

OPENING THE DOORS OF LEARNING AND CULTURE, TOWARDS A TRULY QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM.

BACKGROUND.

1. The year 2017 will mark 62 years of the Freedom Charter and 27 years of the formation of the South African Democratic Teachers Union. 2017 will also mark 23 years of the demise of apartheid and the apartheid based education system. The adoption of the constitution with a Bill of Rights guaranteeing amongst others the right to equality, human dignity, education and labour rights presented a milestone in our struggle for true freedom.
2. The Freedom Charter proclaimed that education shall be free and compulsory. This proclamation is now entrenched as the right to education in Section 29 of the Constitution. Read with other rights in the Bill of Rights, the right to education remains the cornerstone of our developmental state and the central platform for the development of society.
3. Over the 22 years of our democratic state, much progress has been made to ensure the realisation of one of the key objectives of the Freedom Charter and the Bill of Rights. This does not however suggest that the progress made to-date has resulted in overcoming the serious legacies of apartheid education and brought about effective transformation in the education system in line with our envisaged transformative agenda of national reconstruction and development.
4. SADTU's formation 27 years ago, was informed primarily by the objective to eradicate all forms of discrimination in education and to strive towards a free and democratic system of education in South Africa. At her formation, the teachers and education workers "committed ourselves to the transformation of education and dedicated ourselves to the development of an education system which is fully accessible, equal and qualitative, free of apartheid legacy and which is the just expression of the will of the people as enshrined in the Constitution of the country".
5. SADTU further understands the complexities created by the "deeply embedded class and gender disparities in South African Society. This requires the need to eliminate all gender and class based discrimination in education driven by the ideal of an egalitarian and social justice based values.
6. SADTU therefore believes that the objectives which informed her formation remain valid and relevant and should serve as the basis for realising a quality public education system. This, SADTU believes is made the easier by the

existence of pro freedom laws anchored on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

7. The government has already adopted laws and measures aimed at giving effect to the Constitutional values of a democratic society. The key challenge appears to remain the decisive and effective implementation of these measures. Therefore, the focus of the proposals contained herein is more on implementation than developing new policy proposals.
8. Greater attention will be paid in these proposals on the Chapter of the National Development Plan dealing with education, which sets out specific actions required to achieve both the policy and constitutional imperatives to realise a quality public education system. In addition, hereto, specific proposals will be made to strengthen the existing legislative framework regulating education. This is partly in response to certain persistent problems and to bring the legislation in line with recent court judgements on education matters.
9. The proposals contained herein are also based on SADTU, COSATU and ANC conference resolutions and an attempt is made herein to present a structured and integrated approach to moving the transformation of education forward.
10. It is important to reiterate that SADTU supports the idea of a developmental state premised on its stated intent to build a democracy with social content with amongst others as the key elements placing the needs of the poor and social issues on the national agenda as well the quest for equality. SADTU locates her views and ideals unapologetically within the framework of the NDR. Whilst SADTU as trade union with a primary responsibility towards her members, SADTU continues to regard herself as a developmental and progressive teacher union movement informed by the history of her country.
11. SADTU will therefore in this context remain true to making her voice heard in relation to education and public issues to promote education transformation, social equity and the interests of members. SADTU will always in her policy positions, programmes and actions seek to integrate her socio-political identity with members interests.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT.

14. One of the major challenges facing the democratic state is the high incidence of poverty, inequality and unemployment. These triple challenges continue to be an impediment in the majority enjoying the fruit and benefit of our hard-earned democracy. This is more pronounced amongst others in the area of education where inequality, poverty and unemployment continue to be one of the determinants of access to quality public education.

