

PLATFORM OF THE ANTI-PRIVATISATION FORUM

(Adopted at the APF Council, 4th November 2000 and amended by the APF Council, 26 May 2001)

As concerned residents and citizens of South Africa, united by a common vision of a better life for the poor and workers of the country and recognising that independence has not brought liberation from material bondage, we agree that privatisation or corporatisation of state owned enterprises and local government means adding hardship and suffering for the poor. The trend to run government like a business is robbing us of democracy that was so hard fought for. By privatisation we mean any programme supporting profit-making by a few and commercialisation. All these forms of privatisation undermine democracy, making private bosses and not elected representatives responsible for service delivery. Basic services like provision of water and electricity have, as a result of this selling off of public property, become more expensive and therefore even more not affordable by the majority of South Africans. Private business, by nature, only provides services for those who can pay.

By wanting profit, private service contractors also want less cost. This is why so many jobs are being lost as fewer workers are expected to do more, work harder, for longer and for less pay. Privatisation is targeted at weakening workers by making employment flexible which makes union organisation more difficult. Without union protection, private service providers go on the offensive against workers. Business also cuts corners. Safety standards are reduced because they are costly, putting workers and people's lives at risk and harming the environment.

We remember instead the principles underpinning the RDP. These say that government's resources should be mobilised to provide all citizens with piped water, electricity, health services, housing and other means to live with dignity. Therefore, government should be the provider of essential services. The government has argued that it does not have the money to provide these services. But the issue is not if there is money or not but who controls it. The government's GEAR policy benefits those privileged by Apartheid and their new black alibis. GEAR has cut back the money given to local government by over 80% since 1990 which has forced privatisation plans like iGoli 2002. While R46,5 billion is going to buy arms, there is plenty of money that can be redirected to poverty alleviation and reconstruction. Privatisation is unnecessary, therefore, and a result of conditions that can be changed.

We undertake to campaign for :

OUR DEMANDS

1. An end to all privatisation programmes like iGoli 2002 and the return of all privatised services and assets to the public sector, including outsourced and corporatised services.
2. The immediate end and reversal of retrenchments that are the inevitable result of privatisation.

3. The election of local government candidates who stand on anti-privatisation platforms.
4. The free supply of 50l of water per person per day.
5. The free supply of the minimum amount of electricity needed for health, hygiene, cooking and heating.
6. The introduction of a progressive block tariff system, ensuring free lifeline services cross-subsidised from the rich to the poor, from high-end users to low end users.
7. The scrapping of arrears of the poor.
8. An end to rent evictions and the attachment of household goods.
9. An end to water and electricity cut-offs.
10. An increase in the subsidy from national government to local government.
11. The repudiation of the Apartheid debt.
12. Libraries, swimming pools and parks for communities who do not have them already.
13. Safe and humane payouts of pension and disability grants.
14. Police and prisons services that are democratically controlled and accountable.
15. A public broadcaster that serves the informational needs of the people and not the market.
16. Adequate support for the arts and cultural initiatives in local areas, and
17. Support for public works programmes to employ the unemployed at a living wage.

In taking up these issues, our commitment is to achieve the following objectives :

THE OBJECTIVES

- Community involvement in the reconstruction and development of society,
- The forging of a community-worker alliance for justice and equity,
- Service delivery that is democratically controlled.

In struggling for these demands and objectives, we commit ourselves to do the following :

1. The Co-Ordination, Intensification, Strengthening and Deepening of the Different Struggles.
2. On the Basis of these struggles build the Beginnings of A New Movement of Resistance to Neo-liberalism.
3. On the basis of these struggles broaden the influence of the APF to other sections in the communities and workplaces.
4. The Building Of a Sustainable New Movement of Resistance by building a broader layer of Activists in our Organisations.
5. The Exposure of those social forces propagating and implementing the capitalist agenda.

6. The Deepening of the Exposure of the Ruling Class Agenda.
7. Develop a dedicated programme of political education.
8. The Strengthening and Building of the Various Organisations.
9. Overcoming the divide between Community and Workplace.
10. Develop international links and explore different fund-raising initiatives.
11. The Continuation of the sharing of ideas and experiences.
12. The Building of Networks with Similar Initiatives in Other Areas.
13. Drawing the lessons of struggles and generalizing them.

Amandla !!

APF Viva !!

