

**A Critical Study of the Impact of the Government of
National Unity in South Africa, 1994-1999**

By

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A QUOTATION

“Political division based on colour is entirely artificial and when it disappears, so will the domination of one colour group by another. The ANC has spent half a century fighting against racialism. When it triumphs, it will not change that policy. This then is what the ANC is fighting.

Their struggle is a truly national one. It is a struggle of the African people, inspired by their own suffering and their own experience. It is a struggle for the right to live.

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

Nelson Mandela’s Rivonia Trial speech, 1964

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DECLARATION

I declare that: A critical study of the impact of the Unity Government in South Africa, 1994-1999 is a product of my own effort, both in conception and execution. All the sources used have been duly acknowledged.

Jonathan Bafana Mpanza

Kwa-Dlangezwa

ABSTRACT

It is important to note that much has been written on South Africa's national Unity Government. Previous studies conducted on this topic were not as extensive as expected. Such studies were also unscientific, non-academic and more of journalistic writings. This lends credence to the necessity of undertaking an in-depth study on the topic which entails, *inter alia*, the impact of the Unity Government's performance on various areas of governance from 1994-1999.

The year 1994 is considered a turning point in the political history of South Africa. The people of South Africa gave the national Unity Government (GNU) a mandate through the country's first democratic elections on the 27th April 1994 to embark on the fundamental transformation of the country.

The upside of it was the trust and confidence that the black majority of South Africa had in the ANC-led government to redeem the country from high levels of unemployment, abject poverty, economic decline, to mention but a few. However, what was considered a set of solution to South Africa's socio-economic problems, presented yet another set of challenges for the new government. Policy formulation and implementation became one of the major challenges of the unity government. The three parties in government namely, the African National Congress, Inkatha Freedom Party and the National Party did not always agree on issues of fundamental importance.

On the education front, the statistical data point to service delivery and resource allocation challenges. Compared to learning institutions in white communities, some schools in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and Free State, were inadequately resourced and service delivery was far from reality. The unequal distribution of resources became the order of the day.

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The need to ensure economic growth and development through sound economic principles and policies could not be over-emphasized in the prevailing circumstances. The NP was critical of the ANC's economic policies and often criticized them in public. This hampered the envisaged collective effort to effectively address the economic ills of the country.

Another area of challenge was the multi-party politics within the government. It was expected that the ANC, IFP and NP as part of the coalition government sing the same tune in order to advance the course of democracy in South Africa. However, this was not always the case. The IFP advocated for a federal state, the NP felt so strong about the need for power-sharing, while the ANC on the other hand, with compromised stance on unitary state, had serious reservations about such propositions. This caused serious divisions among the three parties and it had a negative and detrimental impact on their collaborative effort.

Eventually, the NP deemed it fit to withdraw from the Unity Government; thereby swelling the opposition ranks. Failure to reconcile their differences created a dangerous loophole. Another responsibility, with which the unity government was charged, was the realignment of South Africa's foreign relations. This was quite a difficult challenge to deal with given the country's image in the global context.

South Africa had lost credibility with the global community because of the apartheid policy whose cause she championed unreservedly since 1948 up until the 1990s. The Unity Government's sole responsibility in this regard, was to change the perception of the global community through the establishment of sound international relations and the maintenance of diplomatic ties. This would help South Africa expand on her economic sphere through foreign trade and investment; which were critical to economic growth and development.

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The legacy left by the interim Unity Government, points to the inadequate capacitation and perhaps limited resources to efficiently respond to the needs and demands of the country. In the post 1999 period, South Africa was still confronted with persistent poverty, high levels of unemployment, unequal allocation and distribution of resources as well as service delivery challenges.

The first five years of democracy in South Africa were such a robust political engagement. It could be termed a “trial and error” period. Challenges of diverse magnitudes under such conditions would often be inevitable. Negative criticism becomes a possible eventuality. In the case of South Africa, the Unity Government was perceived by most South African citizens as the agent of transformation despite its shortfalls.

OPSOMMING

Dit is belangrik om in ag te neem dat daar reeds baie geskryf is oor Suid-Afrika se Regering van Nasionale Eenheid (RNE). Studies oor hierdie onderwerp was egter nie so diepgaande as wat te wagte was nie. Hierdie studies was onwetenskaplik, nie-akademies en eerder van 'n joernalistieke aard. Die leemte dui op die noodsaaklikheid van 'n grondige studie wat onderneem moes word om onder andere te bepaal wat die impak was van die RNE op verskeie regeeringsaspekte in die tydperk 1994 tot 1999.

Die jaar 1994 kan beskou word as keerpunt in die politieke geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika. Die kiesers het in die eerste demokratiese verkiesing op 27 April 1994 'n mandaat aan die regering verleen om te begin met die basiese transformasie van die land.

Die positiewe aspek van hierdie nuwe bedeling was die vertroue wat swart kiesers gestel het in die meerderheidsregering van die ANC om onder andere die hoë vlakke van werkloosheid, knellende armoede en ekonomiese agteruitgang op te los. Tog kon die nuwe regering se voorstelle en pogings nie die land se sosio-ekonomiese probleme oplos nie. Beleidsformulering en -toepassing het groot uitdagings aan die RNE gestel. Die drie politieke partye wat die RNE gevorm het was die African National Congress (ANC), Inkatha Vryheidsparty (IVP) en Nasionale Party (NP), maar hulle het nie altyd saamgestem oor belangrike fundamentele sake nie.

Op onderwysgebied het statistiese data gedui op die behoefte aan beter dienslewering en aanwending van hulpbronne. In vergelyking met opvoedkundige inrigtings in blanke gemeenskappe was sommige skole in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, die Oos-Kaap en Vrystaat onvoldoende voorsien en dienslewering swak. Die ongelyke verspreiding van opvoedkundige hulpbronne was eerder die reël as die uitsondering.

Wat die landseconomie betref, het heersende omstandighede genoodsaak dat ontwikkeling en vooruitgang deur gesonde ekonomiese beginsels en beleidstoepassing verseker moes word. Die NP was skepties oor die ekonomiese beleid van die ANC en het hulle dikwels in die openbaar gekritiseer. Dit het die RNE se beoogde gesamentlike pogings gekelder om die ekonomiese euwels van die land doeltreffend aan te spreek.

'n Ander uitdaging van die RNE was die multi-party politiek binne die regering self. Daar is verwag dat die ANC, IVP en NP wat die koalisie-regering gevorm het, eenstemmig sou wees oor die bevordering van demokrasie in Suid-Afrika. Dit was egter nie altyd die geval nie. Die IVP het 'n federale staatsvorm gepropageer, die NP het die noodsaaklikheid van magsdeling beklemtoon en die ANC het op sy beurt ernstige voorbehoude gehad oor die kompromis van 'n eenheidstaat.

Dit het groot verdeeldheid onder die drie politieke partye binne die RNE geskep wat 'n nadelige uitwerking op hulle gesamentlike funksionering gehad het. Die NP het uiteindelik in Junie 1996 tot die besluit gekom om uit die RNE te onttrek en by die opposisie in die parlement aan te sluit. Mislukking om onderlinge politieke verskille uit te stryk het 'n gevaarlike skuiwergat in die RNE geskep.

'n Ander verantwoordelikheid waarmee die eenheidsregering in 1994 belas is, was die aanpassing van Suid-Afrika se buitelandse betrekkinge. Dit was 'n groot uitdaging as die land se negatiewe internasionale beeld voor 1990 in ag geneem word. Suid-Afrika het geloofwaardigheid ingeboet in die wêreldgemeenskap vanweë die apartheidsbeleid wat vanaf 1948 tot 1990 gegeld het.

Die RNE se groot uitdaging was om sulke internasionale persepsies te verander deur gesonde internasionale betrekkinge aan te knoop en diplomatieke bande in stand te hou. Dit moes Suid-Afrika ook help om ekonomies te vorder deur noodsaaklike buitelandse handel en beleggings.

Die nalatenskap van die tussentydse RNE dui op die onvoldoende kapasiteit en moontlike beperkte hulpbronne om doeltreffend die behoeftes en eise van die land aan te spreek. In die tydperk na 1999 was Suid-Afrika steeds gebuk onder voortgesette armoede, hoë vlakke van werkloosheid en die ongelyke verspreiding van hulpbronne en dienslewering.

Die eerste vyf jaar van demokrasie in Suid-Afrika was 'n groot uitdaging vir die RNE. Dit kan beskryf word as 'n tydperk van "probeer-en-tref". Enorme uitdagings moes hanteerword op 'n verskeidenheid terreine. Negatiewe kritiek moes omskep word tot nuwe moontlikhede. In Suid-Afrika is die RNE deur die meeste landsburgers beskou as 'n agent van transformasie, ten spyte van talle tekortkomings op onderwysgebied, ekonomiese terrein, internasionale verhoudinge en die multi-party stelsel van die regering.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late wife Minty, for her unflagging support, son Siphesihle, daughter Thoriso and mother Mantoa Mkhwanazi.

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CHAPTER 1

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Introduction

South Africa's transition from Apartheid to democracy in 1994 culminated in the formation of Government of National Unity (GNU) comprising the African National Congress, Inkatha Freedom Party and the National Party. It is imperative here to state that a Government of National Unity was comprised of representatives (functionaries) from different political parties – serving a common goal and South Africa was not the first country to accept a GNU. The objective was to foster unity within diversity. The three parties sought to achieve a common understanding of the essential realities of a national Government of National Unity.¹ Reconciling ideological differences would help them map out their vision as the government of the day. Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected head of state, and FW De Klerk were charged with an enormous responsibility of uniting a once-racially polarized South African society.

There were fundamental differences within the triumvirate in the Government of National Unity. This was in line with a generally accepted view that diverse political ideologies in the GNU were inevitable. Changing the mindset of all South Africans on the new political landscape featuring Black leadership was another hurdle to fly

¹ S. Friedman (Ed.): The Long Journey, South Africa's quest for a Negotiated Settlement, pp.77-81; Cape Times, 03 May 1994, p.7.

over.² The ultimate goal of the Government of National Unity, to turn South Africa into a Rainbow Nation was no easy mission to accomplish, given diverse political backgrounds from which South Africa's race groups came. Some white South Africans who clung to the old political traditions with an incredible tenacity, found it difficult to welcome change.

Some black citizens, however, had difficulty in burying the hatchet. This appeared to pose a serious threat to attempts at uniting the South African community around a common goal. Despite such predicaments, this study had to come to terms with the achievements of the Government of National Unity. A critical study of the impact of the GNU in South Africa during the period in question is made intelligible in terms of its policies on the economy, education, foreign affairs, health, defense, social development and justice.³ A cursory look at global trends in respect of the performance of the GNU across the political spectrum has also helped to provide a balanced perspective of its impact.

A discernible yet positive impact of the GNU was that Nelson Mandela, unarguably noted as the embodiment of the spirit of reconciliation, made attempts to foster unity and good relations among the South Africans of all races.⁴ Central to the mandate of the GNU was the endeavor to project a good image of a democratic South Africa to the international community.

² Aida Parker Newsletter, 30 April 1995; pp.4-5; Afrikaner, 19 September 1996, p.4.

³ Phillip Van Niekerk and Barbara Ludman; A-Z of South African Politics, pp.44-46; Herald, 12 December 1995, p.7; Die Volksblad, 28 May 1996.

⁴ Mayibuye, 7 March 1996, p.13; Business Day, 03 April 1996, p.8.

The importance of this could be noted as having had a positive impact in resolving conflicts of the past by peaceful means and led to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.⁵ Its composition, however, mounted opposition as it was particularly viewed by the National Party as fundamentally flawed. Overcoming divisions and bitterness of South Africa's complex and tormented history, was the greatest challenge the GNU was confronted with.

Statement of the Problem

A plethora of literature exists on the GNU and its policies in South Africa. The problem, however, has been an academic *cum* scientific gap in penetrating the ignorance, confusion and curiosity within the South African public opinion about the impact of the GNU in South Africa during the period 1994 to 1999.⁶

A pragmatic shift and a provision of scientific analysis in the study of the impact of the GNU in South Africa during the period 1994 – 1999 become a necessity. It also makes it imperative to scientifically document a critical study of the GNU and its impact, thereby throwing more light on the multi-faceted intricacies during the period under study.

This justifies a critical study of the impact of the GNU in South Africa, 1994 – 1999, thereby helping to assess the effectiveness of ushering in a new democratic dispensation.

⁵ F.W. De Klerk: The Last Trek – A New Beginning, p.351; ANC Today, Volume 1 No.37, 5 October 1994, pp.10-12; Volksblad, 02 April 1996, p.3.

⁶ Star, 28 November 1994, pp.3-4; Sunday Times, 19 March 1995, p.5; Eastern Province Herald, 15 July 1994, p.6.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The year 1994 was a turning point in South Africa's political history. The landslide victory secured by the African National Congress (ANC) in the country's first democratic elections on the 27th April 1994, marked the climax of the liberation struggle.⁷ Millions of people around the world had identified with the cause of the oppressed people in South Africa. Mass demonstrations, consumer boycotts, to mention but a few, were key features of such identification. The democratization of the country became a shared victory.

The study has therefore critically examined the formation and performance of the GNU comprising the African National Congress (ANC), National Party (NP) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). How well did the ANC-led GNU fulfill the hopes raised by its entry into office? There was undoubtedly a challenge of expectations among the electorate that voted for the ANC.⁸

The electorate also believed that the political transformation represented by the majority rule would usher in the desired social and economic transformation. Such transformation entailed among other things, jobs, houses, schools, better living conditions, political stability and economic growth.⁹

⁷ ANC Today, Volume 1 No.39, 19 October 1994, p.10; Chris Landsberg and Cedric de Coning, From "Tar baby" to Transition', op.cit., p.4.

⁸ M. Ballinger: *From Union to Apartheid*, pp.3-4; ANC Today Volume 1 No.29, 10 August 1994; p.8; B.G.G. et.al., Ashcroft, (Eds.): *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, pp.143.

⁹ African Communist No.87, Fourth Quarter, 1996, pp.4-5; N. Alexander: *An Ordinary Country: Issues in the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy in South Africa*, p.121-124.

The study has evaluated the realistic nature of these expectations against the backdrop of the GNU's capacitation and responsibilities in governing South Africa. The GNU, like other governments everywhere, had to worry about enhancing competitiveness and reducing public spending. These were noted as shortcomings of the erstwhile apartheid regime.

The study sought to draw parallels between the ideal and real political spaces, thereby realizing or indefinitely differing the masses' hopes for a rapid improvement in their material conditions.¹⁰ That would help put South Africa's political set-up in a democratic dispensation, into proper perspective.

Did the GNU in South Africa help silence the opposition? Were the three parties in government, i.e. ANC, NP and IFP able to reach consensus on key national delivery issues, despite coming from different maps of the past? That has been another area of exploration undertaken by the study. Pivotal to the duties and responsibilities of the GNU was the stimulation of the country's economic growth.¹¹ The study has critically analysed the economic policies and strategies as well as the extent of their success and shortfalls after the implementation processes. Pertinent questions such as how well did the GNU remedy the country's ailing education system? Did the government have enough resources to respond to South Africa's educational needs? Were cogently handled and findings thereof provided.

¹⁰ Africa Confidential, Volume 36, No.5, 24 October 1996, p.12; The Register Guard, Oregon States, 2 September 1997, pp.7-9.

¹¹ Aida Parker Newsletter, 31 December 1994, p.5; Sunday Tribune, 18 September 1994, p.5; Volksblad, 02 April 1996, p.4.

The study has critically examined the Government of National Unity's foreign policy and its impact on South Africa and the outside world. The focus will be on the government's establishment of international relations and maintenance of diplomatic ties. Furthermore, the main challenges and shortfalls of the GNU were critically studied in juxtaposition with its legacy, which entailed the scope of successes.

It could be argued and said that lessons drawn from the experiences of the GNU in a non-racial democratic South Africa and its impact on the country's political landscape, would shed some light on the essential realities of South Africa and her diverse population. Would the South African public opt for an inclusive government in the post 1999 era? The responses to this question laid at the core of perceptions and views about the GNU and its performances.¹²

The Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research *magnum opus* (masterpiece) has a critical study of the GNU in South Africa as its scope. The Study has the year 1994 as its point of departure and concludes with the year 1999. It has as its scope and limitation the genesis, nature and operational policies of the GNU in South Africa and particularly the impact it had during the period in question.

The study commences with a brief exploration of the factors leading to the formation of the Government of National Unity. South Africa's political climate in the pre-

¹² Leader, 18 September 1998, p.12; Clem Sunter: The World and South Africa in the 1990's, pp.71-86.

democratic era was fraught with various forms of the liberation struggle.¹³ In this study the antics of the De Klerk's administration which became central to the demise of apartheid featured prominently in the ushering of democracy in South Africa.

It all began with the negotiations at the World Trade Centre, alias CODESA I and II, in the early 1990s. The proliferation of diverse political ideologies prior to the 1994 elections was briefly yet critically examined. The general South African public appeared to have viewed the future non-racial democratic South Africa through different lenses and their vision of the New South Africa was somewhat uncommon.

The impact of the 1994 general elections on South Africa's political landscape was critically explored. The impact of the ANC's attempts at unifying the three parties, viz. ANC, NP and IFP around the common goal was critically explored. The study has critically explored the impact of the ANC's handling of multi-party politics as the main ruling party, its ability in formulating common policies and strategies aimed at addressing the country's educational and socio-economic ills.¹⁴ On the education front, this study has made a critical examination and impact of service delivery, unequal distribution of resources and provision of facilities addressed by the GNU. Another critical area of focus has been the GNU's role and impact in stimulating the economic growth and development in South Africa.

The establishment of international relations and maintenance of diplomatic ties were dealt with in detail. The challenges that the GNU was confronted with since its

¹³ New Nation New History, Volume 5, University of the Witwatersrand, 1995, pp.6-8; South African Digest, 1990, pp.17-19.

¹⁴ M. Bratton and C. Landberg: From Promise to Delivery – Official Development Assistance in South Africa, 1994-98, Report No.68, March 1999, p.15.

inception were examined critically. The practical lessons drawn from the experiences of the GNU could serve as the guiding principles for future governments both within and outside South Africa.¹⁵

The Government of National Unity's efforts in ensuring South Africa's political stability and economic growth, among other things, were riddled with complexities and dichotomies which the study has sought to shed some light on.

This research study has limited itself to six (6) distinct areas of focus from 1994 to the end of 1999. The first area of focus covers the nascence of the national Government of National Unity, entailing the intricate political processes prior to and during 1994. The second focus area is concerned with policy implementation on education in particular. The third focus area traces the state of economic development during the embryonic stage of the GNU.¹⁶

The fourth area of focus is concerned with multi-party politics, particularly how South Africa's new political dispensation brought about changes in the party-political system. The fifth area of focus entails international relations and the GNU's ability to change the perceptions of the international community about South Africa. The last focus area takes stock of the various challenges the GNU was confronted with since its inception. In this regard the study has critically explored the extent, magnitude and impact of those challenges in various sectors of government.¹⁷

¹⁵ F.A. Kornegay: "US/Africa: Setting the New Agenda," in Africa Report, September-October 1994, p.75.

¹⁶ James Barber: "South Africa's political miracle," op.cit, p.59; Robin Renwick: Unconventional Diplomacy in Southern Africa, op.cit, p.145.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Significance of the Study

While numerous books, articles, and commentaries have said something about the nature and the operational intricacies of the GNU in South Africa during the period 1994 to 1999, there appears to be a great deal of academic ignorance, confusion and curiosity within the South African academic worldview about the impact of the GNU led by the African National Congress, ostensibly in the name of national democratic revolution.¹⁸ The significance of this study lies in its contribution to penetrating that ignorance and respond to the need for a clearer understanding of this glorious past.

It is also hoped that this study will complement and reinforce the existing literature on the GNU and to the knowledge of its impact in South Africa. This study constitutes a valuable historical resource for the benefit of the public at large, and for the interest of students, domestic and international, of contemporary South African history and with a particular interest in the subject of the first phase of national democratic revolution in South Africa.

Methodology: Collection and Analysis of Sources

A critical study of the impact of the GNU in South Africa, 1994-1999 made use of historical research methods. The employment of 'historical research methods' will facilitate an intelligible critical account on the impact of the GNU in South Africa during the epoch in question.¹⁹

¹⁸ African Communist No.87, Fourth Quarter, 1994-1999, pp.23-29.

¹⁹ Simon Gunn: Research Methods for History, pp.119-121.

Historical research is the process of systematically examining past events to give an account of what has happened in the past. It is not a mere accumulation of facts and dates or even a description of past events. Rather, it is a flowing, dynamic account of past events that involves an interpretation of the events in an attempt to recapture the nuances, personalities, and ideas that influenced these events.²⁰

One of the goals of historical research is to communicate an understanding of past events. Van Rooyen states that conducting historical research becomes important in uncovering the unknown (i.e. some historical events are not recorded); answering questions (i.e. there are many questions about our past that we not only want to know but can profit from knowing); identifying relationship that the past has to the present (i.e. knowing about the past can frequently give a better perspective of current events); recording and evaluating the accomplishments of individuals, agencies, or institutions; and assisting in understanding the culture in which we live.²¹

The nature of this study adheres to a view that there is no one approach used in conducting historical research, although a general set of steps is typically followed, including identification of the research topic and formulation of the research problem or question; data collection or literature review; evaluation of materials; data synthesis; and report preparation or preparation of the narrative exposition.

The research product in this study is a combination of primary and secondary sources (i.e. published and unpublished sources). This study has also determined

²⁰ C. Kotlas: Readings in Qualitative Analysis, p.136.

²¹ A. Van Rooyen (Ed.): Research Methodology, p.69.

the reliability or accuracy of the information contained in the sources collected (internal criticism). It has been proven in this study that first-hand accounts by witnesses to an event, for example, are typically assumed to be more reliable and accurate. This was done by means of positive and negative criticism.²²

For purposes of this study, it is imperative to note that positive criticism refers to assuring that the statements made or the meanings conveyed in the sources are understood. This, however, has been difficult to prove because of the problems of vagueness and presentism. Vagueness refers to uncertainty in the meaning of the words and phrases used in the source; while presentism refers to the assumption that the present-day connotations of terms also existed in the past. Negative criticism refers to establishing the reliability or authenticity and accuracy of the content of the sources used. This has, in this study, proven to be the most difficult part because it requires a judgement about the accuracy and authenticity of what is contained in the source.²³

This study has made use of three heuristics in handling evidence to establish its authenticity or accuracy: corroboration, sourcing, and contextualization. Corroboration entails comparing documents to each other to determine whether they provide the same information. Sourcing involves identifying the author, date of creation of a document, and the place it was created. During contextualization, the researcher identifies when and where an event took place.²⁴

²² C. Kotlas: *Readings in Qualitative Analysis*, pp.139-156.

