

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE URBAN FOUNDATION'S REQUEST TO MEET WITH THE NATIONAL OFFICE OF THE UDF

1. For the past four years the Urban Foundation (UF) has conducted extensive research into a wide range of issues surrounding urbanisation and urban development in South Africa. In all, four broad areas of enquiry have been covered viz.
 - . housing and urban development
 - . urban management and local government
 - . regional development
 - . rural development.

The research has involved two aspects: (i) investigation into the current situation, focussing, in particular, on the many problems that beset our urban areas and the dynamics that underlie these; and (ii) exploration of strategies which might deal effectively with these problems, based both on an analysis of the South African urban political economy and a review of the international experience.

2. The objective of this research programme has been the formulation of a comprehensive set of policies concerning an appropriate approach to development and management of South Africa's urban areas. Both the research and policy-formulation processes are now complete. Accordingly, the UF has crystallised its research-findings and policy-recommendations into eight core documents covering:
 - . housing and informal settlement
 - . urban management and government
 - . Group Areas
 - . urban structure and development
 - . regional development and de-centralisation (the RIDP)
 - . deconcentration
 - . rural development
 - . a "lead" document which synthesises and summarises the UF's work in all of the above areas and succinctly outlines the essence of its policy proposals.

3. It is important to note that, while the UF has led and managed the research/policy-formulation process, it has not acted alone. The Private Sector Council on Urbanisation (PSC) was established on the initiative of the UF in 1985 in order to make an informed contribution to urbanisation policy in South Africa. The PSC comprises the five national employer bodies (Chamber of Mines, Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut, SA Chamber of Business, SEIFSA and NAFCOC), representatives of many of SA's major corporations, and other prominent individuals (see Appendix 1 for a full list.)

Together with the UF's Board of Governors (see Appendix 2) - which has already already endorsed the policy documents mentioned above - the PSC represents a wide spectrum of powerful and influential businessmen. In essence the UF-PSC policy initiative can be understood as the business sector's consolidated view of how South Africa's urban areas should grow and be managed. The proposals that have been arrived at have been extensively researched and thought-out.

4. On the basis of this work the UF-PSC is about to launch a public campaign. The intention of the campaign is both to initiate a national debate about the future of SA's urban areas and to try and bring about real changes in the legislative and policy environment which are in line with UF-PSC proposals. In preface to this campaign the UF wishes to meet with a wide of spectrum of organisations and leadership groupings in the country. Of specific importance here is the extra-parliamentary opposition movement.

The objectives of these meetings, from the UF's point of view, are:

- a) to share information regarding its research and policy findings on the spectrum of issues it has investigated;
- b) to hear any responses that organisations or leadership groupings are able or willing to give to what the UF has to say;
- c) to discover whether and to what extent such organisations/groupings are interested in interacting any further with the UF in this area. Such interaction could involve further dialogue (in-depth discussion on

the policy proposals, for example), discussing ways in which the UF may be able to offer resources of various kinds, and so on.

5. This, then, is the context in which the UF wishes to meet with the national leadership of the UDF. Three final points should be noted:

- . it should be stressed that these meetings are essentially about the exchange of information. No endorsement of any kind is being sought for any policy;
- . the UF has begun its meeting programme on the PWV both because of the importance of the area and because many organisations' head offices are located there. It intends, however, to brief key organisations and leadership in the other regions of the country as well;
- . whilst it is recognised that UDF leadership is extremely busy right now, time is of the essence. It is important for the UF that these meetings proceed as soon as possible. It would also probably be to the advantage of the UDF for it to gain an insight into the work and thinking of the UF-PSC sooner rather than later.