SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

Submission to Working Group 1:

Sub-Group: Role and Character of Umkhonto we Sizwe now and in the Future

In order to facilitate the assignments of Working Group 1 it is important to clarify the role and character of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

- 1. It is false and misleading to assert that MK is a private army. MK has been integral to the national liberation struggle of the vast majority of our people since its inception in 1961.
- 2. Private, in the sense used, denotes exclusivity and restriction. A private army is, narrowly based and serves purely sectional interests and goals. Such armies should not be permitted or allowed to proliferate.
- 3. Throughout the whole period of its existence, MK has been open to all South African irrespective of race, colour or creed. It has been composed of men and women, young and old, from all parts of our country and of all languages and cultural groups. Its members are volunteers who have not joined for mercenary or pecuniary interests but for love of our country.
- 4. MK was created to defend and fight for the democratic rights of all our people, black and white, against the universally condemned and exclusivist apartheid system. MK does not serve minority or group interests but the interests of our people as a whole. It has never been used as a vehicle to force people to join or support the ANC.
- 5. MK was not created because our leaders were infatuated with violence but rather because the violence of the apartheid state and the impossibility at the time of gaining universal human rights by peaceful means, gave no other option but the armed struggle. It was the President of the USA, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who said: "Those who make peaceful change impossible make violent change inevitable."
- 6. MK enjoys the international recognition of the United Nations, OAU, Non-Aligned Movement and was universally accepted, by the World Council of Churches amongst others, as waging a just liberation war against an inhuman, illegitimate system. Indeed, this international stamp of approval was legally recognised when MK and the ANC became signatories to the Geneva Convention on armed struggle. By contrast the SA Government has never signed this agreement.
- 7. Since the ANC agreed to suspend the armed struggle on August 6th 1990, MK has abided by the Pretoria agreement. Not one operation has been ordered or executed by bona fide MK operatives since that time.

- 8. It is indeed strange and ironic that in the 29 years of conflict leading to that historic agreement, neither the Government nor any other party or organisation ever referred to MK as a "private army". The use of this term now is mischievous, propagandistic and diversionary and should not be allowed to hold-up the work and agreements of CODESA and the negotiations process. The facts of history need to be objectively understood and accepted and the point is that the endeavours of the combatants of MK have been part of a process that has forced this government to accept the need to resolve differences at the negotiating table.
- 9. On the question of MK's termination of the armed struggle the following needs to be noted:

It is universally accepted that a ceasefire process marks the suspension of hostilities between two warring parties. This suspension or ceasefire allows for talks to take place in order to resolve the cause of the conflict. It is when such a final agreement is reached that the termination of the conflict results.

It is up to the Government to help us move speedily to the point of Interim Government and the implementation of the democratic Constitution so that Umkhonto we Sizwe and the liberation movement can finally agree to the formalised termination that we all seek.

10. Finally, since up to August 1990 there have been two key belligerants - the Government and MK. Umkhonto we Sizwe must be respected as an element that needs to form part of the reconstituted and fully integrated South African armed forces of a democratic society. There is no way that we can accept that one of the two former belligerants should be dissolved.