²³ Simon Gunn: *Research Methods for History*, pp.121-124.

²⁴ C. Wayne *et.al.*: *The Craft of Research*, p.95.

Primary sources used in this study were newspaper articles covering the period 1994-1999 mostly collected at the SA Media Institute at the University of the Orange Free State. Journals, periodicals and the University of Witwatersrand History Papers, memoirs were found to be interesting sources. Unstructured interviews were conducted with the relevant personalities who had insights into the various sectors of the GNU in South Africa. These entail, *inter alia*, personal accounts, opinions, perceptions, impact and recommendations. These oral informants were drawn from members of the African National Congress (ANC), National Party (NP) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), respectively.

Literature Review

The work of Rich Mkhondo has contributed immensely to this research by providing the essential background pertaining to the formation of the GNU in 1994. Mkhondo journalistically chronicles the political factors that formed the basis of the GNU.²⁵

This study has sought to critically explore various stages of the transformation process which accounted for the composition and challenges that the GNU was confronted with since its inception.

Mkhondo discusses the agreements and disagreements reached at the Congress for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). The constitutional imperative that played itself out with a view to promoting multi- party democracy and healing the divisions of the past; was critically studied. This study assessed the impact of a consensus that

²⁵ R. Mkhondo: Reporting South Africa, p.21.

the constitution would be the supreme law and be guarded over by an independent, non-racial and impartial judiciary.²⁶

It was agreed at CODESA that: "There will be a multi-party democracy with the right to form and join political parties with regular elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage on a common voters' roll. The basic electoral system shall be of proportional representation. This laid a solid foundation for South Africa's new political order."

The study has ascertained the feasibility of these projections in a democratic non-racial South Africa. The policy formulation and implementation under the GNU has been covered extensively by F.W. De Klerk. De Klerk looks at the Government of National Unity's initiatives in trying to reform education. His coverage entails, *inter alia*, the amendment of South Africa's education system, thereby making it accessible to all South Africans.²⁷ De Klerk's views on the language of teaching and learning and the role of the parental component in the management of schools were critically assessed.

David R. Howarth and Aletta J. Norval provide insights into the history of education in South Africa thus drawing parallels between the apartheid and democratic system of education.²⁸

²⁶ P. Waldmeier: Anatomy of a Miracle, The End of Apartheid and the Birth of a New South Africa, p.95.

²⁷ F.W. De Klerk: The Last Trek: A New Beginning, p.210.

²⁸ D.R. Howarth and A.J. Norval: South Africa in Transition, p.38.

The study has critically examined the results of the amended system of education discussed by De Klerk and established its success rate. It further established and analyzed the impact of fundamental departures from the apartheid to a democratic system of education.

Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji echoed the African National Congress (ANC)'s articulated vision for the governance of the future education and training systems.²⁹

They said: "*Governance at all levels of the integrated national system of education and training will maximize the democratic participation of stakeholders, including the broader community and will be oriented towards equity, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability as well as the sharing of responsibility.*"³⁰ The study has critically followed up on this vision and its impact on education and training system.

Clem Sunter looks at South Africa's economic trends in the 1990s as essential for assessing the country's economic growth under the auspices of the GNU. In the 1990s for example, South Africa was considered an average economy with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of about \$1900.³¹

According to the World economic rankings during the period in question and beyond, South Africa was categorized with countries like Yugoslavia, Mexico, Malaysia, Portugal, Uruguay, Chile and Brazil; as somewhat in the middle of the pack. In essence it showed some greater potential to grow fast without posing any threat to

²⁹ G. Mhone and O. Edigheji: Governance in the New South Africa, p.30.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Clem Sunter: The World and South Africa in the 1990s, p.12.

anybody. The study has critically assessed the impact of these considerations on the economic policies fashioned by the GNU in its endeavor to put South Africa's economy on a sound footing. F.W. De Klerk outlines the concern raised by the National Party as part of the GNU, that the ANC cabinet ministers needed some assistance particularly in dealing with financial matters.³² This was allegedly due to their lack of experience in this regard. He argued that the wealth of experience possessed by the NP's ministers on the economic terrain could be used to help the ANC fashion sound economic and financial policies.

The study has critically figured out the extent to which the NP's proposition was considered by the ANC in that respect. Gitanjali Maharaj explores various arguments and visions on the envisaged economic growth and the strategies to be taken into consideration. The South African Foundation (SAF), which was the organisation of top South African companies and GEAR vision, perceived the World economy as an integrated capitalist system where market forces reigned supreme. It punished countries that did not obey the unwritten code of sound fiscal monetary as well as labour market policies.³³

The study has evaluated the extent to which such arguments and visions assisted the GNU to redress South Africa's economic imbalances; which entail, *inter alia* slow economic growth, rising unemployment and persistent poverty. The possible solution highlighted by these arguments was privatization in order to reduce debt and to signal the government's clear commitment to market-oriented policies.³⁴

³² F.W. De Klerk: *The Last Trek – A New Beginning*, p.210.

³³ N. Alexander: *Issues in the transition from apartheid to democracy*, p.52.

³⁴ J. Momberg: *From Malan to Mbeki*, pp.189-195.

However, job creation through greater labour-market flexibility, was considered the most sustainable and effective means of lowering inequality. Furthermore job creation in the SAF/GEAR framework was supported in two major ways, i.e. by creating an investment friendly policy environment in order to provide the basis for output and employment expansion and by making the labour market more flexible so as to facilitate the expansion of lower-wage employment.³⁵

Another area of critical exploration by this research study has been the performance of South Africa's economy after the adoption and implementation of GEAR. Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji outlined the causes of the problem around economic growth and development in South Africa. In their view, this problem raised important issues. First, in its adoption of GEAR as the major basis for economic reforms, the GNU was confronted with major challenges. Such challenges entailed one related to the degree to which the government could rely on the support of its major constituencies as well as other allies outside the alliance in pursuit of the already adopted economic reform.³⁶

The economic problem on the other hand, concerned the degree to which the economic reforms could begin to deliver in terms of achieving sustainable human development to the benefit of the previously economically disadvantaged constituencies. The study has further assessed the GNU's ability to deliver on its initial promises in the economic sphere.³⁷

³⁵ W. Migel: *The Making of Modern South Africa*, p.16.

³⁶ B. Godsell: *Shaping a future South Africa*, p.42.

³⁷ M. Faure and J.E. Lane: *South Africa – designing new political institutions*, pp.8-9.

Murray Faure and Jan-Erik Lane provide insights into South Africa's political system which laid the groundwork for the multi-party politics in a post-1994 dispensation. The nature of the party system in South Africa was determined by legislation as an external factor. The legislation that was considered a threat to the country's party system was repealed shortly before and after the dawn of the new era.³⁸ The post-1994 party-political system was representative of a transitional phase in which the political forces were exonerated from external intervention.

This study has critically examined the role of political parties as actors in South Africa's party political scenario.

Albert Venter and Chris Landsberg maintain that "democracy cannot function without political parties. The conditions of the parties are the best possible evidence of the nature of any regime."³⁹ The study built on this assertion by critically analyzing the role played by key parties in the GNU in advancing the cause of democracy. This study further explored the Government of National Unity's strategies in uniting the three parties, viz. the ANC, NP and IFP around a common goal; despite their diverse political ideologies.

F.W. De Klerk argues that the new cabinet of the Mandela government functioned smoothly for the first year or so. The parties were able to reach common approaches to a number of critical issues. The study identified areas where these

³⁸ F. Pretorius (Ed.): A History of South Africa – from the distant past to the present day, p. 608.

³⁹ A. Venter and C. Landsberg: Government and Politics in the New South Africa, p.16.

approaches yielded fruitful result and determine the possible causes of shortfalls in this regard.⁴⁰

On the economic front, especially with regards to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the National Party supported the funding of this programme in a responsible manner. It went on to support another ANC's economic strategy, i.e. the Growth, Employment and Reconstruction Strategy (GEAR). However, there were clashes of interests on the education front. The NP proposed an education policy that would ensure the rights of pupils to be educated in the language of their choice and the consolidation of the role of parents in the management of schools. Other parties had some serious reservations about such a proposal. Sadly the NP threatened to pull out of the GNU if their proposal was not endorsed.

On the international relations front, the study interacted with the works of Chris Landsberg extensively. His shared experiences and insights helped this study to evaluate and assess South Africa's foreign policy. Christopher Landsberg provides, among others, a comparative framework of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki's administrations as 'settlement' governments.⁴¹

Their philosophies should be taken into cognisance. Mandela was perceived as a "principled" statesman both in style and approach. Mbeki was noted a strategic and technocratic visionary, a pragmatist whose pragmatism often sent a message that

⁴⁰ F.W. De Klerk: *The Last Trek – A New Beginning*, p.200.

⁴¹ C. Landsberg: 'Voicing the voiceless? Rethinking foreign political aid to South Africa', C.F. T. Carothers and Marina Ottaway: *Funding Virtue; Foreign Aid to Civil Society*, p.9.

principle came a distant second in consideration. He would at intervals, put principle second in order to realize long-term strategic goals.⁴² The GNU pursued a highly ethical and cosmopolitan diplomacy while Mbeki followed ambitious foreign policy strategies which sought to bring about a rules-oriented global order and pursued a normative value-driven approach aimed at redressing the injustices of the apartheid, colonial and global pasts.

This study has attempted to lend credence to the argument advanced by Landsberg that during the Mandela period, South Africa pursued a much more principled foreign policy approach, which stressed the importance of human rights, democratisation and respect for international law.

Furthermore, the GNU emphasized the importance of building bridges between the developed north and the developing south. A changed policy position, however, placed the issue of South African solidarity and co-operation on the foreign policy radar screen.⁴³

This study has further explored approaches of the GNU that helped put South Africa on a world map as a politically vibrant, economically viable young and developing democracy.

⁴² F.W. De Klerk: *The Last Trek – A New Beginning*, *op.cit*, p.141.

⁴³ A. Sampson: *Mandela: The Authorised Biography*, *op.cit*, p.359; *Africa Confidential*, Vol.30, No.5, 3 March 1990, pp.8-11.

Dissemination of Research

The findings of this research study are anticipated to be disseminated by means of publications, seminars and incorporation into school and universities' curriculum. Dissemination will also be through the means of publication in journal articles; published book; reading extracted papers in local, international conferences and workshops.⁴⁴ This will solicit the involvement of professional historians (research and writing), specialists on heritage and eco-tourism, history teachers and learners (cultural field), genealogists and biographers, cultural conservationists, librarians, historians and journalists, lawyers and theologians as well as civil servants with keen interest in the history of South Africa. The research findings will also be disseminated for world consumption through the internet.

Ethical Consideration

To avoid plagiarism, ethical guidelines in this research study have strictly been adhered to. This has been done by acknowledging the resource materials used (intellectual ownership right). This study by its nature involved the application of empiricism covering different group of person(s), i.e. those who have experienced both apartheid and post-apartheid life circumstances.⁴⁵

The study has also involved a selected group of people including academics, politicians, trade unionist and statesmen. Various interview sessions were

⁴⁴ Simon Gunn: *Research Methods for History*, pp.125-30; A Van Rooyen (Ed.): *Research Methodology*, pp.74-77.

⁴⁵ A. Van Rooyen (Ed.): *Research Methodology*, pp.189-190; F.A. Van Jaarsveld: *Die Afrikaner en sy geskiedenis*, pp.88-89.

conducted and protection of the respondents' autonomy ensured. Participants were not required to commit an act which might diminish self-respect or cause them to experience shame, embarrassment, or regret. Participants were also not exposed to enquiries which could be interpreted as shameful or upsetting.⁴⁶

Research Questions

This research study has sought to answer the following pertinent questions:

How did the GNU unfold and what circumstances prompted its existence?

What was the response of the various population groups to the formation of the GNU?

What was the impact of the GNU on the people of South Africa, her neighbours and the international community? How could the form that the GNU took best be described?

In what way could the policies of the GNU during the period in question be analysed and evaluated?

How did the GNU become a pioneer in democracy, not only adopting the techniques of other past and present-day democratic governments, but also refining them to a pitch of perfection and even evolving new techniques, which served as a model for others to follow?

⁴⁶ C. Wayne *et.al.*: The Craft of Research, pp.181-187.

To what extent did the GNU implement education, economic and international relations' policies in South Africa?

In what way could the nature, the *modus operandi* (action programme), and the *modus vivendi* (ways of doing things) of the GNU be analysed and evaluated?⁴⁷

In the light of the above discussion, the nascence of the GNU can now be critically studied.

⁴⁷ Simon Gunn: *Research Methods for History*, pp.118-120; A. Van Rooyen (Ed.): *Research Methodology*, p.188; C. Wayne *et.a.l.*: *The Craft of Research*, pp.188-190.

CHAPTER 2

THE NASCENCE OF THE GNU IN SOUTH AFRICA

The need for a new political order in South Africa began with the multi-party convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) held in Kempton Park, east of Johannesburg; on 20 - 21 December 1991. The greatest challenge that Nelson Mandela and F.W. De Klerk were confronted with, was to ensure a peaceful transition to a non-racial, democratic South Africa through negotiations.⁴⁸

The African National Congress's primary objective was to have a multi-party conference which would grant all political parties the latitude to contribute immensely to South Africa's transition to democracy through peaceful means. The incessant political violence in the country had to be extinguished so the negotiation process could not be hampered.⁴⁹

The composition of the negotiation political groupings was too complex a task, following the wrangling and divergent views on the technical aspects of the congress. This entailed, among other things the shape, size, venue and the convener. Nevertheless, they eventually converged at the World Trade Centre which was situated along the then Jan Smuts airport motorway near the eastern Johannesburg suburb of Kempton Park in South Africa.⁵⁰ The political groups and parties that participated in CODESA comprised the White Government group who

⁴⁸ Albert Venter, *Government and Politics in the New South Africa*, p.56.

⁴⁹ Rich Mkhondo, *Reporting South Africa*, p.3.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

wanted power-sharing and the radical left-wing group who called for the immediate transfer of power. Another party were the National Party (NP) led by President F.W. De Klerk. It wanted a non-racial country with a free-market economy, an entrenched Bill of Rights, a regular multi-party election to ensure a limited lifespan of the elected government as well as an independent judiciary.⁵¹

The African National Congress led by its president Nelson Mandela, wanted to redress inequalities of wealth and the creation of a unitary non-racial, non-sexist democratic state. The ANC and its alliance partners namely: South African Communist Party (SACP) and the NP, the two Indian parties that were also present were Solidarity, the majority party in the Indians-only chamber and its opposition, the National People's Party. The Coloureds were represented by the Labour Party under Hendrick formerly the majority party in the Coloured Chamber of the Tricameral (Coloureds, Indians and Whites) parliament. Other participants came from the 10 homelands, four of them nominally independent and six others were self-governing. The quasi-independent homelands included two Xhosa states, i.e. Transkei along the Indian Ocean west of the Natal province and Ciskei, in the Cape Province. The other two were Venda exclusively for Venda-speaking South Africans situated in the northern Transvaal and Bophuthatswana with seven patches of territory for the Batswana.⁵²

The leaders of Transkei and Venda for some reason were pro – ANC while those of Ciskei and Bophuthatswana were anti – ANC.⁵³ The other six self-governing

⁵¹ David Howarth and Aletta Norval, *South Africa in transition*, p.40.

⁵² R.W. Johnson, *South Africa's Brave New World*, p.62.

⁵³ Ibid.

territories were represented by parties: the Inyandza National Movement from the Swazi homeland of KaNgwane in the south-eastern Transvaal, the Ximoko Progressive Party from the Shangaan homeland of Gazankulu in the eastern Transvaal, the Dikwankwetla Party from the South Sotho homeland of Qwaqwa in the Orange Free State province, Intando Yesizwe from the Ndebele homeland in the north-eastern Transvaal and the United People Party, representing the North Sotho homeland of Lebowa. Only two of the six, viz. Dikwankwetla and Ximoko, were pro – ANC. The parties that were absent from the Congress were the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Conservative Party (CP) which championed right-wing interests. Two months before the convention, the PAC and the ANC formed a patriotic front. They were supported by the Azanian People’s Organisation (AZAPO) and advocated for a democratically elected Constituent Assembly, and an interim government.⁵⁴

However, there were ideological differences between the two parties in just a few days before the meeting on the 29th November 1991. The PAC demanded the restoration of land to blacks as a non-negotiable item of negotiation. The ANC on the other hand, entered into agreements with the government of the day on a number of issues such as an interim government and the constituent assembly without the prior knowledge and consent of the Patriotic Front members.⁵⁵

The disgruntled Patriotic Front members felt betrayed by the ANC and resolved to stay out of the talks. The Azanian People’s Organisation (AZAPO) was also

⁵⁴ Eastern Province Herald, 15 July 1994, p.6.

⁵⁵ Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Collected Seminar Papers No.12 University of London, 1995.

conspicuous by its absence from the talks.⁵⁶ It viewed CODESA as a means to muzzle blacks from espousing their political aspirations, which would eventually culminate in the depoliticisation of the freedom fighters. The Conservative Party which was deemed the official opposition in Parliament also refused to participate in the talks until the autonomy of the “White nation” was guaranteed. The Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) and the Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP) demanded a Whites-only homeland in the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Northern Natal; as a result they refused to participate in CODESA.⁵⁷

There were attempts by some right-wing groups to sabotage the talks by planting bombs in government buildings. They demanded the recognition of their rights to self-determination. The Conservative Party despite lobbying by a pro-negotiation faction within its ranks, also refused to participate. It probably echoed the sentiments of other right-wingers. The first preparatory meeting was a success despite the absence of PAC, AZAPO, CP and others. That marked a beacon of hope for a new political order in South Africa. Laying the foundations of a new democratic South Africa was the next challenge that the negotiators were faced with.⁵⁸

The main purpose of the talks was to map out the vision and set goals for the new South Africa. Working groups were therefore formed to work on areas such as constitutional principles, an interim government, the future of the homelands and

⁵⁶ Anthony Sampson, *Mandela, the Authorised Biography*, p.214.

⁵⁷ Rich Mkhondo, *Reporting South Africa*, p.6.

⁵⁸ *Journal for Political Science* since 1990.

suitable time frames for implementing a non-racial democracy.⁵⁹ Working Group 1 was tasked to ensure a peaceful climate of negotiations in preparation for non-racial democratic elections. This group was also expected to make recommendations on how to oil the wheels of the constitutional process.

The most challenging areas of its task was the release of political prisoners, the return of political exiles, the repeal of contentious laws, political intimidation, ending township violence, the use of security forces and the funding of political parties. Another task was to solicit the help of international organisations such as the United Nations' Organisation. The second Working Group was charged with the responsibility of suggesting how South Africa should be governed during the transfer of power from Apartheid to Democracy.⁶⁰

The committee was to come up with transitional arrangements acceptable to all parties. The third Working Group was expected to consider viable options for South Africa's new constitution based on the guidelines tabled by the convention. The analysis of different types of electoral systems, non-racial voters' roll, the power of the constitution, the bill of human rights, the role of the president, fiscal control and economic principles, were other areas of its responsibility.⁶¹ The difficult part of its task was to recommend ways and means of implementing the new constitution through a plebiscite, a constituent assembly and an all-party conference. The fourth Working Group was to suggest ways of re-incorporating the ten tribal homelands,

⁵⁹ Anthony Sampson, *Mandela, the Authorised Biography*, p.216.

⁶⁰ N. Adam and K. Moodley, *South Africa without apartheid*, p.46.

⁶¹ *New Nation*, 17 September, 1990.

four of which were considered independent states by South Africa's definition. The method thereof and matters for citizenship would be top on the agenda.⁶²

The fifth and last Working Group was to set an agenda for the constitutional process and set target dates for the transfer of power to a non-racial democratic South Africa. Disagreements around the constitution on a non-racial basis were evident between the ANC and the other groups involved in the negotiations, just before the convention. The ANC and its allies wanted a constituent assembly. De Klerk and his ruling party the NP on the other hand were totally opposed to it. Another point of difference was the drawing up of the interim constitution.⁶³

The ANC suggested that the constitution be drawn up by a body elected by universal suffrage within the period of 12 months, the NP as the ruling party wanted the constitution to emerge from the talks. The ANC saw this move as paving the way for an interim government representative of all parties which will oversee the transitional process. Such a government would control among other things the security forces, the budget, state media and the electoral process. The ANC desired a speedy transition with an interim government within 18 months and elections for a constituent assembly six months later.⁶⁴

The National Party government welcomed the move towards forming a transitional authority comprising all parties, on condition that parliament retains sovereignty. There were fundamental differences on the shape that the envisaged government

⁶² New Nation New History, Volume 5, Wits, 1995.

⁶³ R.W. Johnson, South Africa's Brave New World, p.72.

⁶⁴ Phillip van Niekerk and Barbara Ludman, A-Z of South African Politics, p.36.

should take. The ANC wished for a unitary state with no special protection for minorities.⁶⁵ The National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party on the other hand preferred the devolution of power to regions. The fate of the homelands was also to be decided upon. The ANC wanted them to be incorporated into South Africa. On the contrary, the government and the Inkatha Freedom Party believed any homeland wanting autonomy, should be able to claim it under some form of federation. The ANC supported participation by groups such as the Commonwealth, the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the Non-Aligned Movement in the transitional process. The NP and the IFP on the other hand, would only accept observers, but resisted any repetition of the facilitating role of the United Nations in the *Namibian independence*.⁶⁶

The negotiators decided that the negotiation process should proceed on the basis of sufficient consensus, which implied more than a mere majority (51% of the votes). It was ultimately constituted by the political organisations committed to CODESA in order to conclude a political settlement. The National Party and the Liberal Democratic Party represented the majority of Whites, while the ANC and Inkatha represented the majority of blacks. The application of the concept sufficient consensus, led the PAC and CP negotiators to pull out of the talks.⁶⁷ This happened at the preparatory meeting when CODESA chairmen Justice Piet Schabert and Justice Ismael Mahomed overruled party dissent and mud-slinging. Staying away from CODESA and its future conventions by the white pro-apartheid parties and the black radical groups, would not prevent the negotiators for a non-racial democratic

⁶⁵ African Communist, No. 87 Fourth Quarter, 1994-1999.

