

BRIEFING REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL PEACE SECRETARIAT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL PEACE SECRETARIAT TO WORKING GROUP 1, SUBGROUP 2 AS REQUESTED

A summary of the activities of the National Peace Secretariat since its inception during November 1991 up to 26 February 1992 is set out below.

1. EXISTING REGIONAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEES

The following Regional Dispute Resolution Committees have been established.

1.1 Natal/KwaZulu Regional Dispute Resolution Committee

This Committee was established on 11 December 1991 under the joint chairmanship of Mr M. C. Pretorius and Archbishop D. Hurley. The committee has established two local dispute resolution committees at Umlazi and Lower Tugela and at least 14 more are being considered.

They are:

- Mooi River;
- Port Shepstone;
- Empangeni;
- Oswatini;
- Tongaat;
- Umvumbumbu;
- Bulver;
- Stanger;
- Estcourt;
- Newcastle;
- Mpomolanga;
- Pinetown;
- Ixopo; and
- Pietermaritzburg.

The following committees are to be established in the Pietermaritzburg area:

- Table Mountain;
- Imbali; and
- NcWadi.

Recent outbreaks of violence in Natal necessitated an emergency meeting of the regional dispute resolution committee on 12 February 1992. This meeting was attended by myself and members of the National Peace Secretariat.

The progress of the dispute resolution committees in Natal is being impeded by political infighting on the committees and also by a lack of sufficient infrastructure and secretarial services. All the committee members serve part time, and they cannot always devote the time which is necessary to create an effective organisation. The frequency of violence in Natal makes almost impossible demands on the time of some of the key members.

1.2 Ciskei/Border Regional Dispute Resolution Committee

This committee was established on 12 December 1991 under the chairmanship of Mr R. Mason. The committee has established three local dispute resolution committees at Cathcart, King William's Town and Whittlesea/Queenstown. An interim committee was established in Grahamstown on 26 February 1992. The formation meeting

will be on 8 April 1992 and final details are still to be announced.

The following are committees that are still to be established in this area:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| - Peddie; | - Seymour/Balfour; |
| - Aliwal North; | - Alice; |
| - East London; | - Middledrift; and |
| - Keiskammahoeck; | - Komga. |

1.3 Western Cape Regional Dispute Resolution Committees

The steering committee was established on 14 January 1992. A regional dispute resolution committee was established on 16 February 1992. Mr G. H. Higgs was appointed chairman. An executive committee was established on 19 February 1992 to investigate areas for which local dispute resolution committees are to be established.

1.4 Witwatersrand/Vaal Regional Dispute Resolution Committee

This committee was established on 7 February 1992. Mr Charles Nupen, a professional facilitator, acts as interim chairman. The following local dispute resolution committees have been established in this area:

- Thokoza/Pholapark;
- Soweto; and
- Germiston.

The following committees are still to be established in the Soweto area:

- Kliptown;
- Jabulani;
- Dobsonville;
- Meadowlands;
- Orlando;
- Moroka; and
- Diepkloof.

1.5 Orange Free State Regional Dispute Resolution Committee

The Secretariat met with relevant organisations in Bloemfontein on 18 February 1992, and a regional dispute resolution committee was established. Mr H. Lerm and the Rev. Mabunda of the SA Council of Churches will act as co-chairmen.

1.6 Eastern Transvaal Regional Dispute Resolution Committee

The Secretariat attended a meeting with interested groups in Middelburg on 26 February 1992. A regional dispute resolution committee for the area was established. Co-chairmen will be appointed, one to be nominated by business and the other by the churches.

Following upon representations from organisations in the Northern Transvaal, the Secretariat decided to divide the Northern Transvaal into two regions, namely:

- the Northern Transvaal Region, comprising Pretoria, Rustenburg, Brits, parts of Bophuthatswana and environs; and
- the far Northern Transvaal Region, comprising the area north of Warmbaths, including Venda, parts of Lebowa, Gazankulu and KwaNdebele.

