



DEPARTEMENT VAN NASIONALE OPVOEDING
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

☎ (012) 26-9971

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ORANJE-NASSAUWEG
ORANJE-NASSAU BLDGSCHOEMANSTRAAT
SCHOEMAN STREETPRIVAATSAK X12
PRIVATE BAG X12

PRETORIA 0001

Navrao
Enquiries Dr. J.C. PauwBylyn
Ext 314-6010Verw
Ref

7/4/7

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012-326 7277

31 March 1994

Prof. A. Sachs
Department of Communication Law
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
7535 Bellville

Dear Prof. Sachs,

CONFERENCE ON THE PROPOSED PAN SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGE BOARD

During discussions between the Language Planning Section of our Department and the Language Commission of the Department of Arts and Culture of the ANC, consensus was reached on measures that have to be taken as a result of the language provisions in section 3 of the new Constitution. A Joint Conference Organising Committee was subsequently formed consisting of three members each from DAC and DNE to organise an all-inclusive, national conference to address some of these issues.

The conference will be a post-election event and is to be called the *Languages For All Conference: towards a Pan South African Language Board*. The proposed dates are 27 and 28 May 1994. Consensus was reached that setting up a consultative process on the creation of the Pan South African Language Board by the Senate would be a central focus of the Conference.

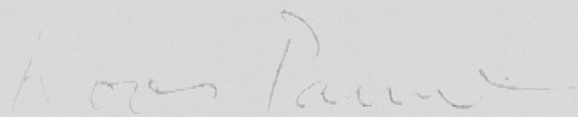
As you know, section 3(10) provides for the establishment by parliamentary legislation of an independent Pan South African Language Board. An extremely important function of this Board will be to make recommendations to Parliament and the provincial legislatures on proposed language legislation within the framework and powers contained in the language clause. The Organising Committee therefore decided that the constitutional imperatives vis-à-vis the formation of the Board, as well as its functions, authority and limitations would have to be addressed and legitimised by the *Languages For All Conference*.

However, some groundwork with respect to the legislation on the Board has to be done. I have therefore taken the liberty to suggest that you and I prepare a text for the Draft Bill on the Pan South African Language Board. To consult as broadly as possible, a copy of this proposed Draft Bill could be sent to delegates before the start of the Conference. (Since this conference must be seen to consult as broadly as possible, the First Circular will be sent out to +500 invitees.) The text would then be discussed in detail at the Conference. In addition, we are also requested to take part in a panel discussion on constituting the Board (please see the attached provisional Conference Programme). After sufficient consensus has been reached, the Conference delegates will have the opportunity (a) to appoint a Committee to advise the Senate on the Board and (b) to formulate a resolution in the form of a Conference Declaration to be submitted to the Senate.

The idea of this Conference has been accepted with enthusiasm by the important role players in the language field. As a result, the Linguistics Society of Southern Africa, the National Language Project, the Language Facilitation Programme of the University of the Orange Free State and politically independent language sociologists have been co-opted to the Organising Committee.

It is widely acknowledged that the proposed Pan South African Language Board will, as a new institution in our society, play a crucial part in the endeavour to linguistically empower the people of South Africa. Since the Conference is to take place in two months time, I would like to suggest that we urgently set up a meeting to discuss our writing of the Draft Bill.

Yours sincerely



DR. J.C. PAUW
DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL