

SACP SUBMISSION TO GENDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON GENDER ISSUES IN THE WORKING GROUPS OF CODESA.

1. The South African Communist Party endorses the recommendations made to the CODESA Management Committee by the ANC Women's League on 6 March 1992.

2. In addition, the SACP makes the following submissions to Working Group 1 (Creation of a Climate for Free Political Participation and Role of International Community):

Noting that:

a) Gender inequality severely hampers women's ability to participate freely and equally in the political and civil processes in society, and that gender inequalities do not rectify themselves as they are rooted in familial relations and in the lack of access to education and skills

b) The ability of working class women to participate in the political process is severely hampered by:

- * working two shifts per day, one in paid labour and one in the home;
- * lack of protective labour legislation. The majority of women workers work in domestic and farming sectors. These sectors are not covered by labour legislation and as a result these workers do not have specified working hours which give them time off to attend meetings;
- * lack of childcare facilities in working class areas;
- * the absence of safe public transport servicing the working class areas and the current violence on trains which makes it dangerous for women to attend gatherings at night;
- * the crime rate in most townships, which is direct result of apartheid and the extreme differences in income and standard of living in South African society.
- * women's subordination is rooted in oppressive family relations, entrenched in family law, and that South African society has a wide variety of family forms which is not recognised by the legislation;
- * fewer girls have access to secondary and tertiary education as limit family resources tend to be used for the education of boy children;
- * the extent of unemployment of women and the ghettoisation of women's jobs creates financial dependence of women on men;

c) The working class woman's ability to understand the CODESA process through the media is severely hampered by:

- * illiteracy and inappropriate written material for immediate post-literacy readers;
- * lack of time to read or watch TV due to the double working shift;
- * lack of lighting facilities;

- * overcrowded living conditions;
- * language problems - indigenous languages and complexity of language used;
- * lack of electricity to run TV's;

d) Equal participation of women within political organisations is a goal that has not yet been achieved; Equal participation is especially poor in relation to the participation of working class women,

And that women are severely under-represented at CODESA,

therefore concludes that CODESA as presently constituted cannot address the interests of working class women adequately.

Recommends that:

- * there is an urgent need to affirmative action in the constitutional process concerning women, and particularly working class women;

- * COSATU's submissions for labour covering domestic and farm workers should be legislated forthwith;

- * childcare facilities should be provided in all working class areas and childcare legislation should be re-examined to provide for adequate protection of children's interests and to provide for their healthy development;

- * safe public transport should be provided in all working class areas;

- * the social problems causing South Africa's high crime rate, including the vast discrepancy of wealth within our society, must be redressed;

- * CODESA publicity and education should be:

- aimed at illiterate, immediate post-literate and advanced readers;

- include printed and electronic media;

- produced in all indigenous languages and in

simple language:

- distributed free of charge;

- pro-actively taken to the people;

- specifically addressed to women aimed at overcoming their negative attitude towards their role in political decision-making.

*urgent attention must be given to the position of women within all family forms and family law should be developed to incorporate all family forms and to provide protection to women's rights to equality and democracy within the family;

* affirmative action concerning girl's access to education, for example, the lowering of girls school fees to act as an incentive, and specifically the inclusion of women in tertiary institutions must be brought into play.

3. The SACP makes the following submissions to Working Group Two (General Constitutional Principles and Constitution-making Body/Process):

The Constitution principles must make provision for:

* constitutional rights against discrimination in the work place on grounds of gender;

* constitutional rights for women to membership of trade unions;

* labour legislation concerning:

maternity benefits so that maternity benefits are a state responsibility to ensure that all women, irrespective of employment are eligible for this assistance, the right to return to the job after the birth of the child, with provision of incentives to employers which will counter the disincentive to hold a woman's job for her, or to employ women in the job at all,

night shift and overtime;

* constitutional rights for women to be active in all civil society structures, such as civic organisations, peasant organisations, educational structures, cultural and religious organisations;

* the provision in the Bill of Rights for affirmative action for women on the basis of class exploitation;

The Constitution-making body must:

* include maximal representation of working class women, which means that participating organisations and parties should be required to ensure the inclusion of working class women within their election lists;

* actively consider issues affecting working class women.

In terms of the election process, the recommendations made by the Women's League must take into account the fact that working class women's access to the political process is the most limited of any sector of our society, and must specifically address these circumstances.

4. The SACP wishes to make the following submissions to Working Group Three (Transitional Arrangements/Interim Government/Transitional Authority):

Noting that:

* Development strategies need to redress current inequalities, and that working class women are the most

economically, politically and educationally disadvantaged sector of society;

Recommends that:

- * in the interim period budgetary measures and redistribution strategies should be implemented to benefit working class women, including subsidised staple foods and zero VAT rating of essentials including medicine and health care, education, public transport and food.

- * Working Group Three should have access to submissions made by the SACP to Working Groups One and Two, and apply the relevant sections.

5. The SACP wishes to make the following submissions to Working Group Four (The Future of TBVC States):

Noting that:

- * The TBVC states are internationally acknowledged to be illegitimate, and that they were imposed on the people of those areas without consultation;

- * unemployment, and particularly unemployment of working class women, is extremely high in the TBVC states; and that migrant labour resulting from these conditions and the National Party's labour allocation policy has destroyed the social fabric and family life, placing an added burden on women as single household heads;

- * trade union rights are not fully recognised and the harassment of trade unions and trade unionists in the TBVC states;

- * the lack of adequate labour legislation, and particularly legislation protecting the rights of domestic workers and farm labourers where large numbers of women are employed;

Recommends that:

- * Re-incorporation of the TBVC states into South Africa should be done on the basis of consultation with the people of those areas, with affirmative action being implemented to ensure that women, and particularly working class women, are part of this process;

- * in the interim period, during the process of reincorporation, the issues of unemployment, migrant labour, family life, social cohesion, labour legislation and trade union rights must be addressed;

- * and that Working Group Four apply the whole of the SACP's submissions to Working Group One.

6. The SACP wishes to make the following submissions to Working Group Five (Time Frames and Implementation of CODESA's decisions):

Noting that:

* the policies of the apartheid state over the last forty years have been racist, sexist and not in the interests of the working class;

* the implementation of CODESA's decisions falls largely on the existing legislature and the to-be-established interim government;

* the removal of discrimination against women and structural gender inequalities is a long-term process that can only be addressed within a politically and economically democratic state;

Recommends that:

* the interim government must act as a guardian and monitor on the development of non-oppressive gender relations;

* the election of a constituent assembly must be completed by the end of 1992.

* Working Group 5 pays attention to submissions made to Working Group 1.