⁶⁶ Johannes Rantele, *The African National Congress and the Negotiated Settlement in South Africa*, p.204.

⁶⁷ *Journal for contemporary history*, volumes 1-12, March 1994 – October 1998.

South Africa from carrying out their tasks including taking decisions on issues of fundamental importance.⁶⁸ The ANC president Nelson Mandela called on the NP government to make way for an interim Government of National Unity; to oversee transition to a non-racial democratic South Africa. De Klerk made it clear that his government was prepared to admit blacks to the country's white-dominated parliament in a bid to help transfer power to a post-apartheid authority.⁶⁹

However, he was not prepared to suspend the constitution until South Africans of all races could have a say in a referendum to decide on the fate of a new non-racial South Africa. De Klerk went on to attack the ANC for refusing to abandon the armed struggle and the ANC's failure to honour the peace accord which stipulated that no political party was allowed to have a private army. There were two options which the ANC and other organisations such as the PAC were left with, namely, to achieve through negotiations or embark on a power struggle through violent means. The reform talks began to degenerate into an emotive acrimonious exchange between F.W. De Klerk and Nelson Mandela over the NP's pressing demand for the ANC to relinquish its armed struggle. De Klerk's deep concern was the ANC's continuation with the armed-struggle despite its suspension in August 1990. He saw that as an obstacle to peace in South Africa.⁷⁰ It was essential for the negotiators at CODESA to be in a rational rather than an emotional state of mind, so the reform talks can run peacefully. CODESA's first session started with 17 speakers giving their views on how South Africa should arrive at a much anticipated democratic settlement. It

⁶⁸ Rich Mkhondo, Reporting South Africa, p.10.

⁶⁹ Sowetan 10 June, 1999, p.2.

⁷⁰ The Star, 1994-1999.

however ended in a verbal brawl between the two party leaders, F.W. De Klerk and Nelson Mandela over a number of issues pertaining to the armed struggle.⁷¹

At CODESA, a total of 17 of the 19 participants signed the Declaration of Intent document which formed the basis for a non-racial democratic South Africa. It was also a solemn commitment by the representatives of political parties, organizations, administrations and the South African government to bring about racially undivided South Africa with one nation. Such envisaged nation was to be one sharing a common citizenship, patriotism and loyalty, pursuing freedom, equality and security for all irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed, a country free from apartheid or any other form of discrimination and domination.⁷²

All political formations would work hard to heal the divisions of the past, secure advancement of all, establish a free and open society based on democratic values where the dignity, worth and rights of every South African were protected by law.⁷³

A grandiose vision also entailed striving to improve the quality of life of all people through the policies that would promote economic growth and human development and ensure equal opportunities as well as social justice for all South Africans. Under such situation a climate conducive to peaceful constitutional change would be created to eliminate violence, intimidation, destabilization and promote free political participation, discussion and debate. A process would therefore be set in motion to draw up and establish a constitution that would ensure that South Africa be a united

⁷¹ B.J. Liebenburg and S.B. Spies, South Africa in the 20th century, p.244.

⁷² F.W. De Klerk, The Man in His Time, p.27.

⁷³ Albert Venter, Government and Politics in the New South Africa, p.96.

democratic, non-racial and non-sexist state in which sovereign authority was exercised over the whole of its territory.⁷⁴

CODES agreed that the constitution would be the supreme law and would be guarded over by an independent, non-racial and impartial judiciary. Crucial to CODESA talks was consensus for South Africa to have a multi-party democracy with the right to form and join political parties and with regular elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage on a common voters' roll. It could be argued, however, that the basic electoral system would be that of proportional representation.⁷⁵

What could be regarded as of positive impact was that there would be a separation of powers between the legislature, executive and judiciary with appropriate checks and balances. This also entailed that the diversity of languages, cultures and religions of other people of South Africa be acknowledged. The CODESA talks position gains also included that all would enjoy universally accepted human rights, freedoms and civil liberties such as freedom of religion, speech and assembly. These would be protected by an entrenched and justifiable bill of rights and a legal system that would guarantee equality of all before the law.⁷⁶

It was also agreed that all participants were entitled to put forward freely to the convention proposals viewed to be consistent with democracy. In that regard, CODESA would establish a mechanism whose task would be in co-operation with the administration of the South African government. Such mechanism would draft

⁷⁴ Ilanga, 17 May, 1994, p.4.

⁷⁵ Die Burger, 5 April, 1994, p.2.

⁷⁶ Rich Mkhondo, Reporting South Africa, p.12.

the text of all legislation required to give effect to the agreement reached at CODESA. There was further commitment to be bound by the agreements of CODESA and realize their implementation.⁷⁷

The declaration of intent was considered a significant component of CODESA, a progressive move towards unity. It unified parties with basic understanding of multi-party democracy, regular elections, an independent judiciary, the supremacy of the constitution and the division of executive, legislative and judicial powers. It could be argued however, that diverse ideological framework among the parties was quite phenomenal. The IFP and the government of Bophuthatswana did not sign the declaration of intent. The IFP felt that in the formulation process of the declaration, a unitary state was more favoured than a federation. The Bophuthatswana government on the other hand, insisted on the recognition of the homelands and that they should be allowed to have a final say in the future.⁷⁸

Although the ANC leaders had reservations about the declaration, Nelson Mandela persuaded them to sign it in the interests of reconciliation. In essence, it meant the government's commitment to converting resolutions taken into legislation through parliament. At this stage, it was clear that South Africa had entered into a new phase of politics. Tempers had cooled, emotions subsided and the delegates were in a rational state of mind.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Mail and Guardian, 8 August, 1999, p.4.

⁷⁸ New Nation, 17 September, 1994, p.6.

⁷⁹ J.D. Brewer, South Africa, from apartheid to democracy.

That was an incredible achievement of CODESA given the previous political climate of South Africa. However, it did not settle any of the tremendous problems the country was faced with such as internecine violence, the economic downswing, unemployment, the housing backlog and other socio-economic ills.⁸⁰ One would argue that such problems could not have been addressed by the congress at this critical and complex stage of the transformation process. Its purpose was mainly to prepare the ground. Setting up an interim government, the drafting of the constitution and the appointment of the body that would write it was the most crucial and challenging task of CODESA. South Africans were anxious to know whether the New Non-Racial South Africa would be the one suggested by De Klerk and his party i.e. power-sharing or its transfer from a minority government to a majority government.⁸¹

One of the responsibilities of the GNU would be to establish a constituent assembly, which would in turn draw up a final constitution. That would be followed by the elections for South Africa's first democratic government. Although the first two days of CODESA did not yield magic solutions and quick fixes, it did succeed to a larger extent in fashioning a new political system. It was therefore considered the first parliament of the new South Africa.⁸²

At the beginning of 1993, South Africa was tossed between hope and desperation. The first round of talks had almost settled, however, violence continued with rapid strides unchallenged, people grew disillusioned about the future. The official

⁸⁰ Monthly reviews of the Centre for Research and Revolutionary activities, RAU 1990-1999.

⁸¹ Aida Parker Newsletter, 30th June 1994, p.5.

⁸² The Star, 18th July 1994, p.3.

resumption of the second round of talks in March 1993, centred around a series of bilateral discussions between the government and the ANC and later between the government and Inkatha.⁸³ Almost all the parties were subjected to one-on-one meetings with an express purpose of resuming the negotiations after the breaking down of talks at CODESA II in May 1992.⁸⁴

Another objective of the resumed negotiation process, was to resolve the stand-off between all the parties previously involved and expected to join such as the PAC, CP, the Afrikaner Volksunie and the traditional leaders from all four provinces. The Inkatha Freedom Party needed to be persuaded to return to the negotiating table after pulling out in protest against the government – ANC Record of Understanding of 26 September 1992. Drawing parallels among all parties despite their diverse ideological viewpoints was essential in paving way for the envisaged Government of National Unity. Common understanding between the government and the ANC power-sharing was crucial.⁸⁵

These one-on-one talks culminated in new agreements on the dynamics of power-sharing arrangements after the elections, especially for the constituent assembly. Significant compromises were also resorted to on both sides in order to balance matters out. Arguments on the shape the future government should take were advanced from different quarters. The ANC's National Working Committee often referred to as South Africa's future cabinet, accepted a document drafted by South African Communist Party's Joe Slovo, arguing that it would be dangerous for any

⁸³ David Howarth and Aletta Norval, *South Africa in transition*, p.82.

⁸⁴ Gitanjali Maharaj, *Between Unity and Diversity*, p.54.

⁸⁵ Vicencio Villa and Doxtader Erik, *The Provocations of Amnesty*, p.30.

future government to alienate the bureaucracy and armed forces empowered by the then state.⁸⁶

He went on to emphasize the necessity for major compromises with an understanding that the ANC was not dealing with a defeated enemy. Joe Slovo further suggested an offer of amnesty to all those who were engaged in the enforcement of apartheid. That would form the basis for reconciliation. Job guarantees and assured pension benefits to generals and civil servants, would enhance their support and co-operation with the country's first democratically elected government. The paradigm shift from the transfer of power to power-sharing was profound.⁸⁷

The ANC resolved to share power with the "white minority" for a limited span after the country's non-racial democratic elections. This kind of alliance was least expected following the complex process of negotiations. Eventually one sees the opposing ideologies namely; the former Marxist revolutionaries and the white supremacists join forces to ensure that the transition to democracy is on track.⁸⁸

The ANC made it clear that in the interest of peace, reconstruction and development of South Africa, it supports the formation of an interim GNU that would run the country until the adoption of the new constitution. The balance of forces and the

⁸⁶ The Cape Times, 5th May 1994, p.2.

⁸⁷ Phillip van Niekerk and Barbara Ludman, A-Z of South African Politics, p.56.

⁸⁸ Die Volksblad, 2nd April 1996, p.3.

interests of the whole country could require the establishment of a GNU in order to prevent those parties that have lost the elections from jeopardizing its function.⁸⁹

The drafting and enactment of the first constitution based on democratic principles, would be the responsibility of the constituent assembly. That was the plan that the government and the ANC had. It was supported by most parties except for the IFP and the CP.⁹⁰

An interim GNU would emerge from the constituent assembly, charged with the responsibility of proposing legislation and supervising the new constitution. The duration of such a government would be five years. The bicameral interim legislature would serve for five years. It was important to assure white South Africans that there would be no intention to push them to the periphery, witnessing the game that they should be playing, the GNU would therefore remain in power throughout this period.⁹¹

There was to be a single president with executive powers; but taking decisions on some specified issues, would require a two-thirds majority in the cabinet. At this stage, South Africa was not well conversant with the essential realities of a democratic government. The US model of democracy was therefore emulated. It would have a strong influence, the lower house would be elected by proportional representation, the upper house on the other hand, would reflect an attempt to give

⁸⁹ Sunday Independent, 12th December 1999, p.4.

⁹⁰ Mail and Guardian, 3 April, 1996, p.1.

⁹¹ Rapport, 7 April 1996, p.4.

whites a disproportionately large voice. Elections would only be held in 1991 after the enactment of the new constitution.⁹²

The fate of the new democratic government would be decided upon by the majority rule. The envisaged interim government would comprise party representatives in proportion to the votes cast for the constituent assembly. That means in essence, De Klerk and Mandela would serve in the same cabinet if the ANC emerged victorious. The National Party failed to strike a balance between the ANC and its own party leaders. It wanted the leaders of the top parties to be equal partners in a revolving presidency thereby giving minority parties the same power as majority parties. It also failed to vest power in an executive committee comprising party leaders, leaving the president to perform ceremonial duties.⁹³

De Klerk also demanded an upfront guarantee of power-sharing in the final constitution. It would be feasible for the envisaged GNU to function on the basis of consensus among the key role players to ensure common understanding and approach in dealing with issues of fundamental importance.⁹⁴

The ANC's move to make concessions in order to keep the Inkatha Freedom Party as one of the key role players in the transformation process was brilliant. It agreed that an unelected negotiating council would be granted the latitude to draw up an interim constitution whose principles on general matters and federation in particular,

⁹² Rich Mkhondo, Reporting South Africa, p.162.

⁹³ National Party Information, 1990-1999.

⁹⁴ Mayibuye, 30 April 1996, p.2.

would be binding on the elected constituent assembly. This would dismount opposition and foster unity within the interim government.⁹⁵

The interpretations of the government and the ANC of the agreements on an interim GNU differed fundamentally; for the government it was tantamount to power-sharing whereas for the ANC, it was no more than an interim measure to unify the country and create stability. At this stage the general feeling among South Africans was that neither the ANC nor the National Party can govern South Africa alone; a coalition government was considered the most viable option to bring about stability in the country.⁹⁶

The idea of suspending outright majority rule for the sake of the country's desired political stability was upsetting to the ANC followers. They saw it as the betrayal of their course. They also took issue with the ANC leadership for putting the liberation struggle on hold in pursuit of political stability. The mounting criticism from its constituency, compelled the ANC to define the proposed interim Government of National Unity, emphasizing that it would not compromise the principle of majority rule. It further maintained that its proposal for such a government was not to share power, but to enhance it for the purposes of rebuilding and reconstructing the country. The envisaged GNU would reflect voter preferences and nothing else.⁹⁷

However, these assurances on the power-sharing deal were met with hostility among the radical leaders of the more militant regions of the ANC such as Natal. Harry

⁹⁵ Tony Leon, On the contrary, p.24.

⁹⁶ B.J. Liebenberg and S.B. Spies, South Africa in the 20th century, p.246.

⁹⁷ Ken Owen, These Times, A decade of South African Politics, p.20.

Gwala saw it as a drastic departure from what the ANC is known to stand for.⁹⁸ Winnie Mandela thought it was undemocratic and would eventually produce a backlash from the disgruntled masses when they realize that their interests were abandoned in a rush for a future gravy train.⁹⁹

Intellectuals within the ranks of the ANC also unleashed blows to the concept of power-sharing. Pallo Jordan saw it as an entrenchment of a civil service with no interest in the ANC's constituency and a perceived interest in undermining democratic rule. Nelson Mandela and many of his colleagues continued to defend the power-sharing concept at the core of the Government of National Unity's principles. He deemed it fit to allow all political parties in South Africa who have an interest in democracy a stake in the government. That would ensure a peaceful transition and political stability ideal for the country's economic growth.¹⁰⁰

The ANC further demonstrated its desire to accommodate even the smaller political parties by insisting on the five percent threshold for entry into the cabinet under the GNU as opposed to the ten percent threshold preferred by the National Party. The latter was gradually losing its grip as the government of the day. The assassination of Chris Hani in April 1993, the most popular and powerful leader of the ANC after Mandela, united South Africans from diverse backgrounds around a desire for a political settlement. The resultant political crisis clearly showed that the NP

⁹⁸ Bureau for Information, South African Profile, Promedia Publications, 1990.

⁹⁹ Citizen, 2 August 1995, p.3.

¹⁰⁰ Mayibuye, 7 March 1996, p.2.

government was losing its legitimacy thus becoming unable to govern the country alone.¹⁰¹

Although the bilateral talks managed to resolve some of the thorny issues affecting the transition to democracy partially, the forged consensus by the government and the ANC on power-sharing and the structure of the GNU was to be tested in the multi-party talks. Uniting the country proved to be too complex a process. There were two power blocs before the demise of CODESA II, i.e. the government and its allies and the ANC's. Inkatha was considered the NP government on many issues as did the leaders of Bophuthatswana, Ciskei and Qwaqwa, De Klerk also counted on the support of those political parties that participated in apartheid-created structures for many years. The impression that the ANC and the government were engaged in secret deals was created.¹⁰²

It is essential to note that despite a shift in power alignments, the 1993 round of talks could be regarded as the most representative political consultations ever held in South Africa. They included the 19 parties that launched CODESA and seven others. The next crucial step to be taken was preparing for the elections. That became the sole responsibility of the interim government.¹⁰³ The Transitional Executive Council was therefore established. Although it would operate alongside the white-dominated cabinet, it would have the powers of intervention at all levels to nurse the country towards free and fair elections. These elections would mark a turning point in South Africa's political history. The new government would have to

¹⁰¹ Herald, 12 December 1995, p.4.

¹⁰² R.W. Johnson, South Africa's Brave New World, p.13.

convince the South African community how it plans to unite divergent cultural, historical and language groups, foster unity within a diversity,¹⁰⁴ enhance political stability that would stimulate the country's economic growth.

All the efforts at ushering in a new political order in South Africa through CODESA, talks about talks leading to the setting of an election date seemed to have been watered down.¹⁰⁵ The GNU eventually came into being after the country's first non-racial democratic elections. It was charged with the responsibility of advancing the course of democracy and managing the transformation process. The next chapter addresses the policy implementation under the GNU.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Rich Mkhondo, Reporting South Africa, p.170.

¹⁰⁵ Sowetan, 31 May 1996, p.2.

¹⁰⁶ Die Volksblad, 28 May 1999, p.1.

CHAPTER 3

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY

On assumption of power on 27 April 1994, the GNU crafted policies in various areas of governance. This chapter undertakes a critical study of the impact of such policy implementation and responses thereof, particularly on education.

The education policy had to be amended in order to respond to the challenges and demands of the new South Africa. Pivotal to its roles and responsibilities the Ministry of Education during the period 1994-1999 had to make education easily accessible to all South Africans. Changes in the curriculum were an absolute necessity. Ensuring that the production of the education system is compatible with the demands of the labour market was of paramount importance. On examining the Government of National Unity's new policy, important amendments were noticeable.¹⁰⁷

The language of teaching and learning was the first area of concern. Pupils were to be granted the right to be educated in the language of their choice; depending on the feasibility thereof. The role of parents in the management of schools was also to be seriously considered.¹⁰⁸ However, this was no easy process, it involved lengthy discussions, arguments and debates. The capacitation of the role players was

¹⁰⁷ F.W. De Klerk, *The last trek, A New Beginning*, p.340.

¹⁰⁸ David R Howarth and Aletta Norval, *South Africa in transition*, p.110.

essential. Diverse views on this matter, led to clashes within the social and administrative affairs cabinet committee.¹⁰⁹

The Minister of Education, Professor S. Bengu was mandated to unravel the dichotomy on mother-tongue education and the parental control of schools. The National Party threatened to leave the GNU if their proposal was not accepted. The ANC remained calm and unshaken by NP's threat, stuck with the amendments made to their original proposals. Such amendments were sufficient to start things off. The NP and the broader educational community had no option at this stage, but to live with the result. The battle over the education policy continued in the negotiations.¹¹⁰

The history of education in South Africa had been a reflection on the support given to a dialectical narrative characterized by contradiction and transcendence. The apartheid Christian National Education promoted segregation of the population on the basis of race and catered for the needs of a capitalist economy.¹¹¹ Shortage of classrooms, lack of basic infrastructure, insufficient textbooks, untrained teachers and overcrowding leading to high teacher-pupil ratios, were some of the fundamental problems that the new government's education policy needed to address. The prevailing conditions in the 1990's necessitated a radical rethinking of the educational struggle aimed at striking a balance between education, development and democracy.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Murray Faure and Jan-Erik Lane, *South Africa, designing new political institutions*, p.34.

¹¹⁰ F.W. De Klerk: *the last trek – A New Beginning*, p.346.

¹¹¹ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, *Governance in the New South Africa*, p.89.

¹¹² Gitanjali Maharaj, *Between Unity and Diversity*, p.160.

It could be argued and said that both the apartheid state and the liberation movement's visions were grounded on an enlightenment value system. Its main thrust was that human reason was capable of objectively describing and explaining the nature of reality both natural and social. This view was seen to be providing humanity with the knowledge required to transform the world and construct a better society. Attempts to resolve the problems of the South Africa's education system in the form of a state-managed process of modernization clearly manifested these values of autonomy, identity, reason, liberty, progress and justice.¹¹³ Six major policy investigations were undertaken within the field of education and training since the beginning of negotiations in 1990. Changes either to specific aspects of the education system or the entire system were recommended. The Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) came up as a result of the policy discussions by the National Party. The Policy Framework for Education and Training (PFET) representing the views of the ANC also came into being.¹¹⁴

This Policy Framework drew on the work of four earlier initiatives viz, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), proposals for training and adult basic education and issues of distance education, lifelong learning and tertiary education being addressed by the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) as well as the Union of Democratic University Staff Association (UDUSA). According to the findings of the research conducted, by 1994 the South African education system had consumed approximately 22 percent of the state budget, employed about 350 000 people and

¹¹³ David R Howarth and Aletta J Norval, *South Africa in transition*, p.134.

¹¹⁴ Albert Venter and Chris Landsberg, *Government and Politics in the New South Africa*, p.62.

provided schooling for 12 million students divided into 18 separate racially defined departments.¹¹⁵ The ERS's proposal for the restructuring of the education system which would ensure freedom of choice, equal opportunities and the need to embrace diversity; was in response to the racially defined department contrary to the democratic values. Schools were to be differentiated on the basis of particular values such as language, culture, religion etc. except for race. This would be made possible by balancing administrative centralization and national standards against decentralization of power to local communities or individual institutions.¹¹⁶

Ironically, the ERS's contribution to the transformation process was the retention of apartheid practices in the guise of free association. It maintained identities, relying on the geographical distribution of populations and institutions. It also provided a substantial number of predominantly white and semi-privatized schools with powers to control the collection and distribution of their own resources. The central question remains, how the ERS hopes to embrace diversity in education circles under such challenging circumstances. All it could do was seek justification for differences and inequalities in a single education system.¹¹⁷

Development in the education sector was the goal that the GNU in the post-apartheid South Africa sought to achieve. Although a high-skill development programme was to a greater extent constraint by the chronic shortage of well trained

¹¹⁵ Ilanga, 24 August, 1995, p.8.

¹¹⁶ David R Howarth and Aletta Norval, South Africa in transition, p.137.