15. It is also these triple challenges which continue to determine the level of education outcomes particularly in gateway subjects. Over the many years, the focus has been on statistics of access and pass rate particularly at national senior certificate without much regard to the building blocks of a quality public education system.
16. What compounds the problems is the lack of effective capacity to address the legacy of the apartheid education system and its impact on society in general, the infrastructure and the human resources required to deliver a quality public education. We have not over the years built sufficient social cohesion to advance the cause of true non-racialism. Our schools remained almost as the apartheid system designed them both in terms of infrastructure, governance and the complexion of the human resources.
17. 22 years into our democracy we hardly have moved an inch in developing a new history curriculum to capture the other part of history and in particular the true history of South Africa. This means our teachers and children continue to teach and learn a distorted history.
18. 22 years into our democracy and 23 years since the UNESCO Delhi Declaration and Framework for Action, not much progress has been made on mother tongue instruction. The UNESCO summit took an explicit stand on the issue of mother tongue instruction by supporting “initial instruction in the mother tongue even if it may in some cases be necessary for the students to master a national language or other language of wider usage if they were to participate effectively in the broader society of which they are part”.
19. Whilst specific initiatives were taken to ensure teacher development, it is important to indicate that these initiatives are limited by the objectives set out for such teacher development. The main focus of the past years has been rather adhoc teacher development programmes either intended to ensure that teachers has the minimum qualifications required to meet statutory requirements for qualification for appointment or to enable teachers to cope with the various curriculum changes introduced over the years. What remains lacking is the programme of teacher development geared towards sustainable teaching for the future.
20. The environment within which learning and teaching takes place remains one of the major challenges adversely affecting learning and teaching. Other than the recorded shortage of proper facilities in many of the schools serving the previously disadvantaged educators are subjected to daily occupational hazards. The relationship between the teaching environment and learning cannot be overemphasised. The slower the pace of addressing the infrastructure needs of schools, the longer it will take to correct the learning environment and the longer it will take to realise desirable education outcomes.

21. Administrative problems which have an adverse on the functionality of schools, allocation of resources and the moral of educators remain one of the major problems confronting the education system. Issues of non-payment of salaries, poor delivery of learning materials and transfers to schools persist. Valuable contact time is lost addressing these issues.
22. Because of these identified problems, demand for what people perceive as better schools has increased significantly over years. This coupled with migration and access to previously exclusive areas particularly for whites has increased contestations between those seeking access and those seeking to maintain the status quo of exclusion. In this contestation, a class of the most disadvantaged in these affluent areas, the ordinary worker cannot have access for their children in these schools as a result of various bars placed in their way.
23. It cannot be said at this stage that our education system advances social cohesion and that it truly advances the objective of non-racialism. The fact that there are major contestations in our schools even on issues such hair amply demonstrates the extent to which little progress has been made.

THE ROLE EDUCATION SHOULD PLAY IN ADVANCING THE DEVELOPMENTAL AGENDA.

24. If it is agreed that education is and should be the building block of the developmental state and the realisation of the historical mission of the National Democratic Struggle, the education must be elevated from just being a societal issue to being a developmental issue. The developmental nature of education would then present a broader objective than merely having society involved in education to education being the core driver of social cohesion, nationhood, socio-economic and the total realisation of human rights.
25. Education must therefore serve as the basis and platform for any state intervention to give effect to the identified five priorities inclusive of education. Because the incidence of poverty, unemployment, inequality and effective economic participation require knowledge and skills, all government programmes must have a component which support education.
26. The education system must be designed so as to create a proper platform for the implementation of government and state intervention programmes to achieve long term sustainability. In this context both the education system itself and the institutions established to provide education services must therefore be capable and have the ability to create an environment for any interventions to find implementation.

THE KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.

27. The proposals contained herein have as the primary objective the advancement of three key principal objectives to give effect to the total transformation of the education system within the context of a developmental state.
28. The first objective relates to the ability and capacity of the education system to contribute significantly to the overall national transformation agenda. In this regard the education system must play the role of a change agent for the nation, assist to develop nationhood and serve as one of the key platforms to drive and advance transformation.
29. The second objective relates to the ability and capacity of the education system to enable the meaningful and effective participation particularly of the youth in the labour market and the economy, reduce the incidence of socio-economic problems and reduce dependence in the medium to long term on the social security system.
30. The third objective relates to the ability and capacity of the education system to produce excellence, reduce adult illiteracy and position particularly the youth to play a meaningful role in national, continental and global affairs. This requires that the education system enables global competitiveness.

THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA.

