

Building an Effective and Exciting YCL

Consolidating our League Building & Organising Strategy

13 – 17 December 2006

A. BACKGROUND

1. The Re-establishment Congress (Vaal Congress) of the YCL in 2003 mandated the current National Committee to be seized with the task of re-building structures of the organisation in provinces, districts and branches to continue with the sterling work done by the National Steering Committee. That Congress further mandated the National Committee to establish new structures where there are *young people*, and to target the recruitment of *young workers, students, township youth, youth in rural areas* and *young professionals* to swell the ranks of the Young Communist League.
2. In his address to the Vaal Congress the General Secretary of the SACP, Blade Nzimande indicated that "...the bedrock of the YCL should be young workers working in alliance with students and young unemployed workers, both in the urban and rural areas. With regards to young workers, the YCL structures should immerse themselves in struggles to defend jobs and to fight retrenchments and to struggle for workplace skills development for young workers. Young workers are the most vulnerable when it comes to retrenchments. You must engage with the SETAs to ensure that young workers benefit from skills development funds, and that individual employers do provide training for young workers. This is a very important dimension of building working class power in the place of production, which is one of the key components of Party programmes..." From this injunction, the Vaal Congress was instrumental in ensuring that we take forward most of these issues as central to our campaigns and programmes, and ensuring that we build a vibrant, dynamic, exciting and radical youth organisation.
3. Politically, and linked to the discussions of Strategic and Tactical perspectives, our main task is to ensure that we organise, educate and mobilise young people who will become the nucleus of the revolution for socialism. The critical discussion is on what this means in practice - what should be the role of, and what should be the tasks of a youth-wing of a South African Communist Party. This challenges us to be **relevant** in terms of the needs and interest of youth, to be **simple** in communicating what we seek to achieve and how we seek to achieve it, to **provide leadership** in relation to the needs of young people and finally, to **engage** young people in a consistent struggle for socialism. These

questions remain relevant in our attempt and commitment to build a foundation for a strong youth formation.

4. The past three years have mainly been a teething process, with the expectation that we should be preoccupied with putting up a sound administration, organising new members and structures, and putting structural systems in place. Most of the time we were learning to walk, we fell and then stood our ground to move forward. In other instances we have seen persistent problems of organisational design and development, which we will have to attend to. However, the last 3 years have not been wasteful, and thus provide us with a platform to engage and take the discussions on designing an organisation for socialism much more seriously.
5. The organisational report to the National Congress will indicate progress in the implementation of our programme of action. We are focused and in action. This year, we have successfully carried out the launch of the Defiance Campaign (in order to achieve the 10 Youth Demands), the Youth Month Programme, the launch of Operation Khula (in order to achieve more than 100 000 members by end of the year), the holding of a successful University Branch Summit, the Chris Hani Inquest, a cadre development School, Swaziland Action, Zimbabwe Action and a lot more is still to come.
6. At the onset, the reconstitution of our provincial and district structures became a springboard for thorough organisational assessment and rebuilding on the basis of the Vaal Congress mandate. This process led to the establishment of all the provincial structures. In most instances as it relates to provinces, districts and branches, there was obvious uneven development as a result of various factors analysed elsewhere. But in brief, to look into some of these:
 - 6.1. At our strong point, it has been mainly in rural areas where the youth in those sections actively took part in the Campaigns and work of the YCL, and the availability of cadres to take forward these tasks.
 - 6.2. Weak provincial structures in the form of either PEC or PILC resulted in poor co-ordination, information dissemination, poor servicing of districts and branches and absence of a campaigning organisation.
 - 6.3. Resources are also a key factor in ensuring that we have a proper organisation and administration. In some instances, most of the provinces thrived on creativity, rather than letting things to loose.

We have also mainly preoccupied ourselves with Campaigns, initially working closely with SASCO and COSAS, launched the Free Education Campaign. Our work was then mainly ceremonial (that is, based on key historical events such as June 16, Chris Hani Commemoration etc). The Policy and Strategy Conference resolutions were helpful in laying a basis to give meaning to a campaigning YCL, which resulted in the launch of the Defiance Campaign (10 Youth Demands for 2015), Operation Khula and Organisational building and strengthening.

