

Slabbert grades SA's progress towards de

# We're doing okay

By SUE VALENTINE

**T**OP POLITICAL analyst Van Zyl Slabbert gives South Africa four to five out of 10 for its achievements during negotiations so far. This may not be a resounding "pass" but, given the complexity of the process and number of parties involved, it can be regarded as a sign that we are on track in the shift to democracy.

Slabbert, who is Idasa's director of policy



and planning, gives this average scoreboard rating of success for a number of key areas in the transition to democracy.

In an assessment delivered at Idasa's recent annual planning meeting, Slabbert identified four key goals of the negotiation process and evaluated the progress made towards achieving them.

He said the challenge facing South Africa

was stability. He said the process chosen by the court for legitimising the transition was a

He said the development of a new constitution and the role of the courts in both the process and the outcome of the negotiations were

Slabbert said the process was a multi-faceted one, involving

national and international progress towards

However, the outcome of the redistribution of income, education,

## 20 reasons for hope in SA

**T**HINGS are only getting worse." This has become the stock phrase that so many South Africans

**Sectors of South African society may be sunk in gloom, but human rights activists BEATIE HOENEYER**

working with communities and organisations dealing with some of the grimmest issues in our devastated country -

# Reasons for hope

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the Western Cape, where we train thousands of people to participate in elections, as voters and as activists for their organisations.

The elections have created a wave of excitement and energy that is sweeping through every village and township in South Africa. In the age of *realpolitik* it may no longer be fashionable to really believe in "freedom, justice and equality", but millions of South Africans do - and they are mobilising as never before to finally claim some control over their lives.

We have come a long way in the last few years. Only five years ago - think back to 1988 - there was almost no hope that we would escape an endless cycle of civil war and repression.

To crush all opposition, PW Botha, Magnus Malan and Adriaan Vlok used the full powers of the law, the security forces, the joint management centres and the infamous death squads.

Nelson Mandela and about 3 000 other political prisoners were still in jail. Thousands of detainees, among them almost the entire leadership of the United Democratic Front, were in their third year of detention.

The headquarters of the South African Council of Churches and the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference were among the buildings of progressive organisations destroyed in bomb blasts. More than 1 000 people died in political violence in Natal. The armed struggle was intensified and more than 220 attacks took place.

Thirty organisations were effectively banned, including the End Conscription Campaign and the Detainees' Parents

racy and unity. But South Africa and Sarajevo are poles apart. Political parties representing almost 90 percent of South Africans are negotiating constructively and are committed to the elections.

The Freedom Alliance has neither the capacity nor the popular support to derail the process. From Kempton Park down to the grassroots, political leaders have been committing themselves to peace, reconciliation and political tolerance.

Shocking newspaper headlines may contradict this, but as the Peace Secretariat

*'It seems inevitable that the ANC will be the first government. It will bring a new calibre of leadership to government. Almost all the leaders who make it to Parliament will be people who have made huge personal sacrifices for the sake of freedom and democracy'*



Beatie Hofmeyr

reminded us, only the bad news makes it into the media. Since the mid-1980s, political conflict in Natal has claimed more lives every year and in the 1990s it erupted in the PWV. Most of us became emotionally blunted to the deaths and could not even read or analyse the details of yet another gruesome massacre.

Although the "third force" theory was treated with derision by the government and the police, it is now widely accepted that faceless forces are involved in fanning the flames, and that the conflict is not simply about political turf.

Too many conflicts start with "drive-by shootings" where people open fire from a van on a group of pedestrians. In divided communities with little access to resources,

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