

YCLSA 4TH NATIONAL CONGRESS
University of the Western Cape, 10-14 December 2014
DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION
2014-2018
(And guidelines for Commissions' Discussion)

1. Introduction

The National Committee has agreed that central to the policy preparations for the 4th National Congress will be a process by structures to review and update the decisions of the 2nd National Council. The decision in the main is informed by the fact that in many regards the 2nd National Council adopted resolutions that in many respects are still relevant. Essentially, we just have to appraise ourselves with regard to latest political developments as will be contained in the Political Report of the National Committee to the 4th National Congress and update were requisite the 2nd National Council Resolutions.

The framework below seeks to elevate at broad level, some of the areas that need to be critically considered in the discussions of the commissions at the 4th National Congress.

2. Context within which the discussions take place

a. The issue of the radical second phase of our revolution

Since 2012, the movement broadly has been engaged with the issues of the content and context of the revolutionary programme that we pursuing, thus coming to a conclusion in Mangaung that we now have to pursue a more radical second phase of our revolution. Our discussion in congress cannot shy away from an interface with this issue.

The SACP has released a thought provoking discussion document that takes the debate forward about the context and character of the second phase. Our discussions as we conclude a draft programme of action for the next four years must be driven by and large by considering the main thrust advanced in the document.

b. Towards the 60 years of the freedom Charter

2015 will mark the 60th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter. What is going to be the posture of the YCL in that context? Whilst we have always appreciated the Freedom Charter as a minimum programme and not a maximum blue print for socialism, how do we deal with the intentions to use the very same freedom charter to hijack the revolutionary programme by the syndicalist, populists and demagogues?

We raising this issue because the misrepresentations of the overall aims and programme of our struggle often appeal with youth from various backgrounds and we see them rallying behind wrong agenda.

c. The discussions that will have an impact on the YCL in relation to organisational renewal of the SACP

The 13th Congress of the SACP mandated the Central Committee to undertake an in depth exercise of organisational renewal and report back the Special National Congress. It is expected that by the time our congress meets the Central Committee will have released a first draft of engagement with structures of the SACP.

We do have an interest as the YCL firstly about the organisational shape of the Party going forward. Over and above that obvious interest since we are the youth wing and a reservoir from which the Party will in future, hopefully, draw its most trusted cadres, there is a salient point of the relationship between the YCL and the Party which in this congress we will have to discuss informed amongst others by the document.

We will also have to define how in a principled way the YCL interacts with the process itself going forward.

d. A need to conceive of our interventions to include children – the future youth. Already there is an overlap in the definition of children 1-17 and youth 14-35.

3. Youth and Economic Transformation and Development

- a. According to information provided by Stats SA “the largest industries, as measured by their nominal value added in the third quarter of 2014, were as follows: Finance, real estate and business services – 20,3 per cent; General government services – 17,0 per cent; Wholesale, retail and motor trade; catering and accommodation – 14,4 per cent; and Manufacturing – 13,4 per cent”.
- b. This information points out to stubborn structural defects in our economy. Notwithstanding challenges in the mining sector which are often blamed for the decline in the sectors contribution to the GDP, we do have a crisis of the structural make of our economy.
- c. Closer scrutiny into the composition of the finance, real estate and business service will point to a dominance of luxury consumption growth, mostly debt driven. The role of finance, real estate and business combined with wholesale, retail and motor trade: catering and accommodation constitutes close to 35% of the GDP.
- d. Unemployment remains high amongst black in general and Africans in particular, with unemployment amongst black African youth according to Stats SA standing at 39.4%, 35.3 % amongst Coloureds, 15.7% amongst Indians and 9.6% amongst whites.
- e. Having regard to this situation, how do we appraise our interventions to date? Have we seen the requisite energy to drive the Youth Employment Accord which was our prime intervention at a government level? How do we continue to mobilise outside government and rally various forces behind the idea of Jobs for youth campaign – what is the next level we should elevate the campaign to?
- f. What progress has been made in relation to our progressive resolutions to support smooth transition between education and work? Where are difficulties at a policy level that needs attention – asked differently what are the pressure points that we should focus on to drive some of our decisions dating back to the 1st every ‘Jobs for Youth Summit’.
- g. By the time we congregated at the 2nd National Council the correlation of power in relation to the Youth Machinery in our country was far from what we have today. Without acting unnecessarily triumphalist, it is not an exaggeration to say never have young communists been at an advantage point to drive the agenda of youth development like we are positioned at the time we starting our

