

22 April 1993

PRESS STATEMENT

We are deeply concerned about the plight of the St George's Mall traders and support their call for urgent action by the Cape Administrator and the Cape Town City Council.

For many months now, the traders - together with the ANC and SANCO - have been meeting with the City Council in order to try to resolve the issue of trading space in the city centre. We believe that the demands of the traders have been entirely reasonable.

Despite the fact that negotiations in this regard are still underway, Council has now independently called for applications for sites on St Georges Mall. The call is, moreover, for an elitist arts and crafts market with trading criteria which virtually none of the people currently involved in negotiations can meet.

It is our view that the way in which tenders are awarded to informal traders is exclusive and geared to benefit individual entrepreneurs. It is essential that both the City Council and the formal trading sector should begin giving serious attention to the process of accommodating small traders who are disadvantaged by the tender system as presently applied. It is clear that the process of allocating sites to individuals actually excludes small traders who do not have the resources to compete against their wealthier counterparts.

We are opposed in principle to the idea of individuals deriving benefit from what should, we believe, be a collectively controlled activity. We believe that trading areas should be controlled by the participating traders themselves and should not be open to exploitation by individuals for personal profit.

It is clear that Council and the Cape Administrator are refusing to take the current negotiations with the traders seriously. This is of enormous concern, particularly given the elitist and very largely white profile of the City. It is disappointing that while, on the one hand, Council is widely advertising its constitutional proposals for the city it is, on the other, continuing to administer the city along traditional lines.

We therefore call on the Cape Administrator to postpone all decisions with regard to trading until the present negotiations have been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.

We also demand that urgent attention be given to the issue of the predominantly white trading profile in the City and Waterfront. The current political environment demands that a programme of serious affirmative action be instituted in order that Cape Town may honestly begin to reflect its role as a city for all our people.

**Issued by ANC Western Cape and SANCO Western Cape
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