

2 March 1992

Submission to: CODESA

From: **Library and Information Workers' Organisation (LIWO) - Natal**  
c/o University Library, University of Natal  
P O Box 375 Pietermaritzburg 3200  
Secretary: Rosemary Bell Tel: (0331) 95-5053 Fax: (0331) 95-5599  
Chairperson: Chantelle Wyley Tel: (031) 816-2062 Fax: (031) 816-2051

**Library and Information Workers' Organisation (LIWO) - Cape**  
c/o Peninsula Technikon Library Service  
Modderdam Road  
P O Box 1906  
Bellville 7530  
Chairperson: Bill Bennett Tel: (021) 959-6320 Fax: (021) 951-5617

**Natal Resource Centre Forum**  
c/o Educational Resources Information Service  
Media Resource Centre, University of Natal  
King George V Avenue, Durban 4001  
Chairperson: Jenni Karlason Tel: (031) 816-2090 Fax: (031) 261-6880

**Inter Resource Forum**  
c/o Khanya College  
377 Lower Main Road  
Salt River 7925  
Liaison person: Faye Reagon Tel: (021) 47-4719 Fax: (021) 47-2638

LIWO represents more than 170 progressive library and information workers predominantly in the Natal and Cape provinces. These members work in the formal library structures (ie. public, academic and special libraries) as well as informal information services supporting non-governmental and community-based organisations.

The Natal Resource Centre Forum and Inter Resource Forum represent about 50 progressive non-governmental and community-based information services (known as resource centres) in the Natal and Cape provinces.

Our submission to the CODESA working groups is based on our concern that library and information services in South Africa have been distorted by apartheid in such a way that the information needs of the majority are not being satisfied. In the future, information must be freely available to all the people of our land, in order to empower and develop communities for democracy and an improved quality of life.

### **Submission to Working Group One**

In support of creating a climate for free political participation we submit:

1. that information and knowledge are not neutral; they play an important and positive role in the political process
2. that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, opinion and expression, both orally, in written, printed and broadcasted form
3. that everyone has the right to participate in the process of the creation, production, distribution, dissemination and consumption of information and media, without interference
4. that information and knowledge are necessary for the creation of democracy
5. that information services, libraries and resource centres play a facilitative and supportive role in making information and media accessible to the community
6. that every public library and information service should be open without restrictions, including membership fees, to all people
7. that every public library and information service should make available information and media informing the public about the political processes and options
8. that CODESA should therefore make available to every library and information service in South Africa display materials and free copies of: **CODESA Working Groups' Terms of Reference**  
All constitutional proposals and policy documents submitted by all political organisations to CODESA
9. that CODESA make a public statement to all public libraries and information services requesting that they stock and make available copies of literature and other media dealing with our political history, especially that to which we have been denied access in terms of the censorship of past apartheid regimes

### **Submission to Working Group Two**

Regarding general constitutional principles, we submit that the following rights (as established in documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) should be enshrined in the new constitution of South Africa:

1. the right to inform and be informed
2. the right to public information, in the context of government accountability to its citizenry
3. the right of access to government archives which have been preserved and protected from destruction
3. the right to information which affects the general public, including that held by commerce, industry and research bodies, in the context of their responsibility to the community at large
4. the right to criticise public figures, institutions and organisations
5. the right of the criticised to reply
6. the right to protect information given in confidence
7. the right to true and accurate information
8. the right of individuals to information pertaining to life skills enabling them to develop and empower themselves politically, economically, culturally and socially
9. the right of individuals to information in appropriate media
10. the right to participate in the free and equal exchange of information

These rights carry the responsibility that peace, life and well being should be protected and that information should not be used to propagate war and violence.

Furthermore, since public library services generally fall under the jurisdiction of regional, provincial or municipal authorities, we submit that this regional autonomy should be balanced by constitutional principles (eg. as above) established by central government.

### Submission to Working Group Three

Regarding transitional arrangements, we submit that in the context of existing initiatives to formulate recommendations relating to the restructuring of our society, including library and information services, there should be a moratorium on all restructuring and reallocation of resources controlled by central and local government, until an interim government is in place.

In the interim period we recommend that CODESA facilitate a process whereby the formal library and information services under the authority of central and local government engage in discussion with their counterpart representative organisations and bodies (civic and community-based structures and sector-specific organisations like LIWO and the regional resource centre forums).

### Submission to Working Group Four

Regarding the future of the TBVC states, we wish to address the future of their national library services.

In the light of the existing South African centralised national library and archive service and the apparent duplication of costly services, we submit:

1. that these expensive and inappropriate institutions in the TBVC have their national library status amended
2. that existing facilities, staff and resources should be re-orientated to offer an information service which will respond to the everyday needs of the local community
3. that these services should address the needs of scholars, students and all sectors of the community, including children, the aged, women, the newly literate, the illiterate, workers and the unemployed
4. that the governance of these services should be in the hands of structures with representatives from the local community including teachers, SRCs, parents, unions, youth, civic, and women's organisations.

### Submission to Working Group Five

We believe that an informed public safeguards and ensures the development of democracy, and therefore the provision of and access to information during the transitional period in South Africa is vital to the full participation of the whole community in the negotiation process. Furthermore, in serving the information needs of disadvantaged communities which have been deprived of access to information in the past, we are acutely aware of aspirations for a democratic, free and united South Africa.

In this context and with regard to the time frames for implementing CODESA's decisions, we submit:

1. that attention to the library and information service in the context of the negotiation process is an important and urgent issue
2. that the recommendations above regarding the dissemination of documents and other literature, the arrangements for a moratorium on restructuring, the introduction of consultative procedures in existing library services, and the restructuring of TBVC national library services, be implemented immediately.

Chantelle Wyley  
for LIWO - Natal and Cape

2 March 1992  
Durban

Copies to: SAPA  
local Natal media  
fraternal organisations

Jenni Karlsson  
for Natal Resource Centre Forum  
and Inter Resource Forum

# mrc \* fax message

Media Resource Centre, University of Natal, King George V Ave., Durban 4001 South Africa

TELEPHONE: \*(031) 816-2603 [Director], (031) 816-2090/ 816-1029 [Projects]

FAX: \*(031) 261-6880 \*international calls use code (27 31)

TO: CODESA	Code:	FAX:	TEL:
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MESSAGE: Attention: MURPHEY MOROBE

Please forward our submissions to the relevant working groups.  
 Many thanks

FROM: Jenni Karlsson. <sup>incl.</sup> (4 pages)

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