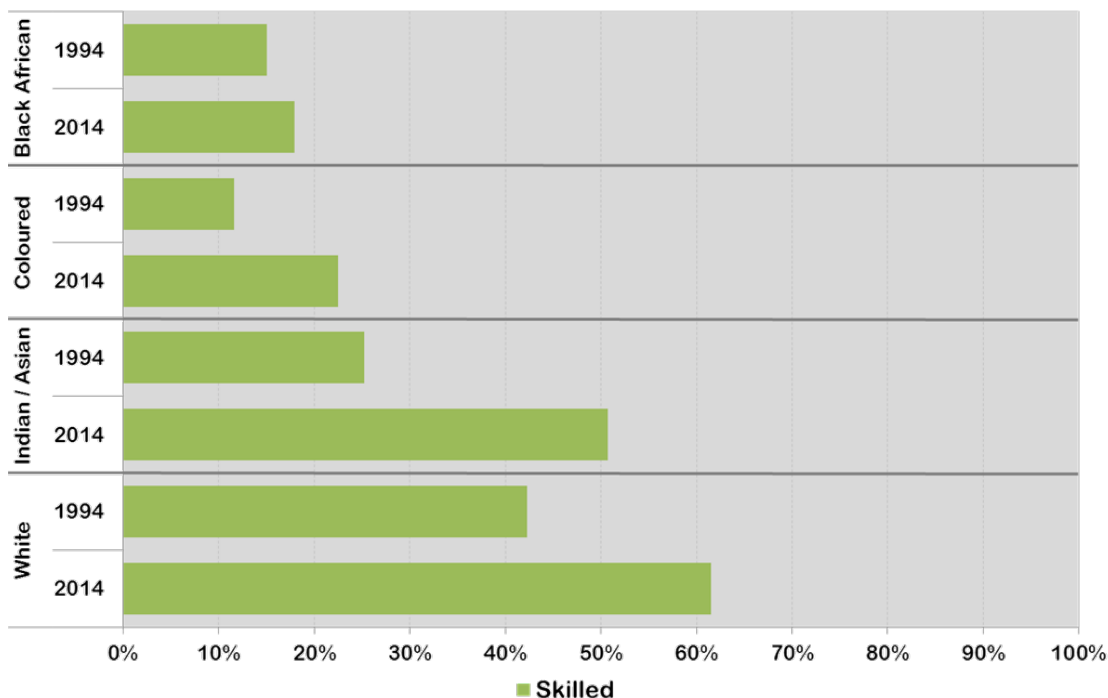
4th National Congress. Do we all understand the challenge correctly? How exactly do we seize the moment to assert a radical agenda?

- h. What is our response to the challenges that have bedeviled the South African Youth Council in the troika of youth development? What are the necessary lessons about our lack of presence in various areas of youth interest and hegemony at a local level to be seen as the obvious leaders of youth development in what is referred to as civil society space?
- i. With the envisaged reconstitution of the NYDA by following correct legislative mechanisms to enable the agency to have provincial and possibly local footprint, what will be the role of the YCL beyond the scramble for power. What should be the programme of local and provincial offices of the NYDA in supporting youth initiatives that could help us to start reversing the picture painted above in terms of employment and faulty structural make of the South African economy?
- j. We should drive local economic activity, at the centre of which must be youth, away from debt drive consumption to one that prioritises a different logic of production, distribution and consumption – away from the profit motive. This is why co-operatives must be seen as crucial and not as an add-on to simply keep the unemployed busy. If we are to alter the deficient structural make we also need to talk about the nature of economic activity often associated co-operatives.