1.7 Northern Transvaal Regional Dispute Resolution Committee

A meeting with interested parties was held in Pretoria on 11 February 1992, and a steering committee was elected from the organisations that attended. Following upon the work done by the steering committee, a regional dispute resolution committee was established on 25 February 1992. Co-chairmen will be appointed, one to be nominated by business and the other by the churches.

1.8 Far Northern Transvaal Regional Dispute Resolution Committee

A preliminary meeting was held at Pietersburg on 8 February 1992 and an advisory committee was elected from the organisations that attended. A regional dispute resolution committee was established on 26 February 1992. Prof. K. van den Heever was elected chairman.

2. FUTURE REGIONAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEES

2.1 Western Transvaal Regional Dispute Resolution Committee

An investigative meeting attended by all interested parties was held at Klerksdorp on 11 February 1992. A steering committee was elected from the organisations present and it was agreed that a regional committee will be established on 25 March 1992.

2.2 Eastern Cape

A visit by the Secretariat to Port Elizabeth is planned for 5 March 1992, to lay the foundations for a regional dispute resolution committee for the area.

2.3 Northern Cape

The Secretariat plans to visit Kimberley on 25 March 1992 to discuss the establishment of a regional dispute resolution committee.

It is envisaged that all regional dispute resolution committees will be established towards the end of March 1992.

3. LOCAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED BY THE PEACE SECRETARIAT

When a local dispute resolution committee is urgently required for an area, it has been the policy of the Secretariat not to wait for

the establishment of a regional dispute resolution committee for that area, but to establish the local committee itself. The following local committees have been established by the Secretariat:

3.1 Germiston

A local committee was established on 10 December 1991 under the co-chairmanship of the Rev. B. van Zijl and Mrs K. Jansen.

3.2 Soweto

After much preparatory work a local dispute resolution committee was established for the Greater Soweto area on 12 December 1991.

I acted as interim chairman for the first three meetings, after which Mr Charles Nupen took over the interim chairmanship. Although agreement has been reached on the appointment of an executive committee, it has not yet been possible to reach agreement on the appointment of a permanent chairman.

3.3 Phalaborwa

A local committee for Phalaborwa was established by the Secretariat on 8 February 1992. Because no agreement could be reached on the appointment of a chairman, I agreed to act as interim chairman for the first meeting on 26 February 1992. At that meeting the committee decided that the chairmanship should revolve between nominees of the three major mining companies in the area.

3.4 Ennerdale

The National Peace Secretariat is seeking to resolve a dispute on municipal services between the Civic Association and the Ennerdale Local Development Committee. It is intended that these proceedings will lead to the establishment of a local dispute resolution committee.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEES

The efficiency of some existing dispute committees is being hampered by adequate infrastructure. The promotion of peace requires continued efforts which part-time members of committees are not always able to provide. Secretarial assistance is needed, and at times also facilitators.

The South African Communication Service is in a position to provide the necessary infrastructure, and some committees make good use of its services. The South African Communication Service is a State body, and it appears that this body may not be acceptable to some political organisations in certain areas. It is essential that either the services of either the South African Communication Service be used or that other infrastructure arrangements be made. Unfortunately, other facilities will take time and cost money. The work of the dispute resolution committees cannot be allowed to slow down through the lack of infrastructure, and the provision of adequate infrastructure must be a first priority.

In cases of dire conflict, where members of the Secretariat or of the dispute resolution committees do not have the necessary time or the necessary expertise to deal with a matter, it is necessary to employ professional facilitators. The basis on which such facilitators may be employed has recently been approved by the State.

5. LACK OF COMMUNICATION

There is at times an unfortunate lack of communication between the leadership of political parties at top level, and the membership on the ground. This lack of communication delays the formation of dispute resolution committees and also the operation of the committees after they have been established. It is essential for the top leadership of political parties -

- to publicly and frequently commit themselves to the process of peace and the mechanisms of facilitation and mediation; and
- to ensure that all their members understand and comply with the provisions of the peace accord.

It is also essential that the peace accord (or a summary thereof) be made available in the most important indigenous languages. At this stage, very few people understand the accord or its operation. Copies of the shortened document are at present being prepared in different languages.

