

BLOEMFONTEIN

SRCs gather in Bloemfontein

ON May 8 and 9 SRC representatives from tertiary institutions in the Free State will meet at a conference in Bloemfontein to discuss the contribution of student bodies in developing relevant community oriented education in the province.

This event will provide student leaders from different backgrounds with a platform to become engaged in this debate and to establish closer links among themselves.

● The OFS Education Forum's next meeting will be held on May 14 in Bloemfontein.

The forum, which aims to influence policy makers, consists of people who are concerned about proper, equal and accessible education in the region.

Various education departments, teacher and professional bodies, community organisations and the business sector are participating in the forum.

Anyone with an interest in education is welcome to attend.

New moves on Welkom, women

AN INFORMAL workshop on the work of Idasa will be held with some key people in the region in Welkom on May 20.

The visit to Welkom will be concluded with a public seminar in the evening which will be addressed by Dr Van Zyl Slabbert, Idasa's director of policy and planning.

● On May 23 Idasa and the Vista University Women's Association will present a seminar on the role women can play towards a new South Africa.

Key national figures will engage in discussions with representatives from local organisations.

Konferensie oor ontwikkeling

'N KONFERENSIE oor streeksonwikkeling in die Vrystaat, gereël in samewerking met ander organisasies, vind op 3 Junie by Allemanskraal plaas.

Die doelstellings van die projek is om 'n gesamentlike visie vir ontwikkeling te skep en 'n legitieme struktuur daar te stel om die proses te ondersteun.

PRETORIA

Focus on schools crisis

IDASA, in conjunction with Lawyers for Human Rights, will host an evening forum on the topic, "The Present Education Crisis: How Permanent is Model C", at the Holiday Inn on May 18.



Dr Neil McGurk

The forum will take the form of input from two speakers followed by questioning from a panel and the public.

The speakers will be representatives from the Department of Education and Training and the ANC, while the panelists will include a school management committee member, a teacher and representatives from NEPI, Sadtu and the Wits Education Policy Unit. Dr Neil McGurk will chair the forum.

Religion in a new SA

THE EDITOR of *Sojourner* magazine, Jim Wallis, will be the guest speaker at an evening forum on religious freedom to be held at the Holiday Inn on June 2.

Mr Wallis, whose magazine has a Christian orientation and works for justice and human rights in the USA, will be joined by speakers from

political parties. The meeting will be chaired by a representative from the SA chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

● Population Development will be the topic of a one-day seminar to be hosted by Idasa at the Holiday Inn on June 3.

The issue will be approached from a number of different perspectives such as human rights, women and the politics of population growth.

PORT ELIZABETH

Indaba at Plettenberg Bay

REPRESENTATIVES of the civic organisations and municipalities of 29 southern Cape towns will meet at Plettenberg Bay on May 8 and 9 for a conference on local government restructuring.

The conference will be preceded by a public meeting on the topic of Codesa in Plettenberg Bay on May 7. Speakers include Prof Kader Asmal of the ANC and Dr Ian Phillips of the University of Natal.

EAST LONDON

Workshop on child abuse

IDASA'S Border region will host four events in East London over the next few weeks.

An education for empowerment seminar takes place on May 9 and a workshop on child abuse will be held towards the end of May. Other events include a public meeting on conscription on June 25 and a youth interaction event in mid-June.

The Border office also holds regular afternoon and evening meetings on topical subjects, including a monthly meeting on gender issues.

More information can be obtained from (0431) 43-0047.

CAPE TOWN

Stale word games or real talk?

BY GILLE WEINTROUB

CONFLICT and negotiation are buzzwords in South African right now. All eyes are on Codesa and the negotiation process. The danger of this negotiation process (that everyone has such high hopes about) falling into stale word games is real. Are the concepts behind our understanding of conflict and negotiation outdated?

Conventional negotiations are built around the acceptance that if you win, you must have been right, US-based social scientist and management consultant Prof Jamshid Gharajedaghi told associates of the Institute of Futures Research at a conference in Cape Town recently. This means that winning is about more than results – it becomes a moral obligation and principle – and losing means you were wrong.

Addressing a one-day conference on "Negotiating and Dissolving Conflict in South Africa: Creating a Win-Win Context", Prof Gharajedaghi said conventional approaches to conflict were based on a dichotomy or an either/or arrangement in which parties were locked into a win/lose situation.

