



UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT: UDM STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

- ELECTION 2009 ANALYSIS
- STATE OF THE NATION
- 2011, 2014 ELECTIONS
- POLITICAL REALIGNMENT DEBATE

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ELECTION 2009

The 2009 National Elections in South Africa did not only disappoint the members of the United Democratic Movement (UDM), but also the whole Nation. The public and commentators in various spheres had noted our vigorous publicity strategy which we embarked upon as early as September 2007, when we launched our Ascendancy Profile. Indeed we obtained reports from our structures that the UDM National Office supplied them with enough campaign material. It was agreed that the UDM's exposure on radio and television, outdoor advertisement, newspapers and various discussion forums, talk shows and other media fronts was a success.

It would be folly of me though, not to recognise the great efforts shown by the UDM structures despite the lack of resources especially those who went an extra mile in using their own resources. A special word of thanks goes to King Sabata Dalindyebo (KSD) region in the Eastern Cape which performed well.

However, it is clear that you can have all the resources in the world but if you do not have structures on the ground you are doomed to fail in the elections.

We cannot blame anybody but ourselves for not having done our work. A classical example was the lack of follow-up with the UDM's Ascendancy Profile. It has been the view of the National Executive Committee (NEC) for years that if we are to be strong contenders for power, we need to have a branch in every locality.

Instead, in the Party's history we have been confronted with the building of 'plastic branches', a situation which posed a serious threat to the existence of the Party. It is surprising when you correlate areas where it was reported that we have so many branches yet that support did not culminate in votes. You will find out that others will be vocal, pretending to have strong constituencies, but on the eve of elections these so-called leaders would disappear into thin air. It is clear that there are multitudes of reasons why they behave in that fashion e.g. infiltration to see to it that the UDM does not grow, politics of factionalism, cliques etc.

At the level of NEC we cannot claim to have been honest for it has been noted that decisions taken at this level did not filter down the organisational structure, hence people continued to

be in the dark when it comes to what is expected of them. We had conducted several strategic sessions since the inception of the UDM for the local, regional, provincial and national leaders to be vocal on issues that affect their spheres of operation.

Every time we agreed on the programme of action; the answer had always been: **“YES WE WILL DO”**. We thought that the situation would improve when we had councillors on the ground. Some of them do not attend meetings; they are silent on local issues and are nowhere to be found, even on their telephones. This picture demonstrated itself during the past elections when the UDM leaders were required to represent the Party on talk shows, only a few would be available. In these workshops, it was emphasised that we need to change the perception that only the UDM President can participate in such debates. This tendency proved to have negative impact on the UDM when people looked at our policies and manifesto, they commend them, but pose a question as to whether we have people enough to run a government and execute such policies. These are examples of the main challenges facing the growth of the UDM.

This poses a question as to whether the instruments we use to select Party leadership give prominence to quantity over quality. The big question is therefore whether we have managed to select or elect leaders who can sell the UDM’s vision and its policies. However, I submit that we cannot come up with an answer today, but put us on alert for the forthcoming provincial congresses and the national congress next year.

If we are to agree on a turn-around strategy to rebuild the UDM, discipline must be the key factor and how we identify and select leaders. However, the politics out there are not going to wait for Congresses. We need to contribute on matters of National importance on a daily basis.

I therefore recommend that we must have spokespersons for various ‘desks’, what in other parties are called “shadow cabinet”. Such a responsibility would mean that those appointed to such portfolios should at all times keep their lines of communication open to the public, media and UDM structures.

If this suggestion is approved, the Secretary General should co-ordinate a workshop where the incumbents will be orientated on UDM policies especially dealing with the public and the media. Such a strategy should also, if it works, permeate to all other structures of the UDM. The UDM women, youth and student spokespersons should also participate in this proposed workshop for various desks.

The most important hurdles facing us are to rebuild our structures to be ready for Regional, Provincial and National Congresses. To do this work we have almost a year; starting September 2009 up to September 2010, when we should have a National Congress. Simultaneously we should begin to prepare for the 2011 Local Government Elections [*Ascendancy Profile attached*]. One of our challenges is to identify would-be councillors for 2011 Local Government Elections. Criteria to be used are whether the candidate is actively involved in community issues and understanding UDM policies. Judging by the impatience and anxiety amongst South Africans on the ground, it is clear that the 2011 Local Government Elections will not be business as usual.