¹¹⁷ F.W. De Klerk, The Man in His Time, p.52.

teachers. The redress of all historical inequalities in education would eventually influence all subsequent policy formulations.¹¹⁸

The ANC articulated its vision for the governance of the future education and training system as follows: "Governance at all levels of the integrated national system of education and training will maximize the democratic participation of stakeholders, including the broader community and will be oriented towards equity, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and the sharing of responsibility."¹¹⁹

This vision became the focal point of a set of policies meant to transform the entire education system which was characterized by inequalities particularly in resource allocation according to race, class and geographical location. Decentralization appeared to be the most viable option in fast tracking the transformation process; as opposed to centralization. Examining other models of the governance approach was of immense importance. Key assumptions reflecting on the global understanding of change in education should be taken into cognisance.¹²⁰

The first assumption for example, was that education is one of the means to enhance and sustain national developments. It was also considered central to nation-building in various spheres namely, economic, social and political developments. It empowers people to effectively participate in all processes of a democratic society, economic activity, cultural expression and community life. The

¹¹⁸ Sunday Times, 18 May 1997, p.4.

¹¹⁹ Guy Mhone and Omando Edigheji: Governance in the New South Africa, p.182.

¹²⁰ Phillip Van Niekerk and Barbara Ludman, A-Z of South African Politics, p.44.

second assumption was that improved efficient decentralized management would lead to delivery at all levels in the education system.¹²¹

The third assumption was that a democratic participation was key to education change and delivery. The apartheid education system on the contrary had been characterized by non-participative, hierarchical and secretive ethos that was neither accountable nor democratic. The stakeholders (parents, learners, educators and local communities) had had limited voice in the decision-making processes that affected their development. Furthermore, the delivery systems lacked political, financial and management accountability as a result of an over-centralization of control and limited legitimacy of the political authorities.¹²²

The last assumption was that, democratic governance would ensure equity and redress. Coming to terms with the practical dimensions of these assumptions, the policies formulated henceforth must be critically examined. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, was a reflection of a worldwide trend to transfer powers to local levels, it also provided greater opportunities for the regulations, technical and financial support of the development. In the South African context, it was assumed that education stakeholders will fill the gap created by the reduced role of the state as the provider of education.¹²³

¹²¹ Johannes Rantele, *The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa*, p.161.

¹²² Pretoria News, 13 May 1998, p.4.

¹²³ Johannes Rantele, *The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa*, p.163.

This attempt was a move to shift from a hierarchical system of organisation to the one that enabled and supported local school development. Schools had greater responsibility in the new education system, but school departments would continue to have a major task in assisting and supporting schools to create the conditions for effective teaching and learning.¹²⁴

The first five years of democracy, saw the development of a comprehensive framework for the governance and delivery of education in South Africa by the national departments of education. The education policy focused on building a national education system while simultaneously decentralizing decision-making to the lowest possible level in the system. This move would give the previously disadvantaged stakeholders a stake in the transformation process of the education system in the democratic non-racial South Africa.¹²⁵

The decentralization of power within the education sector needs further exploration in order to comprehend its implications at various levels. The relationship between globalization, development and democratic governance in the South African education sector needs some examination.¹²⁶ An argument is advanced that globalization, the history and context of education development would limit policy choices and impede the expected delivery. The possibility of achieving effective service delivery in impoverished contexts through decentralization and limited state intervention needs to be explored in pragmatic terms. Some theories and

¹²⁴ Albert Venter, *Government and Politics in the New South Africa*, p.170.

¹²⁵ Sowetan, 1 March 1994, p.3.

¹²⁶ Rand Daily Mail, 19 June 1999, p.12

assumptions that underpin the general understanding of the dynamics of globalization and governance may come in handy in response to this enquiry.¹²⁷

The argument that the emphasis on equity, decentralization of authority, self-management of schools, professionalism, outcome-based learning and quality assurance evident in the approach to education governance, was a direct consequence of the particular history of education development in South Africa, as well as the tendency to use global knowledge and understanding may be validated by the final outcomes of the research undertaking on the subject. The next focus will be on the relationship between decentralization and globalization.¹²⁸

Education is viewed by many developing countries as a viable tool for national development. It is considered ideal for enhancing economic growth and influencing social transformation. Many marginalized and disadvantaged societies see education as an escape route from poverty and exclusion. In the South African context, it is a commitment to future development and the means to improve the legitimacy of the new government.¹²⁹

When viewed from a global perspective, the expanded delivery of education usually takes place within a context of economic crisis, increasing polarization between different racial, ethnic and religious groups and a reduction in the purpose of education to the production of human capital in order to stimulate economic growth.

¹²⁷ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, *Governance in the New South Africa*, p.88.

¹²⁸ Gitanjali Maharaj, *Between Unity and Diversity*, p.94.

¹²⁹ R.W. Johnson, *South Africa's Brave New World*, p.90.

Many developing countries, in an attempt to expand access and encourage social and economic development have placed strong emphasis on the centralized control of the education system. Lyons (1985:7) in Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji argues that centralization is ideal for unity and the creation of management efficiencies.¹³⁰

Furthermore, the standardization of the curricula, examinations, qualifications as well as the equity of provision and efficiency are most likely to be the permanent features of the centralized control of the education system. However, the perceived limitations of the centralized governing structures should be taken into consideration in transforming the country's education system. In essence, the authority and responsibility get shifted from the education system. Laugho (1996:40) in Guy Mhone and Omano Edignlji, maintains that this process is normally motivated by three values viz. a politically-legitimate dispersal of authority, efficiency in the use of available resources and the improvement in the quality of the service provided.¹³¹

The first is achieved through the democratisation of education which boils down to the parental control of schools through the establishment of the school governing bodies. That makes the education service more responsive and accountable to the communities they serve. Another advantage connected to the decentralization of education, is its potential and perhaps ability to extend participation in decision-making processes by the stakeholders.¹³² It is also linked to the country's ideological commitment to democratization. This chapter will further explore the extent to which the GNU in South Africa, has taken cognisance of these assumptions in transforming

¹³⁰ David Howarth and Aletta Norval, *South Africa in transition*, p.170.

¹³¹ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, *Governance in the New South Africa*, p.205.

¹³² Volksblad, 18 April 1994, p.3.

the education sector. The decentralized system of education took a different form in the post-apartheid South Africa.¹³³ The ANC's policy framework on education and training assumed a strong national direction despite the structural constraints that the interim constitution placed on the extent to which centralized participatory democracy could be achieved.¹³⁴

The dictates of the interim constitution and the 1996 constitution on the education system must be taken into cognisance. These constitutions listed education as a concurrent power of both national and provincial departments. All nine provinces, into which the new South Africa was divided, were given powers over all aspects of education with the exception of higher education. In essence, this meant that in the event where the national and provincial laws were consistent, both would apply.¹³⁵

However, if they were inconsistent, the provincial law would prevail except where minimum or uniform norms and standards were required to render an effective service. Pivotal to the challenges that the system of education was confronted with, was the confusion over the actual roles and responsibilities of the education Ministry in as far as policy developments and decision-making were concerned.

The source of confusion could have been the constitutional model that South Africa adopted which was neither centralized nor federalized. Smith and Foster p.200 in Mhone and Edigheji point out that it was based on the principle of co-operative¹³⁶ governance under which each sphere of government (national, provincial and local)

¹³³ Mayibuye, 30 April 1996, p.2.

¹³⁴ Terence Corrigan, Mbeki, His Time Has Come, p.60.

¹³⁵ Beeld, 22 February 1996, p.6.

¹³⁶ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, Governance in the New South Africa, p.270.

retained its own unique character, but could not function independently of the other spheres.¹³⁷

The tension in the structural arrangements that define education governance reflects on the complexities of the inter-governmental relations in the education sector. There would always be a push and pull between the spheres in education circles as each attempts to establish authority over the allocation and distribution of resources. The compromises made by the ANC and the NP during the negotiations preceding 1994, do account to some extent for such a constitutional arrangement. The ANC for example, favoured a strong centralized governing system while the NP preferred a federalized system in order to protect the interests of the white citizens.¹³⁸

The GNU had hoped that its wishes for a single national education system which is largely organized and managed on the basis of the nine provincial sub-systems, would easily come to fruition. That was a bit unrealistic as effective delivery was becoming problematic. The relationship over accountability and responsibility between the national and provincial departments of education including the stakeholders, culminated in the promulgation of the National Education Policy Act No.27 of 1996.¹³⁹

The National Party, Democratic Party and Inkatha Freedom Party challenged its constitutionality on the grounds that it impinged on the legislative competence and

¹³⁷ David R Howarth and Aletta J Norval, *South Africa in transition*, p.78.

¹³⁸ Albert Venter, *Government and Politics in the New South Africa*, p.189.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

jurisdiction of provincial governments by giving unlimited authority to the Minister of Education. The legal intervention on this matter was of absolute necessity.¹⁴⁰

The Constitutional Court rejected the arguments advanced by the three parties that the Bill gave the national minister of education unconstitutional powers. Its findings did not endorse the dominance of the national department, instead suggested that the Act should give the nine provinces a fair chance to come in handy and address issues where they felt that the standard of national provision did not comply with the constitution.¹⁴¹

By the late 1996, there were ten operating departments of education implementing their own regulations on the basis of one national education act and several provincial acts. Only the provincial departments had the audacity to employ teachers and operate schools. Compliance with the National Policy Framework was a major problem especially at the fundamental level of implementation. Departments were at this stage still structured along gender and racial lines; although the black representation at senior management levels had somewhat changed. However, management systems had not changed as expected. Education departments were required to give quality and compulsory education up to grade 9 within extremely deprived uneven and racially unequal school and provincial contexts.¹⁴²

This was evident in the overall assessment of service delivery by the departments and the reports released, namely, the Provincial Review Report (1997) and the

¹⁴⁰ Albert Venter and Chris Landsberg, *Government and Politics in the New South Africa*, p.76.

¹⁴¹ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, *Governance in the New South Africa*, p.195.

¹⁴² Ibid.

Presidential Review Commission (1998). The 1997 Review revealed that the centralization of functions in provinces in specific areas namely, finance and personnel management had a detrimental effect on the departments' ability to deliver. Furthermore the lack of a client-service approach by central provincial departments which saw themselves as controlling instead of enabling line departments as well as a deficit of skills compounded the problem. Provinces could hardly restructure their departments in response to the needs of service delivery owing to budgetary constraints.¹⁴³

Provincial education departments had different numbers of schools to manage under different geographical and socio-economic conditions, according to the report released by the Human Science Research Council in 1997. The Northern Cape for example had only 531 schools located across an enormous geographical area. The provinces which had the highest number of schools and enrolments were the Eastern Cape, Northern Province and KwaZulu-Natal.¹⁴⁴

These were the most rural and economically disadvantaged provinces in the country. The highest enrolments were in KwaZulu-Natal with 2 690 950, followed by the Eastern Cape, with 2 231 865 and the Northern Province with only 1 934 101. Nationally the majority of schools had enrolments less than or equal to 500. 30% of schools in the country fell within the enrolment category of 501 – 1000, 8% of

¹⁴³ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, *Governance in the New South Africa*, p.196.
¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

schools had enrolments¹⁴⁵ higher than 1000. In many cases the new governing system hinged on the existing racial and socio-economic patterns of distribution.¹⁴⁶

The School Register of Needs (SRN) released by the Human Science Research Council in 1997, pointed to a small proportion of formerly White schools that were adequately resourced as opposed to the vast majority of Black schools whose learners continued to be taught under impoverished and unfavourable conditions. 24% of schools in the country had no water available within walking distance from the school; less than half of them had electricity. In KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Mpumalanga less than 50% of schools had telephones. 3,7% of schools had no workshops and chairs; 38% were insufficiently supplied. Classroom shortages were extremely high in the three provinces namely, Eastern Cape (15 538), KwaZulu-Natal (14 534) and the Northern Province (13 670). The methods employed by the GNU in an attempt to improve the quality of education delivery in the country, proved unworkable to a greater extent between 1994 and 1999.¹⁴⁷ According to the Report released in 2000, there were improvements particularly in the infrastructure of provisions. Less overcrowding in institutions with a decline in the average number of learners in a classroom from 43 in 1996 to 35 in 2000 was highlighted. Learner classroom ratios had decreased with the exception of Mpumalanga.¹⁴⁸

Classroom shortages decreased from 49% in 1996 to 40% in 2000. In 1996, 40% of the country's schools had no access to water and in 2000 this was reduced to 34%. There was a 68% improvement in the provision of sanitary facilities, although 16% of

¹⁴⁵ David R Howarth and Aletta J Norval, *South Africa in transition*, p.90.

¹⁴⁶ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, *Governance in the New South Africa*, p.197.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ken Owen, *These Times, A decade of South African Politics*, p.63.

learners continued to be without toilet facilities. However, the 2000 School Register of Needs showed that investment in physical infrastructure improvement had not been sustainable. The number of buildings in good state declined from 9000 to 4000 with at least 12 000 that needed renovation. Despite all the attempts made to improve service delivery in education, it remained characterized by inequality and under development. The reality of service delivery in the education system was that, within the provinces, there has always been unequal provision of resources between the schools in the White communities and those in Black townships. Privileged schools and communities were able to provide better quality education as opposed to the underprivileged schools in the Black communities. This has been a trend ever since.¹⁴⁹

A much similar pattern operated at national level. Some departments were better and adequately resourced than the others. Gauteng and Western Cape education departments for example, were sufficiently capacitated and resourced to respond to the educational needs as compared to departments in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Province, Mpumalanga, North West, Free State and Northern Cape. They started off with huge deficit in basic resources and provision.¹⁵⁰

It was difficult for the GNU to ensure an even distribution of resources in the education sector. This has been perceived as a consequence of¹⁵¹ poor implementation of the New Government's Education Policy and deep rooted inequality. Perhaps the GNU needed to ascertain the institutionalization of social

¹⁴⁹ David R Howarth and Aletta J Norval, *South Africa in Transition*, p.81.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, *Governance in the New South Africa*, p.197.

relationships and distribution patterns in order to ameliorate the problem of poor service delivery in the country, which has a detrimental effect on the country's political stability and economic growth.¹⁵²

It is imperative to conduct a post mortem on the Government of National Unity's Education Policy which recorded a much lower success rate in its initial stage of implementation. The education development policy was at first deeply rooted in the pursuit of growth through the redistribution approach of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). In the subsequent years, there was a paradigm in shift towards a marketised model of education development with greater emphasis on decentralization, user fees, choice and efficiency as well as decreasing emphasis on redress and redistribution.¹⁵³

As time progressed, the initial emphasis on education as a tool for social and democratic development, was superseded by a much stronger focus on education for economic development. It became common practice for the state to reduce its investment in education; while simultaneously shifting the educational output to the skill requirements of globalization. Looking at the RDP for example, it was intended as an integrated socio-economic framework for the restructuring of government and its objectives. Its primary object was to address the inequalities caused by the Apartheid Government.¹⁵⁴ Considering its challenges in trying to achieve the set goals, it was replaced in 1996 with a more conventional development strategy known as the Growth Employment and Redistribution Policy (GEAR).

¹⁵² Albert Venter, *Government and Politics in the New South Africa*, p.108.

¹⁵³ Human Resource Development in the RDP, p.34.

¹⁵⁴ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, *Governance in the New South Africa*, p.198.

It combined a series of strategies aimed at building the country's economy rapidly, improving productivity, creating jobs, redistributing income and opportunities, providing social services as well as securing working and living environments. In both the RDP and GEAR, education as a developer and provider of skilled human resources, was perceived as being in the heart of the development process.¹⁵⁵ While the RDP focused on the development of human resources for nation-building and citizenship, GEAR on the other hand, was concerned with fiscal saving, human capital and efficient delivery. The RDP was rooted in the discourses of resistance and democratic participation, while GEAR arguably tended towards the reform and managerialism discourse. These discourses viewed for dominance in the South African Education Policy. The complex overlapping of discourses resulted in education being seen as instrumental in facilitating development, building social capital and democratic consensus as well as producing human capital in order to enhance economic growth.¹⁵⁶

At this stage, it had occurred to the ANC that the redistribution of resources on an equitable basis, would be difficult to come by, despite its decision to shift the state expenditure towards social services, the Department of Education was required to expand and improve on service delivery within tight fiscal constraints. An ANC Education Finance Task Team was set up to streamline the budget for education.¹⁵⁷ It acknowledged the need to change user fees in order to meet the shortfall required

¹⁵⁵ Johannes Rantele, *The African National Congress and the Negotiated Settlement*, p.98.

¹⁵⁶ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, *Governance in the New South Africa*, p.199.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

for education redistribution. It was decided that education budget totaling R24 billion was too high and that necessitated a reprioritization within existing limits.¹⁵⁸

These constraints necessitated budget reform initiatives to focus on available options for achieving equity within existing fiscal limits by redefining teacher-pupil ratios, pooling resources, modifying teacher pay scales, improving unit costs and productivity, user charges and seeking new funding partnerships; argued Greenstein and Mobagoane, 1994 in Mhone and Edicheji.¹⁵⁹

However, despite a total education budget allocation of R32,2 billion of which 85% went to provinces for school and college education, the 1995 enrolment increase of 3,5% meant that the amount available for each child in the system declined in 1995/1996 fiscal year. Chisholm, 1995 in Mhone and Edicheji points out that an attempt to redistribute funding allocations between provinces and a shift in per capita expenditure from White to Black children, meant that some provinces were faced with cutbacks particularly in the new teaching posts and the scrapping of building projects as well as minor repairs.

In the 1995 to 1997 period, the Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, was charged with the responsibility for provincial budgetary allocations and claimed to have reduced inter-provincial inequity by almost 60%.¹⁶⁰ In 1997-1998, provincial governments were allocated an “equitable share” of national revenue as a block grant and for the first time, they were responsible for dividing their own budgets

¹⁵⁸ Murray Faure and Jan-Erik Lane, South Africa, Designing New Political Institutions, p.32.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, Governance in the New South Africa, p.200.

among their line function departments. The only snag was the Minister's lack of control over the national redistribution process. This had serious implications for achieving national equity in the education system, for examples better resourced provinces regardless of the redistribution formula, were able to do more with their resource base than the inadequately resourced ones.¹⁶¹

In the light of these assumptions, discourses, statistical data and findings of the research process, it stands to reason that the formulation and implementation of the Education Policy by the Government of National Unity, has been too complex a task to carry out; with a record of a very low success rate. This must have had an adverse effect on the country's economic growth. The next chapter focuses on the insights into South Africa's economic growth under the Government of National Unity.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Anthony Simpson, *Mandela, the Authorised Biography*, p.340.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 4

SOUTH AFRICA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY

It would be essential to take a glance at South Africa's economic state in the 1990s in order to come to real terms with the socio-political factors that influenced its growth and development under the Government of National Unity. Glem Sunter provides perspectives on the assumptions and expectations of the country's idealistic economic scenario.

In the 1990s, South Africa was considered an average economy. Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was about \$1900 which according to the world economic rankings put it with countries like Yugoslavia, Mexico, Malaysia, Portugal, Uruguay, Chile and Brazil; somewhat in the middle of the pack. In essence, it had the potential to grow fast without threatening anybody.

This period saw the move into knowledge intensive where people could make more money from knowledge and less from raw materials. High tech for instance, posed a serious threat to South Africa's commodity exports.¹⁶³ If it did not have its gold, platinum and diamond exports, it would face the same current account problems as Australia. The rough econometric model that was run in Angola, showed that even with the fairly generous assumption that gold production would remain at current levels, probably till the turn of the century, South Africa could face a huge current

¹⁶³ Glem Sunter: the World and South Africa in the 1990s, p.85.

account deficit round about mid 1990s onwards; unless something was done to create a conducive environment for the development of other export industries to a point where some of them turn into major foreign exchange earners by the late 1990s.¹⁶⁴

These were some of the most challenging areas of the South Africa's economy which needed urgent attention. This chapter therefore focuses on the performance of the country's economy under the auspices of the Government of National Unity. It was important for the GNU to reach common approaches to a number of critical issues, in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the new cabinet, thereby making a positive contribution to the development of the government's economic strategy known as the Growth Employment and Reconstruction Strategy (GEAR). This was the first move to get the process of economic growth and development off the ground. The Government of National Unity's lack of experience in the economic sphere necessitated its reliance on the economic models with a track record of viability. In 1993 during the period of negotiations, the government had adopted its own economic model known as the Normative Economic Model. It provided the framework for economic and financial policy. The National Party leader, F.W. De Klerk's concern after the election, was the ANC's ability to implement the right economic and financial policy.¹⁶⁵

He therefore tasked Derek Keys, then Minister of Finance, to enter into discussions on the economy with the key people in the ANC. Such discussions were of absolute

¹⁶⁴ C. Landsberg: 'Voicing the voiceless? Rethinking foreign political aid to South Africa', C.F. T. Carothers and Marina Ottaway: *Funding Virtue; Foreign Aid to Civil Society*, p.67.

¹⁶⁵ F.W. De Klerk: *the last trek – A New Beginning*, p.344.

necessity as the ANC needed some advice and coaching on the country's economic matters. The NP demonstrated its willingness to use the experience it gained on economic issues while in government. Immediately after the 1994 elections, the ANC was expected to adopt a budget which would have been drawn up by the NP; so the administration of the country could continue. At this stage, it was pointed out that Derek Keys succeeded in winning the confidence of the ANC. The next step was to lay a good foundation for greater economic realism with the National Economic Forum in which the government, trade unions and the employers had for some time been discussing significant aspects of national economic policy. As a result, the ANC accepted a broad framework of responsible economic principles as the basis for its own GEAR model.

The primary object was to address the needs of the poor and narrow the gap between the rich and the poor in the country. The ANC planned to do this in line with the global economic principles. The NP supported this move in general and GEAR in particular. De Klerk argued that the reason for the NP's positive contribution to the ANC's economic policy framework, was to promote the adoption of a balanced economic policy which would ensure growth and progress thereby steering a course away from the socialist tendencies of the ruling party.¹⁶⁶ Any economic policy that would demonstrate a potential and capacity to respond to high levels of unemployment and pervasive poverty that afflicts millions of the country's citizens, would be welcome by the GNU.

¹⁶⁶ C. Landsberg: 'Voicing the voiceless? Rethinking foreign political aid to South Africa', C.F. T. Carothers and Marina Ottaway: *Funding Virtue; Foreign Aid to Civil Society*, p.73.