7. In order to be able to succeed in defining an organisational design, it is essential to note that we are the youth-wing of the South African Communist Party, an organisation with a history of more than 85 years, and in alliance with the African National Congress (the ruling party) and the Congress of South African Trade Union (Cosatu). We are also part of the Progressive Youth Alliance, which includes the student and youth formation in our country from various sectors. This will be analysed later, but it is significant to note from the onset.
8. This National Congress Discussion Document will explore the Challenges facing the Youth as a basis for organisational design; look into the Role, Nature and Character of the YCL; the challenges of the current organisational design, explore Structural Operations and suggested changes to be made, and look into the way-forward. It should also be noted that this Discussion Document will be supplemented by the Organisational Report to be presented at the National Congress as a basis for organisational review and design.

B. CHALLENGES FACING SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH – IMPERATIVE FOR ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN.

9. Any organisational strategy or design should be based on the targeted constituency, their needs and interests, their evolving nature, but then also on the political vision, strategy and objective. The YCL as a youth formation should take a keen interest in the nature and character of SA youth, their interests and socio-economic conditions and so forth. This will help us to design our organisation such that it attracts young people whilst on the other hand ensuring that we remain focused and in action for our ultimate objective. An analysis of where the SA youth are and what they are doing is therefore a premise for an organisational design strategy.
10. The current generation of youth are faced with extremely different challenges from those of 1944 (the formation of the ANCYL and the revitalization of the YCL), 1976 (the student uprising), 1986 (the State of Emergency) or 1990 (the unbanning of all political parties and heightened violence in townships). All these shaped and molded the kind of organisations that were built at the time.
11. The main features of organisational design in the early nineties included that of a transition from underground to legality; from closed cadre development cells to mass organizations; racial polarity with the main political parties described as either black or white (with some white cadres in the ANC and the SACP); civic organising based on rent boycotts (etc); youth militancy opposed to continued presence of the police and the Apartheid local state in townships; and trade union organisation focusing on issues beyond the workplace.

12. The youth at the time played a significant role, identifying with the struggle against white minority rule and resistance, and provided the final push against the system. Active and prominent progressive youth formations included the ANCYL, SASCO and COSAS, with a massive presence in schools, universities, townships and rural areas. At the time, the enemy was clear, apartheid.
13. Currently, the main challenges facing the youth of the country can be summarised as joblessness, poverty, HIV/AIDS, skewed access to school and university education, economic marginalization, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, lack of skills, physical and emotional abuse, illiteracy and lack of access to basic services. A thorough analysis was made towards the Policy and Strategy Conference, which includes statistical information from both the recent Census and Statistics SA, we will not deal with this here.
14. These challenges are obviously an embodiment of the legacy of the Apartheid State, and for the past years, various work has been done in order to ensure that we reverse this legacy. A debate of whether this has been successful or not is left to the political discussion documents, here, we seek to position the YCL in order to ensure that we better the lives of the youth of our country.
15. Our political analysis has always held that these challenges are further as a result of capitalism as a social, economic and political system. We should then always be in a position to design the YCL in such a way that it mobilises youth to confront this system. The challenge, based on our slogan (*Socialism in our lifetime*) and on the principal strategic foci of the SACP, is to Build Socialism Now! This is within the context of deepening a radical National Democratic Revolution and ultimately socializing the means of production into the hands of the working class and the poor.
16. Organizationally, the youth today can be found in political, cultural, student, youth, trade union and civil society organisations. Although the presence of youth in political youth formations has changed, youth politics is drastically changing since 2003. Most analysts have declared that young people are apathetic, however, this is not reflective of the many different activities that young people find expression in. Lately, young people have showed extreme and radical activism demanding basic services, jobs, access to education and also challenging various undemocratic government actions (as seen in the cross-boundary struggles). There is clearly a need to build a youth organisation that is welcoming, that allows young people to express themselves but also ensuring that we locate their needs and interest as immediate.

C. BRIEF ASSESMENT OF YCL STRUCTURES

Branches

17. Branches of the YCL are mainly located in the countryside (with the highest concentration), townships, universities and cities. Branches have taken up issues regarding unemployment, Free Education, Service Delivery, provincial demarcations, socio-economic development, racism, Chris Hani Inquest, access to sports facilities, school infrastructure, political education, care for the elderly, issues relating to young women and national, provincial and local elections campaigns. This is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the many issues that branches of the YCL have taken up. The initial process of wanting to launch branches in a crude form without linking that with visible campaigns sometimes resulted in collapsing branches. There has always been a serious need for political induction in order to help branches define a path for themselves. Most branches stagnate after recruitment of 30 members as required by the constitution. Information flowing down from National Committee down to branches has been one of the major problems confronting branches. There is still a need for proper administration in terms of membership, branch meetings and general branch activities.