In discussing our performance, we must not lose sight of the fact that we were dealing with the African National Congress (ANC) which has a lot of front companies who benefit from State resources which support it financially. Looking at its budget which was over R500 million, coupled with them having access to public funds, the UDM budget did not even make ten percent thereof. Their expenditure of R22 million for only one event speaks volumes about the expensive nature of elections today. We must therefore not treat ourselves harshly when we compare our performance levels in terms of financial and other resources.

In light of the fact that the playing field remains unlevel it is therefore imperative that we be creative enough in our efforts to build the Party especially considering that the number of members of Provincial legislatures and Parliament has dropped. The financial strain placed on the UDM during the election impacts on our day-to-day performance. The UDM has never been able to carve a niche in the established sponsorship base which is patronised by older political formations.

In analysing the results in General Elections of 2009, the downward spiral of political parties who were in Parliament previously, with the exception of the Democratic Alliance (DA), was

noted. Indeed the analysis of these results paint a picture that it would have been worse for the ANC had it not been for the massive support it got from KwaZulu-Natal, alas at the expense of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the UDM.

It is therefore important to note that despite all the resources the ruling party had, voters were free to exercise their vote. The ruling party clique seems to think that they own all South Africans; this situation is going to be exacerbated by the politics of marginalisation laced with ethnic tendencies. All that is needed is for the UDM to reposition itself and tap into this pond of resurrection.

Despite the drop in support the results of the 2009 Election show that the UDM has the potential to grow in all the nine provinces - in this respect, party building is of paramount importance. Primary in this area is the necessity to concentrate our energies on capacity building especially in as far as youth, students and women.

STATE OF THE NATION

As far as the State of the Nation is concerned, we can say President Jacob Zuma and his Cabinet ascended the positions of power after the ANC won the 2009 Elections. At present the Executive looks too bloated. The unfortunate part is that this happens at a time when a call for a cutback on expenditure is frequently made. However what comes out clearly is that these newly created Cabinet and Departmental posts were intended to accommodate President Zuma's appointments and those of the Mbeki-era with the sole intension of unifying the party at the expense of service delivery. The jury is still out on whether it was a good decision for him to have such a big cabinet.

The Country has experienced serious protests over the lack of service delivery in the last four years. Whenever these protests rear its ugly head, the powers-that-be always suspect the involvement of a 'third force'. The truth of the matter is that 99,9% of these protests are organised and led by some of the Tripartite Alliance partners. The undercurrent of these protests is caused by the so-called leftists who claim to be promoting a particular ideology against the ANC's who has been portrayed as representing neo-liberal policies. This infighting was visible in Polokwane which led to the emergence of new faces both in Parliament and the Executive. Expect that this campaign will intensify up to 2011 when they would have ferreted

out people deemed to be the undesirables in this revamped Tripartite Alliance in Government. The question is: what are they fighting for? Could it be that there is truth in that they are fighting for the control of resources? You be the judge!

It is worth noting that, during the past five years, service delivery has grounded to a halt and unemployment is sky rocketing, lawlessness abounds, the criminal justice system is in a crisis.

There is convergence between top politicians, police and criminals which blurs the dividing line between law-enforcers and criminals. This has led to the dismantling of constitutionally designed structures like the Scorpions which were intended to fight high intensity criminal elements.

Ruling party political leaders engage in high levels of scientific discourse on matters where they are out of their depth (where only eagles dare), rather than to attend to burning issues of putting food on the table for the crying hungry children and the helplessly aged.

POLITICAL REALIGNMENT DEBATE

The clarion call from the general public in the past fifteen years has been for the opposition parties to work closely together in order to avoid one-party-dominance which has proven elsewhere to be a system that breeds corruption and the display of arrogance of power.

The UDM, as early as in the 1999/2000 financial year, took a decision to engage other political formations in discussions that could culminate in the formation of an alternative government for South Africa. Of course this was an endorsement of a concept espoused by the UDM at its inception. UDM members will recall that we entrusted this task of talking to other parties to the myself, the then Chairperson Mr Masilo Mabetla, Dr Gerhard Koornhof and Mr PG Qokweni who are no longer with the Party having been induced by the ANC during the flooring-crossing era.

The National Congress of the UDM in 2001 also endorsed this notion. The UDM Discussion document called:

- “CONSOLIDATE AND BUILD A STRONG ALTERNATIVE” released in October 2001 for our Second National Congress (December 2001)
- as well as the UDM Discussion document called “A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PARTY AND STATE OF THE NATION” (June 2000)

both contain arguments for realignment. Both documents were endorsed at the UDM’s National Congress of 2001.

