



UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

## DISCUSSION DOCUMENT:

# Towards the UDM's 4<sup>th</sup> National Congress and beyond

*by B Holomisa, MP*

*President of the United Democratic Movement*

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### National Office

- ☎ 012-321-0010
- ☎ 087-941-9052
- ✉ info@udm.org.za
- ✉ PO Box 26290, Arcadia, 0007

### Parliamentary Office

- ☎ 021-403-3926
- ☎ 021-403-2922
- ✉ research@udm.org.za
- ✉ PO Box 15, Cape Town, 8000

[www.udm.org.za](http://www.udm.org.za)



## **INTRODUCTION**

It is a year and a half since the 2009 National and Provincial elections, with only a few months to the Local Government elections of 2011.

The 2009 elections represented a significant milestone for our democracy. Multi-party democracy, which is our only defence against one-party dominance and dictatorship, is now finely balanced between opportunity and disaster.

Looking at the 2009 election results we notice that the ANC lost ground in eight out of the nine provinces. Unfortunately, the UDM and most opposition parties failed to capitalise on this and the ANC managed to absorb its national setback with a very strong advance in KwaZulu Natal.

On the eve of the Local Government Elections it is now vital that we correctly analyse the state of the nation and the state of the organisation in order to develop the best strategies.

As a nation we do not seem to have made progress in addressing issues related to service delivery, precisely because of infighting in the ruling party. This behaviour has affected the functioning of government departments and municipalities. For instance, since the government of President Zuma came to office they have purged no less than six Directors General (Education; Communication; Women, Children and People with Disabilities; Local Government; etc.) some of these DGs have been purged simply because they resisted wasteful expenditure. Some of these DGs were only appointed last year and have already been removed again.

Members are called upon, when debating this discussion document, to identify the opportunities that these issues present for the UDM.

## **STATE OF THE NATION**

It's been a year and a half since the Government of President Jacob Zuma was elected. In that time they have had more than enough time to demonstrate what they are capable of. It is a matter of record that the outcomes have been poor.

The present Government upon election immediately became embroiled in a scandal involving the buying of unnecessary and overly expensive 'official' vehicles by Ministers. Even as this scandal evolved we saw the first signs that indecision, silence and unfulfilled commitments would be hallmarks of the new Presidency. President Zuma failed to act decisively to put an end to this wanton spending spree for the personal luxury of ruling leaders who had campaigned on a pro-poor ticket in the elections. This was contrary to President Zuma's campaign promises that the new administration would do things differently.

What this first crisis also demonstrated is that the faction that now controls the ANC is no different from the one it replaced and which it had accused of being motivated by self-enrichment.

The current Government came to power on an election promise of creating half a million jobs by the end of 2009, but by January 2010 we received the news that the economy had actually lost more than a million jobs. By October 2010 the same Government was again making extravagant promises of creating millions of jobs. We need only look at their track-record to know that the odds are very slim of them fulfilling their latest jobs promises.

There were high hopes in many quarters when a new Government replaced the Mbeki administration, especially with regards to fresh economic thinking to bring an end to the so-called 'jobless growth'. Alas, President Zuma quickly put an end to those hopes by announcing that there would be no changes in economic policy. We have to wonder whether all the supposed ideology conflict between the Zuma and Mbeki camps was merely a smokescreen.

Indeed the UDM has been vindicated in our assessment that the ANC's infighting (which continues after Polokwane, and even after the COPE-split) is not a question of ideology, but rather about access to state resources for the triumphant faction to reward friends and family with.

During this period we have witnessed wave upon wave of service delivery protests, with people complaining about the lack of jobs and services in their communities. Unfortunately the ANC Government responds to legitimate grievances by sending in the police, instead of engaging the community. This mentality reminds us of the Apartheid regime.

This same securo-crat mentality also raised its ugly head with the introduction of the Protection of Information Bill, as well as the ANC's planned Media Tribunal. Never before has proposed legislation caused so much negative local and international publicity. Sadly, this negative publicity followed shortly on the heels of a successful World Cup which placed South Africa on the world map in a positive light. By pursuing these draconian undemocratic laws, the ruling party has scored an own goal by squandering the goodwill of the World Cup.