Districts

18. District Collectives remain central in becoming the link between the province and National Committee and branches. Most districts have an average of 10 branches, as required by the guideline agreed to by the NC. Not many districts are central in leading campaigns, with some failing to meet with resources as one of the major problems. The task of servicing branches has not been performed distinctly, with some provinces resorting to disbanding districts in lieu of fewer branches, ability to meet, implementation of programmes and support for branches. Although branches are the basic unit of the YCL, districts should be the nucleus of keeping these basic units cohesive and coordinated. There are still more districts to be launched, and many to be revived, with fewer provinces having launched all districts as per the demarcation of the SACP.

Provinces

19. Although all provinces have been launched, resources remain the most challenging issue for many and thus incapacity to meet, inability to service districts by deployees and serious problems around administration and co-ordination. Most provinces have managed to deploy volunteers, which assisted in ensuring that there is consistent administrative and organising capacity to ensure that districts and branches are serviced. Some provinces have actively implemented and spearheaded YCL Campaigns, with the majority having held activities in terms of the Defiance Campaign, Operation

Khula and various campaigns initiated at a provincial level. Coordination between National Committee members based in provinces, deployees and National Office is one of the major problems we are facing.

D. NATURE, ROLE AND CHARACTER OF THE YCL

20. The YCL is a youth-wing of the South African Communist Party. In line with the constitution, we are tasked to recruit young people from all cultural and racial backgrounds between the ages of 14 and 35. YCL members are organized from a branch level, and comprised of students, young workers and so forth. Membership of the YCL is supposed to express the racial, gender, and socio-economic profile of the country. Membership of the YCL is voluntary, with members expected to play an active role in confronting the challenges of the time.
21. We are also a communist youth organisation, which distinguishes us from all other youth formations in terms of ideological stance and vision of society we seek to build. Therefore, members of the YCL, although not communist in the onset, are expected to learn over time and understand the medium- and long-term vision of the SACP. The YCL is therefore the political school of the SACP, recruiting, training and preparing youth for membership of the SACP.
22. The National Committee has focused our energies on building a mass-based and vanguard youth organisation, whose primary aim is to complement the work of the SACP in its leadership of the working class and the poor in their struggle for socialism. Thus, as part of the National Policy Conference, we endorsed the pillars of *fight, educate, learn, mobilise* and *organise* as symbolic of the kind of organisation we seek to build. Our role therefore is to fight against capitalism, *educate* the youth about socialism, *learn* from each other and various sources about our tasks, *mobilise* the youth behind our campaigns and *organise* to build a strong youth formation and movement.
23. To educate and mobilise young people for socialism requires the YCL to communicate very clearly and youthfully to young people the central message that it is only under socialism that they as the youth can be able to finally realise in full all their needs, interests and aspirations. The eradication of poverty, exploitation and all forms of inequality cannot be achieved under a capitalist dispensation. The alienation and marginalisation of youth is a necessary part of capitalism and social reproduction under capitalism. Yes, we can make a lot of advances towards meeting the needs of young people, but it is only a socialist dispensation that will usher in an epoch of real and meaningful freedom, equality, democracy and youth development. All of this may be obvious to us here but we need to find ways to communicate these messages most clearly and simply to young people particularly through concrete action in the working class struggle.

24. We have not as yet been able to attract in a massive way young white, Indian and 'Coloured' youth in our ranks. We have also not been able to ensure that there is a massive presence of young women especially in leadership positions. A clear analysis of the conditions of young people in these communities is needed. The reality is that most of the young people in these communities have more or less similar experiences, and thus, a generic youth formation should be able to respond to attracting them into the organization, to the extent that we are able to articulate their concerns and interests, and the objectives of the working class as a whole.
25. The central and overall role of the League is:
- 25.1. firstly, to move and inspire (through mobilisation, conscientisation, education and organisation) thousands of young South Africans (new layers of young people) into political action around their needs, interests, aspirations, dreams and fears;
 - 25.2. secondly, to educate and mobilise young people for socialism; and
 - 25.3. thirdly to prepare young people in the context of struggle and on an ongoing basis as a fertile, dynamic, portable and organic foundation for their current and future strategic role as members, cadres, activists and leaders of the Party, the broader youth movement and all key sites of power and influence in our society.
26. Moving and inspiring young people into political action means that the League should be an organisation enabling every young person to see that it consists of people whose teachings they perhaps may not understand and immediately believe, but from whose practical work and activity they can see that they are really people who are showing them the right road. For the YCL, moving young people into action must be linked to our socialist perspectives and programme. The Party programme insists correctly that "maintaining a consistent class perspective is critical in our present conjuncture. At present in South Africa...class is too often forgotten. An anti-capitalist class-struggle cannot be held over to some later stage of our transformation process". For the YCL, moving young people into action is therefore a necessary part of maintaining a consistent class perspective, of keeping class issues on the agenda all the time and of taking forward the anti-capitalist struggle in the here and now.
27. The YCL can attract radicalising young people who are not yet ready to join the Party, but who are willing and able to participate in a broad range of political actions in support of and together with the Party. The YCL can and must lead actions and take initiatives in its own name among young people. It can serve as a valuable training and testing ground for potential members of the Party, and make it easier for them to acquire the political and organisational experience and theoretical education required for consistent revolutionary activity. Membership of the YCL youth organisation enables

