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CODESA
World Trade Centre
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Dear Sir,

In response to your invitation to individual South Africans to contribute to a new South Africa through Codesa, I would like to make my contribution through the contents of this letter.

Although Codesa was convened mainly to resolve and plan the political future of South Africa, there are a number of important factors that could influence the political future of this country. One of these factors Sir, is the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

AIDS could profoundly effect the political, social and economic future of any country in Africa and therefore, during your deliberations on the future of this country, discussions on the role of AIDS is a 'sine qua non'. Failure to take this problem into consideration would be committing a crime against the people of this country.

AIDS has the potential to become the greatest epidemic mankind has known, yet it is an avoidable disease. AIDS is a malady of the people, of society. To prevent a biological carnage of South Africans requires the combined and total efforts of every man, woman and child. The political

leaders of this country must play a leading and vital role in the fight against this ever increasing epidemic. They need to show determination, foresight, concern, wisdom and courage. Denial has absolutely no place in our resolve to prevent this disease, it is our single biggest enemy.

We are fast approaching the point where we will be powerless to influence the further spread of this disease. What we need is a pre-emptive strike, we need to act now with all our resources. I pray daily that we have not missed the boat.

With your permission Sir, I would like to put forward the following for consideration by Codesa:

- 1) That Codesa publically issue a Declaration of War against the AIDS virus (HIV) and AIDS. The HIV has declared war on us and is winning. We must reciprocate appropriately.
- 2) That AIDS be declared a national emergency.
- 3) That a fund be established to enable community-based organisations, through education, to mobilise the people to fight this disease.
- 4) That Codesa empowers the women of this country with the ability to stem the tide of this potential holocaust. That they be empowered to say NO. Let us not underestimate the hand that rocks the cradle.
- 5) That the "Declaration of Human Rights" be observed at all times in dealing with people with AIDS and HIV infection.
- 6) That the state will provide uncompromising medical care to people with

HIV infection and AIDS.

7) That prejudice and discrimination be declared illegal practices, in all fields of human endeavour and the workplace.

8) That prostitution and homosexuality be decriminalised. This will enable the relevant authorities to control the spread of AIDS in these two high risk behaviour groups.

9) That AIDS education, without prejudice, be started immediately in schools.

As AIDS transcends all aspects of our daily life, I would be prepared to address the full body of Codesa on this subject at its next meeting. We have to avoid building orphanages in place of schools. Future generations will judge whether we were civilised or not in the 1990's by the manner in which we handled the AIDS problem. The solution lies in our hands, we dare not fail our children. I sincerely hope and pray that this letter will not find its way into the waste paper basket.

I have the honour to be

yours sincerely,



PROF R SHER

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