31. The total transformation of society requires that the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and equality be addressed decisively. In the present context and circumstances, reversing the legacy of apartheid through specific interventions in the short and medium term becomes a priority. In this context this requires amongst others the adoption of redress measures envisaged in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. For the purposes of the education system the following specific measures are proposed hereunder.
32. Developing a new education design system consistent with the education outcomes required in line with constitutional imperatives bearing in mind the high proportion of expenditure on education relative to education outcomes.
 - 32.1. One of the key imperatives of our constitutional framework is the redress of the imbalances of the past. The constitution specifically enjoins the state to adopt measures to advance persons previously disadvantaged by past injustices. The education system partly remains a mirror of the past system of apartheid education locked in the past spatial planning designs

calculated at disadvantaging particular classes of persons or groups of persons.

- 32.2. The current system of education does not reflect the practical reality required to give effect to a democratic state. Major inequalities, despite efforts to create an equal system of education remains. These major inequalities are reflected by the education outcomes year in year out. The current system of “equal access but unequal quality” perpetuates the primary objectives of the previous system of education. Whilst measures are in place to ensure access by all to education, these do not translate in equal quality education for all.
- 32.3. The current education system other than the existing limited redress and support measures continues to provide an unequal playfield as a result of past injustices. This is reflected amongst others in the major differences between the levels and quality of the inputs and outputs between schools serving the previously advantaged and disadvantaged.
- 32.4. The current education system does not necessarily give effect to the policy objectives and imperatives and does not serve as a platform to advance a national transformation agenda. This is reflected by the growing levels of poverty, unemployment, high levels of dependence on the social security system, higher than acceptable levels of crime and socio economic problems.
- 32.5. The current structure of the education system remains more academic based with little or no resources dedicated to vocational education. This is reflected by the current levels of performance at National Senior Certificate, the high drop-out rate at secondary phase and the performance at tertiary academic institutions.

33. As proposed in the National Development Plan the following key interventions in addition to the education system design require urgent implementation:

Addressing the infrastructure, learning and teaching environment.

- 33.1. One of the resolution of the ANC is the development of infrastructure for Early Childhood Development. This resolution fortifies the correct position for the need to address the problem of education using a bottom up approach instead of focussing all energy at the top of the value chain. It is proposed that there be a special and dedicated focus on the development of Early Childhood Development. This entails that as per the ANC resolution adequate resources be committed to developing the Early

Childhood Development phase to prepare a solid foundation for the foundation phase in education.

- 33.2. It is also proposed that consideration be given to relocating the Early Childhood Development function to the Basic Education Sector as the lead sector. This will create proper synergy between the foundation and early childhood development phases and create a rationalisation of the resources required. This may at the least require that a grade be added in the curriculum system below Grade R.
- 33.3. With due recognition of the policy and implementation efforts underway to address infrastructure needs of schools for the previously disadvantaged, it is noted however that the interventions remain limited. The issue of norms of standards for school infrastructure requires to be resolved and a costed wholesale implementation plan developed and implemented. The issues of school safety and compliance with occupational health and safety must become key priorities of the norms and standards. The norms and standards must at a minimum provide for all infrastructure needs to provide for an ideal learning and teaching environment capable of ensuring school safety, focus on gateway subjects and providing adequate capacity to meet prescribed learner-teacher ratios.
- 33.4. In addition to the above and bearing in mind that the ANC and government has declared Education Priority 1, and having regard to the role that education should play in addressing and/or creating a platform for the realisation of the four other priorities every sphere of government must be required in law to prioritise services to education infrastructure particularly basic services.

Addressing the human resource needs of the country and the capacity needs for effective learning and teaching.

34. It has already pointed out the need for a new education system design. We have already proposed a reconsideration of the early childhood development function and proposed that consideration be given to adding a grade below Grade R. We have also highlighted the fact that the current education system is more focussed on academic and not vocational education. We have also highlighted the high drop-out rate, failure rates at both NSC and tertiary institutions and the existing ongoing inequalities. Hereunder we deal in more detail with proposal regarding these issues.
35. One of the identified shortcomings within the education system is the reality that teaching as a profession is not seen as attractive. This in the main is caused by what are perceived as low salaries for educators, the atrocious

conditions under which educators work and the overall treatment educators receive from education authorities.

36. A decision was made to review the conditions of service of educators. This if successful may contribute in addressing this otherwise strong perception.
37. One of the key areas of suitably qualified educators is in gateway subjects. Because a number of persons ordinarily qualified in gateway subjects do not have as a first choice teaching, the supply and demand remains skewed. It is difficult to attract these persons into teaching after their qualification. The current requirements for appointment as an educator exclude these persons. A system must be developed to attract persons qualified in the required content to teaching, having regard to what is stated above.