Members should also remember that a meeting amongst the leaders of the following political parties i.e. the UDM, IFP, the then Democratic Party (DP) and the New National Party (NNP), did not produce good results in this regard. Instead the DP and the NNP saw an opportunity to merge and form what we call the Democratic Alliance (DA) today. Even that ‘marriage of convenience’ did not last long, as the NNP pulled out and migrated to their erstwhile foes, the ANC.

It was during this crazy period where every attempt was made to call all people who were former members of the NNP to carry their political possessions in their suitcases and converge under the ANC’s hegemony. Indeed it looks as though a word was sent to all former architects of Apartheid that their future was more guaranteed if they join the ANC.

It was for this reason that the likes of Ms Annelizé Van Wyk, Mr Tommy Abrahams, Mr Salam Abram Mayet, Mr Sam de Beer, Dr Gerhard Koornhof, Mr Cedric Frolick, etc. etc., left the UDM during the floor-crossing period. Indeed, this was a re-alignment of a special kind but nevertheless one which should be viewed as having contributed to the strengthening of the reconciliation process given the history of both parties.

It should be noted however, that the ANC of today and the NNP represent a predominantly wealthy social group who inherited social and economic privileges from the previous dispensation. No wonder the resources of this Country only circulate within the circles of this hegemonous group. One wonders whether the deal between the two during the CODESA period will ever translate into meaningful economic freedom for all. It is for that reason that they dilly dally when it comes to issues of land distribution and service delivery.

So, when we engage in debates on political re-alignment, we should be reminded of the UDM's policy and Congress positions such as our call for this Country to hold an indaba to find solutions to our economic woes. We should take note that President Zuma and his party have ruled out the possibilities of such a meeting. Why is the ruling party government failing to open up a debate on its macro-economic policies to enable the exploration of alternative models that would minimise job losses and create alternative employment?

It should be noted that in order to re-dress the economic disparities of the Apartheid era we cannot afford to leave that responsibility to individuals in the ruling party or their chosen consultants. This is a matter of national importance and they must therefore be addressed by a national indaba comparable in scale and depth to the CODESA which resolved the Apartheid political conundrum.

Let me remind everyone of our initial debate on the need to re-align politics in South Africa. We said as far back as the 2001 Congress that:-

"We would like to note that there is a strong opinion that the transformation process cannot be confined to the economic sphere only and that in the political arena transformation is also needed. South Africa has a painful history in which racial divisions and social inequalities have coincided with party political formations. The resultant antagonisms and mutual suspicions will continue to mar our society for sometime yet, because they cannot be easily wished away by the constitution that highlights the non-racialism and unity in diversity, today, South Africans are still voting along racial lines, e.g: Blacks vote for Black political parties and Whites vote for White political parties.

Proponents of this view suggest that such a transformation will culminate into the emergency of two major political parties in the centre stage of national politics in our society. Experiences in established democracies elsewhere give credence to this view. Britain, France and USA are examples that come to our mind. The economic and political stability of these countries is common knowledge.

We are convinced as a party that such a process will need the support of and acceptance by the majority citizens of this country. Such support will not only give legitimacy to these developments but most important will prevent them from degenerating into tendencies

wherein appeals to racist and narrow class interests are utilised as a vehicle for the mobilisation of followers in pursuit of short term gains. The 1994, 1999 and 2000 election campaign by some political parties is a living testimony.

Our analysis of the changing socio-political order in South Africa indicates that there will be discernible political shifts along interest group divides distinguished by common concerns and aspirations and not along racial lines as we witness today. This process will move towards the crystallisation of two major political streams, which express the ethos of the beneficiaries of the established order, on the one hand, and the aspirations of the emerging major social groupings that are marginalised on the other hand. This will necessitate the emergence of two political formations representing these interest groups.

The National Management Committee mandated the party to engage other formations in discussions that could culminate in the formation of an alternative government for South Africa. This was an endorsement of a concept by the UDM at its inception.

In all discussions our point of departure as a party is the recommitment to the principle of improving the quality of lives of the people of South Africa as a national objective agreed to by all parties during the negotiation process in 1994.

This point of departure informs our insistence in all discussions on re-alignment, that the long-term objective of an alternative government must address the needs and receive the support of the majority citizens of our country.

It is for this reason the UDM in its discussion with other parties and public utterances insist on encompassing people beyond the existing formations and reach out to all spheres of society.

The UDM's view is that an appropriate format for discussions will be a National Convention of Political parties including other sectors of society.