Contrary to the propaganda of the ruling party, there have never been a single instance in which a newspaper or media organisation has threatened national security by publishing leaked information. However, there have been countless cases of leaked information exposing the scandals and wrongdoing within Government. It is patently clear to any right-minded observer

that these proposed laws are a heavy-handed attempt by Government to prevent the public from knowing about the scandals it is involved in.

It is the media that has ensured that the public have been shown the lies and deception of those in power. A classic example is those Tripartite Alliance leaders in Cabinet who have portrayed themselves as champions of the poor, but who live in imperial opulence. If it wasn't for the media we would not know that these so-called pro-poor hypocrites drive million-rand cars and stay in the most expensive hotels in the land. Nor is the problem restricted to individuals; the ANC used Eskom as a cash-cow via the billion-rand Hitachi deal. If it was not for the media we would not have known that Eskom had entered into contracts that will directly benefit the ANC to the tune of hundreds of millions of Rands. In October 2010 the Minister of Finance announced that Government would guarantee up to R300 billion in loans for ESKOM up to 2017. The meaning of that decision is that the taxpayer is helping ESKOM to fund the ANC. This is the danger of a one-party state; the arrogance of power that comes with that means that the ruling party simply tells the rest of us to go jump in a lake and they will not pull out of such patently corrupt deals.

This type of looting reminds us of the PetroSA scandal wherein the ANC received a R11 million 'donation' prior to the elections. It is more than likely that many similar underhanded deals have been concluded.

Could it be that these media exposes are the real reason for the introduction of these laws?

The UDM and its members must do everything in their power to resist these proposed laws. If these measures become law, it will be a direct attack on our most basic freedoms. Without the right to know, we might as well be back in the 1970s when the Apartheid regime committed crimes against the people with impunity.

Initially the UDM welcomed the creation of new Ministries and Departments since there are certain priorities that require more focussed attention. However we've seen that most of these new Departments have no real impact on policy. It is clear that the taxpayer is carrying a huge new burden to maintain positions essentially created to appease the various interest groups that backed the Zuma project at Polokwane.

Whilst the ministerial car furore died down, experts in the business arena started noticing the sudden emergence of huge private and public sector contracts in favour of people with personal connections to the new President. The friends and financial backers of President Zuma have

rapidly accumulated inordinate wealth. According to the media, President Zuma's wives are suddenly directors in multiple companies, whilst his son and nephew have gone from relative lightweight businessmen to multi-billionaires in one short year. Nor have President Zuma's closest supporters from Polokwane been shy of living like latter-day emperors. Ironically some of those same close Zuma supporters, such as Julius Malema (ANC Youth League President) and Zwelinzima Vavi (COSATU Secretary General), are loudly protesting against the sudden economic advancement of President Zuma's family. As even the Chairperson of the Young Communist League (YCL) has correctly pointed out, we are witnessing Zuma Economic Empowerment (ZEE).

The lesson that UDM members should learn is that it has become a trend in the last 15 years in this country that those who are wealthy can buy influence. The downfall of Selebi, and the near-downfall of President Zuma himself, demonstrate how wealthy seek to influence and corrupt decision-makers to advance their own agendas. Nor does it involve only individuals; even the ruling party itself (as demonstrated in the Hitachi/Chancellor House deal) is embroiled in shady deals with foreign companies. If this trend is not stopped it will undermine investor confidence in the economy.

The purging of civil servants and managers in the Government and parastatals accelerated, further crippling service delivery. Is it any wonder that we have witnessed a wave of service delivery protests in poor communities throughout the country?

2010 commenced with a double-crisis for President Zuma. His personal life dominated front pages and even staunch supporters began to question his suitability for office. In addition the President's State of the Nation address with the opening of Parliament was an uninspiring speech that left even his supporters unimpressed. When the National Budget was presented shortly thereafter, the ANC's left allies (COSATU and SACP) realised that their misplaced hopes that Zuma would be pro-left had been dashed, especially when the Zuma Government emphasised that there would be no changes to economic policy.