potential young socialists to decide their own policies, organise their own actions, and learn from their own experiences. It is particularly among such young people that the Party can expect to recruit the best activists in the struggle for socialism. While often lacking experience in struggle, young people in our country are a fertile ground to revitalise the older generations. Young people are generally free from the demoralisation of past defeats and they have fresh enthusiasm and aggressive spirit which can guarantee preliminary successes in the struggle and revitalise the best elements of the older generation.

28. Through the YCL, we aim to build a socialist organisation which brings together all radical young people, empowers them, convinces them to be revolutionary activists, and inspires our generation to take action. The YCL also has many advantages for the Party itself. It helps the Party to avoid acting as a youth organisation and reducing its political maturity and theoretical understanding to the less demanding levels of an organisation agreeable to broad layers of young people. We will justify our name as the League of the young communist generation only when at every step our teaching, training and education is linked up with participation by young people in the ongoing anti-capitalist struggle.
29. To do all these things, we must produce a generation of young people who can reach political maturity in the midst of a disciplined anti-capitalist struggle.
30. In building a YCL capable of playing its strategic roles, some of the key considerations we need to take into account are:
 - 30.1. developing the League's capacity to effectively unite and provide leadership to the youth and progressive youth movement;
 - 30.2. developing and deepening the presence and influence of the League in key strategic areas in the youth movement;
 - 30.3. fostering a capacity to have a wider influence in society on youth issues and struggles;
 - 30.4. having a capacity to play an international role, engaging with counterparts, learning from and contributing to the international defense and renewal of the socialist youth movement.
31. We cannot play our strategic roles if, in our character, in our membership and profile we are not rooted amongst the stratum that we seek to represent and influence. The bedrock of the League should be young workers working in alliance with students and young unemployed workers, both in the urban and rural areas. With regards to young workers, YCL structures should immerse themselves in struggles to defend jobs, fight retrenchments, fight for better working conditions and benefits, fight for workplace transformation and to struggle for workplace skills development for young workers. Young workers are the most vulnerable when it comes to retrenchments. The YCL working with other youth organisations must engage with the SETAs to ensure that

young workers benefit from skills development funds, and that individual employers do provide training for young workers. The dimension of building working class power in the place of production is one of the key components of Party programmes. How far have we gone in this regard in our two years of existence?

32. The political style and content of the YCL must also breathe fresh air into organisational building, political language, political education and cadreship development. We must excite, innovate, create and inspire young people. We must be an active, exciting and campaigning organisation. We must be dynamic, appealing, innovative, pluralistic, tolerant and diverse.
33. Whilst the League's theoretical rigour and seriousness must be nurtured in line with Party traditions, the League must also obviously and deliberately foster open debate and new forms of experimentation with political education so that it understands and is understood by young people. It must be in our character to be clear and simple whilst remaining communists. Once thousands of young people grasp and understand who we are then we are set to be the YCL that we seek to be.
34. One practical implication of this is that the League must pay special attention to the different age groups that should make up the league and how it works with them, taking into account their overall and specific interests and issues. For example the broad age definition could be broken down into 3 categories: 14–19 range which should be the youth in the last years of school; 20 – 24 range which should be the youth focusing on the transition from school to either higher education or vocational training or work; a 25 – 30 range which should be the youth getting first jobs or being integrated into the mainstream of the economy and social life, and the 30-35 age range which should be the youth with more experience and assuming more and more adult responsibilities.
35. As the YCL we should be able to segment certain age categories within our membership. Such segmentation can only enhance and focus interventions in addressing particular issues and concerns related to different age groups. A 30-year old YCL leader who has experience of being in SASCO, the ANC, SACP, etc. could have the effect of intimidating a matriculant interested to join the YCL. How do we use the experience of this YCL leader so as to educate and excite the young matriculant about the YCL and what it stands for? There are obviously issues relating to whether we should reduce the age of qualifying for membership in the YCL. All of these balanced with the fact that youth in our country is defined as young people between age 14 – 35 on the one hand, thus seeking to balance our organisational focus and activism within the realm of civil society and other spheres. On the other hand, there is a need to balance the needs and interests of the entire membership of the YCL across all age segments. Part of the scenarios that we could adopt is to

ensure that there is clear representivity of all age segments within the leadership and membership of the YCL, including targeted recruitment in parallel with the building of COSAS.

