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P.O. Box 387
FLORIDA HILLS
1716

10 October 1993

The Constitutional Committee
Multi Party Negotiations Forum
P.O. Box 307
ISANDO
1600

Ladies and Gentlemen,

NEW CONSTITUTION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

You are referred to the appeal which was made to readers in an editorial article in the "Sunday Times" of 22 August 1993 to come forward with ideas and suggestions on a federal system of government for South Africa. The American Federal System was put forward as a possible model for South Africa under the name of the "Federal Republic of South Africa."

I support this appeal totally and wish to add my voice to the voices of millions of South Africans (of all colours and creeds) who have now come to the firm belief that a fully-fledged federal system is the only constitutional system suitable for South Africa.

An earnest and urgent appeal is therefore made to your Committee to employ your knowledge and expertise to steer the course of events in this direction.

Thoughts of a one party state have been shelved, why not also abandon the idea of a unitary state which could never function successfully in a heterogeneous society with such a great number of widely diverse cultures?

We have accepted that there would have to be a multi-party government. We could also accept that there would be dual citizenship. Firstly at grass roots level, that is on local and regional levels, and secondly on national level. South African citizenship on national level already exists. This citizenship could encompass secondary citizenships of divergent cultures, whether based on economic, ethnic, level of development, geographical or whatever grounds.

Let us make the most of the enrichment which the various cultures provide and give expression to this fact by devising a political system to accommodate it. Let us not resort to a system by which all South Africans are fed through a sausage machine, like the meat, fat and other ingredients, in an attempt to make every one equal, just a number in an indifferent, expressionless, spineless and retrogressive society.

You gentlemen would perhaps have the following comment: idealistic, oversimplification of a complex situation, impractical, impracticable and so on. I am of the opinion, however, that once it has been decided by all the rollplayers and other interest groups that a federal system is the only one to be embarked upon, progress would follow and there would be a full attendance at your Conference.

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I am also mindful of the fact that economic realities and time scales would have to be taken into account, the latter particularly in view of the unrest situation.

Many of the sentiments which I have expressed have been shared and echoed by prominent academics in this country as well as abroad. In this context please also refer to the article by Mr. John Kane-Berman and the letter from Dr. Mario Orianiambrosini in the "Sunday Times" of 29 August 1993.

A few years ago I published a book called: "The Federal Republic of South Africa: A New Political Dispensation " in which I outlined in detail a federal system which with certain adaptations, after negotiations, could be suitable for South Africa. This book could serve as a point of departure in our quest for a constitutional model acceptable to the vast majority of South Africans. Kindly inform me whether I would be welcome to present you with copies.

Yours sincerely,


Armand Steenhuisen