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30/3/92

Dear Madam

Thank you for your letter received in March.

We have received quite a steady stream of letters on the question of the representation of women at CODESA . This we obviously appreciate because there can be no running away from the fact that present society is totally male dominated and any attempt to jog society's conscience on this issue is very welcome.

From our point of view the representation of women at CODESA is not directly CODESA's responsibility but is really the responsibility of each and every Party that constitutes the CODESA process.

However in recognition of the seriousness of this matter, CODESA has gone some way within the ambit of its function to deal with the issue of women's participation in the CODESA process.

At its meeting of 13 January 1992, CODESA's Management Committee "agreed that each Working Group shall determine ways and means by which women's and other interest groups which are not participants in CODESA, may make submissions to that Working Group on matters relevant to its Terms of Reference.

The meeting further agreed that Management Committee members "should draw to the attention of their respective organisations the importance of involving women representatives in the CODESA process" by among other things:

- debating this matter at constituency level
- applying for permission to appoint additional advisers to the Management Committee to address plenary sessions on the understanding that these should be women
- debating this matter with women's organisations at constituency level; and
- appealing for more women delegates to the plenary sessions.

Over and above this, even CODESA's Declaration of Intent (5a) goes a long way towards addressing this issue by declaring to set in motion a process ensuring that the new constitution will ensure that "South Africa will be a United, democratic, non racial and non-sexist state."

Among the ideas before CODESA's Management Committee is one calling for the establishment of a Gender Advisory Committee. The matter is of course still open to discussion as finality has not as yet been reached.

Yours Sincerely



Murphy Morobe
(CODESA Administration)

17/3 / 1992

To the CODESA Management Committee:

I write in response to your request for comments and suggestions from members of the public regarding the composition and agenda of the CODESA working groups.

As you know, the Declaration of Intent formulated by CODESA participants affirms a commitment to the creation of a democratic South Africa free of all forms of discrimination and governed by a constitution which protects the rights of women.

It has come to my attention that there are very few women participants in the decision making bodies of CODESA. In my view, if the decisions and actions taken by CODESA are intended to represent the aspirations of a majority of South Africans, the needs, views and ideas of women must be taken into account at every stage of the negotiation process. Women represent 50% of the South African population and in many respects, their experiences and concerns differ from those of men.

In the interest of ensuring that the CODESA process is representative and legitimate, I offer the following suggestion:

That a CODESA Gender Review Committee be constituted and charged with the following responsibilities:

1. To consider the briefs of each of the working group with regard to their potential impact on women, and to make recommendations with regard to issues which need to be raised to ensure that all deliberations reflect gender awareness.
2. To review the decisions of all working groups with regard to their projected impact upon women. Working Groups should be required to consider the recommendations of the Gender Review Committee before making final decisions.

The Gender Review Committee should be comprised of two representatives from each party who are selected on the basis of demonstrated interest and experience in gender issues.

I look forward to notification of your response to this proposal.

Yours sincerely

CATHERINE LABURN-PEARCE

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