36. Given the character of South African youth it is correct that the YCL is a mass youth organisation. We must have thousands of members and activists everywhere: in high schools, technical colleges, Technikons, colleges of education, universities, informal settlements, townships, rural areas, inner cities, churches, synagogues, in workplaces, etc. Those young people that become members, activists, cadres and leaders of the YCL should be able to analyse and understand society from a communist standpoint, make socialism relevant in the new millennium and to young people, and act as activists of a mobile YCL strike force that is an agent for change. But we also want the majority of young people in our society to understand and analyse society for what it is: a capitalist society. We also want the broad masses of young people to want change, to struggle for change and to develop an anti-capitalist character, to deepen their sympathy for socialism and to accept socialism – their experiences, daily struggles are critical in all of this. How we mobilise young people to achieve this is a key challenge.

E. SOME REFLECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS

Structural Operations

37. The **National Office** comprises three key departments, all embodied under the Secretariat and also reflecting the pillars of the organisation. These are **Administration** (focusing on Meetings Co-ordination, Human Resources, Financial Administration and Fundraising and Trade Union Work), **Organising** (focusing on International, Membership, Gender and Cadre Development), and **Communications** (focusing on Youth Development, Media, Information and Publicity, Networking, Policy Advocacy and Submission).
38. The functioning of these departments is severely hampered by the fact that all of them are concentrated on individuals due to lack of resources. The Secretariat should ensure that the National Office is beefed up to include capacity for the various tasks. The other problem is lack of National Committee/National Working Committee members taking up some of the tasks, or being dedicated to assist staff in these tasks. We should consider mandating the National (Working) Committee to dedicate its members to specific tasks relating to the above work.
39. The **National Working Committee** has not been meeting consistently due to lack of resources. The NWC teleconferences are a helpful intervention and should be retained. There should be monthly NWC visits to provinces in order

to ensure that we retain contact with provincial structures, whilst NWC members should become heads of Provincial Deployments. NWC members should play the role of strengthening provinces, monitoring implementation of organisational programmes as per National Committee decisions, intervening on behalf of the National Committee as per its mandate, monitoring organisational growth and providing assistance in terms of organisational weaknesses. NWC members, together with their fellow deployees, should effectively become PEC members. The NWC should become a 'working committee' in the real sense, without the danger of them duplicating the work of National Office. All NWC meetings should rotate to provinces.

40. The **National Secretaries Teleconference** should be retained in order to maintain engagements on a monthly basis between provincial secretaries and National Office. We should retain the Weekly Activities Plan and supplement these by introducing Monthly Plans for all provinces.
41. The **National Committee** is the most significant and highest decision making body in between Congresses. Inconsistency in this structure may lead to a break in organisational democracy, internal communication, structural cohesion and an organisation that is dysfunctional. Some members of the National Committee have been inconsistent in attending meetings. We obviously need committed National Committee members, who will not render the YCL second fiddle to other commitments they may have. We should ensure that the National Committee convenes ordinary sittings at least four times a year, which means that by the next Congress, we should have had twelve ordinary meetings. We should deal with the issue of resources as some of the National Committee members gave this as a reason. The attendance of Provincial Secretaries and Chairpersons has been despicable in certain instances and impressive in others. We need to ensure that the performance of this ex-officio includes their participation in NC members. We should strengthen the work of Commissions, and streamline them along the pillars of our Programme of Action.
42. The **Provincial Executive Committees** have been either a deterrent to progress in provinces or a pillar for strong districts and branches. There has been uneven consistency in terms of provincial work. One of the principles we should insist on is monthly meetings, all taking place at the same period immediately after National Committee or NWC meetings. Some of the PEC meetings should then be followed by **Provincial Councils**, a structure of the organisation which we have been weak at building. We must insist on at least four Provincial Councils a year. There have been weaknesses in inducting PECs into their new responsibilities, and the fact that in some instances, some of the members who served in PILC's did not necessarily take part in the new structures, which undermined continuity.