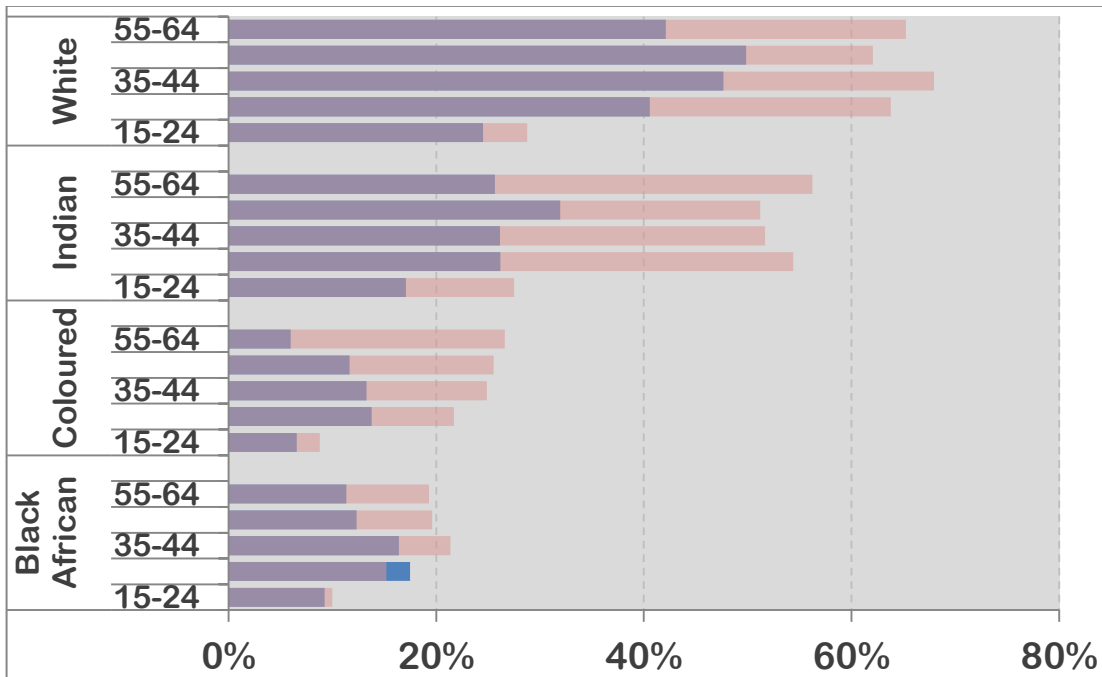
4. Youth and Education, Skills Development and Health

4.1 *Education and Skills Development*

- a. Since the National Council Stats SA has released data that paints the following picture:



Source Stats SA: Percentage of workers within each race group who are skilled (managers, professionals, technicians)



Source Stats SA: Percentage of workers in each age group who are skilled (managers, professionals, technicians)

- b. This information paints a bleak picture in relation to the skilling of the Africans in particular and blacks in general. That we have not made progress as evidenced by the underrepresentation of black African population in skilled sections in relation to employment brings to question the trajectory we are undertaking on one hand but on the other hand sharply bring to the fore the challenges of the task at hand with respect to undoing the legacy of apartheid and colonialism.
- c. If these figures are read in conjunction with the reports of Commission on Employment Equity one will get a reinforcing picture that we have not done much more to advance.
- d. Furthermore the report entitled “Youth employment, skills and economic growth 1994 – 2014” released by Stats SA paints a demoralizing picture about the education and skill development system and how it is of service to the people of the country, especially the youth. The mismatch points to deep-seated system problems in the education and skills development system that the YCL must pay attention to.
- e. These facts must not demoralize us activist but must inspire us to double our efforts to radically change the situation for young people.
- f. Firstly at an ideological level we need to carve our campaigns, messaging to move away from reinforcing the neo-liberal context of human capital theory and its false promises. We do recognise the significance of education but refuse to treat it purely on economic terms.
- g. There are other factors like race, gender, reputation of university or school attended, networks and so forth that must be taken into consideration and be exposed for their weight on employment possibilities of young people.
- h. Whilst we argue for more access we must be critical about the kind of education and the education system as a whole. It must not just be that we open up to continuously segment the working class and obviate the development of a class for itself and in itself. We must situate our messaging around the development objectives and paradigm of Socialism, not short-term initiatives of Capitalism to redeem itself? Go to school or get a skill you will be sold easily in the

labour market as a commodity that is best developed for selling must be defeated. The YCL must continuously engage with the private sector to expose the weaknesses around the poor quality of labour debate, hence the high levels of unemployment.