6. TRAINING

Now that a sizable number of dispute resolution committees have been established (or are soon to be established), it has become necessary to institute training programmes in facilitation and mediation skills for the committee members. The purpose of such training would be -

- to enable and empower participants in the peace process to promote their interests through peaceful negotiations; and
- to change the prevailing political culture from one characterised by adversity and intolerance, particularly at grass-roots level, to one characterised by joint problem-solving and development.

Attaining this ultimate goal will take time.

The Secretariat has established a comprehensive dossier of facilitators who could be of assistance. A subcommittee of the Secretariat is holding discussions with a number of facilitators in order to put together a training programme. It is expected that general training could commence by the end of March 1992. The first training session for members of the National Peace Secretariat will take place over a two-day period on 20-21 March 1992.

7. MEETING OF CHAIRMEN OF ALL REGIONAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEES

A joint meeting with the Chairman of all the regional dispute resolution committees is planned for 10 April 1992. By that date, all the committees will have been established. The meeting will be used to plan a co-ordinated violence-prevention strategy for the country as a whole and will be based on the experiences of the various regions.

8. PUBLICITY

The activities of the Secretariat and of the dispute resolution committees must be given continued publicity. People must know about the committees, how they work and how they can assist in preventing violence. My colleagues and I have taken every opportunity to promote the work of the Secretariat and of the dispute resolution committees in the press, on the radio, on television and also through personal discussions and lectures. We have had a good reception from the press, for which we are grateful.

9. ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT

Since its inception in November 1991 the National Peace Secretariat has met 43 times. Some of these meetings were devoted to the establishment of regional and local dispute resolution committees and the furtherance of their activities. Of these 43 meetings, at least nine were devoted fully or partially to the planning of strategies, training programmes, publicity and the identification

of interest groups in the various areas. The administrative affairs of the Secretariat are conducted by seven full-time staff members from offices in Pretoria. These staff members receive and deal a vast number of documents, and telephone enquiries and a vast volume of correspondence, arrange all the meetings, keep all the minutes and attend to normal administrative functions. They perform their difficult task admirably.

10. IS THE VIOLENCE ABATING?

The peace accord rests on three main pillars, and each of these has a separate function, distinct from but complementary to the others.

The Peace Committee oversees the peace process as set out in the peace accord, publicises it and applies the code of conduct for political parties.

The Commission of Inquiry regarding the Prevention of Public Violence and Intimidation investigates the phenomenon of public violence and intimidation, exposes the background and reasons for it, and brings it to the attention of the media. The process is similar to a judicial operation, and the members of the Commission are lawyers.

The National Peace Secretariat is, through the various dispute resolution committees, charged with preventing future violence through mediation and facilitation. The Secretariat and the committees have a political base, and as such they cannot be a

vehicle for the formal investigation of past violence, nor can they make findings on past violence.

Unfortunately the efficacy of some dispute resolution committees is impeded by continued political point-scoring during debates, and by dissent on who should serve on the various subcommittees. During the recent spate of violence these factors inhibited the efficiency of the committees.

It is important that the above separation of functions be borne in mind when the activities of any of these peace structures are considered.

None of the peace structures will cause violence to disappear overnight. The process is a long-term one. None the less, some mechanism must be found to monitor the incidence of violence, its increase or decrease, and the efficiency of the roles and efforts of each of the peace structures. The Secretariat is investigating such a monitoring mechanism, which will be put into operation as soon as possible.

Talks are actually in progress in most of the violence-ridden areas. Dispute resolution committees have been established for these areas. I believe that the mere fact that people from opposite ends of the political spectrum are talking to each other has the effect, to some degree at least, of reducing violence. The National Peace Secretariat serves as a positive structure through which talks between conflicting parties should continue. These parties are not limited to signatories to the National Peace

Accord. In fact, parties who were not prepared to sign the Accord have on occasion participated in conflict facilitation procedures initiated by the Secretariat.

A. GILDENHUYS

CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL PEACE SECRETARIAT

26 February 1992

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