43. We should re-orientate the role of **District Executive Committees** from being mere coordinating structures into working structures. This is mainly because of their closeness to branches. We should ensure that by the end of 2007 we have launched all the districts countrywide. We should also ensure that by that time, all the districts have more than thirty branches. Districts should be given the role of, inter alia:-
- 43.1. Launching of Branches and their Induction.
 - 43.2. Political Education and Cadre Development.
 - 43.3. Coordination of recruitment.
 - 43.4. Branch Visits by all DEC members.
 - 43.5. Interfacing with PYA structures.
44. The **branch** is the basic unit of the organisation. Our branches are a reflection of the state of the entire organisation, that of uneven development. On the one hand, there are branches with good administration, doing recruitment, implementing organisational programmes, building the PYA, recruiting new members, consistently hold BEC and General Meetings, active in all youth fronts and creatively attending to the issues that confront members. On the other hand, we have branches which are launched, remain inactive and then are relaunched. The weakness is not mainly due to the branch itself, but also borders on the fact that after the launch, districts and provinces do not guide branches on what they should do. We need to ensure that by 2008 all branches have a proper administration capacity through access to phone, fax, email, filing and other forms of communications. It should be the task of all districts to ensure that all branches undergo induction, and it should be the task of all branches to make sure that all new members go through induction.
45. The alignment of branches is also one of the main causes of dysfunctionality. If we are serious about building a mass based youth organisation, we should move towards having **ward based branches**, **village based branches** which may be within wards, retain our **university based branches**, launch **branches in residential schools** (what used to be called Boarding Schools which are not necessarily located in townships) and **young workers cells** (based in workplaces). A constitutional amendment should be effected in this regard to ensure that we have branch structures and demarcation that facilitates expansion and deepening of branch recruitment and activism. But the first instance is to ensure that in every SACP branch, there is a YCL branch. As indicated before, our strength in the countryside is not complemented by strong township branches. It may take longer to delve into reasons why this is the case, however, a conscious programme should be developed to ensure that targeted recruitment and organisational building takes place in Soweto, Soshanguve, Mamelodi, Gugulethu, Langa, Mdantshane and many other townships which were active in the anti-Apartheid struggles.

46. We should also **increase the number of members required for a branch to launch from thirty to sixty**. There is a great potential in many branches to increase their membership to even above that number. Progressively, the National Committee should be allowed to pass a special resolution to increase the number of members to launch a branch annually. In anyway, the National Policy and Strategy Conference had decided on fifty. The rationale is that most branches stop at the constitutionally required number, when they have a potential to do more. We further need to ensure that we normalize the Annual General Meetings of Branches, Districts and Provinces. In this regard, we must insist that:
- The months of January – March should annually be dedicated to recruitment, although we should not be limited to these dates when we recruit, especially with new branches.
 - All branches should go to their AGM every April.
 - All Districts should go to their District Congresses every May and June,
 - All provinces should go to their Provincial Congresses in July and August, starting next year.

This will go a long way in achieving the targets set for Operation Khula.

47. All branches should be given the task of establishing a Youth Club. This Youth Club should include young people in education, sports, arts, culture, HIV/AIDS activists, co-operatives, trade unions, youth councils, religious groupings and progressive youth organs. The Youth Clubs should be a place where young people in communities engage on the issues that confront them in localities, but should be used by the YCL to ensure that our programmes find expressions in localities. They can also be used for recruitment and political education purposes, but should address basic issues such as unemployment, recreational facilities, basic services, access to education, health and social issues and must also be a centre of youth entertainment. We should be able to use the Youth Clubs to fight local struggles but further as a centre for youth consultation by municipalities. We should target the end of 2008 to ensure that we establish Youth Clubs in all local municipalities.
48. The role and character of YCL Branches in campuses of learning should be extensively engaged in this Congress. We need to ask ourselves **what work YCL branches in campuses** needs to undertake on a continuous basis focusing on various programmes. We need to further probe relations with the ANCYL and SASCO on campus, and working together with the trade-union movement, especially NEHAWU. How do we ensure that we **Build University Based Branches as a resource centre** for surrounding township branches. We further need to intensify community work projects in the form of Street Law, HIV/AIDS Education and Care, Matric Intervention Programmes and Literacy Campaigns in a massive way. Further than that, a YCL branch may not have attained its significance if it does not draw in challenges facing students such as accommodation, catering, tuition fees and academic support.

Congress should probe the issue of contestation of election as this has already begun in some institutions.