The stage was being set for a massive confrontation between the Tripartite Alliance partners. Into this fray blustered Julius Malema, on the one hand defaming COSATU and the SACP, whilst on the other hand becoming an enthusiastic proponent of far left ideology on nationalisation (which even the SACP acknowledges has not worked).

It is perhaps worth noting that the nationalisation debate thus far fails to make one important point: the master of nationalisation was the Apartheid Regime, which used it to advance its control over society and create jobs and wealth for its cronies... is this the ideology we want to return to?

This war of words between the Tripartite Alliance partners spelled the end of the 'Zuma collective' and showed that the new battle lines would be drawn between the so-called 'nationalists' and the so-called 'socialists/pro-worker' factions. If either faction, or the rest of the country, thought that President Zuma would demonstrate decisive leadership to quell this developing conflict, they were sorely mistaken.

The infighting in the ANC has been affecting service delivery even prior to the removal of President Mbeki from office. The ANC factions use their positions in the Government to fight their party political battles. Up to this date this instability continues with civil servants and office-bearers throughout the state being purged willy-nilly by one of the ANC factions. To make matters worse, this instability and uncertainty further ensures that those who gain positions of influence are even more likely to immediately use the opportunity to enrich themselves before they might be replaced. Indeed the UDM was correct in its assessment that the Polokwane lynch mob would not take this country anywhere.

Indeed, it quickly became clear that neither faction viewed the President as their leader; rather they spoke of him as the man they put in power (and by implication, the man they could remove from power). Eventually after many gratuitous insults and public utterances Julius Malema was given a slap on the wrist for the minor misdemeanour of mentioning President Zuma in the same context as his predecessor. This ineffectual half-hearted punishment and its failure to quell Malema or his opponents have only emphasised the weakness of Zuma's influence within the ANC and Tripartite Alliance.

It is becoming a norm for the ruling alliance to elect people to the office of the President and then shortly thereafter begin to attack the person occupying that office. It creates the impression that we are saddled with lame-duck Presidents who cannot decisively lead the country. For how long is South Africa going to be under this kind of leadership? This is one of the probing questions which we as UDM members must discuss with citizens of this country.

The World Cup provided the country with a brief interlude during which South Africans demonstrated that we are greater than the hollow battles within the ruling elite. Unfortunately the World Cup had barely concluded when a series of violent and protracted strikes commenced. After months of insults and name-calling COSATU and the SACP demonstrated their collective influence by punishing ordinary South Africans with disruptions to vital services. Children died in hospitals and hundreds of thousands of matriculants and learners were deprived of the education that could help them to rise from poverty. In this bloody battle both sides showed scant regard for the socio-economic damage they inflicted on the rest of the

country, especially the poor who do not have the resources to access private service providers of health, education etc.

It is time that South Africans realise that the Tripartite Alliance is based on a poisonous relationship which is inherently flawed. As long as this ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance is allowed to govern we will continue to see these factional battles that cripple service delivery and fail to address poverty.

At election time COSATU and the SACP perpetuate the myth of the ANC as pro-poor, notwithstanding all evidence to contrary. After elections they complain and talk of a 'predatory state' and 'hyenas'. The state isn't predatory, the ruling elite is, and it is COSATU and the SACP who continue to deceive the public to vote for an ANC which has since the Arms Deal of 1998 been characterised by self-enrichment.

This country's highest priorities right now are: job creation, education and service delivery, followed by crime-fighting, health and environmental issues. Whilst the ANC and its alliance partners battle for the spoils of power these urgent policy priorities remain neglected.

Whilst the ANC Government and COSATU bicker over salaries, what have they done about the unemployed and job creation? We can only assume they don't care about that.

Whilst the ANC Government and SADTU fail to end their conflict, what have they done to protect the right of children to a proper education? We can only assume they don't care about that.

Whilst the ANC factions fight about who occupies which positions in municipalities, provinces and national government, what have they done to address the service delivery concerns of protesting communities? We can only assume they don't care about that.