These sentiments were echoed by President Nelson Mandela during his opening speech to parliament on 9th February 1996 when he pointed to South Africa's slow economic growth rising unemployment and persistent poverty. He then called on the public and private sectors to develop and implement a National Vision to lift the country out of this quagmire.¹⁶⁷

Various arguments and visions on the economic growth strategies would be taken into consideration. First, the South African Foundation (SAF) which was the organization of top South African companies and GEAR vision saw the world economy as an integrated capitalist system where market forces reign supreme, punishing countries which did not obey the unwritten code of sound fiscal monetary and labour market policies. Both documents stressed the need for privatization in order to reduce debt and to signal government's clear commitment to market-oriented policies. Furthermore, SAF and GEAR maintained that some government policies promote to some extent redistribution such as Land Reform, and the provision of basic social services.¹⁶⁸

However, job creation through greater labour market flexibility was considered the most sustainable and effective means of lowering inequality. Job creation in the SAF/GEAR framework was supported in two major ways namely: 1, by creating an investment friendly policy environment to provide the basis for output and employment expansion; 2, by making the labour market more flexible so as to facilitate the expansion of lower-wage employment.

¹⁶⁷ Gitanjali Maharaj: between Unity and Diversity, p.75.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, p.77.

The SAF and GEAR approach attributed unemployment to the inability of wages to adjust downwards in order to clear the labour market. The SAF on the other hand, suggested a “two-tier” labour market which differentiates between those already in the employment, who will remain subject to existing labour regulations and the new recruits who will become employed under a more flexible set of regulations.

The proposed legislative changes for workers in the second tier (new recruits) included the following conditions i.e. no automatic rights to severance pay, no statutory procedural obligation prior to retrenchment and the right to fire second-tier workers.¹⁶⁹ GEAR supported greater labour-market flexibility but adopted a less extreme position. This was in line with the presidential Labour Market Commission. GEAR avoided the two tier discourse and arguments about promoting regulated flexibility. It suggested a differentiation between workers in the same firm and the possibility to include a less onerous wage schedule for young trainees.

SAF found that the South African wages were too high compared to productivity. A more flexible labour market which allows for the downward adjustment of lower-skilled wages was required in order to bring down unit-labour costs and improve competitiveness. SAF further argued that the benefits of lower wages do not accrue only to capitalists. In trying to capture the moral-high ground, it maintained that a more flexible labour market will benefit the poor by encouraging expansion of relatively low-paid wage employment. Such job creation will narrow inequality.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Aida Parker Newsletter, 31 December 1994, p.6.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

The major challenge in the employment sector was to bridge the gap between the unemployed and those in wage employment. Given these arguments, speculations and projections by GEAR and SAF, job creation seemed to be the top priority in the new South Africa. The question arises: Was the GNU in a position to adequately respond to the employment needs of the country?

SAF and GEAR held different views on the possible solution to South Africa's employment challenges. SAF advocated a Reform programme, which implied that the GNU should act firmly and take the necessary harsh and painful decisions in the interests of the poor and unemployed. The SAF's ideal state was strong enough to combat crime and resist being captured by sectional interests and small enough to avoid crowding private investment. The government should avoid large deficit and limit its intervention in the productive sphere of the economy. While sharing some of these assumptions, GEAR chose to thread on a more conciliatory path between decisive action and consultation.¹⁷¹

GEAR supported corporatist negotiations between organized interest groups; whereby the social partners would be called upon to ensure that a national agreement underpins rapid growth, job creation and development. This implied that in the short term, buying into the government's macro-economic framework and taking steps to ensure that the depreciation of the currency does not translate into a vicious circle of wage and price increase, which will culminate in instability in the financial markets as well as a decline in competitive advantage.

¹⁷¹ Mail & Guardian, 2 November 1997, p.11.

This meant that, instead of trying to achieve favourable macro-economic conditions by limiting the power of organized labour, GEAR attempted to harness the trade union movement to an income policy involving price and wage restraint. Arguably, the price restraint could be achieved through an effective competitions policy and continued trade liberalization. Wage restraint on the other hand, was assumed to be resulting from labour market reforms and from commitments by organized business and¹⁷² labour in order to keep wage growth in line with productivity. It is crucial to examine the logic behind the SAF and GEAR's vision for stimulating economic growth and development in the country. Such vision came down to the following economic logic; namely, the introduction of a set of orthodox, outward-orientated investor-friendly stabilization and adjustment policies, making the labour market more flexible, cutting government-consumption spending and boosting investment by the government and parastatals.

It was presumed that once investment had occurred as anticipated, rapid expansion in output and employment would soon become reality. The advanced logic was that, as many unemployed people get jobs, even at relatively low wages, then the economy-wide income distribution will be narrowed. The results that one gets from this process, indicate the importance of promoting the interests of capital in the sense of creating an investor-friendly environment which is ideal for growth and for resolving problems of poverty and unemployment.¹⁷³ Having grasped the import of the economic strategies recommended for South Africa's economic growth, their impact on the labour market will be broadly explored.

¹⁷² Sunday Times, 18 May 1997, p.4.

¹⁷³ ANC Today, Vol.1 No. 38, 12 October 1994 – October 1999, pp.11-15.

The labour market rejected SAF and GEAR claim that increased wage flexibility will lead to job creation and more egalitarian income distribution. The protection of the existing labour standards was viewed by labour as a viable option. It would also promote equity within the ranks of the employment sector. Labour further maintained that the existing framework for collective bargaining should not be tampered with and that government should support the policies designed to narrow the gap on wage distribution.

Labour took exception to the SAF's suggestion that the interests of the employed and unemployed in the country were different and diametrically opposed. It maintained that the employed workers supported the unemployed directly through household transfers and indirectly by providing demand for goods as well as services produced in the informal sector. This analysis overlooked the fact that in reality, 53% of the unemployed live in households without a wage earner and provide no estimate of the effect of wages particularly on informal activity.¹⁷⁴

The evidence used by SAF in support of its labour market analysis was challenged by the International Labour Organisation Review. It suggested that the South African statistics overestimated the unemployment rate. It should have been in the region of 20% than 30%. This pointed to the probable unreliability of the country's official statistics, resulting in the possible under estimation of employment figures.

Job creation issue was riddled with lots of complexities which the GNU had to unravel with extreme caution. The empirical techniques used by those who

¹⁷⁴ Volksblad, 24 January 1997, p.5.

suggested a trade-off between wages and employment were somewhat dubious. They led to a conclusion that studies conducted on these issues left much to be desired. There was no clear demonstration whether real wages were considered rigid or they have had a profound negative effect on employment. They did however, sound a warning that the minimum wages and protection of employment security did not guarantee positive impact on employment. The ILO repudiated that claimed link between unemployment and poverty in the country.¹⁷⁵

First, let us take a closer look at the six pillars presented by labour in order to promote social equity in the new South Africa. The six pillars entailed the following:

1. Job creation (Public Works, mass-housing programmes, job sharing, increased domestic demand, pragmatic trade policies, land reform etc.
2. Redistributive fiscal policy.
3. Proposal to break up economic concentration.
4. Measures to promote workers' rights (including a 40 hour week).
5. Industrial democracy (strengthen shop steward structures, reduce managerial prerogative etc.).
6. Promote equity and development globally.¹⁷⁶

The labour document further proposed that various measures such as preventing offshore movements of assets, increased taxation of the wealthy, higher corporate taxes, prescribed assets etc., should be taken into consideration rather than

¹⁷⁵ New Nation New History, Vol.5, 1995, p.6.

¹⁷⁶ Sowetan, 10 January 1999, p.4.

introducing policies in order to attract capital into the country. This was not in accordance with the SAF/GEAR definition of investor-friendly.

It would not stimulate growth in the labour economic vision because investment was seen as being driven by the expansion of demand rather than by sending investor-friendly signals encoded in the so-called sound economic policy stances. It also dwelled on the assumption that the government spending on infrastructure will “crowd in” rather than “crowd out” private investment. The ILO Review further argued that investment is primarily determined by the profitability of investment as well as the complementarity between investment by the state and the private sector.

Labour advised the GNU to adopt a more interventionist stance (along the lines of the South East Asian Developmental states) and to promote redistribution actively through the budget. This coupled with wage policies to support income of workers, would eventually result in the desired productivity and output. The GNU needed such capacitation in order to effectively redress the imbalances between the adopted economic policies and the demands of the labour market.¹⁷⁷ Given the prevailing intricate economic circumstances, the extent to which the GNU attempted to address the country’s economic needs through the adoption and implementation of GEAR, will be further examined. The problem around economic growth and development in South Africa raised two issues, in its adoption of GEAR as the major basis for economic reforms, the GNU was confronted with two challenges namely, a political one and an economic one. The political problem related to the degree to which the

¹⁷⁷ ANC Today, Vol.1 No. 36, 28 September 1999,p.13.

government can rely on the support of its major constituencies and other allies outside the alliance in pursuit of the adopted economic reform.

Dissatisfaction emerged among the alliance partners and the traditional constituencies of the ruling party. The economic problem on the other hand, concerned the degree to which the economic reforms could begin to deliver in terms of achieving sustainable human development to the benefit of the previously economically disadvantaged constituencies. The major concern was to accommodate constituencies in the economic reform programme. The Government of National Unity's ability to deliver on its initial promises was critically assessed.¹⁷⁸

Przerwoski (1991:168)'s observation in Mhone and Edigheji, sheds some light on the importance of the government's ability to deliver on its promises. He maintains that: "confidence plays a crucial role in shaping popular reactions. People's evaluation of their future streams of consumption depends on how certain they feel their consumption will in fact increase as a result of present sacrifices. They are willing to suffer in the short run if they believe in the long run. This confidence is to a large extent endogenous. The reason is that people do not know how costly and how long the transition will be. Structural transformations of the economy are a plunge into opaque waters. The people do not know where the bottom is and how long they will have to hold their breath. All they know is what is happening whether they are still plunging or already emerging, whether things have turned around, confidence is a stock. It can be depleted and it can be accumulated. It can be eroded in two ways

¹⁷⁸ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji: Governance in the Nwa South Africa, p.42.

by erroneous and by vacillations.”¹⁷⁹ This quote highlights the significance of instilling confidence in the constituencies as the government.

While still on the Government of National Unity’s implementation of GEAR, it could be argued that forecasts on the real side of fundamental issues namely, output and employment growth, were somewhat erroneous, being well below the announced targets. The GNU resolved not to vacillate or be seen to be doing so by sticking to its initial announced programme. Meanwhile time was progressing without seeing the real outcomes of the envisaged economic reforms.

Przerwoski (1991:189) supports Huntington in Mhone and Edigcheji; in his argument that democratization in relatively poor countries like South Africa is particularly an onerous task. He observes that in order to have it consolidated, democratic institutions must at the same time protect all major interests and generate economic results. The durability of the new democracies will depend however, not only on their structure and the ideology of major political forces, but to a large extent on their economic performance. He further advises that profound economic reforms must be undertaken if there is to be any hope that the deterioration in living conditions experienced by many nascent democratic countries will ever cease.¹⁸⁰

Przwerwoski (1991:190) in Mhone and Edigheji advanced further argument that, it gets dangerous when the results become elusive and the confidence among groups begins to wane. The possible eventuality would be a move toward authoritarianism

¹⁷⁹ Volksblad, 23 January 1990, p.4.

¹⁸⁰ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji: Governance in the Nwa South Africa, p.43.

and a decline in the country's economy. It should be borne in mind that democratic South Africa inherited the economy that was dominated by an enclave formal sector which acted as an engine of growth.

The main problem that the GNU was confronted with since its inception was the marginalization and underutilization of a significant proportion of the labour force. This was an apartheid pattern which ought to have been long eroded in all spheres of the new government. South Africa's economic sector was fraught with distributive inequalities which acted as a constraint on one segment of the population while acting as a facilitator of economic participation on the other part of the population. This implied in essence unequal access to physical and financial resources, land, human capital as well as social capital.¹⁸¹

Sadly, these endowments have been biased in favour of the White citizens which constituted only 13% of the entire population; but controlled the majority of these assets. Second, there were allocative inefficiencies emanating from the discriminatory allocation of labour, land, government expenditures on infrastructure and incentive structures. Tendencies for over-consumption and underutilization of such assets among the privileged group as well as under-consumption and underutilization among the disadvantaged group become inevitable.

The consequences of the discriminatory allocation of resources were low output and investment which had a detrimental effect on the country's economy. Furthermore there was an oversupply of lower level (secondary) labour, while there was an acute

¹⁸¹ Mayibuye, 7 March 1999, p.4.

shortage of higher level (primary) labour. Meanwhile the economy's demand for labour shifted from reliance on lower skilled labour to reliance on relatively skilled labour which the economy was unable to supply sufficiently, chiefly because of the past disparities and unequal provision of education and training.¹⁸²

Third, the micro-economic constraints should also be viewed in a more serious light. These related to the fact that many firms have been underperforming because of the protective environment that nurtured them. Small, micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs) which should have been the vehicle for broadening the country's economy, have not been constrained by inadequate access to capital and other related resources, but have also been penalized by a non-conducive policy environment biased against them in favour of large-scale firms and also by the under-development of value chains, particularly in the rural areas.

This implied that the SMMEs were incapacitated to develop themselves; they had to rely on additional support and incentives. Fourth, spatial patterns emanating from apartheid zoning regulations, increased transaction costs for scores of rural and township residents. Such increased costs became a major constraint particularly on economic participation.¹⁸³ Channeling economic activities towards growth and development, presented the GNU with many hurdles to fly over.

There were other dynamic economic realities which were principal to South Africa's relatively slow economic growth. The low income equilibrium trap whereby the presence of a large under-utilized labour force implied low effective internal demand

¹⁸² Journal for Political Science since 1990.

¹⁸³ ANC Today, Vol.1 No, 29, 10 August 1999, p.11.

which led to excess capacity in some of the enterprises and sectors. Furthermore these low levels of internal demand resulted in inadequate income and insufficient internal savings and the required resources for investment.

As a result, the country's economy had no option, but to rely on external demand in the form of exports to shore up demand as well as on external savings and investment for the purposes of resource mobilization. In addition to that, given the fact that the large segment of the population was not in a position to contribute to production and the government revenues on the other hand have not succeeded in satisfying the social needs which were as a result of the past injustices, the state had no option but to increase social demands with limited capacity to meet them. GEAR was predicated on creating an enabling environment for the market to restructure the economy.

The GNU also had¹⁸⁴ a share of responsibility. It was expected to play an enabling role by providing a good macroeconomic environment and also by nudging the economic players through the provision of infrastructure and incentive in the appropriate regulatory environment. Within this context, the GNU was expected to continue with privatization and the realignment of public sector in order to facilitate the restructuring process and boost investor confidence. It further committed itself to developmental micro economic initiatives such as development corridors, a new manufacturing strategy, a skills development strategy, local economic development, municipal infrastructure programme etc. However, these developmental measures

¹⁸⁴ Journal for Contemporary History. Volumes 1-12 March 1994, p.34.

were incapacitated to contribute meaningfully to the restructuring of the country's economy.

Pivotal to the reasons behind the failure of these developmental measures to reach the apex of their economic endeavours, was the negative reaction from investors. Any measure that was perceived to be too interventionist was met with immediate objection. This has been the case with the Black Economic Empowerment initiatives such as the Mining Charter.¹⁸⁵

GEAR has projected a growth rate of about 6% on the basis of the foregoing assumptions. This projection was affected by the under-utilized labour in the economy. Sadly, the economy was unable to break through the 3% annual growth rate in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while the unemployment and poverty levels continued to increase. Eventually, it was the contradictory repercussions of the desired economic reforms that emerged greater than their stimulative effects on South Africa's economy.

At this stage of the enquiry into South Africa's economic growth under the Government of National Unity, it would be prudent to ponder the real economic consequences of GEAR. It has not been able to adequately address the ills of South Africa's economy. Arguably matters could have been worse in the absence of GEAR as an economic developmental measure, given the prevailing turmoil in World markets since the democratic dispensation. There were other external factors

¹⁸⁵ Rapport, 04 January 1995, p.5.

responsible for straining the efficacy of GEAR.¹⁸⁶ The GNU did not have a bold approach to economic development and also failed to unveil the results of a proactive and grand state-led strategy of the entire transformation process. The marginal changes anticipated by GEAR did not materialize in real economic terms; the major structural inequality inherited from the apartheid era had either worsened or not changed at all. Evidence collected further suggested an increase in so far as the income inequalities among the Africans were concerned.

The discourses and assumptions on the GNU's attempt to restructure South Africa's economy and stimulate its growth, indicated the possibility of an average success in the economic sphere over a reasonable period. There were sporadic instances of protest particularly among the very poor in the informal settlements and the landless rural folk. They were relatively uneventful and within the parameters of expectations in a democratic dispensation. The GNU made an honest effort to improve service delivery with respect to expanding access to water, health, education, electricity and housing.¹⁸⁷

The major concern however was that unemployment, poverty and socio-economic inequalities with their associated social pathologies such as high levels of crime, abuse of women and children, social dislocation and the impact of HIV and AIDS, continued to plague South Africa. One may argue that the Government of National Unity's inability to resolve these socio-economic ills, culminated in its loss of credibility with the South African community in particular.

¹⁸⁶ Rand Daily Mail, 12 May 1995, p.6.

¹⁸⁷ Volksblad, 24 January 1997, p.8.

Furthermore, when such maladies affect a large proportion of the population and persist unabated, they do not only represent a development problem, rather than a mere growth problem, but they also pose a risk to the maintenance and consolidation of a democratic dispensation.¹⁸⁸

Perhaps it would be necessary to give a critical examination of the Government of National Unity's handling of the multi-party politics. Did all the key role players in the GNU share the same sentiments on the country's economic matters? The next chapter therefore delves into a critical study of the GNU and impact it had on multi-party politics.

¹⁸⁸ Rapport, 04 January 1995, p.6.

CHAPTER 5

THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY AND MULTI-PARTY POLITICS

South Africa's party-political system prior to 1994 should be briefly explored so as to get better insights into the Government of National Unity's handling of the country's multi-party political system. The nature of the party-political system in South Africa was determined by legislation as an external factor.¹⁸⁹ Most of the legislation that had a detrimental effect on the country's party system was repealed shortly before and after the dawn of the new era in South Africa's politics.

In essence the post-1994 party-political system was representative of a transitional phase in which the political forces that normally operated within the parameters of a party system have been exonerated from external intervention. The political parties were not seen to be unitary actors in the entire South Africa's party system.

The pre-1994 party-political system in South Africa was multifaceted with three identifiable types, i.e. a dominant party system which organized and represented the White electorate for parliamentary purposes and also established its hegemony over the other parties. There was a substantial number of subsystems that catered exclusively for the quasi-enfranchised as well as the quasi party system that catered for the majority of the disenfranchised separately and parallel to dominant party-

¹⁸⁹ Murray Faure and Jan Erik Iane: South Africa designing New Political institutions, p.10.

system. These systems interacted with one another and had a major influence on the development of the political system as a whole.¹⁹⁰

The party-political system had its roots in the political forces prior to the formation of the Union of South Africa back in 1910. Arguably such a system was not functional enough due to the absence of free political activity which deprived the political parties the platform to espouse their political aspirations. The franchise for example, was not extended to other sectors of the population namely, Blacks, Coloureds and Indians. As a result they were barred from active politics and participation in the elections.

The disgruntled non-white groups were predisposed by the prevailing political circumstances to turn to organisations referred to as extra-parliamentary movements in search of a political home and platform for expression. The African National Congress founded in 1912 was a classic example. Other organisations which had the same political agenda were also formed. These organisations led to the development of a quasi-party system that functioned parallel to the dominant party-system.

The National Party founded in 1914, proposed that each group should have its own political structures. Eventually a number of political structures were created through which the disenfranchised were enfranchised. They were thus referred to as quasi-enfranchised. In essence they were granted limited power. Their most important political structures were councils comprising elected and nominated members with

¹⁹⁰ Journal for Contemporary History. Volumes 1-12 March 1994, p.13.

advisory powers only viz, the Natives Representative Council (1936), the Coloured Persons' Representative Council (1968) and the South African Indian Council (1964).¹⁹¹ The GNU had compelling reasons to transform South Africa's political party-system against the backdrop of the fragmented pre-1994 system. When one ponders the shape that the multi-party politics took under the Government of National Unity, the fundamental question that springs to mind is: Did all the political parties in the country have a common vision for the New South Africa? This would be the basic premise that this chapter seeks to move from.

South Africa's new political dispensation brought about changes in the party-system. Quasi-parties were extinguished. All the existing political parties and their leaders were released from the confinements of their cage. This move resulted in the increase in political parties. The ANC and PAC were the first two former quasi-parties that had to be registered as political parties. The ANC saw the need to form an alliance with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party. Most former political parties in the subsystems either vanished or were absorbed by the larger parties. The Inkatha Freedom Party was the only former subsystem party that became a factor on the National and Provincial level.¹⁹²

Dikwankwetla Party of Qwaqwa was the only former subsystem party that managed to win a substantial number of votes on the provincial level, but without seats. Of the former all-White parties, only the NP and the DP participated in the 1994 elections.

¹⁹¹ ANC Today, Vol.1 No.37, 5 October 1995, p.7.

¹⁹² Pretoria News, 12 August 1997, p.10.

The Freedom Front (FF) and the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) were the only newcomers that won seats both on the national and provincial levels. The Minority Front (MF) was the only other newcomer that managed to win a seat only on the provincial level (KwaZulu-Natal). There were 12 other newcomers that took part in the 1994 elections on the national level, but together only managed to secure less than one percent of the votes.

The parties that won seats in all the nine provincial legislatures were the ANC and the NP. This gave them the latitude for political mobilization of the South African masses on a national level. The ANC polled 62,65% of the votes three times that of its rival the NP with only 20,39% close to six times that of the IFP with only 10,54%.¹⁹³ Given the brief account of the election background, it is essential to take a much closer look at the ideological diversity and distance of the various political parties in the New South Africa. The denunciation of the apartheid ideology by the NP was an indicator of progress in the transformation process. The biggest challenge at this stage, among the left-wingers (AZAPO and PAC) and the right-wingers (FF, CP and MMP) and the middle ground non-racial occupants (ANC, NP, IFP, DP and ACDP); was racism.

The ANC's alliance with COSATU and the SACP channeled its basic thinking to the socialist principles in dealing with social issues. These ideological distances between the political parties weakened the entire party system. Schattschneider (1942:1) in Albert Venter and Chris Landsberg: Government and Politics in the New South Africa, maintains that "a democracy cannot function without political parties.

¹⁹³ New Nation New History, Vol. 5, 1995, p.5.