Building a Campaigning Organisation

49. What roles have campaigns and activism played in league building? Campaigns play an important role in league building and activism. We may have most of our members joining the YCL due to the nature of issues we raise, the successes of our campaigns, the extent of their exciting nature and their link to daily challenges that the organisation faces. The mistake we committed in some instance was when our structures assumed that we can only build structures and then engage into campaigns later, instead of ensuring that we retain the connection between the two processes.
50. Our campaigns have mainly focused on socio-economic and political demands of the day. We have successfully participated in the ANC National Elections (2004) and the Local Government Elections (2006). We also launched the Free Education Campaign with SASCO and COSAS, but resulted in it collapsing, whilst our Education Alliance activities were not necessarily consistent, although they had an impact. The Defiance Campaign (10 Youth Demands) remains one of the most distinct programmes that we have launched and it has kicked off, speaking directly to youth related problems and matters. We also engaged into International Campaigns, focusing on Bask, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and the Middle East.
51. Our major failure has been to ensure that we draw youth formations into these campaigns, with the mistake of concentrating only on the progressive youth alliance. There are arguably hundreds of young people who are interested in our Campaigns, and may have inquired and joined the YCL on the basis of campaigns. The challenge with the campaigns that we have launched is to root them into our structures, connect them with the real lives of young people, their challenges, miseries, hopes, aspirations and ensure that they serve to educate, fight, learn, organize and mobilize. As long as the campaigns remain the tasks of the National Office, or are located merely in head office, the degree of them making an impact remains lesser and lesser. The role of provinces as coordinating structures remains important, and mainly, as we discuss the way forward in terms of campaigns, we further need to discuss the capacity of provinces to take them up, and the strengthening of all levels of the organization to implement these.

Media and Communication Strategy

52. A clear media and communication strategy is inevitable if we want to reach out to the members of the YCL and young people in general. Admittedly, in August we did an audit of 100 statements we issued since March, which we selected randomly, we then checked the coverage of those on the print media. Eighty

three of them were covered, 21% of the entire media statements issued were on the Deputy President of the ANC, 30% were a reaction to various other issues relating to key YCL campaigns and then 41% were on YCL Campaigns, particularly the defiance campaign. A greater percentage of statements on Jacob Zuma were covered by the media than other statements released by the YCL, and this is obviously because of the media frenzy developed around the Jacob Zuma matter, and none or lack of interest on many other issues which we feel strongly should be covered.

53. Strengthening our internal communication strategy should be a priority. The issuing of both electronic and print Y-REDS should be improved and be based on the real issues confronting young people. The communication that goes to provinces for attention to districts and branches seldom reaches these structures. Decisions of the National Committee hardly reach lower structures except through mainstream electronic and print media. The role of provinces and districts in distributing these decisions to branches through *Hola Batsha* is critical. Branches will not be in a position to appreciate and implement decisions taken at a National level if they do not know what they are and are helped to understand them.
54. There should be dedicated training of provincial structures on our media and communication strategy and how it works.
55. The initiative of *The Bottomline* is a good one in ensuring that on behalf of the National Committee, the National Secretary articulates YCL positions and takes forward some of the decisions, policies and principles of the organisation. We need to strengthen this publication and ensure that it becomes part of the political engagements at branches. Another challenge is in ensuring that we improve on the editorial and the quality of discussions engaged in through this publication.

Political Education and Cadre Development

56. We need to strengthen the National Cadre Development Team, and spearhead the formation of Provincial Cadre Development Teams. The recommendations of the Cadre Development School should be taken forwards, which includes the following:
 - The training of ten cadres in each province who will constitute a Political Education Training Team, and conduct Political Education in districts and branches.
 - The development and endorsement of an Induction Manual for Branches.
 - The induction of all new members and structures through this education manual.
 - Embedding political discussions in all structures of the YCL through discussing various conjectural political issues in YCL meetings.

57. We need to ensure that we strengthen our links with the Chris Hani Institute of the SACP/COSATU and the Chris Hani Brigade of COSATU. We further need to ensure that we engage with our members in trade unions through trade union political education.
58. The other critical challenge remains that of ensuring that we strengthen Political Education within the Progressive Youth Alliance.

International Work

59. At an international level, the organisation has done extensive work in the fields of solidarity, building international friends, participating in activities of the World Federation of Democratic Youth and strengthening the left movement in the region and continent. Critical tasks that we need to focus on include:
 - Strengthening our work in terms of solidarity;
 - Completing the process of joining WFDY;
 - Building a strong left movement in the region and continent;
 - Consolidating friendship with international friends;
 - Strengthening the ability of the YCL to be able to respond to international relations issues.

