

THE WOMEN'S LOBBY

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Bryanston 2021
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3rd April 1992

Working Group III,
CODESA,
P.O. Box 307,
Isando 1600

Dear Sir,

The Women's Lobby (TWL) submits the following proposals for a transitional and a future government.

The aim of a new government must be to develop the potential of all South Africa's people. Human beings - not minerals - are our most precious resource. The government must be a facilitator and a provider of only the most essential services. The aim must be for all our citizens to become self-sufficient, independent and capable of supporting themselves. Government must motivate the enlightened self-interest of individuals, which is the most powerful springboard to personal upliftment.

TWL believes that much can be learned from the successes of Far East nations such as Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand and Japan. Key factors in their success were stepped up education programmes and collaboration between government, business and labour. These led to unusually high rates of economic growth.

Teams of South African educators, business and labour leaders and appropriate government representatives should be sent to these countries to learn their methods and to ascertain if any could be applied to South Africa's heterogeneous population.

TWL believes that the two most immediate problems facing us are the lack of education and the dire poverty of much of our population.

Mindful of the prevailing financial constraints, TWL presents only minimal and feasible proposals.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

POVERTY

Appropriate authorities should examine and eradicate all legislation and regulations impeding the ability of individuals to rise by their own efforts and initiative

Government loans of R50 - R3000 should be available at very low rates to small traders and those with no collateral. We think of stokvels, spaza shops and informal backyard industry as successful examples of private low-cost initiative.

Many urban centres existing today are mere dormitories, not offering full community life. Rapid development

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Date Rec'd : ..9/4/92.....

Date Ackn : ..9/4/92.....

Docs Sent :7/5.....

Handed for Processing to :
.....Vsg3.....

is necessary to provide full community life - commercial, industrial, social, entertainment, educational etc.

Obligatory National Contributory Pension Scheme

We see the need for the government to introduce an obligatory national pension scheme to which all will contribute during their working lives. Independence on retirement or in old age should be the aim of all citizens.

National Health Scheme

A national health scheme should be put into operation to provide for the basic health needs of all inhabitants. A large para-medical service should be established for our huge population.

Size of Families

A decline in the present birth-rate is essential and must become the policy of any new government. Smaller families can provide better food, clothing, shelter and education. The critical problem of pregnancy among unmarried teenagers must be seriously addressed.

State Lotteries

No country is wealthy enough to fulfil all its requirements from taxation alone. State lotteries should be introduced to provide for education and welfare needs.

Rural Women

Women's subordinate rôle in traditional society must change. In the agricultural sector women particularly are held back by traditional practices and ignored by most development schemes. Initially, government funding is required to encourage and train women to articulate their particular needs.

Infrastructure

Practical, low-cost intermediate technology should be applied as quickly as possible to lay the foundations for rapid improvement in living conditions. There should be an immediate provision of infrastructure when squatter settlements spring up.

National Priorities are:-

1. Local supply of electricity countrywide.
2. Accessible supply of water.
3. Inexpensive sewerage systems.
4. Solar heating.
5. Improved transport.
6. Where squatter and deprived settlements occur in rural and urban areas one essential facility should be a well-lit community hall for study, recreation and social needs.

EDUCATION

Children must be trained in their early years in habits of discipline and the work ethic. Instilling this

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requires the co-operation of parents, educators and government. Provision of child care should be an accepted policy.

Educators

A crash programme of educating and up-grading the skills of teachers and educators is imperative.

Reaching all citizens

The concept of education for all must be an unrelenting national theme. All technical and electronic facilities must be employed to eradicate illiteracy, and educate the entire population.

Finance

The main financial responsibility for education at early childhood, primary and secondary stages should be borne by the state. It should contribute substantially to tertiary education. Repayable loans and bursaries must be available on a large scale to children, youths and families who cannot afford schooling, university or technical training.

National Language

The adoption of a national language is a highly sensitive issue. South Africa cannot afford to isolate itself from a world language. The claims of our various indigenous languages cannot be overlooked. The government must find a way through this dilemma.

CONCLUSIONS

In the new South Africa women must not be discriminated against in the workplace, in matrimonial and family matters, in property rights and access to credit. Traditional practices and legal impediments that militate against women's complete equality with men must be eradicated in order to achieve the goal of a non-sexist society.

South Africa can develop a truly humane society only by valuing its most important resource - human beings. Recognising our common humanity, let us work together to free the creative energies of all South Africans.

TWL hopes that serious consideration will be given to these recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

Babette Kabak

BABETTE KABAK
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Vice-Chairman: Doris Ravenhill
Member of Executive: E.E.Monro

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April 13 1992

Gender Advisory Committee
CODESA
P O Box 307
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Dear Colleagues, _

A NON-SEXIST SOUTH AFRICA

The Women's Lobby submits our statement on non-sexism to the CODESA Gender Advisory Committee.

A non-sexist society should be one in which gender equality is affirmed in law and practice, social custom and traditional culture, throughout public and private life. Men and women should experience equal status, dignity and respect as basic human rights. Removing impediments to gender equity should be pursued as explicitly by CODESA as removing barriers to racial equity.

TWL offers the Gender Advisory Committee good wishes for its effectiveness and success.

Yours sincerely,

Babette Kabak

Doris Ravenhill

Babette Kabak, Chairman
Doris Ravenhill, Vice Chairman
E.E. Monro, Member of the Executive