

Some resources will be unlocked from better organisation and rationalisation of existing systems – savings from government expenditure and the removal of unnecessary duplication of government functions created under apartheid.

The RDP envisages the restructuring of the national budget to release funds for reconstruction and development. Moreover, as the tax system is rationalised and the economy improves, tax revenues will increase.

This, in conjunction with a proposed Reconstruction Bond; socially desirable investments by the private sector; and assistance from the international community, will it is envisaged, raise the necessary funds to ensure the success of the RDP.

#### South Africa in Southern Africa

THE RDP stresses the importance of South Africa's role in the region. Indeed it argues that 'in the long run, sustainable reconstruction and development in South Africa requires sustainable reconstruction and development in Southern Africa as a whole'. It proposes that a democratic South Africa should apply to the Southern Africa Development Community and 'negotiate with neighbouring countries to forge an equitable and mutually beneficial programme of increasing co-operation, co-ordination and integration appropriate to the conditions of the region'.

## Bringing the RDP to fruition

President Mandela, immediately on his inauguration, appointed Jay Naidoo, the former General Secretary of Cosatu, as Minister without Portfolio with responsibility for the implementation of the RDP.

Delivering his State of the Nation Address to parliament on 24 May, President Mandela recalled that 'when we elaborated the RDP we were inspired by the hope that all South Africans of goodwill could join together to provide a better life for all'.

He went on to announce 'that the Cabinet of the Government of National Unity has reached consensus not only on the broad objective of the creation of a people-centred society . . . but also on many elements of a plan broadly based on that of the RDP'.

The President also gave details of an appropriation of R2.5 billion in the 1994/5 budget to fund the RDP, rising to R10 billion over the next five years.

President Mandela also gave details of specific projects to be implemented within the next 100 days including provision of free medical care to all children under the age of six and pregnant mothers and nutritional feeding schemes in every primary school.

## RDP makes progress

On 18 August, to mark one hundred days in office, President Mandela addressed a special Joint Session of Parliament in Cape Town where he gave a comprehensive progress report on the RDP and announced a series of new initiatives. These included:

- ◆ projects for rebuilding and restoring townships;
- ◆ a major clinic building programme;
- ◆ an expanded AIDS awareness and prevention campaign;
- ◆ a national campaign for the rebuilding and rehabilitation of schools;
- ◆ a programme of rehabili-

tation and extension of municipal services and infrastructure in both urban and rural areas;

- ◆ water and sanitation projects serving 1.7 million people;
- ◆ restitution of land to communities and land redistribution;
- ◆ a new R100 million fund for the provinces to finance community initiated projects linked to the RDP.

'We have some distance to travel to achieve the objective of transforming South African society' President Mandela stressed and he called for 'clear medium and long term strategies from all departments and parastatal institutions on mechanisms of shifting their operations to meet the requirements of reconstruction and development' by the end of the year.

## Future of the Anti-Apartheid Movement

WITH the birth of democracy in South Africa the Anti-Apartheid Movement has achieved its goal. On 25 June an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Movement unanimously decided to transform the AAM into a new movement of solidarity with the peoples of Southern Africa.

One of the main tasks of the successor organisation will be to support the South African people in their implementation of the RDP. We will also be campaigning for reconstruction and development for the Southern Africa region as a whole.

## What we can do!

Nelson Mandela, in his Preface to the Reconstruction and Development Programme warned:

‘Democracy will have little content, and indeed, will be short lived if we cannot address our socio-economic problems.’

This is why it is essential that the world is mobilised in support of the RDP – and there is much that can be done by the international community to help the RDP succeed.

*Firstly*, we need to inform and educate public opinion about the RDP – its vision of a new South Africa; its objectives in transforming South African society; its major policy programmes; its successes; and its problems.

A range of material including photo-exhibition, brochures, briefings, as well as speakers with expertise on the RDP, are available to help get the message of the RDP across to the public in Britain.

*Secondly*, we need to help create an international environment which is supportive of the RDP, especially so that there is maximum access for South African products into Britain and the European Union. We need to be lobbying our MPs and MEPs to ensure

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Nelson Mandela

that the interim agreement between the EU and South Africa is transformed into a long term agreement which helps the South African economy develop on the basis envisaged in the RDP, but which is also supportive of the development and reconstruction of the Southern African region as whole.

We also need to press for South Africa’s reclassification by bodies such as the OECD, the European Commission and the British government as a ‘developing country’, so that it can benefit from all the facilities provided for

such countries. At present, because of the level of its per capita gross national product it is deemed to be an ‘upper middle income country’. However, this hides the reality of the underdeveloped character of most of South African society, which the RDP seeks to address.

*Thirdly*, we need to ensure that effective programmes of developmental aid are provided by the British government, the European Union and the United Nations and its agencies in support of the RDP both directly to the new democratic government as well as to South Africa’s vibrant non-governmental sector.

We need to lobby both MPs and MEPs to press the case for the generous provision of aid which will be *genuinely* supportive of the process of reconstruction and development.

*Fourthly*, we need to be campaigning for new forms of economic solidarity with South Africa as trade and investment relations grow following the lifting of sanctions. Banks and companies investing in or making loans to South Africa should do so in ways which are supportive of the RDP and importers of South African products should ensure that they purchase from companies which are committed to the RDP.

*Finally*, we can make a direct contribution to the success of the RDP by contributing to any of the many agencies in Britain which are funding projects in South Africa which are promoting the RDP.



■ If you would like more information, send off now for the RDP Campaign Information Pack to:  
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