Building a Strong Youth Movement, Relations with Social Movements and Civil Society Organs and Relations with the SACP

60. South African social formation has had an imprint on the forms of resistance of young people. The form and content of the South African capitalist structure gave rise to the organisational forms through which the class, gender and national struggles are fought – it gave birth to the revolutionary Alliance composed of the SACP and COSATU as led by the ANC. In the youth sector, this led to the formation of the Progressive Youth Alliance, which was preceded by a number of heroic youth struggles, representing the interests of the youth in class and national terms. The political organ of the proletariat youth is the YCL.
61. The political organ of the student youth is SASCO and COSAS, religious youth – YCS and SUCA, and the ANCYL is the organ all these sections. Is it natural that the ANCYL should lead the PYA and what does leadership mean? Whereas some of the PYA structures amongst youth are sectoral, they are guided by the Freedom Charter and the NDR in doing their sectoral work. The PYA is composed of equal political partners, therefore, there is no leader or follower or senior or junior partner in the PYA. The ideological and organisational leadership of the PYA, in the same way as working class leadership, has to be earned in the process of concrete struggle. It is not won by decree or by transmission or osmosis. Organisationally who should lead the

PYA? [Taken from Draft 1 of the Discussion Document on Strategy and Tactics]

62. We identify our role as the YCL critically as that of building a strong youth movement united in consolidating the National Democratic Revolution and the struggle for socialism. Most of the immediate and long term goals can only be achieved by a cohesive, united, focused youth movement mobilised and organized on the basis of a clear programme. Beyond the Progressive Youth Alliance, any attempt to build relations and impact on youth relations issues in a sectarian fashion will not assist. Strengthening our joint work with young people in the social movements, issue-based formations, non-governmental and statutory bodies focusing on youth related matters and youth formations focusing on socio-economic development remains a critical task. We can only manage to do this through coherent campaigns initiated by the YCL or joining campaigns initiated by other youth formations. Clear guidelines and programmes in this regard are quite important. For the YCL to remain relevant, clear, to provide leadership and engage with young people, we will inevitably have to focus on issues directly affecting young people at a micro level such as access to education, micro-finance, land, jobs and fighting poverty. This can only be realized through working together with youth organisations at a local level.
63. The SACP remains our mother body, and a guiding organisation in terms of the realization of the vision of socialism. As the political party of the working class and the poor, the SACP is the **only** organisation capable of achieving socialism in South Africa. The relationship between the YCL and the SACP is a dialectical one, with the YCL receiving political leadership whilst in turn providing a training base for future leaders of the SACP. We obviously do not intend to be at all times dancing to the drumbeat of the SACP, or becoming its lapdog, but contributing at all times towards the programmes and vision of the SACP in both a critical and engaging manner. We need to ensure that we continue to find space in Party programmes, ensure that we influence it and remain the youth front for socialism in South Africa.

Recruitment Strategy and the Involvement of Young Women

64. The launch of Operation Khula:100 000 this year in March was a success. However, this was followed by failure to meet targets by branches, districts and provinces, failure to workshop the key tasks of the Campaign, availability of resources, the major task of renewing and launching structures which was supposed to run parallel to the Operation Khula and failure to take advantage of the SACP Membership Month Campaign. All of these presented a problem, a challenge and an opportunity to grow the organisation. We only managed to reach not more than 35 000 members and to achieve a growth of more than 10% in new branches. Some of the provinces experienced a decline in the

process. Some of the membership was lost due to poor administration and inactive structures.

65. We need to conduct a thorough analysis of our ability to recruit and mobilize young women, as well as our ability to retain young women cadres within the organization. Related to this is the extent to which we are able to ensure that women are in leadership positions in the organization. A key weakness is the fact that we do not have a conscious strategy to recruit and mobilize young women.
66. We need to ask ourselves the following questions in order to improve on the membership targets. Who are our targeted members in line with our political programme? How do we succeed in recruiting young people across all sectors and ages of youth? How do we use our campaigns to ensure that we recruit new members? What programmes should be put in place to ensure that we are able to meet the 100 000 target? How do we ensure that we recruit young women, young white, Indian and Coloured South Africans?

Conclusion

67. “The road is long and full of difficulties” and requires consistent and focused building of our organisation. The Second National Congress is a proper platform to ensure that we consolidate the gains that we have garnered and chart a way-forward for the challenges we are facing. The only way to move forward is to confront the organisational challenges we are faced with. Period! Forward to the Second National Congress of the YCL!