The condition of the parties is the best possible evidence of the nature of any regime.¹⁹⁴

Furthermore, one may argue that it is the existence of the political parties in any democratic state that forms the basis of representation. The GNU was expected to ensure equal and proper representation of the South African masses by the existing political parties. The subsequent stage of this enquiry will be the critical examination of the role played by the political parties involved in the Government of National Unity. This will entail inter alia discourses on policy formulation and implementation in various areas of governance. The focus will be on the prominent role played by the NP, ANC and IFP retrospectively in the Government of National Unity's administration of the country.

The new cabinet comprising the three parties (ANC, NP and IFP) functioned relatively smooth for the first year or so. The IFP and ANC ministers accepted De Klerk's authority as chairman of the meetings over which he presided without any difficulty. They were even willing to learn from the experiences that the NP ministers had in government.

Significant progress was made during the first year of the GNU in reaching common approaches to a number of critical issues.¹⁹⁵ First, let us look at the perceptions and views of the parties about the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The NP felt the importance of funding this programme in a responsible manner. De

¹⁹⁴ Albert Venter and Chris Landsberg: Government and Politics in the New South Africa, p.202.

¹⁹⁵ F.W. De Klerk: The last trek – A new beginning, p.344.

Klerk suggested that the RDP should not be viewed as the monopoly of the ANC, but as an initiative of the entire Government of National Unity. The National Party went on to make a viable contribution to the development of the government's economic strategy namely, the Growth, Employment and Reconstruction Strategy (GEAR).

De Klerk as leader of the National Party was deeply concerned about the ANC's formulation and implementation of the right economic and financial policies. The NP's gained insights and experience in the economic matters made it the most reliable source of guidance in steering the country's economy to the high levels of growth, development and sustainability.¹⁹⁶

On the education front, there were clashes over the proposed amendments to the Government of National Unity's education policy. The National Party proposed an education policy that would ensure the rights of pupils to be educated in the language of their choice. The feasibility thereof would strengthen the role of parents in the management of schools. Other parties were diametrically opposed to this proposal, as a result, there were lengthy discussions and clashes within the cabinet. The NP made a concerted effort to convince Professor Sibusiso Bhengu, the then Minister of Education, of the seriousness and value that the National Party attached to mother tongue instruction and the parental control of schools.

The NP threatened to leave the GNU if their proposal was not welcome. In some cases the NP was able to influence legislation positively and some of its recommendations were favourably considered. That placed an obligation on them to

¹⁹⁶ Weekly Mail, 3 May 1997, p.7.

accept what seemed to suit the ANC's agenda better than their own. This however, would often result in constant tension within their ranks.¹⁹⁷

Symbols of national unity were noticeable in the first few months of the new South Africa. The new multi-coloured flag, the new national anthem which combined the four versions viz, IsiXhosa, SeSotho, Afrikaans and English. The singing therefore with equal enthusiasm clearly demonstrated the spirit of unity within a diversity.

The interim constitution created room for the president to give his deputies special responsibilities. The NP felt marginalized as President Nelson Mandela displayed his preference in the execution of State duties and responsibilities by his deputies. De Klerk was not always considered for representing the country in international meetings. President Mandela always chose Deputy President Thabo Mbeki to run the country during his frequent visits overseas.¹⁹⁸

Despite such acts of marginalization, De Klerk continued to market the new South Africa to the international community through his positive response to invitations from overseas organizations to address them on the transformation of South Africa and likely future developments. He went a little further to persuade foreign companies and individuals to invest in South Africa. However, his efforts received little recognition and appreciation from his colleagues in the GNU. Differences particularly on policy issues became evident in cabinet discussions. These discourses went on to reveal serious flaws and anomalies in the unnatural

¹⁹⁷ Albert Venter and Chris Landsberg: Government and Politics in the New South Africa, p.202.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

constitutional coalition within which the three parties (ANC, NP and IFP) found themselves.

Ideally coalition governments are formed elsewhere in the World because no single party has the majority in parliament. This normally leads to the formation of natural coalitions and the acceptance by all participating parties of a common policy framework. Parties often spend much time hammering out the details of their common policy approach which constitutes the foundation of the coalition. The GNU was no exception.¹⁹⁹ It was imperative for the GNU to consider such a model in order to quantify commonalities and minimize differences.

Despite requests by the NP to adopt a common policy approach, the ANC with its 62% majority refused to negotiate such a framework with it and the IFP. The NP was uncomfortable and in constant disagreement with the government proposals that the ANC came up with. To worsen matters for the NP, the ANC continued to exercise its right to oppose publicly the policies which had been adopted at cabinet.

This placed the NP in an untenable position. It considered a review of being part of the government whose policies it did not approve of, attacking them in public. As a result both of the ANC and NP roles in particular suffered. The ANC would always take issue with the NP for criticizing its policies, the NP on the other hand felt completely barred from playing its expected role in the GNU. This kind of discord

¹⁹⁹ Sunday Tribune, 28 September 1997, p.9.

was unhealthy for the efficient implementation of the Government of National Unity's policies.²⁰⁰

Indications of a possible deviation from the spirit of reconciliation by the ANC were beginning to surface at this stage. Reconciliation was the key driving force in making the new South Africa's desired melting pot a reality. The GNU in general and the ANC in particular needed to thread carefully on controversial issues lest they jeopardise the very fabric of national unity. The ANC's appointment of a policy Task Force to press murder charges against the former Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan and two former chiefs of the SADF, General Jannie Geldenhuys and General Kat Liebenber, as well as several other senior members of the security forces; reflected on its unwillingness to bury the hatchet.

Speculation was ripe that the Attorney-General of KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Tim McNally had initiated the prosecutions because of the enormous pressure from the ANC members of the parliamentary Justice Portfolio Committee. The charges emanated from the involvement of the accused in a decision to train a special Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) unit to protect Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi and IFP leaders from the ANC attacks. The main contention was that they were responsible for murders which members of the unit committed in the course of the bitter struggle between the IFP and the ANC.²⁰¹

F.W. De Klerk was predisposed by this development which he must have found very much disturbing, given the general anticipation that the transformation process would

²⁰⁰ ANC Today, Volume 1 No 42, 09 November 1994, p.7.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

not feature such negative sentiments. Putting the past behind and looking forward to a new start was probably what the NP wished for, however, the ANC had a different view. De Klerk therefore felt obliged to come to the defence of General Malan and the senior officers of the old SADF who had served during his presidency, without interfering with the normal process of the law.

This was bound to take an ugly turn. De Klerk and Roelf Meyer tried to convince President Nelson Mandela that the matter should not be taken to court as it would be considered in their view, a travesty of justice. However, Malan insisted that the prosecution should continue so that he could put his case in court and expose the ANC.²⁰²

Mandela chose not to be involved in the legal processes. That was in line with the universal principle that regulated the functions of the heads of state. The NP exerted pressure on the reinstatement of the prosecution of prominent members of the ANC which had been suspended during the negotiations. However, the ANC Minister of Justice and the South African Police Service managed to find ways of delaying the process despite assurances that the prosecution would continue as a matter of principle. Eventually the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up to take over the prosecution process, but General Malan and all his co-accused were acquitted by the Supreme Court judges.

The functionality of the GNU since its inception needed some critical assessment. This became the main contention at a cabinet meeting held on 18 January 1995.

²⁰² Rand Daily Mail, 1994, p.9.

Serious clashes between De Klerk and Mandela broke out. The dubious role of the NP, i.e. being part of the GNU and its official opposition simultaneously, was cause for concern.²⁰³

De Klerk pulled no punches in his criticism of the ANC in public statements. The ANC ministers worked out a strategy to get him to account for his attacks. Their advanced argument was that, it was unbecoming of him as an executive deputy president to openly criticize government decisions and exceeding bounds as leader of the National Party, which did not give him the audacity to discredit the ANC either. De Klerk's efforts in trying to defend the right of the NP to criticize and oppose any government decision they considered irrational proved futile. Matters came to a head when President Mandela joined the ANC cabinet members in attacking the NP.

His main point of criticism related to the application for indemnity that had been submitted just prior to the elections on behalf of some 3,500 members of the South African police. Mandela considered such an application by the NP's deceitful and an underhand attempt to grant indemnity to perpetrators of gross violations of human rights.²⁰⁴

The fact of the matter was that the legislation under which their applications had been made, did not provide for the granting of indemnity to perpetrators of serious crimes. The snag was that the same piece of legislation had been somewhat used by thousands of ANC members, according to De Klerk there was absolutely no reason for the police not to be granted the same right. Mandela lashed out at De

²⁰³ Leader, 11 June 1999, p.10.

²⁰⁴ Sunday Tribune, 28 September 1997, p.9.

Klerk and the National Party for not supporting the Reconstruction and Development Programme. On the contrary, De Klerk claimed that such a charge had no substance because he supported the RDP, however he had serious reservations about its implementation. He was also seen to be totally opposed to affirmative action. De Klerk maintained that this too was unfounded.

The National Party always supported the judicious application of affirmative action with the notable exception of its implemented policies which were construed as a blatant reverse racial discrimination which placed inexperienced people in jobs for which they were not yet qualified. Another criticism which De Klerk considered the most bizarre was his pre-election visit to Germany. He persuaded the German government to channel its aid away from officially sanctioned recipients in South Africa to National Party organisations.²⁰⁵ Gary-Dieter Spranger, the German Minister in charge of overseas aid, asked De Klerk to recommend an organization in South Africa that was helping farm workers. He immediately thought of the Rural Foundation which had an impeccable record of excellence in that area. De Klerk emphasized the fact that the RF was absolutely autonomous, with no links whatsoever to the National Party.

The members of the National Party and its leader De Klerk threatened to withdraw their participation from the GNU following Mandela's tirade which they found unacceptable and extremely unbearable. They eventually decided to convince the

²⁰⁵ Mail & Guardian, 13 October 1997, p.8.

ANC to accept publicly the view that the National Party was entitled to criticize decisions to which they had not been party.²⁰⁶

The withdrawal of the NP from the GNU seemed imminent at this stage. De Klerk took it up with the Executive Council of the National Party and later the Congress of the National Party. Such articulation of the NP's intention caused unexpected national and international consternation and resulted in dire economic consequences, a sharp drop on the Johannesburg Stock market clearly attested to that. Tension between the two parties (ANC and NP) was beginning to assume alarming proportions. The NP demanded the clarification of their right to public opposition which should be incorporated in a clear agreement on the functioning of the Government of National Unity. Mandela assured De Klerk that their demands would be considered and acceded to because the maximum co-operation of these two parties in the Government of National Unity, would be in the best interest of the new South Africa.

The two leaders appeared to have cleared up misunderstandings and accepted one another's "good faith" and "integrity" during the press conference on the back lawn of Libertas. Uncertainty surrounding the indemnity applications which had been lodged by members of the police was to be removed as a matter of urgency. Special attention was to be given to the rights, duties and responsibilities of the parties within the Government of National Unity.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Afrikaner, 19 September 1996, p.6..

²⁰⁷ A. Sampson: Mandela – The Authorized Biography, p.260.

This development impacted positively on the stock market which showed signs of recovery. However, the ANC did not honour its undertaking to continue discussions on the proper functioning of the GNU including the promise to unravel uncertainties surrounding the legality of amnesty applications by members of the police. There were two disturbing tendencies of Nelson Mandela noticed by De Klerk; first the habit of plying off the handle without properly checking his facts, second, his tactic of papering over problems with charm and promises without taking effective remedial action. De Klerk felt that Mandela's attacks had gone far beyond politics, there must have been a personal edge to it.

There were domestic tensions between the ANC and the NP within the GNU. De Klerk confirmed these tensions during a speech that he delivered in September 1995 in Johannesburg. He went on to say that theirs had never been a marriage of love. They came from different backgrounds and their families did not get on very well with one another. He further maintained that they had been forced together in order to legitimize the new South Africa. The honeymoon was over. "We greeted each other politely, we ran the household jointly and tried to keep up appearances. We only remained together for the sake of our offspring."²⁰⁸

This was a clear indication that the NP's withdrawal from the GNU was imminent. The ongoing violence in KwaZulu-Natal was another issue which caused growing friction between the ANC and the NP within the ranks of the Government of National Unity. Such violence had been a running sore in the body of the new South Africa after the 1994 elections.

²⁰⁸ Tony Leon: *On the Contrary*, p.36.

According to De Klerk the root cause of this violence was the ANC's refusal to take steps in honouring the undertaking that it had given on 19 April 1994 to submit the IFP's constitutional concerns to international mediation. This was further complicated by Cyril Ramaphosa's announcement in September 1994 that the ANC had received legal advice to the effect that it was no longer bound by the agreement. The ANC's reluctance to address the IFP's concerns incensed Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi and drove him to make statements in which he instructed his supporters to rise and resist the central government and fight for freedom.²⁰⁹

Strangely, although Mandela, De Klerk and Buthelezi sat together week after week at cabinet meetings, tensions in KwaZulu-Natal were never discussed in that forum. This was probably due to the fact that within the context of the cabinet, they considered themselves as unequal partners. It occurred to De Klerk that the ANC was toying with the idea of resolving the problems of KwaZulu-Natal by force rather than through peaceful means. During a discussion with F.W. De Klerk in August 1995, Mandela tried to draw him into a common strategy against the Inkatha Freedom Party. The primary object must have been to crush Chief Buthelezi.

De Klerk rejected the idea and suggested a meeting between Mandela, Deputy President Mbeki and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi to discuss international mediation and political initiatives that would help lessen tension and political violence in the province. However, this proposal was dismissed by Nelson Mandela and rejected the idea that the National Party should mediate between the ANC and the IFP.

²⁰⁹ ANC Today, Volume 1 No 27, 27 July 1994, p.11.

De Klerk felt that Mandela's view that a meeting between the leaders of the three largest parties in the country to consider and possibly ameliorate its greatest problems was pointless, bordered on the irrational.²¹⁰ These were clear signs that the original purpose of the GNU was beginning to grind to a defeat. De Klerk and the National Party felt completely ostracized from playing a constructive role within the Government of National Unity. The NP ministers had hoped that their party would continue to exert much more positive influence behind the scenes within the power structures of the GNU than they would be able to from the opposition benches.

The reality was that, due to the lack of a proper coalition agreement, individual ministers had only a limited ability to determine policy even within their own departments. They were therefore circumstantially obliged to operate within the framework of the broad policies that had been dictated by the ANC majority. De Klerk continued to urge his ministers and deputy ministers to play an unambiguous and assertive role in the cabinet in support of the National Party principles and policies.²¹¹

However, the majority of NP ministers and deputy ministers often failed to tackle the ANC as De Klerk would have wanted them to in the cabinet. On the party political front, it was important for the National Party to adopt a new forward-looking vision that match the challenges of the New South Africa. The fundamental question that De Klerk posed on 2 February 1996, was: "Was the New South Africa going to establish a vital multiparty democracy or were we going to be caught in the trap of

²¹⁰ Rapport, 24 September 1995, p.8..

²¹¹ Ibid.

one-party domination? Were we going to be trapped in ethnic politics or were we going to establish a non-racial, value-driven party-political system?" These questions formed the basis of the multi-party politics in the new South Africa. The NP endeavored to realign South Africa's politics by bringing together the majority of South Africans in a more dynamic new political movement based on proven core values and Christian norms and standards.

Pivotal to the concerns of the new government was the negotiation of the final constitution, which had to be adopted within two years of the inauguration of the GNU, i.e. before 10 May 1996. The negotiating team did succeed to a larger extent in reaching compromise on a number of contentious issues; however, they deadlocked on the issue of power-sharing. The ANC flatly refused to include any aspect of power-sharing at the executive level in the final constitution.²¹²

Achieving consensus between the major political role players in the GNU was the goal that the National Party had sought to achieve since the inception of the negotiation process. Promoting the spirit of consensus and joint decision-making would be ideal for the smooth functionality of the Government of National Unity. The NP finally suggested the establishment of a special consultative council which would be composed along similar lines to the Government of National Unity. This would, it argued, enable important minority parties to participate in the consideration of a limited number of special issues such as the preparation of the annual budget, foreign policy, matters of deep national interest and any matters that might be of special concern to cultural minorities.

²¹² Business Day, 24 March 1996, p.10.

The proposed council would only serve as a vehicle to achieve the desired consensus on issues of national importance and to lift them out of the confrontational party political arena. The ANC rejected this proposal. De Klerk warned Mandela that the NP would consider withdrawing from the GNU if there were no provisions to ensure the achievement of consensus.²¹³ The main cause of the deadlock among the key role players in the GNU was the issue of power-sharing at the executive level and the adoption of a consensus model. This would make it difficult for the NP to secure the required one-third support on this issue in Parliament.

There were also a number of matters of key importance with which the NP wrestled right up to the end of the negotiations. One of them was death penalty. It was impossible to reach consensus on that matter. The wording of the clause on the protection of private property was another issue over which there was a fierce struggle alongside the definition of the rights of trade unions and the employers in balance with one another, the powers and capacities of the provinces as well as the right to mother-tongue education.

The National Party as an official opposition grouping sought co-operation of the smaller minority parties on these issues. It went on to consult with the interest groups from the private sector and professional organizations. Some form of compromise had to be resorted to on these issues and this resulted in the support from the private sector, teachers' organizations, the agricultural community and employers' organizations.²¹⁴ The key issue at this stage was the adoption of the new

²¹³ The Register Guard, Oregon, USA, 2 September 1997, p.14.

²¹⁴ F. Pretorius (Ed.): A History of South Africa – from the distant past to the present day, pp.661-677.

constitution. The basic question is: To what extent the three groupings viz. ANC, IFP and NP co-operated in this regard?

On the 6th May 1996, the NP clarified its position on this matter by declaring its support for the new constitution despite its discontent with a number of clauses. The new constitution was duly adopted on 8 May 1996. De Klerk explained the reasons for the NP's voting in favour of it. He, however, expressed their reservations as the opposition regarding some aspects thereof particularly the absence of any provision for future power-sharing and consensus-seeking at the executive level. He also mentioned in Parliament that the Federal Council would be meeting to consider the impact of the new constitution on their future strategies and most significantly their future position and involvement in the Government of National Unity.²¹⁵

The media immediately seized on this aspect of De Klerk's speech and speculated that the Federal Council was contemplating withdrawing the National Party from the Government of National Unity. This had an adverse economic effect as the rand began to tumble several cents shortly after this announcement. The situation had become a little volatile for the country's economy. On realizing that South Africa's economy would soon be on the verge of collapse, De Klerk took up the responsibility of convening a meeting of the smaller Federal Executive Committee of the National Party.

Tension was mounting, there were strongly divergent views on the NP's continued role in the Government of National Unity. One group was convinced that it was time

²¹⁵ The Register Guard, Oregon, USA, 2 September 1997, p.15.

they left the Government of National Unity. On the contrary, the other felt that they should not leave. De Klerk's basic feeling was that, they should give serious consideration to withdrawal. The meeting was deeply divided. The strongest supporters of continued participation in the GNU were Pik Botha, Roelf Meyer and Chris Fisser. On the other hand Dawie de Villiers and a couple of others were in favour of withdrawal. Those who were in favour of staying in the GNU tried to find a compromise. They suggested a provisional stay and withdrawal about a year before the elections.²¹⁶

De Klerk totally rejected the idea of staying on as such a decision would not be based on principle. The choice was thus between staying on until the 1999 elections or withdrawing immediately on principled grounds with as little drama as possible. The last straw that broke the camel's back was when De Klerk announced his intended resignation in his individual capacity as executive deputy president in order to lead the party from the opposition benches in Parliament. He gave them the option of taking a decision that the National Party should remain in the government and choose someone to act as executive deputy president while he continued to lead the party from outside of the government. Pik Botha felt that there was absolutely no need for further argument, those NP members who were in favour of staying on in the GNU, must just swallow a bitter pill and consider themselves out of the Government of National Unity.

The National Party finally withdrew from the Government of National Unity. This had far-reaching repercussions. Chris Fisser was deeply unhappy and immediately

²¹⁶ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji, *Governance in the New South Africa*, p.199.

announced his retirement from politics, shortly afterwards Pik Botha followed suit and a year later it was Dawie de Villiers. It clearly shows that the National Party members were not sailing in the same boat on issues of fundamental importance.

De Klerk finally left the government at the end of June 1996. He pointed during the international press conference that their decision to withdraw from the GNU should be seen as an important step in the growing maturity and normalization of our young democracy and that it should in no way be interpreted as a lack of confidence in the new South Africa. He further maintained that they believed that the development of a strong and vigilant opposition was essential for the maintenance and promotion of a genuine multiparty democracy.²¹⁷

In the light of failure of the new constitution to provide for the continuation of any form of joint decision-making in the executive branch of government, the NP Ministers and Parliamentarians decided that time had come for them to play their full role as the main opposition party. He added that their continued participation in the GNU had also become an obstacle to the full realization of the new vision adopted by the NP on 2nd February 1996. De Klerk's statement did much to restore confidence and the value of the rand strengthened.

However, tensions began to develop within the ranks of the National Party. As a result, the party got dismantled before the 1999 elections and had to be replaced by a New National Party. The baton had been passed on to a new generation of leaders, unencumbered by the baggage of the past. Marthinus van Schalkwyk was

²¹⁷ H. Giliomee: Die Laaste Afrikaner - leiers, pp.296-301.

charged with the responsibility of leading the New National Party. Roelf Meyer on the other hand left the NP and decided to create the United Democratic Movement together with Bantu Holomisa, the former military ruler of the Transkei who had also fallen foul of his former party, the ANC probably because of his populist views and attacks on the integrity of his leaders.²¹⁸ The next chapter will dwell on the GNU and international relations.

²¹⁸ F. Pretorius (Ed.): A History of South Africa – from the distant past to the present day, pp.661-677.

CHAPTER 6

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY

A critical study into South Africa's international relations post 1994 is primarily aimed at assessing the Government of National Unity's ability to change the perceptions of the international community on South Africa's foreign policy. This chapter also ascertains the extent to which the GNU strengthened South Africa's foreign relations in respect to economic growth and internal political stability.

