

Multi-party conference should begin now

By Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of the Inkatha Freedom Party

The holding of a Multi-Party Conference to establish the way forward and to determine the structure of negotiations and the negotiation process is long over-due. We should have made a beginning before now. From an IFP point of view, it is only current levels of violence which are precluding us from getting negotiations off the ground.

The IFP is totally committed to the National Peace Accord and will do everything in its power to make it work, because unless we reduce violence, there will not be the necessary freedom for political Parties to seek mandates from the people before they go to the negotiating table and to report back to the people on progress during negotiations. That collecting of mandates and receiving authorisation to continue after each compromise has been made is just not possible at the moment. Negotiations would be very restricted if they were to start immediately.

The peace process must be part of the process of normalising relationships between political Parties, whose members are killing each other with or without Parties' formal sanction of violent action. There will be no peace unless the IFP and the ANC can relate to each other as normal political Parties and settle differences through discussion and negotiation, or agree to refer difficulties to electorates for deciding who is right and who is wrong.

While we cannot immediately start on negotiating a new constitution for South Africa, we can immediately hold a Multi-Party Conference which could set up all-Party Work Groups to plan the way forward and to determine what negotiation structures must be put in place and

determine the participants in negotiation and the negotiation process.

If we make a start now at this level and work towards holding a National All-Party Convention where we adopt the recommendations of the Work Groups, we will be in a position to start taking advantage of circumstances as violence recedes and peace gains ground.

White fears

The IFP urges this approach because we are convinced that it is progress made towards establishing the new South Africa that will curb far-right and far-left excesses. It is progress that will allay White fears that they cannot deal with Blacks – and in the eyes of many voters, it is progress which will take away their uncertainty about the correctness of the South African Government's dramatic moves since February, 1990.

Vast numbers of Black South Africans have lost faith in the peace process and they have lost faith in the politics of negotiation because they and their communities have been too devastated by violence. Here again, it is progress made in normalising relationships between political Parties in the peace process and in the successful mounting of negotiations, which will off-set fears that violence is all that is left.

The IFP believes that the Church has a vital role to play in breaking the negotiation impasse. It is political Parties which must implement the peace process agreed upon in the National Peace Accord. It is political Parties which must establish the Peace Accord machinery, and it is political Parties which must propagate a

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commitment to peace amongst their members. While the political Parties are playing their role, the State must play its role in establishing the instruments of justice to apprehend criminal violators of the Peace Accord and bring them to speedy trial.

While these essential functions are undertaken by political Parties and the State, there has to be a process of community healing.

That process cannot be done by political Parties and the State. It is a community process in which the Church must play its vital role. The way for the Churches to back the Peace Accord is to work on the ground amongst the victims of violence and amongst communities torn apart by violence to help re-establish the dispute and problem-solving mechanisms of society.

It is absolutely clear to me that the peace process will ultimately only work if it is dominantly a bottom-to-top process. Peace cannot be imposed. It must be earned by the people on the ground who say 'enough is enough' and take advantages of the facilities and the assistance which political Parties, the State and the Church can give.

The IFP is insistent that unless we facilitate inter-racial and inter-group reconciliation while we are in the last phases of eradicating apartheid, we will not

emerge with the national will to make democracy work. The Churches' role in community and group reconciliation is vital.

Non-violent

If it is progress towards a multi-Party democracy we want, it will have to be through non-violent means. This has always been the IFP's contention. This has always been the central belief in the Black struggle for liberation. The Black people of South Africa have voted against revolution with their feet. There was never any prospect of revolutionaries being able to establish a liberated zone in South Africa from which to further their aims to seize power.

The wholeness of society and the re-constitution of effective problem-solving mechanisms in society must be undertaken by a multi-Party approach. The churches must be involved. There is an urgent need for remorse on the side of the churches who selectively supported the ANC against all-comers, and forgiveness on the part of those who were affected, so that we can gather what strengths we will need – not only to establish a democracy, but to keep it functioning.

Extract from a memorandum presented to the Rev. Dr Emilio Castro, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches in Durban recently.

Economic Focus 1: The IFP and affirmative action

Economic growth and redistribution of

The Inkatha Freedom Party totally abhors the apartheid-determined, socio-economic destitution of the majority of the people, too many of whom lack even the bare essentials – jobs, housing, food, health, hope – that a potentially wealthy country like South Africa should be in a position to deliver. The Party's prime motivation is to meet the material and political aspirations of its impoverished constituency, but to do so in a responsible manner...

The Party thus avoids the temptation of taking a short-term perspective. This easy but fallacious route tries to satisfy the material needs of the greatest number in the shortest time, but does so by killing the goose that lays the golden egg. The goal may be noble, but the means are too often inappropriate.

Included among some of the dangerous proposals to redistribute wealth and income (such as nationalisation or the pursuit of