

19/03 [12]

Position paper of Venda traditional leaders on participation of traditional leaders in CODESA

1. Historical Background

The struggle of the Vhavenda against colonial subjugation is one of the keynotes in the history of the African population of the Republic of South Africa. The Vhavenda succeeded in maintaining their independence until the end of the 1890s, after managing to drive off the boer settlers from Schoemansdal in 1867 - 68.

Venda traditional leaders therefore, have a recorded history of resistance characterised by Paramount Chief Makhado who, even though finally subjugated by General Piet Joubert, did fight wars against the Transvaal Republic army's campaign of territorial occupation of the Northern Transvaal.

2. CODESA

We view with great appreciation and welcome the reform process which gave rise to the Convention for a

Democratic South Africa. We were of the opinion that the formulation of a new democratic constitution of our country would be negotiated by political parties, organisations and administrations including traditional leaders. However, we were dismayed that traditional leaders were not invited to the negotiation forum.

3. PARTICIPATION

The general feeling among traditional leaders is that we want to participate in the formulation of a new constitution of our country. We also feel that as traditional leaders we represent all groups despite their political affiliations. Traditional leaders in Venda feel that they should participate in all levels of CODESA.

A. MODE OF PARTICIPATION

We feel that CODESA should facilitate a meeting of all traditional leaders in South Africa in order to finalise on the modalities of participation.

5. THE POSITION OF KINGS AND PARAMOUNT CHIEFS

In view of their seniority and status in the black communities in South Africa, the traditional leaders in Venda feel that Kings and Paramount Chiefs should be accorded Observer status in CODESA.

Signed on 17 March 1992

1. M.A. Netshimbupfe (Chief)
2. T.A. Mulima (Chief)
3. P.F. Kutama (Chief)
4. N.T.L. Mashamba (Chief)
5. U.T. Lalumbe (Acting Chief)
6. M. Mphaphuli (Acting Chief)