South Africa's foreign relations prior to 1994 elections were shaped by one overriding theme of: "its internal policy of apartheid."²¹⁹ South Africa's situation was considered by the international community as an institutionalized form of racism. Other salient themes in post-second World War international affairs such as the North-South debate, human rights, migration and refugees, nuclear nonproliferation, disarmament, arms control and the environment were overshadowed and virtually disappeared from South African foreign relations.²²⁰

The GNU had to move from this premise in its quest for the realignment of South Africa's foreign relations in a new world order. Variations in South Africa's relations with the outside world, however, occurred largely along geographic lines due to historic and ideological reasons. As a result South Africa's foreign relations were

²¹⁹ Murray Faure and Jan-Erik Lane: South Africa designing new political institutions, p.122.

²²⁰ Ibid, p.123.

often viewed by practitioners, observers and dealt with in scholarly work; through geographically defined lenses. South African policies towards Southern Africa, Africa, Western Europe, North America, Latin America, the Middle East, the rest of Asia, central and eastern Europe, Australia as well as New Zealand were deliberated upon and contrasted.

South Africa's relations with each of these geographical regions were analysed within the framework of how the relations were affected by the apartheid's domestic policy. Back in 1990, South Africa's relationship with its immediate neighbours in Southern Africa, could be characterized as one of both dependence and conflict either open or clandestine. The development of a power configuration placed South Africa's neighbours largely at its mercy; both economically and militarily.

It was the Government of National Unity's responsibility to resuscitate the image of South Africa as it almost lost credibility with the international community due to its apartheid policy. South Africa's isolation from the international political arena and sanctions against her by various countries, had an adverse effect on its trade links and ultimately economic growth and development. The great issues of international politics after decolonization were simply overshadowed by the effect of South Africa's internal policies. The most pervading change in South Africa's foreign policy and thinking on international relations had occurred in this respect.²²¹

It was imperative to review South Africa's foreign relations and policy in order to ensure flexibility in the establishment of foreign relations. The past geographical

²²¹ Post, 29 August 1997, p.6.

divisions no longer mattered most. The South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs was restructured and reorganized to respond to the challenges of foreign relations. The focus was now more on the issue-based ordering principle (Muller, 1996). This implied that debates and research occurred along the lines of great international political issues. Scholars had been impatient with a geographic delimitation when dealing with South Africa's foreign relations and policy.

This change saw South Africa for the first time since the Second World War engaging in the various dialogues thus making up the substance of international politics. Faure and Lane highlight the necessity of dealing with the changes effected on South Africa's foreign relations since 1990 in terms of two ordering principles. First, the admissions that change in South Africa's foreign relations were traced along geographical lines. Second, changes with regard to the great issues of contemporary international politics can also be traced.²²² Faure and Lane came up with an "actor-oriented" approach which implied that in the past, each region represented a grouping of individual states with which South Africa's relations had some characteristics in common; thus her relations with individual countries in Southern Africa, Africa, Western Europe, North America, Latin America, the Middle East, the rest of Asia, central and eastern Europe, Australia as well as New Zealand could be more or less typified without completely disallowing for exceptions and anomalies.

Relations in Southern Africa improved after the April 1994 elections. This led to an extension of South Africa's formal diplomatic relations with its neighbours. Her

²²² Sunday Tribune, 11 November 1996, p.4.

membership to the essential regional economic groupings such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) clearly attested to that development. (Cilliers, 1993/94 and Donaldson et al, 1992) in Faure and Lane maintained that the reincorporation of the independent homelands namely, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Transkei and Venda into South Africa, was as a result of the internal political changes in the country.²²³ In dealing with issues of international relations, the GNU had to consider problems which were amplified under a new set of circumstances.

These entailed inter-alia, the handling of refugees, the influx of large numbers of illegal migrants cross-border vehicle theft, cattle rustling, arms and drug smuggling, contraband, the violation of customs, regulations, environmental degradation, the availability of water, the spread of human, animal and plant diseases including HIV and AIDS as well as ethnic conflict (Mills: 1995; Muller: 1993; Solomon: 1993; Van Aardt:1994, 1996 in Faure and Lane).²²⁴

The GNU was indebted to Southern African region for its support during South Africa's liberation struggle. Reciprocity in this respect was somewhat inevitable. The Southern African region had high expectations from South Africa's new government in terms of aiding the region accordingly. Good official relations between South Africa and its neighbours became noticeable as opposed to the past relations that were characterized by unhealthy forms of isolation, penetration or intervention. South Africa never had substantial direct and open relations with Africa beyond Southern Africa, until the domestic political changes of 1990-1994.

²²³ Mail & Guardian, 12 October 1997, p.11.

²²⁴ Weekly Mail, 10 October 1997, p.7.

Brief reflections on the old South African government, revealed that it only sought to project itself as the natural link between the West and Africa. It often stressed that it aspired for leadership through service, in its relations with Africa. Great emphasis was placed on functional areas such as science and technology. However, most African states would have no open relations with South Africa because of its apartheid policy. Barber and Barratt, 1990:146-150) in Faure and Lane point out that despite South Africa's isolation from the continent, it did not mean that considerable trade did not take place between South Africa and the continent, that covert co-operation in some areas did not happen or that South Africa did not have a few rather short-lived successes on the continent.²²⁵ Africa succeeded in exerting considerable pressure on the West in particular, to force South Africa to change.

The democratization of South Africa resulted in the improved international relations; by the end of 1993 and the beginning of 1994, she had already established permanent missions in a number of African countries beyond Southern Africa. Trade with Africa increased dramatically as did tourism scientific and technological links, Esterhuysen et al, 1994:64-75 in Faure and Lane maintained.

South Africa had substantial economic and cultural ties with Western Europe; including Britain, even at the height of isolation. The GNU had to consider the three categories of West European states in its mission to consolidate international relations. Firstly, Britain, France, West Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Belgium, maintained a relatively cautious position in the international campaign against South Africa. The latter had strong economic ties with Britain, West

²²⁵ The Star, 9 May 1999, p.2.

Germany and France, which were never entirely dismantled by the sanctions movement. Diplomatic relations were maintained though Belgium and West Germany suspended their cultural accords with South Africa; stated Geldenhuys 1989:285, in Faure and Lane.

Secondly, on the contrary, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries were more openly critical of the South African government. Economic considerations did not play as prominent a role in these cases. The Netherlands culturally closest to the Afrikaner, had to thread carefully on dissociating itself from the National Party-led government which was Afrikaner-dominated. Geldenhuys, 1989:285 in Faure and Lane points out that diplomatic ties were maintained, but not cultural ties.²²⁶

Some Scandinavian countries, such as Denmark and Norway, discontinued diplomatic relations. Geldenhuys, 1990:164 in Faure and Lane maintains that they gave significant support to the anti-apartheid movements and the ANC in particular. Thirdly, and somewhat in the middle of the spectrum, were countries such as Italy, Greece and Spain. Italy had extensive economic relations with South Africa, maintained diplomatic relations, but was critical of South Africa's apartheid government.

Greece and Spain which had fewer and less established ties with South Africa, were less openly critical of South Africa's NP-led government. Portugal was in the same political situation as South Africa before its revolution, since its decision to break up

²²⁶ The Sunday Independent, 2 April 1996, p.7.

with South Africa, after 1974, only diplomatic ties were maintained and like Greece, its nationals continued to settle in South Africa.²²⁷

This served as a pointer to the most fundamental need in South Africa's politically changed climate, particularly in the international relations' sphere. Western Europe had no option but to abolish sanctions and adopt a laissez-faire approach crucial for the normalization of political and economic relations. However, the fact that Western Europe had undergone some momentous changes at more or less the same time, it was difficult for this minimalist approach to be adopted; argued Holland, 1996 in Faure and Lane. The merging of West and East Germany in late 1990s, accelerated much longed-for transformation within the European community. As a result, instead of a minimalist approach, South Africa was selected as one of the first five joint actions of the new European Union's (EU) Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) launched in November 1993.

This heightened the attention given to external relations with South Africa, but made those relations subject to the difficulties, novelty and internal pressures of creating common joint actions (Holland, 1996) in Faure and Lane. Pietsch, 1994:120 in Faure and Lane points out that, bilateral relations with western European countries would not cease, but South African relations with the region in the 1990s and beyond could be dealt with in the context of the European Union.²²⁸

North America and the USA in particular, isolated South Africa by means of disinvestment and sanctions (Geldenhuys, 1989:282-5) in Faure and Lane. This

²²⁷ Weekly Mail, 13 February 1997, p.5.

²²⁸ Sunday Independent, 2 April 1996, p.8.

included the enforcement of the arms embargo against South Africa all because of the NP-led government's apartheid policy. Both South Africa and the United States of America had one common element, namely, anti-communist. Such sentiments were clearly reflected on their foreign policies. (Landsberg and De Coning) in Faure and Lane.

It was basically the demise of the Cold War and Apartheid that predisposed the USA to support the transitional process across the spectrum and to lift sanctions. As a result, South Africa became the largest recipient of US aid in Africa (Landsberg and De Coning, 1995:23) in Faure and Lane. This meant South Africa's benefit from direct foreign investment and trade.

The American-continued relationship with South Africa hinged on two factors viz, her ability to ensure regional stability and her capacity to attract investors. Other USA's expectations included South African co-operation on issues such as the environment, global trade, nuclear proliferation and promoting democracy.²²⁹

South Africa's diplomacy and foreign policy had been driven by powerful and influential personalities. The successes of South Africa's foreign policy in the first five years of democracy were ignited by President Nelson Mandela's personal magnetism. As the world's respected statesman and an ardent tactician, his diplomacy magnetized foreign investors and also won the country's credibility with the international community.

²²⁹ Die Burger, 8 April 1995, p.5.

It would be of absolute necessity to briefly do some critical and comparative analysis of South Africa's diplomacy and international relations strategy under Mandela and Mbeki's administration. It could be argued that while Thabo Mbeki was a Deputy President under Mandela, he played a major role in marketing South Africa to the outside world. The philosophies of the two statesmen in this respect should also be taken into cognizance. Mbeki was seen as being strategic and a technocratic visionary. Where Mandela was viewed to be principled in his style and approach, Mbeki emerged as a pragmatist whose pragmatism often sent the message that principle came a distant second in consideration. He would, at interval, put principle second in order to realize long-term strategic goals.²³⁰

Nevertheless, the GNU became principled about race and the place of Africa in World Affairs, and this propelled it to take the issues of national redress in South Africa and global redress very seriously. South Africa appreciated the complexities and nuances of foreign policy-making and governance. Foreign policy-making was comprehended as a process to balance competing demands. For the duration of its tenure, the GNU reasoned in geo-strategic terms and classically made links between serious conflicts and foreign policy issues.

The GNU pursued a highly ethical and cosmopolitan diplomacy while on the other hand pursuing ambitious foreign policy strategies which sought to bring about a ruler-oriented global order and followed a normative value-driven approach. This was generally aimed at redressing the injustices of the apartheid, colonial and global pasts.

²³⁰ Christopher Landsberg: *The Quiet Diplomacy of Liberation*, p.160.

Landsberg argues that during the period 1994-1999 South Africa pursued a principled foreign policy approach, which stressed the importance of human rights, democratization and respect for international law.²³¹ Furthermore, the GNU stressed the importance of building bridges between the developed north and developing south parts of the world. The issue of south-south solidarity and co-operation was placed on the foreign policy radar screen. What became common for the GNU was that it articulated not only sub-regional or continental strategies, but expressed global agendas and conducted essentially quiet diplomacy strategies.²³²

The ANC had always maintained that lasting solutions to global problems could only come through the promotion of democracy throughout the world. Pivotal to South Africa's international policy, was the promotion of democratic peace. This international expectation was evidenced by the mapping out of its international public policy. These entailed, *inter alia*, human rights, women's rights, children's rights, environmental rights, democracy, good governance, culture, *Ubuntu* as well as a commitment to international law and the rule of law. There were, however, limits to what Landsberg calls South Africa's moralistic, pro-human rights' foreign policy.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry insisted that during the period 1994-1999 South Africa's stance on human rights was to be determined by her identity i.e. a middle-income developing country. That would enable it to address vast socio-economic backlogs and that human rights be approached on a case-by-case basis.

²³¹ T. Papenfus: *Pik Botha en sy Tyd*, p. 553.

²³² F. Pretorius (Ed.): *A History of South Africa – from the distant past to the present day*, pp.661-677.

It should be borne in mind that South Africa's success at negotiating an end to racial discrimination and conflict, was utilized and promoted as a viable tool in international policy formulation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs viewed South Africa's human rights image as probably its only comparative advantage in this regard.

It stands to reason that South Africa's foreign policy was by and large shaped by its experience of transition from apartheid to democracy. The GNU deemed it fit to ensure regional reconciliation after decades of tension and destabilization by the apartheid regime. While the GNU ruled out the military option as part of the strategy, with the notable exception of Lesotho in September 1998, this approach was altered in 1999 and a pro-peace-keeping strategy adopted.²³³

The GNU focused on brokering peace pacts amongst the belligerents in conflict situations. These pacts were often promoted along the lines of South Africa's 1994 GNU model. While promoting this approach, the GNU displayed willingness to underwrite peace deals with peace-keeping operations.

In its diplomatic strategies, the GNU developed pro-negotiations posture and strived to turn negotiated solutions into an article of faith. This was an attempt to secure a safe place for South Africa in the sphere of international relations and politics.

In 1994, President Nelson Mandela sought to broker an exclusive peace deal in Angola's civil war that lasted for almost two decades. He persuaded Angola's President José Eduardo Dos Santos to seek an accommodation with Jonas Savimbi,

²³³ T. Papenfus: *Pik Botha en sy Tyd*, p. 557.

a rebel leader and declared warlord of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Likewise, he urged Savimbi to legitimize the government of President Dos Santos instead of seeking to topple the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).²³⁴

Mandela's primary object was to lay the solid groundwork for potential peace initiative in Angola. Between 1997 and 1999, attempts were made to revive the Lusaka Peace Process to no avail. Luanda persistently rejected such offers and, instead, called on South Africa to join the military offensive against UNITA.

Furthermore, the relationship between Luanda and Pretoria went frosty due to Government of National Unity's refusal to sell arms to the MPLA in its bid to obliterate UNITA out of the face of the earth. The South Africa's new government also declined to join a military alliance with other SADC countries to achieve that goal. This infuriated Angola's MPLA government which felt that the ANC was somewhat reneging on its expected reciprocity, given the assistance it received from Angola during the liberation struggle.

Enduring destabilization by the former apartheid military forces, para-military institutions and mercenaries like Executive Outcomes who aided UNITA, worsened relations between Luanda and Pretoria. The Diamond magnate De Beers collaboration with UNITA in order to gain access to the diamond fields, further compromised South Africa's diplomatic efforts in Angola.²³⁵

²³⁴ J. Momberg: From Malan to Mbeki – memoirs of an Afrikaner with a conscience, p.196.

²³⁵ W. Esterhuyse: Eindstryd, pp.223-228.

During King Letsie's "royal coup" in Lesotho back in 1994, South Africa joined Botswana and Zimbabwe in a preventive diplomacy effort to encourage elections and stave off a constitutional crisis. The objective was to deal with the crisis triggered by rebel Lesotho soldiers, demanding a doubling of pay and also aiming at overthrowing the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle. This problem was compounded by the split of the ruling Basotholand Congress Party into various factions back in 1997.

Immediately after Lesotho's disputed 1998 general elections South African experts joined their counterparts in Zimbabwe and Botswana in a commission of inquiry into the crisis. The commission set out to investigate charges of irregularities in the election process. It was led by the South African Constitutional Court Judge, Pius Langa. The Langa Report was released after long delays and culminated in the hardening of belligerents' attitudes. Violence erupted with members of the army staging a mutiny. Prime Minister Mokhehle was left with no option, but to seek for SADC intervention.²³⁶

While Zimbabwe and Mozambique declined to send troops, South Africa deployed 8000 troops under the banner of "Operation Boleas" to roll the military intervention reflected on South Africa's abortive diplomatic efforts. It could be argued that South Africa only resorted to military action when its quiet diplomacy had failed. It also demonstrated that when vital interests of the GNU were under serious threat, military force would be resorted to. The Lesotho intervention was triggered by her vested interest in the Lesotho Highlands Water Programme.

²³⁶ J. Momberg: From Malan to Mbeki – memoirs of an Afrikaner with a conscience, p.199.

In 1997, President Nelson Mandela jolted South Africa into peace-making efforts in the Great Lakes area when civil war broke out in Zaire. In February of the same year, he invited the Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila, chairman of the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo Zaire (ADLF) and Zaire's dictator Mobutu sese Seko, to discuss their problems.

Mandela persuaded Mobutu sese Seko to negotiate for peace and political stability. They went on to offer him South Africa's good offices and facilitation. Furthermore, they impressed upon him the need for a negotiated settlement in order to end the conflict.²³⁷

They advised Kabila to consider a regime that would be accommodating enough, which would include Mobutu, such a stance would attract the US-backing behind the scenes. In April 1997, Mandela made an official announcement that Kabila and Mobutu had accepted South Africa's mediation, ostensibly at the expense of a rival mediation bid from Nigeria.

However, during the mediation process, Pretoria's limited leverage revealed itself when Laurent Kabila rejected any idea of a ceasefire and warned of continued war. In essence, the GNU was circumstantially predisposed to play a wait and see-game in this regard. In May 1997 Kabila prevailed and took control of Zaire and changed its name to "Democratic Republic of Congo" (DRC).

²³⁷ F. Pretorius (Ed.): A History of South Africa – from the distant past to the present day, pp.661-677.

Another display of the GNU's peace-maker philosophy, was when Mandela played an active role in seeking an end to the rebellion against Kabila's rule. His approach involved an intriguing application of inducement strategies to try to midge the parties to a settlement.²³⁸ He applied conditions while also suggesting that in exchange for an agreement reached, South Africa promised to help the war-torn country with reparations through substantial post-conflict reconstruction; but rejected any military involvement. This stance was somewhat controversial given South Africa's military intervention in Lesotho by September 1998, to roll back a coup d'état. This move was regarded by the DRC as double-standards after South Africa refused to intervene on the side of the beleaguered Kabila.

This led to the accusation of South Africa by Kabila together, with Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Angolan President José Eduardo Dos Santos and the Namibian President Sam Nujoma, that she was promoting "regional apartheid policies." South Africa's neutrality or impartiality in this regard was therefore questioned. The four leaders further accused South Africa of siding with Uganda, Rwanda and the rebels in an effort to topple Kabila and of harbouring the Congolese rebels; Kabila pulled no punches in his tirade and labeled South African government as puppets of the aggressors.²³⁹

The question of arms deal was another bone of contention. Evidence gathered on this matter revealed that South Africa did sell arms to Namibia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Rwanda, with the notable exception of the DRC. South Africa reacted by rebutting the remarks as being unfounded and lacking substance. Furthermore,

²³⁸ Mayibuye, 8 April 1995, p.6.

²³⁹ Die Burger, 8 April 1995, p.4.

South Africa's Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, Alfred Nzo, maintained in no uncertain terms that South Africa's impartiality in trying to curve a long-term solution to the prevailing crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo remained undisputed.

In an effort to placate its critics, the GNU adopted an even-handed approach. Instead of engaging the rebels and their key external backers, Uganda and Rwanda, South Africa reached out to one of the DRC alliance members Sam Nujoma and impressed upon him the need for an expeditious solution to the conflict in the country. It was advisable under the prevailing circumstances to cajole Mugabe and Dos Santos at a time when their relations with South Africa were at an all-time low.

In June 1999 South Africa underwent a paradigm shift in foreign policy approach. Thabo Mbeki, successor to Nelson Mandela, brought a new style and approach to foreign policy in general and the DRC peace-making efforts in particular. He regarded no effort too great in weaving together deals between belligerents.²⁴⁰

In August 1999 a major shift in foreign policy trend was highlighted. When Mbeki announced its when he announced South Africa's readiness to send troops to a peace-keeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This was viewed as drifting away from an initial reluctance to commit to peace-keeping. That is not to say that the Government of National Unity's contribution to peace initiatives on the African continent was minimal. The end of 1999 saw the replacement of Tanzania by South Africa as the official mediator of the Arusha peace process in Burundi. The GNU also demonstrated shrewd diplomatic skills by continuing with Tanzania's idea

²⁴⁰ F.W. De Klerk : The Man in His Time, pp.60-67.

of dealing with security arrangements, regional and international security guarantees.

It must be borne in mind that South Africa's foreign policy had once sought to pursue a principled and pragmatic foreign policy which caused much confusion in diplomacy. The objective was to promote national unity in order to end conflicts in divided societies. The GNU held a belief that problems could not be solved militarily, but through peaceful and diplomatic means.²⁴¹

The GNU tried to make its macro foreign policy predictable by 1999. It was difficult for the new government to implement an ethics-driven foreign policy. Mandela always attempted to promote human rights while engaging many human rights violators for trade and economic benefits.

In 1999 the GNU attempted a much more pragmatic approach though it was criticized for allegedly being soft on the most fundamental principles. Through its universality posture, the ANC-led government related to Cuba, Libya and Indonesia. These states were the close allies of the ANC during the liberation struggle years. Thus, the Government of National Unity, vowed not to allow the US which labeled them as "rogue states", to dictate who South Africa's allies were.²⁴²

There were instances when the "universality" posture delivered real political dividends and breakthroughs, from 1991-1999; the GNU engaged Muamar Gaddafi government 'silently' in an effort to end the stand-off over Libya's alleged terrorist

²⁴¹ Sowetan, 3 June 1996, p.9.

²⁴² Mayibuye, 27 August 1995, pp.4-5.

activities. Particular reference was made to the charge that Libya was behind the bombing of Pan-Am Flight 800 over Lockerbie, Scotland back in 1988. President Mandela was determined to end Libya's pariah status in exchange for it agreeing to pay compensation to the Lockerbie crash. The Western powers initially objected to this move, but later agreed that Mandela's overtures in this regard were successful.

The most fundamental question at this stage is: Why did South Africa believe that it was uniquely qualified to play a constructive role through an independent and pro-Africa and pro-"south" foreign policy posture? The answer could be attributed to the notion that her political transition, based on a hard-won negotiated settlement and power-sharing arrangements, set a precedent for international compromises.

Some regarded these perspectives as an attempt by South Africa to spread its "miracle" to other parts of the continent. This has conjured up notions of it acting as a presumed indispensable nation suffering from what Mahmood Mamdani referred to as exceptionalism.²⁴³ Having critically explored the Government of National Unity's strategies and challenges in handling her relations issues, the next chapter provides an in-depth study on the challenges faced by the GNU during the period in question.

²⁴³ Sunday Times, 13 August 1996, p.4.