Since its inception the UDM has been in the forefront of the campaign for good governance and for government to do more in the economy to create jobs. Of late we notice that certain sections of the Tripartite Alliance have adopted this language. The UDM must develop strategies to educate the public that the Tripartite Alliance does not represent their interests (no matter what they say), and are merely concerned about getting into power and looting the resources of the state.

In their election manifesto the ANC promised to fight corruption. But in reality they disbanded the Scorpions and established the Hawks, who seem to have been created simply to close down the Arms Deal investigation. The investigation, it must be remembered, was initiated by Parliament through the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA); but the Hawks have announced the discontinuation of the Arms Deal investigation without SCOPA's approval. One of the great similarities of the Mbeki and Zuma Governments has been that both of them have vehemently opposed the proper investigation of the Arms Deal. Therefore the whole notion – as purported in their election manifestoes – of the ruling party as fighting corruption is preposterous.

The issues highlighted above require the members of the UDM to go out and explain to the public that the ruling party's behaviour is actually delaying the realisation of our freedom. If we allow them to continue down this path, South Africa will follow the disastrous examples of other countries on the continent that rapidly sank into poverty and oppression after attaining freedom from colonialism.

## **STATE OF THE ORGANISATION**

The UDM adopted an Ascendancy Profile in the year prior to the National and Provincial elections of 2009.

Members will be aware of the targets and deadlines within that plan which were unanimously endorsed by the UDM NEC after extensive consultation.

That Ascendancy Profile was aimed at reinvigorating our structures and result in improved electoral performance. In the aftermath of the 2009 elections we did a thorough assessment of our performance; without repeating that entire report here, suffice it to say that we failed to achieve our targets due to a range of external and internal factors. In terms of external constraints, we simply have to develop better strategies to address these hurdles, but we shall not dwell on those issues in this document.

What we need to focus on, for the purposes of this document, are the internal constraints that prevent the UDM from performing as we should in elections. For the purposes of the 2010 UDM National Conference it is necessary to update our ascendancy plan with a view to the Local Government elections of 2011.

As the structures conduct their 2010 Provincial Congresses, which will culminate in the National Congress of December 2010, we all need to do introspection and evaluate ourselves on

whether we are correctly positioned to provide an alternative to the many millions of frustrated voters. Even those voters who formerly voted for the UDM and then pinned their hopes on a new political party in the last elections, must surely now be ripe for return to our fold.

There is a high level of morbidity among branches and even some provincial structures, or to put it differently, there are structures that barely exist in name and are incapable of mobilising for even the most basic of organisational functions, such as provincial congresses. It is no surprise that more challenging organisational duties, such as election campaigning, cannot be properly executed.

It is an unhealthy state of affairs when in some areas mobilisation only occurs when the leader of the party threatens local leaders with disciplinary measures and replacement. It should not be necessary to remind members and elected office-bearers of their clearly-defined duties as set out in detail within the UDM constitution.

The current state of affairs, point to a lack of leadership, initiative and enthusiasm within many structures.

One of the failures of the organisation is that we have not formally chosen long-term shadow cabinets on provincial and national level, which would help the UDM to propagate its policies and views on topical issues on a continuous basis. Such an organisational approach would dispel the notion that the UDM is a one-man party. The National Congress must guide the organisation in developing such an organisational arrangement. At the same time it is important to note that such a strategy will fail if those who are chosen for the National Executive Committee and/or the proposed shadow cabinets are not properly qualified and dedicated.

This organisation requires people who are dedicated and hard-working; people for whom the hurdles they encounter are challenges to overcome, as opposed to excuses for not doing what they were chosen to do. We need office-bearers and public representatives who accept nomination and appointment because they want to serve the UDM and advance the interests of its supporters and voters, not simply to occupy a position.

The existence of factions and camps deter the growth of the party. We may have to look at the party constitution to introduce measures to deal with those people whose sole activity seems to be the creation of factions and sow instability.

Another challenge facing the organisation which members need to discuss, is the question of our limited resources. Currently our limited funding is often drained by the need to service election-related debts, instead of vital tasks such as political education workshops. There is no use in complaining about the uneven playing field, we need to find ways to compete against political parties with multi-million Rand campaign budgets.