- i. Secondly we must appreciate the efforts that government has undertaken in investing in the TVET colleges and trying to reshape the sector to be able to meet the demand to skill our youth. However a successful model of TVET colleges relies on a strong partnership between government and the private sector on the one hand and government and State Owned Corporations on the other.
- j. In this regard collaboration has to drive curriculum innovation and advancement, lecturer training, technology and work exposure to those registered in TVET colleges. What does it mean that government on the one hand emphasizes intake in TVET colleges but on the other we have an economy that is dominated by finance and retails, not manufacturing? Is the space for absorption of young people?
- k. Is the private sector doing enough? 16 years after the adoption of the Skills Development Act and the Skills Development Levies act is 1% of the overall salary bill still appropriate for the challenge at hand? Should we campaign for a broadened scope of the levy to be increased and thus include the TVET colleges?
- l. What has happened to the training initiatives at the work place that must also help with training of young people? Most employers have shut down these initiatives.
- m. With a focus on the enrolment at TVET colleges, are we simultaneously reforming the trade test model to make sure that it is sufficiently decentralized, less costly and we remove in build hoarding mechanisms with respect to assessment?
- n. Providing well thought proposals and responses to these questions will be addressing the question of effectiveness as argued for by the White Paper on Post school education and Training.
- o. How does the YCL favorably respond to the radical proposals of establishment of Community Colleges that in the immediate will help with the problems of youth Not in Employment, Education or Training, NEET. Are our branches ready to mobilise communities to play a leading role in this regard?
- p. Our TVET colleges and Universities are already starved of academic staff. This being an important centre of contest in the battle of ideas, can the YCL take up programmes to encourage YCL members to take up career in the academia to be lecturer in our universities and colleges? Can we lead a co-ordinated campaign for young professionals to volunteer services as lecturers in FET colleges – meaning that there will have to be a programme to up skill them with pedagogic issues.
- q. Lastly, we must reiterate that our call for free public quality education remains relevant and must be pursued in partnerships with the PYA structures and individually as an organisation. How do we address the growing restlessness on campuses, often accompanied by violent strikes, on issues of access despite increased resources that government have channeled into the NSFAS. What violent strikes have achieved so far is to divert attention from genuine student demands and sway public opinion away for the genuine struggle for free quality public education for all! In the second phase, when does government extend the free year of study to cover second year and first year undergraduate? Have we assessed the returns of investing in education in the way we suggesting before we dismiss the argument on the basis of cost input?

4.2 On Health

- a) At an ideological level, coupled with our National Council Resolutions on the NHI, it is critical that the YCL works with like-minded organisations (trade unions, NGO's etc.) to radically alter the narrative around health challenges. This narrative is often dominated by ignorance with respect to social determinants of health. There is therefore an imperative that the YCL takes the lead in ensuring that the youth in South Africa have a deep understanding of the Primary Health Care Approach (PHCA) as the philosophical basis of a future socialist health system. Linked to this understanding, would include YCL members taking a lead in active participation in the governance structures within the health system such as hospital boards and health facilities.
- b) Our campaign for an NHI, which provides for universal coverage free at the point of service with payment and purchasing through a publicly administered single fund, must not divert the organisation from a programme to expose the spiraling cost of medical care in South Africa. The current emphasis in the main is driven by the logic of healthcare being treated as a commodity rather than a social good. These have had a serious impact on medical aid costs and increase of medical aid contributions on the one hand and a decrease in the basket of benefits on the other. The campaign will help reverse the influence that medical aid fund administrators are in the short term enjoying in the public domain and their attempts to turn the NHI into a multi-payer systems administered by them, that is private sector administrators.
- c) YCL must maintain a watchful eye on the outcome of the Competition Commission Inquiry into Private Healthcare Costs so that its report does not provide an avenue for continued plundering of medical aids by the private sector. We know that private hospitals and specialists are the main cost drivers of the rising costs of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The report cannot be allowed to repeat the exercise in which construction companies who benefitted so much from the building of soccer stadiums, simply paid fines and continued with "business as usual".
- d) For the success of the NHI, the YCL must develop a keen understanding of the many complex issues involved in the financing of health care and engage directly with manoeuvres of government departments, in particular National Treasury, to undermine the resolutions of the 53rd Conference of the ANC.
- e) The NHI will not succeed unless we continue to campaign for the strengthening of the public healthcare system. The moonlighting of public sector nurses and doctors in the private sector, and the outsourcing of services in public hospitals, are all contributing to the erosion of our public health-care system. As part of our community responsibility, YCL members should be mindful of the pressures under which health workers have to work, but should also take responsibility for ensuring that health workers understand that they are in fact accountable to the people whom they serve. We should be seeking out the returning doctors who have been trained in Cuba and working with them to ensure the implementation of the valuable lessons which they learnt during their training.
- f) YCL structures need to be capacitated to be able to keep an eye on the ongoing primary healthcare (PHC) re-engineering programme and the roll out of school health services. Partnership with NEHAWU and the South African People's Health University for capacity building remains critical. In addition, YCL structures must work closely with NEHAWU structures on the effective monitoring of the rollout of the PHC re-engineering programme.
- g) The YCL needs to also undertake a campaign in relation to the pricing of medication. We also need to initiate a national dialogue about the extent of reliance on extreme drugs – for instance must our country sell painkillers over the counter with such high doses of Aspirin? In the long term what does this do the human body? Why are lifestyle diseases immediately characterised as chronic and drugs prescribed? This issue is directly linked to the power of pharmaceutical companies, their influence in health services sector and their contribution to the high cost of