The re-alignment phenomenon, it must be clearly understood, is not an alliance of political parties. It is a re-writing of the political map, a re-alignment of ideas, the regrouping of people around new concepts that have been thrown up by the changes that have taken place.

We call upon South Africans in all political formations, civil society, the business sector, academia etc, to take stock and concede that we should leave the baggage of the past behind and embrace the opportunity to carry our society forward and write a new chapter in our history.”

Once more you will recall that in those documents of the Congress we proposed the following steps to advance the said debates:-

- a. *“Engage in informal discussion with all stakeholders, as we have started this weekend, which will begin to identify the various policy positions that are needed to improve the lot of South Africans.*
- b. *If there is an emerging consensus to establish an alternative government, we should establish a Committee of Parties with equal status (it will need to include other stakeholders in society such as Labour, Business, Traditional institutions, Youth, Women, NGOs, etc).*
- c. *That Committee of Parties should, in consultation with their leaders, work out the following:*
 - i. *a vision.*
 - ii. *a possible vehicle to drive the process, including the question of leadership.*
 - iii. *areas of agreement and disagreement on our values.*
- d. *If there is consensus, the Committee should call a Summit of Leaders to send a message that we are serious about political realignment in South Africa. It is at this Summit that the leaders may decide on what the next stage in the process will be.*
- e. *The UDM’s view is that an appropriate format for discussions will be a second bigger National Indaba/Convention of Political Parties and sectors of society.*
- f. *Such an Indaba/Convention can set up Commissions to deliberate on different policy areas.*

- g. The Commissions would report their findings to the Indaba/Convention, indicating differences and agreements on key areas and principles underlying party platforms.*
- h. It would be the responsibility of the Indaba/Convention to take resolutions, on the most important aspects of this process, which would be a commitment to an accepted common vision of an alternative government.”*

The UDM as the chief architect of the re-alignment process should ensure that the Party is not left behind. We must get involved even at this early stage of informal discussions. The agenda which is being proposed currently amongst leaders of opposition parties is:-

- (a) Co-operation inside and outside Parliament;
- (b) Co-operation in 2011 Local Government Elections;
- (c) Co-operation for the 2014 National Elections.

Already the prophets of doom have stated that re-alignment of opposition politics will not succeed because of different ideologies. However, you need not be a political scientist to understand how political labels have been dished out internationally. The debate these days is about the improvement of the quality of life of the people all over the world. It is for that reason that the ANC of today is composed of capitalists, socialists, communists, so called 'hardline-leftists', Separate Development architects like the NNP, Christians, Hindus, Muslims and many other religious formations. One thing we cannot deny on all these groupings, especially the mixture of political class mentioned above, is the equitable level of their consumption pattern.

Members will recall that I am also chairperson of the Multiparty Forum Secretariat which was established in 2007 to co-ordinate the activities of political parties and to engage with other stakeholders such as the IEC. Had it not been for the establishment of this Forum, we would not have enjoyed live coverage on SABC TV and radio stations during the 2009 election period.

Indeed the Forum identified issues which required short and long term solutions (see the attached Multiparty Forum Resolutions). This document was also distributed during the launch of our Manifesto this year. For the first time in the history of opposition parties, party agents co-operated in monitoring the 2009 Elections.

This debate on political re-alignment among the opposition parties is a process not an event and it will take some time to complete. In the meantime we stay focussed and build the UDM for the 2011 and 2014 Elections.

We must take this discussion document back so that we remind our structures on the road ahead of what we discussed and our position on the re-alignment debate. In the meantime I would propose that we establish a committee of ten people to represent UDM interests in these re-alignment debates. Such a committee will be accountable to the NEC and be given powers to co-opt when need be especially academics that support the UDM. In conclusion, when we discuss the re-alignment phenomenon we should consider the following scenarios:-

- a. Devise a cooperation model, without losing the identities of the political parties such as working together under one umbrella during elections.
- b. Remain as separate parties, but cooperate on issues raised in the Multi-Party Forum, such as electoral processes.
- c. Consider electoral pacts, where political parties agree not to contest against each other, and ask their supporters in certain areas to vote for their partner in the pact.
- d. Contest the election separately, but political parties can also consider coalitions after the election.
- e. Disband all the likeminded parties and create one new political entity to contest upcoming elections.

I therefore table this document to be accepted as a guide to our discussions towards our congresses next year and the 2011 Local Government and 2014 National elections.

I thank you.