According to the Ascendancy Profile, in December 2010 the associate structures of the UDM (Woman, Youth and Students), will have their national conferences. It is the wish of the mother-body that those who are elected office-bearers at these conferences will honour their mandates.

Another organisational matter which members need to discuss is the structuring of the National Organising department at National Office. The time has perhaps come to acknowledge that certain national positions should be filled by appointment, not election, because popularity does not always translate into delivery.

### **UDM POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

It is worth noting that the UDM policies which we published in 1999 under the title “Government must do more” are by now largely accepted by Government. Our policies were visionary and it is important that we remain leaders in developing innovative policy solutions for the challenges facing the country.

After the UDM December 2010 National Conference it will be necessary to once more engage in a policy development process to evaluate whether our current policies are still relevant to the country and also to add further innovative solutions. Especially in the following areas there is a need for policy debate and development:

- a) Job creation
- b) Integration of former homelands and township with the developed infrastructure of South Africa.
- c) Both health and education infrastructure are in a state of disrepair, whilst human resource development in both these areas need urgent attention.
- d) Environment-related programmes that could also create job opportunities.
- e) Property ownership – many South Africans still do not own any property due to legal or financial hurdles. Lack of property ownership is a significant hurdle to economic development.
- f) Widespread corruption in Government and parastatals.
- g) Future of provinces – there is debate about relooking the current composition of provinces and the UDM must not be caught wanting in this debate.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

It is vital in our preparations that we identify the three categories of people who will be pivotal to our electoral performance, namely: provincial and local office-bearers who will lead and manage campaigns, candidates who will stand for election, and party agents who will defend our interests at polling stations.

There can be no doubt that these people must be in place already; failure to identify these key role-players in time will undermine our electoral performance.

The selection of these leaders, candidates and agents must be done in a transparent and honest manner that recognises the skills required of people occupying these positions.

The forthcoming Local Government elections will not be the same as the previous one, when the atmosphere was relatively calm. There is an element of frustration and anger in many communities, and our candidates should therefore be very careful of making empty promises. The empty promises that have been made by the ruling party over the course of many elections have created this anger. The approach should rather be to position our councillors as mouthpieces of the deprived and marginalised people, which simply means that UDM councillors will devote their time to campaign for council, province and national government to bring services to the people.

We have witnessed how the national and provincial governments always put the blame for lack of service delivery on local councils, yet they are equally guilty of not providing proper budgets and resources to local councils to deliver services. Currently, according to studies, the Eastern Cape, for instance, has a R740 billion shortfall in terms of infrastructure maintenance and development. There is no way that councillors alone should carry all the blame for lack of service delivery in such circumstances. The same national and provincial authorities that claim there is a lack of funding for such vital causes are capable of quickly finding money for projects in which ***their party, friends and relatives*** win tenders.

UDM members must also be on the alert that the ruling party is fond of shifting ward/municipal boundaries to dilute areas where we are strong electorally. Our best response to this is to ensure that we have branches across communities, irrespective of whether ward/municipal boundaries have changed.

## **POLITICAL REALIGNMENT DEBATE**

The UDM has been a proponent of the political realignment debate since our establishment in 1997. In the past year the debate has not moved forward in a uniform manner, because various parties have begun different initiatives. Nonetheless the leaders of opposition parties had met early in 2010 and agreed on the importance of this debate. Since then we have not had an opportunity as leaders to reassemble, and it may be necessary to engage again and get the broader realignment debate moving forward again. UDM members are referred to the discussion document which was released in August 2009; in that document we suggested that when we discuss the re-alignment phenomenon we should be guided by 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.

As we have said before, realignment is a process and it should be treated as such.

The results of the previous election indicate that the electoral landscape is shifting and it is our analysis that eventually there will emerge a balance of power between two strong political parties.

## **CONCLUSION**

This discussion document is not cast in stone, every member at provincial and national congresses will be free to interpret the political landscape and propose their own analysis. This is merely a guide to stimulate debate. However in this changing political landscape UDM members must ensure that whatever decisions we take are not only in the interest of our supporters, but the nation as a whole.