medical inflation. We must link this to our emphasis on prevention, health promotion and rehabilitation as essential elements of the PHCA.

- h) There is a need that the YCL articulates a comprehensive programme with regards to issues of sexual and reproductive health rights. In this regard congress must debate and finalise a programme around the following issues:
 - i. Family planning
 - ii. Access to emergency contraception
 - iii. Post abortion care and access to safe pregnancy termination
 - iv. Distribution rate of male and female condoms

The YCL programme must include a focus on sexual abuse of women and children linking it to a socialist perspective of how capitalist patriarchal society endorses and enforces power relations between men and women, and between adults and children. The abuse of women and children takes various forms at different levels and includes practices from some of our cultures and traditions which inherently continue to humiliate and ostracise women and children, justifying the use of violence against them and continuing their oppression.

- i) One critical challenge facing young people specifically is the question of substance abuse. Whilst this is a complex question and requires a multifaceted response that includes health authorities, social development, economic inclusion of youth and crime fighting authorities, we suggest that these are added to broad sweeping resolutions regarding abuse of alcohol and the danger of smoking as articulated in our National Council Resolutions.
- j) The role of branches in this respect is quite central as most young people experience challenges at a local level.
- k) In this regard, a YCL-led educational campaign to educate the youth and the community on substance abuse, making rehabilitation centres accessible – the best centres are still privately owned and quite expensive. The YCL branches must not only be the nerve centre of information and assistance to communities in the fight against drugs and substance abuse.
- l) Community action in our health campaign and our campaign against substance abuse remains one of the key ingredients for our success. What are the modalities of leading these people health committees, exercising well earned leadership of clinic and hospital committees, running popular local campaigns around the patient services charter or know your rights as patient and mobilizing for youth friendly clinics?
- m) Capitalist society does not prioritise the provision of decent housing and recreational facilities in our townships. As we deepen our understanding of PHCA, we know that these facilities are an important vehicle to provide leisure activities for young people. These leisure activities contribute substantially to their wellbeing, including schooling and academic success. Our branches must spearhead campaigns to ensure that local authorities provide resources so that outdoor activities, such as playing sport, cycling and hiking are available to township youth. However, even without these resources, we must be encouraging sporting activities at local level.

5. League Building, Finance and Fundraising

- a. Without exaggerating our weaknesses and strengths, we know that often the exercise of self-criticism is the most difficult. It would be important that when we debate this issues we do not go overboard one way, either basking in the glory of our successes or drowning in the misery of our underachievement's