Introduction of a vocational education.

38. It is recorded that the government has recognised the need to structure the curriculum to make proper provision for vocational education. We therefore do not see a need to make out a case for vocational education. We however reiterate what we stated already regarding education infrastructure in so far as it applies to vocational education institutions.
39. SADTU is of the view that the introduction of vocational education requires as in the case of early childhood development the redesign of the education system. This is necessitated once more by the need to create a synergy between existing TVET colleges and vocational education in the basic education sector.
40. SADTU does not believe that the introduction of vocational education should just be a simple matter of the introduction of a vocational education curriculum. We are the view that the vocational and academic curricula must link directly with the human resource needs of the country. In this regard we propose that the National Curriculum statements for both vocational and academic streams must be based on the national development plan and pre-determined human resource needs of the country. It is our that planning in basic education must be strictly in accordance with the National Development Plan and the human resource needs of the country.
41. SADTU further propose that a dedicated aptitude assessment system must be developed and implemented from the intermediate phase to determine aptitude of learners at an early stage and to direct learners in the correct fields of study. This is not to be targeted at isolating academic and vocational learners but to determine sub-groups within these two streams.

Human resource planning.

42. The Public Service Regulations require the development of a Department specific human resource plan. The Basic Education function is therefore already required to develop and implement a Human Resource Plan. In addition hereto government seeks to develop through the Human Resource Council a human resource plan for the country.
43. We have already pointed out the need for the curriculum statement to be based on the Human Resource needs of the country. It should therefore be given that the department specific human resource plan must also be based on the objectives set out in the country plan.
44. One of the key issues raised regarding education outcomes is the capacity in particular of educators and the shortage thereof in certain learning areas. Whilst it is recognised that there are currently interventions such as teacher development and schemes for the training of new educators to address these capacity challenges, it is also recognised that the current interventions have limitations. These limitations include the fact that the number of educators unable to teach particularly in gateway learning areas is disproportionately high and the number of new educators entering the system is far lower than the demand.
45. It is also recognised that consideration is being given to the reopening of teacher colleges. This it appears is based on the desire to meet the quantity of new educators required and does not address the existing human resource gaps. It is proposed that a new structure be considered for education centres to serve the twin purpose of teacher production and development as opposed to merely focussing on the production of new teachers. One of the key failures of the past system of teacher training colleges was its focus on production of new teachers only.
46. It is also recognised that one of the major shortcomings of the current teacher development initiatives is focus mainly on content or create a fragmented system of capacity development. The proposed teacher centres must also be able to provide overall development to the various functionaries within a school. Mere content knowledge is not sufficient to realise desired education outcomes.
47. The case with educators is the same with support functions to educators in the form of subject advisory services and governance. Education centres must have the capacity as pointed out not only to produce educators but other functionaries involved with and in schools. The NDP proposes a system of development and accountability for schools and school managers. The ability

of schools and school managers to realise the desired levels of performance and accountability is also dependent on the role played by other functionaries closely related to the functioning of a school.

48. Therefore one of the key proposals is the reskilling of the current cohort of all key role-players in the schooling system.

Review of functions.

49. SADTU further proposes that a client-contractor system be applied to the basic education. This entails that the determination of the requirements for the outcomes in basic education, policy and evaluation be relocated to the Planning Monitoring and Evaluation function and the Basic Education function be responsible for implementation only. The new focus of the Basic Education function must be coordination of implementation of the basic delivery units which are education institutions, the management of the education system and actual implementation of education services.

Addressing the resource needs for learning and teaching in a redress approach.

50. The current budget and resourcing models presents a fragmented approach which separate cost items using a generalised approach instead of a plan based costing approach. The method does not target total education outcomes and the core delivery unit being the school. Currently infrastructure, norms and standards, human resources and support programmes are costed individually and more statistically based.
51. The NDP proposes an approach which encourages schools to have better control over their resources and accountability. It is important that a complete system of accountability must start with responsibility in line with the tenor of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public service which advocates managerial responsibility and accountability. The mere delegation of limited powers to schools does not address the fundamental issue raised in the NDP.
52. It is proposed that the budgeting for education must be based on the outcomes required of each individual school taking into account all other factors including but not limited to redress issues. In this context the budget of education must be sum total of the budget of individual schools based on the plan of each school and the specific needs to attain the minimum education outcomes.

