



Seshi Chonco, Amanda Gouws and
director of Idasa.

for democracy was the experience and expectations of jobless youths.

"The 17 or 18-year-old youngster in a township with no job, no home, no security, needs to be convinced that the struggle for democracy makes sense in terms of their escape from the ghetto. We cannot wait for a democratic government before we transform the education system. We must begin now."

Programme director for the Institute of Multi-Party Democracy Dr Seshi Chonco echoed similar sentiments.

He spoke of the difficulty of making democracy a concrete experience in the townships and squatter camps around the country when what people most needed and wanted were basic amenities such as toilet facilities.

He said a process of deliberation should be promoted to question and debate and arrive at a common understanding of what constituted democracy. The institutions of schools and political parties were essential to this process. □

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Offering some thoughts on the future of democracy, Nigerian academic Claude Ake suggested that the most appropriate democracy was not one which dealt only with constitutional rights, but one which united political and economic rights – a social democracy.

"There is no freedom in abject poverty and no freedom in ignorance. If we talk of the future of democracy in Africa we must think of producing enough surplus [wealth] to support it."

Ake said there was a danger of people using civil society tautologically to define democracy. Civil society was an effect of democracy not a precondition for it.

He suggested that civilian defence against state power in Africa came through the development of associational life. Communal life and ethnic or cultural groups were not a problem in themselves. It was the political exploitation of cultural identities that caused problems.

"We must take community, collective and cultural rights seriously. If we don't we will repeat the mistakes of history," he said.

"People identify with these groups because it is useful to do so. The state must not denounce ethnicity, but must dis-

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