- b. We have already indicated in the section setting the context that our discussions on league building must be debate concurrently with the SACP's document with respect to Organisational renewal.
- c. The foremost central question we have to ask ourselves in relation to league building is the question of the YCL Branch. What is the role of the branch in a community? What is its focus? Do community members see an organ that serves them or do they see in the YCL branch an elitist organ whose members exist to fight for positions and tenders in the municipality?
- d. Do we command the requisite respect amongst community members out of the selfless service we render or are branches a stepping stone to palace politics at a local level? Are branches used as instruments to fight back political battles lost at in the ANC, the ANC YL and SACP structures?
- e. If YCL branches exist and are strong, why do we sometimes experience serious problems in the run up to conferences at all levels on issues that are not ideological but on pure personalities?
- f. What is the extent of theoretical and ideological development of members at a branch level embracing dual elements of theory and practice – starting with induction? On paper we have articulated an elaborate process of induction. The question is does it work in practice and if not what are remedial measures we propose?
- g. In the organisation do we live up to what are our principles are? Do we practice the principle of democratic centralism correctly and in a balanced manner or does the element of centralism dominate the element of democracy?
- h. What does Centralism mean? According to L Slepov on the Lenin's Principles and Standards of Party Life (28) "centralism means that the party has a single programme and one set of rules that are obligatory for all Party organisations and all Party members, and a single leading body and every Party organisation is subordinated to the higher organisation; there is one form of Party discipline for all, the minority submits to the majority. The decisions of all higher bodies are mandatory for lower bodies"
- i. The interpretation of centralism has in many regards been misunderstood when decisions do not favour lower organs of the YCL or when higher organs deliberately venture to suppress democracy in the organisation.
- j. With respect to democracy Slepov says "democracy means that the programme and the rules and all important decisions are adopted as a result of their discussion by party members. The leading bodies are elective and must report back to those who elected them. All Communists take an active part in party life"
- k. Furthermore, in practice, how do we canvass views of lower structures on matters in front of the Provincial Committee for discussion and then go back to report to them decisions for actions? There seems to be a serious challenges in this regard that we have to sufficiently ventilate on beyond restating the obvious. Those who represent District Committees come to Provincial meetings having not discussed issues at that level, those who represent provinces come to national meetings not having canvassed issues with Provincial Committees and other lower structures.
- l. There are a number of reasons for these deficiencies and this includes but is not limited to the following factors:
 - i. Often how we convene meetings does not allow for such discussion to take place.

- ii. We simply do not have the capacity in terms of organisational machinery and finances to make this possible. We rely on volunteers who have other commitments and often serve on multiple structures in their localities.
- m. Do we cultivate the requisite climate in the organisation for freedom of discussion and criticism within the proper realms of YCL programme and principles and not just for the sake of it?
- n. Any organisation commands respect because of the members it has. Why have we repeatedly failed to meet the targets as set out in operation Khula to recruit 100 000 YCL members nationwide? Can we conduct the debate without being complacent and blame system issues, albeit that we must build the capacity of the organisation to operate reliable systems. But this first and foremost is a political issue we must analyse carefully. What do we make of the practice of recruitment that is not in line with proper principles of the organisation?
- o. The issues we raising above should not demoralize us to celebrate the 11 years of the relaunch of the YCL, 93 years of communist activism and to redouble our efforts as we intensify youth mobilization for Socialism.
- p. Indeed in 11 years since the re-launch the YCL has made an impact in society and is a force to be reckoned with.

6. Youth and International Equilibrium of Power

6.1 Theoretical basis for internationalism and internationalist struggles

- a. YCL should on an ongoing basis cultivate progressive theoretical basis for conducting and comprehending the international correlation and balance of forces
- b. Hold regular exchanges and international seminars to evaluate the international forces (correlations or/and balance)
- c. Organise annual 'festival' on a thematic basis to cultivate left and theoretical base for YCL and ordinary members
- d. Arrange regular exchange between and among socialist countries such as Cuba, Vietnam and PR China, and 'missions or brigades' to Venezuela, Bolivia and Chile

6.2 Building anti-imperialist broad progressive forces

- a. Comprehension of the geo-political terrain and the anti-imperialist, anti-colonialism and neo-colonialism terrains to develop action plan(s) of and for engagement;
- b. Therefore, build (and lead) anti-imperialist broad front to widest possible progressive forces behind the goals of safe-guarding sovereignty, self-determination, national liberation and democratization

6.3 International formation(s)

- a. YCL to develop and forge ahead together with progressive regional and other forces to imprint the goals of African and a non-Aligned progressive movement via active membership and participation in:
 - i. World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and International Union of Students (ISU)
 - ii. Increase our role and participation on the continent and in the affairs of the AU and their initiatives. In this instance the YCL prioritise party-to-party relation with progressive forces on the continent, work with our ally the ANC YL to revive the Southern African Youth Forum.
 - iii. YCL to take more active part in the affairs of left and communist youth-inclined formations, in particular the WFDY and others