"One needs to recognise the multi-dimensionality of the conflict situation," he said. "It's not a question of this or that, but of this and that."

Parties in a multi-dimensional society had to recognise their interdependence in the system. They also had to recognise that they had a choice as to the ends they aspired to, and a choice as to the means they employed to reach those ends.

If parties were able to recognise that they were in pursuit of common ends, the conflict could be converted into competition. Parties had to recog-

nise that the ends they wanted to attain were compatible, although their means of achieving those ends were incompatible.

Prof Gharajedaghi said a coalition amounted to a temporary agreement in which there were common means but incompatible goals. This was a situation of "deadly deferred conflict disguised as co-operation" in which parties were obliged to mislead each other.

Genuine co-operation was a situation in which ends and means were compatible for all parties. The benefits of such a situation were real in that energy could be concentrated on dissolving or redesigning conflict – or finding a way to work around the forces causing the conflict. The concept of power sharing had to be recognised as duplication of power, not abdication. Power, like knowledge, was a spiritual property. "If you give some of your knowledge away, do you lose it?" asked Prof Gharajedaghi.

He said the idea of negotiation should be to change the solution by coming up with a new set of ideas that would satisfy all parties. In conventional negotiations, parties came to the table with preconceived solutions, the achievement of which they equated with success.

However, if the parties came to the table with concerns, they could return to their constituents with an answer to the concern – and that would be recognised as success.

Yet there was no such thing as happily ever after. As soon as problems were solved, there would be other problems. The way to deal with this was to keep on learning.

It was important to recognise that the interests of negotiators could be different from the interests of their constituents.

Gille Weintraub is a journalist with *The Argus*

Mandela meets OFS leaders

By HENNING MYBURGH

Idasa's Free State office was honoured to host Mr Nelson Mandela at a dinner function during his recent visit to the Free State. The function was held to give decision makers in Bloemfontein the opportunity to meet Mr Mandela on a personal level and to discuss the future of the country.

In his address, Mr Mandela explained his views on issues such as the language question, nationalisation and the negotiations process. He emphasised that many blacks had experienced Afrikaans only as the language of the oppressor but

that it was the wish of the ANC that this situation be changed.

Dealing with the negotiation process, Mr Mandela said the aim of participants should not be to beat each other into an inferior situation in the new South Africa but rather to assist each other in building the new nation.

Feedback received about the

event indicates that encounters such as these still play a tremendous role in normalising the political processes in predominantly rural regions like the Free State. In the words of Mr Mandela: "It seems that 50 percent of our problems just solve themselves when we start talking to each other and get to know each other as people."



Mr Mandela with, from left, UOFS staff members Mr Lucius Botes, Prof Alan Bennie, Mr Harold Verster and Prof Koos Bekker.

Idasa initiative on language access

BY KOBUS VAN LOGGERENBERG

The language question in South Africa is directly related to settling social injustices of the past and cultivating a democratic culture in the country.

Although language issues have always been prominent in South African society, the debate has long been dominated by Afrikaner nationalistic thinking, resulting in a narrow focus. However, over the past five years progressive language and cultural actors have re-entered the debate and regained the initiative.

The timely intervention of these actors has resulted in a significant shift in focus from a narrowly defined "language" question to a more broadly defined societal issue. Probably the single most crucial issue now arising is that of access to the goods and services of the nation.

Language actors have, over the past few years, adopted two strategies to address the access problem related to language, the first being language teaching and the second that of language facilitation. Since Soweto '76 the strategy of teaching has dominated, while the strategy of facilitation has only gained momentum over the past two years.

As English is fast becoming the language that dominates in most sectors of South African

society, an adequate control over this language is actually a prerequisite for social mobility.

However, even the most effective language teaching can still not address the overwhelming lack of adequate knowledge and control of English.

What is thus needed is to address the access problem in the short term. Language facilitation (translation and interpretation), specifically at community level, can offer access in the short term.

Idasa's Free State office has initiated a language project to investigate several options of language facilitation to establish what the real impact of language facilitation is on the negotiation process and to find cost-effective ways of dealing with multi-lingualism. The underlying assumption of this project is that the constructive accommodation of multi-lingualism plays a vital role in the cultivation of a democratic culture in South Africa.

Dr Theo du Plessis, a language sociologist from the region, has been contracted as language consultant to head this project. He has been involved in the national language debate for some time and is a specialist in language planning. He will be based in Bloemfontein.