53. The current system of Quintiles must be phased out and a new system based on outcome and redress be introduced. Therefore a redress policy as part of the measures to advance equality must be developed to bring the schools of the previously disadvantaged to the level of the schools of the advantaged or at least to a far more equitable level.
54. Each school must have a costed plan which must be the basis for the budget planning and resource allocation. This plan must include human resource needs, infrastructure, support services and operational costs.
55. The structure in terms whereof certain schools are allowed to charge school fees must be revised and all schools must be no fee schools. A new system must be considered to ensure that parents who are able to afford to pay fees do contribute towards education. Making all schools no fee schools will standardise all schools and improve access and eliminate the system which indirectly confines certain classes of learners to particular schools.
56. In addition hereto and for the purposes of ensuring that all schools particularly in affluent areas truly represent the demographics of the country and serve as a platform for social cohesion, specific demographic targets must be set to ensure equity in admission to schools for the previously advantaged and special measures adopted to ensure that children of working class whose parents either work or reside in areas for the previously advantaged have access to schools in those areas. These may require the establishment of hostel facilities to cater for such children at full state cost.
57. One of the critical factors affecting more rural schools is the fact that the level of social infrastructure is far low and discourages professionals such as educators taking up posts in those areas. Already a new housing scheme has been developed which enables persons owning property in rural areas which were previously excluded from benefitting from the scheme and to encourage educators taking up posts in rural areas. Consideration should be given to increasing the amount of the housing allowance to those willing to relocate to rural areas or rationalising the various existing schemes to create a far more attractive incentive.
58. It is proposed that due to the peculiar material conditions of rural areas, a rural education development strategy be developed which must include but limited to measures to address the levels of literacy among the rural people to enable them to participate effectively in the education of their children. Special measures must also be developed to provide additional resource support to rural schools and communities.

59. One of the key objectives which government has committed to but battles to achieve is in the area of LTSM. Various approaches have been adopted in recent times including a process of centralisation of the procurement of LTSM and the development of workbooks. Whilst the problem is mainly caused by administrative problems which can be easily resolved, this still presents some contradictions in two key areas viz:

- 59.1. Current material is mainly available in English and Afrikaans save for language material. This is mainly because the issue of language of instruction at schools remain unresolved. It has already been pointed out that the issue of mother tongue instruction must now be resolved. A decision on the implementation of mother tongue instruction up to certain grades will of necessity require that LTSM be made available in the various mother tongues.
- 59.2. Educators who English is a third language are expected to master content offered in a language which they do not master. This on its own presents major challenges and has an effect on the quality of learning and teaching. The issue of LTSM being in a third language to educators presents a problem similar to that of learners. Whilst it is necessary that there be a national language of instruction, it is proposed that:
1. A project as part of skilling and reskilling educators must focus on the issue of the language of instruction to enable educators to master the language of instruction. This is one of the roles which must be played by the education centre proposed hereinabove;
 2. Certain material be made available as an interim measure in the language which the educators master to ensure that as their capacity to master the language of instruction is being attended to, they are able to deal with content.
 3. A comprehensive review of the arts stream of the curriculum be conducted and where necessary new material be developed to bring such material in line with the ideal of a democratic and developmental state. This must of necessity strike a fair balance between the current Eurocentric approach and to incorporate the Afrocentric approach as well.

Quality learning and teaching.

60. There are currently projects aimed at improving the quality of learning and teaching. These projects are based on the assumptions that normal and effective schooling can take place in an abnormal environment. Whilst the

projects are a necessity and have realised a measure of success, the current approach is rather limited and has serious limitations.

61. In addition to the proposals set out hereinabove the following are proposed:

- 61.1. A new approach be adopted in terms whereof QLTC structures include intergovernmental structures, community based and non-governmental organisations, organised labour and have legislated and funded structures; and
- 61.2. A new approach be adopted in terms whereof the QLTC approach focusses more on monitoring and support of the implementation of defined objectives and approved plans.