



UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

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7th December, 1989

Zanele Mbeki,
UNHCR,
Lusaka.

Dear Zanele,

I deeply regret that I am unable to attend the seminar on women's rights. My doctor has instructed me not to travel because of a hard dose of flu and sinusitis, which makes air travel dangerous for me. I am terribly sorry about this because I was looking forward to coming because of the importance of the conference.

I would very much like to have made the following points at the conference:

- 1) The ANC should announce that, because of the appalling record of the apartheid regime in this area, it will on taking office systematically ratify the major international conventions and treaties on human rights. In particular the Conventions on Sex and Race Discrimination of 1979 and 1965 and the two Covenants of 1966 on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic Social and Cultural Rights shall be priorities.
- 2) The provisions of the 1979 Convention make it necessary for the Women's Committee to draft a charter of women's rights to focus attention on the way women are discriminated against in South Africa in nearly all areas of life, public and private. Although law may not immediately change attitudes, it can affect patterns of behaviour and help to educate.
- 3) There is a need to provide special training for women in our movement and to recognise that quotas or reserved places may have to be established at all levels of the community, including the NEC, to ensure that women's right to participate is not only recognised but catered for.
- 4) The Constitutional Guidelines should be developed further and strengthened so as to refer more adequately to the place of women in our society, especially in relation to dealing with incitement to sexism etc.

You should note that the Boers' Law Reform Commission proposals do not refer to women at all except for the general anti-discrimination clause. We should therefore emphasise the need for equality and for positive ameliorative measures to be taken to ensure the removal of historic and present-day discrimination on grounds of sex.

Please communicate my deep admiration to the members of the Women's Committee, together with their comrades in the movement, men and women, who must work for the eradication of racism and sexism from our movement and from our country.

Yours absent comrade,

Kader
Kader Asmal

PS Please confirm that you have received this, otherwise I will try to send it to the ANC fax number, but this does not seem to be working at the moment. My fax no is 01-895697.