

20.11

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR LIBRARIANSHIP AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

SUBMISSION TO CODESA

WORKING GROUP 4

PREAMBLE

The success of a democratic society depends on informed and educated citizens.

Libraries serve as sources of information and education for all citizens regardless of economic or educational status, language, origins, age or sex. Libraries assemble and make available information that reflects many viewpoints. They complement the mass media by retaining information on topics and events that are quickly forgotten as the media move on to the latest headlines. They retain for use publications that are out of print or have been withdrawn from retailers' shelves due to flagging sales. This information serves as essential background for responsible opinion forming and decision making by individual citizens as well as community and party leaders. Libraries thus provide an essential service for the successful functioning of a democratic state.

There are over one thousand public library service points distributed throughout South Africa. They provide invaluable support for formal education programmes and, if mobilized in support of programmes of literacy training, community education and development, they have enormous potential as sources of nonformal and informal education.

The existing network of libraries constitutes a ready-made, politically neutral infrastructure for the dissemination of information about Codesa and for the creation of a climate of mutual understanding and tolerance.

Codesa should therefore make use of libraries in attaining its objectives, and its decisions and recommendations should promote the use and support of libraries.

The South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science offers its services whenever consultation on library matters is required.

Libraries enter into the following assignments of Working Group 4:

Assignment: Future of TBVC states

1.1.4(d) the existing libraries in the TBVC states can be used as a channel for keeping the people informed

1.1.5(e) libraries are part of the existing infrastructure and should be used optimally for the development of the people. Specifically, the national library services of the TBVC states should be incorporated into the existing national and regional structures for the provision of library and information services to the entire population of South Africa. These structures will need to be appropriately revised, expanded and funded to ensure, inter alia, that members of rural communities can benefit from them.

1.1.5(f) because of the relatively underdeveloped state of libraries in the TBVC states, high priority should be given to their full use as an essential instrument for social, economic and political development, while so-called "national" library functions should receive a lower priority

1.1.5(h) unimpeded continuation of existing library services should be ensured in the interest of advancing democracy and the development of the people. Specifically, a smooth transfer of legal deposit of publications, bibliographic and document delivery functions must be insured in consultation with the State Library, Pretoria, and the South African Library, Cape Town.