6.4 International Solidarity

- a. YCL to deepen and broaden its solidarity activity in order to express solidarity and mobilize the widest possible progressive forces behind key strategic ideals such as anti-imperialist stances to support Cuba, PR China, Palestine, Western Sahara and courses such a world peace, non-proliferation of nuclear armaments and migration and labour rights
- b. Work with and play a leading in FOCUS-SA on Cuban solidarity,
- c. Work with Palestinian progressive forces and play a leading role in solidarity structures such as BDS, Palestinian Coalition, etc.
- d. Western Sahara
- e. Venezuelan solidarity, etc.
- f. Has our strategy to ask province to lead our solidarity work with countries like Lesotho (Free State), Botswana (North West), Swaziland (Mpumalanga and KZN), Zimbabwe and Mozambique (Limpopo) so far borne fruits?

7. Media and Battle of Ideas

- a. Whilst we must reaffirm the thrust of the decisions on the National Council in this regard, we must hasten to say that we have not been successful at all in this front.
- b. The progressive forces continue to take a battering in the public platforms and there is a rise in an anti-communist sentiment various media platforms.
- c. Our submission to this congress is we have sufficiently theorized the basis of these attacks in our National General Council. We do not lack theory as to why the movement and the struggle for Socialism is under such attack.
- d. What we lack is the cadreship to implement our resolutions, the cadreship to challenge the discredited conservative ideas that are seen as solutions whilst in essence they are the cause of the problem.
- e. We do not have the cadreship that can sustain our popular alternative forms like pamphleteering and person to person contact. Unless we place much emphasis on this element of alternative media platforms, diversifying, we will continue to play what the SACP calls a “permanent away game”. It is important to contest the space in the mainstream media and expose their shortcomings but it ought not be our sole pre-occupation at the expense of building our own platforms and strengthening community media.

8. 2016 Local Government Elections

- a. The 2014 General Elections have painted a worrying picture of trends especially in metropolitan areas where the ANC lost support quite heavily. The reactionaries are smelling a possible victory. In fact they want to replicate trends that we have seen globally where ruling parties lead national governments but major metropolitans at a local level are controlled by opposition. The YCL must correctly theorise and explain to our people this strategy wherein there will be a twin governance model at an ideological level in all fronts – policing, by laws, tax collection and so forth.
- b. Once they have their hands on the levers of power in this centers they will then advance for more decentralization and use the existing arrangement to frustrate efforts of government nationally. For this forces governance is not co-operative.

- c. In this context we must also not miss the fact that in various by-elections the movement has done well to maintain control of areas that it was in control.
- d. The questions though remain for us to ponder – what are the subjective and objective weaknesses at a local government level that exists and are weakening us? Poor deployments, lack of capacity, distance between leaders and the people and corruption are some of the issues we have to deal with if local government is to succeed. Do we have young people sufficiently interested in standing as councilors and rendering service to the people?
- e. In countries like China for example most people by the time they get to serve at a national level would have serious experience of working at a local and provincial level. Are we patient enough to groom comrades through that system so that they can gain invaluable experience? Why do we disregard the level of crucial service to the people as a demotion in political terms?
- f. The neo-liberal new management paradigm has also crippled local government institutionally. Casualization, agencification, privatization and outsourcing have left municipalities mainly as facilitators of tenders thus festering a fertile ground for corruption for instance. A crisis of billing for instance in major cities if we are to follow it to its logical end will most certainly be associated with an awarding of a tender to run systems to incapable yet politically connected. Managerial approaches have not paid off with most municipalities struggling with compliance of the governance paradigm we have created.
- g. Inability to maintain infrastructure that is ageing and even where we have build new settlements the infrastructure is of such poor quality. How do we approach this issues as the YCL in the run up to the 2016 local government elections in way that puts the movement in pole position come 2016.

10. Conclusion

The intention of the framework is not to present conclusively issues of debate but to highlight key aspects that could precipitate the possibility of the 4th National Congress having a debate that could result in the adoption of a crisp programme for its term. It is important that we remain focused on what could be tasks that a branch member as he or she picks up the programme of action can relate with quite easily.

In discussion in Provincial Councils feedback to enrich and fill gaps would be welcomed.

In summary the document suggest that over and above the 2nd National Council Resolutions the Congress is pre-occupied with the issues listed above and converts them into a popular programme for intensifying youth mobilization for Socialism!