CHAPTER 7

THE CHALLENGES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY

The GNU was confronted with various challenges since its inception. It would be of absolute necessity for this study to explore the extent, magnitude, and impact of those challenges in various sectors of the government. Some aspects covered in the previous chapters of this study will be the focal points in examining the challenges of the GNU.

On the education front, the GNU formulated policies aimed at transforming the country's education system which was characterized by inequalities in resource allocation on the basis of race, class and geographical location. Firstly, among the key challenges with which the GNU was confronted in the education sector was the need to decentralize South Africa's education system.

Langlo (1996:40) in Mhone and Edigheji maintains that the process of decentralizing the education system hinged on three values, i.e. a politically-legitimate dispersal of authority, efficiency in the use of available resources and improvement in the quality of service provided.²⁴⁴

The political rationale behind this move was to enhance democratic participation in the country's education system and to make education services more responsive and accountable to the communities they served. The parental control of schools,

²⁴⁴ Guy Mhone and Omans Edigheji: Governance in the New South Africa, p.184.

through the establishment of school Governing Councils was a classic example. Chief among their responsibilities was to represent all stakeholders in education circles and ensure quality in the education delivery at school level.

Shaeffer (1997:225) in Mhone and Edigheji asserts that the decentralization of control improves the quality of education and its relevance to local conditions and needs. He further maintains that bringing decision-making about education closer to the level where the decisions made differences, would certainly encourage local innovation, enhance local accountability with regard to the provision and quality of education, as well as stimulate community participation and ownership of education.²⁴⁵

This must have been the fundamental premise the GNU moved from in its quest to transform South Africa's education system along democratic lines. There were some limitations with regard to the performance of duties by the provincial education departments and districts. One of the major challenges was the resource allocation. This was done on an equitable basis to ensure the efficient functioning of the departments. However, an unequal provision of the required resources became the order of the day.

As a result, schools in black communities were inadequately resourced compared to the one in white communities. There was less intervention by the GNU to unravel such a dichotomy. School Governing Councils lacked capacity to redress such imbalances and inequalities in the country's education system. The school

²⁴⁵ Sowetan, 9 May 1997, p.3.

infrastructure was another challenge that the GNU was confronted with. The improvement of infrastructure in the country's schools was considered along racial and geographical lines. Schools in white communities had better infrastructure compared to black community schools. The worst in the bunch were those located in the rural areas. The lack of sanitary facilities was one of the major challenges that the rural schools were faced with.

Mother-tongue instruction was another cause for concern. This was a tough battle for the Government of National Unity. It was an amendment proposed by the National Party to the Government of National Unity's new education policy. The primary objective was to grant pupils the right to be educated in the language of their choice. The NP viewed this ideal as being feasible and capable of strengthening the role of parents in the management of schools.²⁴⁶

However, the GNU could not strike a balance in this regard. Non-White South African learners continued to be taught in English. Some of their native languages only featured in the curriculum as vernacular subjects and not as the medium of instruction. In essence, giving learners the latitude to be educated in the languages of their choice, was just wishful thinking, given the inequalities in the country's education system at that time.

Service delivery in education was also a serious challenge. Effective delivery required clarity about relationships of accountability and responsibility between the national and provincial education departments. The 1996 Constitution listed

²⁴⁶ F.W. De Klerk: *The Last Trek – A New Beginning*, p.345.

education as a concurrent power of both national and provincial departments. This gave all nine provinces power over all aspects of education except for higher education. By the late 1996 there were about ten different operating education departments implementing their own regulations.

Despite the democratisation of South Africa's education system, education departments were still structured along gender and racial lines, although the representation of blacks at senior management levels had changed. Management systems had not changed as dramatically as implied by the new policy frameworks. This hampered service delivery in the education sector on an equitable basis. Education departments were expected to provide quality and compulsory education up to grade 9 within extremely deprived, uneven and racially unequal school and provincial contexts.²⁴⁷

The GNU had difficulty in ensuring and fast-tracking transformation of the country's education system on a non-racial basis which could have resulted in the equal allocation and distribution of the resources in all education departments. The next area of challenge was the economic growth. Common approaches to economic growth and development initiatives were of paramount importance for the efficient functioning of the GNU when it came to economic matters. The first area of challenge was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

The National Party deemed it fit for the RDP to be regarded as the initiative of the entire GNU and not simply an ANC policy. The extent to which the RDP has

²⁴⁷ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji: Governance in the New South Africa, p.195.

succeeded in its endeavor to remedy South Africa's economic ills, should be thoroughly explored. This programme was to be funded according to sound budgeting procedures.

Mandela relayed the message to the International Donor Conference on Human Resource Development in the RDP that skilled human resources are a sole prerequisite for any initiative aimed at economic growth and international competitiveness. The acute shortage of requisite skills in the economic sector was the biggest challenge that the GNU was confronted with.²⁴⁸

Let us take a critical look at the strategies that the GNU came up with in a bid to expedite the transformation process. The political liberation attained was not sufficient and some form of fundamental transformation was required. The extent to which the RDP addressed the needs of the poorest and politically least-powerful people of South Africa is of critical study. Human Resource Development was critical given the country's skills shortage.

The GNU released a White Paper on the RDP which identified three major legs in that process:

- “1. A thorough transformation of government and the way it works.
2. The restructuring of the economy in order to facilitate growth.

²⁴⁸ Human Resource Development in the RDP, p.v.

3. The development projects aimed at hastening improvement of the standard of living and job-creation.”²⁴⁹

The primary objective of the RDP was to ensure restructuring, reviewing and redirecting of existing programmes and institutions as well as the allocation of resources in response to these new priorities. This was surely not going to be an overnight achievement. The RDP had great potential to achieve its intended goals, given its innovative character and the way in which it took into account the development experience. Its people-centered thrust was strongly supported by the international community on realizing the importance of promoting civil society and democracy as well as stronger public management capacities.

The GNU put some control measures in place to prevent government departments from adding on programmes without reviewing their existing ones. The cabinet’s agreement was that, resources from the RDP fund would be given to departments and provinces on condition that they displayed significant redirection of their existing resources.

This restriction also applied to staffing. The government undertook to cut consumption expenditure. This meant that the resources allocated to the civil service were to be redirected to programmes which complied with the agreed-upon priorities and criteria.²⁵⁰ This implied that the RDP programmes could not be initiated by hiring new staff, but by redirecting the existing one. The GNU made it clear that the programmes of the RDP be people-centered and people-driven.

²⁴⁹ Tony Leon: *On the Contrary*, pp.236-238.

²⁵⁰ F.W.De Klerk: *The Last Trek – A New Beginning*, pp.352-354.

Development would not be delivered from the top-down without proper consultation which ensured the participation of those directly concerned.

Communities were to be involved in all stages of the development of the programme including planning, management and implementation. Furthermore the RDP entailed providing people with skills and the ability to participate in planning, management, construction, engineering and social change in a context of commitment to strict fiscal discipline.²⁵¹

This served as a vehicle to force departments of national, provincial and local government to engage in the redirection of expenditure and the transformation of their existing programmes and structures. Despite these good initiatives endeavoured to pre-empt any misuse of the state resources and corruption within government departments at national, provincial and local levels, the implementation of the RDP always remained a challenge for the Government of National Unity. The RDP sought to address the legacy of the past and had the capacity to point to the actions necessary to take South Africa into the future. The Government of National Unity's next challenge was to develop a strategy to finance the RDP.

At the center of strategic thinking behind the RDP was the inter-relatedness of its central pillars i.e. meeting basic needs, developing human resources, rebuilding the economy and democratizing the society.

²⁵¹ ANC Today, Vol. 1 No. 47, 14 December 1996, p.8.

A positive move was that in the 1994/95 fiscal year, the RDP Fund was established within the budget. In 1994/1995, an amount of R2, 5 billion was placed in the fund which had the savings, grant aid, other grants, interest and the sale of state assets where appropriate, as sources of finance. The purpose of the fund was to finance initial RDP programmes and to leverage a reprioritisation of state expenditure in all departments.²⁵²

This could be achieved by keeping recurrent expenditure constant while effecting a R2,5 billion contribution to the RDP Fund in each fiscal year. The possible eventuality was the department's contribution to this amount in a manner that affected redistribution between departments based on RDP objectives. Departments could experience real reduction in available resources unless this was compensated for by productivity gains or reprioritization. Departments accessed the RDP Fund, which would grow by R2, 5 billion each year; on condition that their programmes and projects related to the RDP objectives in their functional area.

Strict adherence to fiscal discipline was another area of challenge to the Government of National Unity. Some departments had difficulty in complying with this norm designed to achieve transformatory objectives. The GNU had to guard against generating what might be referred to as an RDP-active body of expenditure and an RDP-passive body of expenditure within the overall body of state expenditure. Ensuring fiscal accountability and adherence to budgetary parameters was also cause for concern.²⁵³ However, the country's economic challenges were somewhat compounded. The tragic mistake was an addition to the large amount of RDP-

²⁵² Sunday Independent, 23 November 1997, p.3.

²⁵³ ANC Today, Vol. 1 No.45, 30 November 1997, p.2.

passive expenditure. Consumption expenditure was at 21% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which was comparatively high. This implied that the country was sitting with a problem of absorbing a large proportion of resources into the state sector. The high level was caused by rapid decline in the growth rate of the GDP.

The RDP Ministry was disbanded after two years of its implementation. The GNU considered, justifiably so, its narrow scope and limits. This was coupled with a relatively low success rate in taking the country to greater economic heights. The GNU came up with the new macroeconomic policy framework known as the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). This policy document was adopted by the Government after consultation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. It was more of a structural adjustment and stabilization programme of South Africa's own making. The rationale behind the Government of National Unity's adoption of GEAR was to adapt to the changing international economic environment.²⁵⁴

Furthermore, the government was responding to the need for the insulating South Africa from the Asian economic and financial crisis and other similar crises that might occur among emerging markets. Implicitly the adoption of GEAR as a policy framework was an attempt by the GNU to allay fears of foreign and domestic investors, thereby making South Africa magnetic to investors across the board.

GEAR pointed to the depreciation of the rand as posing a serious threat to South Africa's economy. The GNU saw a need for a competitive and fast-growing

²⁵⁴ Guy Mhone and Omano Edigheji: Governance and the New South Africa, p.22.

economy which would create sufficient jobs for the unemployed. There was also a need to ensure a redistribution of income and opportunities in favour of the poor, a society in which sound health, education and other services were available to all and an environment in which hopes were secured and workplaces productive.²⁵⁵ In short GEAR was perceived as a strategy for rebuilding and restructuring the economy in keeping with the goals of the RDP.

It stands to reason that the growth achieved thus far was not enough to address high levels of unemployment. It did not generate sufficient resources to address the deficit in social services and yielded inadequate progress towards an equitable distribution of income and wealth. The RDP was part of the trial and error-method used by the GNU to put its policies to test.

The integrated economic strategy that the GNU embarked upon, was expected to yield better results. Its core elements were a renewed focus on budget reform to strengthen the redistributive thrust of expenditure and a much faster deficit reduction to contain debt service obligations. Core elements included counter inflation and free resources for investment and an exchange rate policy to keep the real effective rate stable at a competitive level. The GNU needed consistent monetary policy to prevent a resurgence of inflation and a further step in the gradual relaxation of exchange controls. What was of crucial importance was a reduction in tariffs to contain input prices and to facilitate industrial restructuring. Partial compensation for the exchange-rate depreciation and tax incentives to stimulate new investment in

²⁵⁵ Mayibuye, 7 March 1997, p.2.

competitive and labour-absorbing projects was also important.²⁵⁶ The GNU could also not deliver without speeding up the restructuring of state assets to optimize investment resources and an appropriately structured flexibility within the collective bargaining system. The period in question further demanded an expansion of trade and investment flows in Southern Africa and a commitment to the implementation of stable and co-ordinated policies.

This approach was expected to achieve a growth rate of 6% per annum and job creation of 400 000 per annum by the year 2000. Essentially GEAR was a conventional structural adjustment and stabilization programme. The GNU admitted that GEAR merely represented a clarification of obvious omissions in the RDP. This included the absence of an explicit macroeconomic framework.

GEAR was seen as a continuation of the RDP while others viewed it as an explicit break with the RDP. There were disputes over the implementation of GEAR. This threatened to disrupt the alliance of the ANC with its main partners viz, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP)²⁵⁷ which vehemently disagreed with the ruling-party over the shift toward economic liberalism. The government maintained that it had not deviated from its original policies, it was still committed to a people-centered democracy and sustainable human development as envisioned in the RDP. The multi-party politics in the GNU was a serious challenge.

²⁵⁶ Sunday Times, 18 March 1995, p.3.

²⁵⁷ ANC Today, Vol. 1 No. 44, 23 November 1998, p.5.

It was imperative for the key role-players in the GNU to brush aside their ideological differences and find some common ground, so the entire vision of the GNU does not fall by the wayside. The three parties were able to sing the same tune on a number of issues however they often differed on various policy issues.

The GNU needed a common policy framework which would unite the participating parties in the new government. This would scale down opposition and strengthen multi-party democracy whose course was to champion the benefit of a non-racial South Africa. However, the parties could not reach discernible consensus. The differences on policy issues revealed themselves and further exposed polarization in cabinet discussions.²⁵⁸

The common policy approach became the bone of contention among the parties. The NP and IFP were in favour of such an approach. The ANC on the other hand, with its 62% majority, refused to negotiate such a framework with the NP and the IFP. This led to serious discontent.

The National Party appeared to have endured the most challenges within the Government of National Unity. Firstly, the new cabinet which comprised the ANC, NP and IFP ministers functioned smoothly and F.W. De Klerk had no difficulty presiding over cabinet meetings as chairman. Ironically he would sometimes find himself in an awkward position of adjudicating and mediating in disputes among the ANC members themselves.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ F.W. De Klerk: the Last Trek – A New Beginning, p.347.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, p.344.

Nevertheless, the ANC ministers demonstrated their preparedness to draw from the National Party's experience in government. During the first year of democratic government, ANC, NP and IFP made good progress in reaching common approaches on a number of critical issues. The NP ensured that, through positive influence, the Government of National Unity's RDP would be funded in a responsible manner. It was essential for the RDP not to be perceived as simply an ANC initiative, but that of the entire GNU for uniformity purposes. The National Party went out of its way to ensure that the RDP was funded according to sound budgeting procedures and that the ANC did not claim sole ownership thereof.

The NP also made a viable contribution to the development of the government's economic strategy known as the Growth, Employment and Reconstruction strategy (GEAR). De Klerk's experience in government as former Head of State could be viewed as having pressurized the ANC to craft and implement sound economic policies.

The ANC accepted a broad framework of responsible economic principles as the basis for its own economic Growth, Employment and Reconstruction model. The strategy's central objective was to cater for the needs of the poorest segments of the population and to help narrow the gap between the rich and the poor in the country.²⁶⁰ However, the main ruling party's (ANC) alleged unilateral decision-making tendencies on a number of critical issues of governance, changed the complexion of relations among the 'trio' within the Government of National Unity. The first indication of the ANC's deviation from the spirit of reconciliation was the

²⁶⁰ Sunday Independent, 13 August 1996, p.3.

manner in which it appointed the police task force sought to press murder charges against the former minister of defence, General Malan and two former chiefs of the SADF, General Jannie Geldenhuys and General Kat Liebenberg as well as several other senior members of the security forces.

Speculation was rife that the attorney-general of KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Tim McNully, had been pressured by the ANC members of the parliamentary Justice Portfolio Committee to initiate prosecutions. The charges arose from the involvement of the accused in a decision to train a Special IFP Unit to protect Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi and other IFP leaders from possible ANC attacks.²⁶¹ This reflected on the ANC's unwillingness to bury the hatchet and look forward to a new start. As a result, tension mounted within the GNU and its original objective of seeking to achieve unity within South Africa's diverse political set-up appeared to be far from being achieved. Thus, the Government of National Unity's mandate to draw parallels in an endeavor to promote reconciliation and unity in the non-racial democratic South Africa, proved difficult to carry out under the prevailing circumstances.

There were other areas of controversy among the 'trio' within the Government of National Unity; such as the application for indemnity. This was submitted shortly before the 1994 elections on behalf of some 3,500 members of the South African police. Mandela saw it as a deceitful and underhand attempt by the former (NP) government to grant indemnity to perpetrators of gross violations of human rights before the new (ANC) government came into power.

²⁶¹ Business Day, 3 April 1996, p.3.

Mandela's administration was fraught with immense challenges in virtually all directions. The Alan Boesak case for example, brought a sharp new focus on corruption. Donors lodged a complaint that contributions made to the ANC's main NGO, the Kagiso Trust fell into a bottomless pit of unaccountability. The R138 million given to the Association of Ex-Political Prisoners also went missing.²⁶²

In the North West, Rocky Malebane-Metsing, the provincial minister of agriculture was revealed to have illegally lent R15.5 million to a Jamaican businessman. The most difficult challenge for Mandela was the case of his former wife, Winnie Mandela who was deputy Minister of Arts and Culture as well as head of the ANC Women's League. His personal animus against his errant wife was already considerable but this became a little complex when Deputy President Thabo Mbeki insisted on her continued role in the Government of National Unity.

Mandela found it difficult to put up with Winnie's open attacks on the ANC-led government from the left and made it clear that all ministers were obliged to support government. In February 1995, F.W. De Klerk sounded the alarm, stating that Mandela was buffeted and exhausted by the affairs of his party than of the government. It appeared that the Government of National Unity's credibility with the international community in general, and the South Africa's community in particular, was somewhat at stake given its failure to fulfill almost all promises it made since its inception.²⁶³

²⁶² R.W. Johnson: South Africa's Brave New World, p.66.

²⁶³ Ibid, p.70.

Fewer than a thousand houses were built in the first year. The land redistribution target was quickly abandoned. Professor Sibusiso Bengu, the Minister of Education suffered a stroke immediately after taking office and therefore his contribution to the education sector was minimal. The promised free, compulsory education did not materialize, instead, Minister Bengu launched a scheme designed to cut down on a number of teachers by offering generous retirement packages.

This move had disastrous repercussions. These packages were invariably taken by the best and most experienced teachers, leaving the teaching profession utterly unable to carry out the promised task of educational transformation. The Health Ministry under Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma had its own flaws. She drove a large number of doctors abroad in the face of HIV and AIDS crisis. The GNU was characterized by mismanagement of crisis in various sectors of government. At this stage Mandela's abdication from active politics became imminent.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki was the heir apparent and inherited a number of problems and unresolved issues.²⁶⁴ Discontent was welling up within the ranks of the ANC. According to Mathews Phosa, the then premier of Mpumalanga province, there was no longer serious regard for the principle of collective leadership, democratic practices, criticism and self-criticism. He argued that the ANC constitution and the code of conduct were being violated and the level of discipline dropping off. The politics of power, positions and money were noted as among the factors that corroded the ANC-led government from within.

²⁶⁴ Sechaba: ANC, MEC Political Report, December 1999, p.11.

Phosa called on the government to clamp down on corruption and warned that there were signs of tribalism, racism, regionalism and factionalism. These had to be averted at all costs, lest the efforts of the freedom fighters for a non-racial democratic South Africa were watered down.

The restructuring and realignment of the government was of cardinal importance. The greater part of the challenge in this regard was the reshuffling and positioning at national, provincial and local leadership levels.²⁶⁵

The GNU also faced challenges on the international relations front. South Africa lost credibility with some members of the international community because of the strategies used in promoting global political stability. The GNU for example, came under immense criticism for selling arms to countries such as Indonesia, Algeria and Rwanda due to intense debates about the human rights records and conflicts in these countries.

Ironically, South Africa tried to play the role of peacemaker in those countries while selling arms to them. The problem in South Africa's arms sales policy was the clash between economic self-interest and the celebrated goals of a cosmopolitan and ethically pro-human rights posture. The defence mechanism that the GNU came up with was that its pro-arms sales policy was on the basis of job creation which was desperately needed to curb the country's sluggish economy sitting with an unemployment figure of 35 per cent or more. In short, there was tension between a pragmatic foreign policy that sought to advance the country's trade and economic

²⁶⁵ ANC Today, Vol. 1 No. 38, 12 October 1996, p.7.

interests and its principles of defending democracy and human rights.²⁶⁶ Sometime the government was predisposed to be on the defensive because of compelling pragmatic and economic considerations. Another issue that caused contention and fall-out for South Africa's international reputation was the military activities in Southern Africa. These activities were carried out by South African mercenary groups such as Executive Outcomes, who offered military advice and assistance to African regimes in turmoil.

The GNU was left with no option but to resuscitate its image in the international community; as the peacemaker. The mercenary groups engaged in their military proxy activities mainly for commercial gains. The fact that they were South African, the GNU was instructed to put an end to such activities. As a result, the GNU passed legislation in 1997, prohibiting South Africans from engaging in mercenary activities. This was the correct step in the right direction. The Government of National Unity's attempts at resolving its challenges of diverse magnitude considering what it had been up against, could be said to have recorded a reasonable success rate.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ Christopher Landsberg: the Quiet Diplomacy of Liberation, p.184.
²⁶⁷ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Igniting the democratic process in South Africa has been the most challenging responsibility for the Government of National Unity. Looking at the areas briefly explored by this enquiry, clearly success was very difficult to come by. Among the factors principal to the GNU's predicaments was the lack of insights into the essential realities of a democratic government; as well as too much reliance on the models of the GNU whose practical application did not always yield the desired end results. Furthermore, inadequate space for testing the feasibility of such models may have been another contributory factor. The overall plight of South Africa's GNU could be termed "double-jeopardy" in the sense that it first had to unite all parties in government around common goals for the new non-racial democratic South Africa and to efficiently respond to the needs of the country in various respects. Coming from different maps of the past made it difficult for the ANC, NP and IFP in particular to find each other, hence the mounting opposition which manifested itself in both policy formulation and implementation.

The results of this enquiry show an acute shortage of resources and limited capacity the GNU had to cope with. As a result, the country's economic and education sectors were the hardest hit. The government's failure to deliver on its promises could be attributed to the insufficient resource allocation and budgetary constraints.

On the positive side, some of the Government of National Unity's strategies to foster unity within a diversity came to fruition. It managed to stabilize the country along political lines, stimulate economic growth although to a lesser extent, transform the

education sector despite service delivery challenges, establish sound international relations and maintain diplomatic ties.

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