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REPORT ON THE UNITY TALKS BETWEEN THE UNITED WOMEN'S
ORGANISATION AND THE WOMEN'S FRONT ORGANISATION

The UWO and WFO Executives met on 3 March 1984 to discuss the unity of the two organisations. The meeting was attended by UDF regional and national representatives.

The meeting agreed in principles to unite the two organisations and elected a Commission consisting of three UWO, three WFO, and one UDF(WC) representatives. The task of this Commission was to plan the stages by which unity could be built.

The first stage was for the Commission to visit plan joint meetings of UWO and WFO branches in all areas. The findings of the Commission was tabled and accepted by a joint meeting.

The second stage was working together on the successful Women's Rally in April. The third stage was a joint UWO/WFO workshop planned by the Commission. The aim of the workshop was to come up with a formula for the unity. The workshop was open to all members of the two organisations. It was attended by sixty UWO members from all branches except Stellenbosch and Worcester, and by ten WFO members from all branches. The members had an open mandate to participate in the discussion on the basis of branch discussion.

The workshop took two decisions:

1. to hold a joint conference early in June
2. to choose, by a show of hands at that joint conference, the name of the united organisation. The only two proposals to be put to the conference were 'United Women's Organisation' and 'Western Cape Women's Organisation'.

The meeting of UWO and WFO Executives on 30 May 1984, to plan the joint conference, was attended by the UDF National Secretary, Publicity Secretary and the Regional Secretary. The WFO raised a matter before proceeding with the agenda. They reported that they were mandated to get that meeting to decide to agree to go to the conference with one name before WFO was prepared to go a joint conference. The motivation for this was that WFO felt that it will be important to avoid conflict at the conference.

The meeting agreed that:

1. The jointly agreed on democratic procedure for deciding on the name could not be overthrown.

2. No Executive could agree to change the name of their organisation. This could only be done by the membership at a conference.

Women's Front Organisation agreed to the request made by the UDF National officials that they go back to their membership to re-discuss the matter and abide by a decision already taken. WFO agreed to treat the matter as urgent and to contact UWO as soon as they were ready to go to the joint conference.

The meeting supported the UWO request that they hold their own UWO conference so that their work could go forward. UWO had been functionally unconstitutional for three months by postponing their conference in the interest of unity. The doors were left open for WFO to attend that conference if they could resolve the matter with their membership by then. If this was possible, a joint conference would be held later at a time suitable to both organisations.

During July, in reply to UWO questions, the WFO said that they had not yet resolved the matter. Finally in the second week of August, the WFO replied to UWO that they had decided to keep to their earlier position that the decision on the name should be taken before the joint conference could take place.

This report was presented to and accepted by UDF GC Western Cape on Saturday 6 October. It was endorsed by the Executives of both UWO and WFO.

Signed on behalf of the UDF(WC) Executive, by:

19 October 1984

At the joint Executives meeting on 3 March, the Commission, consisting of 3 UWO, 3 WFO and the UDF WC regional secretary was given the task to build unity amongst the branches of the two organisations. They set up meetings in every area where either the organisations had branches. There were two aims of the visits. The Commission wanted to hear how the membership of both organisation felt about the unity. It also wanted to gather information about the structure and size of the two organisations so that the practical arrangements for unity could be made.

The following meetings were held:

10.3.84 KTC and New Crossroads branches: 16 UWO members, one apology from WFO.

11.3.84 Nyanga: 4 UWO, 19 WFO

13.3.84 Langa: 10 UWO

14.3.84 Worcester: 12 UWO

15.3.84 Gardens, Kensington, Observatory, Woodstock, Athlone, Claremont, Wynberg: 28 UWO, one UWO apology

18.3.84 Guguletu and Nyanga Extension: 24 UWO, 3 WFO

20.3.84 Paarl 23 UWO, 1 WFO

22.3.84 Stellenbosch 8 UWO

Total number of members seen: 125 UWO 23 WFO

All branches reported that they were happy about unity. The unity encouraged some elder women who had sat down because of the split. The following questions were raised by the Commission members. The members accepted the answers.

Question 1. Are we going to have one organisation or two organisations which work together?

Question 2. Are we going to have one name or two?

Question 3. How are we going to work from now on?

Question 4. How are the sub committees of the two organisations going to work?

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The meeting agreed that:

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2./.....

All of these four questions were referred to the joint workshop on 5 May so that the members of both organisations could decide.

Question 5. What about UWO conference ?

(The UWO agreed to postpone their conference from from 3 April 1984 in the hope that it would be possible to hold a joint conference.)

Question 6. What happens to UWO branch activities ?

(Branches of both organisations were encouraged to continue their work.)

All of the branches were wanted to know what the future stages of building unity were. The Commission proposed:

Stage 2: Joint work for the Federation Anniversary Rally

Stage 3: Joint membership workshop to discuss the structures of a front, federation and organisations and decide on the most useful structure.

The Commission puts that proposal to the meeting for discussion.

The UWO and WFO Executives met on 3 March 1984 to discuss the unity of the two organisations. The meeting was attended by UDF regional and national representatives.

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Signed on behalf of the UDF(WC) Executive, by:

19 October 1984

REPORT OF THE UWO/WFO COMMISSION ON VISITS TO BRANCHES

GIVEN TO THE JOINT UWO/WFO EXECUTIVES MEETING HELD ON 25.3.84

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