

"Democracy means freedom to choose"



# INKATHA

Inkatha Freedom Party

IQembu leNkatha Yenkululeko

WORKING DOCUMENT

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PROPOSAL

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS

TO BE FOUNDED AND ORGANISED  
 UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE  
 AND NATIONAL PEACE SECRETARIAT  
 FOR THE YOUTH OF SOUTH AFRICA  
 WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT  
 THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA AND  
 THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Motivation:

More than 50 percent of South Africa's total population is under the age of 15 years. Apartheid and the struggle for liberation have produced dynamics in our society which seriously disadvantage our youth and endanger others. Many millions have been brutalised and traumatised by violence, poverty and discrimination and are functionally illiterate and innumerate. Many are turning to crime and display serious anti-social behaviour which impacts adversely on the current peace process. Their actions could also jeopardise negotiations which will hopefully lead to democracy and the future socio-economic development and reconstruction of the country. The South African Government and civil society in general have an equal responsibility to urgently assist these youths by enabling them to play their rightful roles in constructively building the new South Africa. They need to be encouraged to help themselves and in so doing other citizens for the common good of all. Their expectations of their post-apartheid futures are high and all reality dictates that, in the short term, there will be substantial non-delivery of their perceived hopes and aspirations in terms of educational and material benefits. Our youth are angry and many are hungry, ill-disciplined and despairing. It is the view of the Inkatha Freedom Party that they deserve to be given love, hope, shelter, respect, skills, values and a very real vision. It is our youth who will ultimately produce a safe, vibrant, future society, or not. It is our youth who must be empowered and assured of their worth in the constructive transformation of South Africa. It is our youth who must be given mechanisms to enable them to triumph over the iniquities of our past for which they can rightfully take credit for their own special endeavours.

**Empowerment:**

There is a commonly held viewpoint that the rapid disintegration of respect for others, for tolerance and other precious values in our society can be traced to the inability of parents to exert constructive control over their children and, indeed, often their own behaviour. The causes are many and multi-faceted with a direct nexus to apartheid but nevertheless the result is that the youth, their parents and the organs of civil society in general (in particular educational, local, religious, traditional, law and order and justice authorities) need a focus on how best to overcome the widening gaps and lack of common purpose, direction and goal setting which is militating against individual, family, community and spiritual development. It is our submission that it is though our youth that hope lies and it is towards them that our resources must be directed in order to effect solutions and the eventual empowerment of all citizens in whatever roles they play in our homes, schools, places of employment, communities, governmental structures and so on.

**Mechanism:****THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL PEACE CORPS**

The Inkatha Freedom Party proposes that immediate steps be taken to investigate how best a National Peace Corps can be created in which, over time, the majority of our youth (18 to 25 years) can have the privilege of voluntarily participating for a period of time to be determined (for example one or two full years after training).

It is our suggestion that this Peace Corps be completely independent of present Governmental structures and fall under the control and direction of the National Peace Committee and its signatories with the National Peace Secretariat being given responsibility for the implementation of NPC policy guidelines and all other aspects of the development of the Peace Corps as instructed and agreed upon.

This Peace Corps should recruit youth, irrespective of race, colour, gender, creed or political affiliation, with special attention and preference given to those living in violence-torn communities. Such individuals should be housed, fed, given medical care and trained with emphasis on skills development, peace-making and reconciliation with the intention of them thereafter working in their own or other areas throughout South Africa as clearly identifiable members of the National Peace Corps and under the supervision of the NPC/NPS.

All Peace Corps members should wear suitable clothing indentifying them as being an elite brigade of young men and women in service to the nation and to whom honour, respect and dignity should flow in accordance with their endeavours. Media campaigns should afford the Peace Corps high visibility and acceptance into the Peace Corps must be equated with special privilege and an outstanding commitment to South Africa.

It is our view that initially Peace Corps recruits should be taught technical and other life skills which, in a short period of time, will enable them to be of assistance in community development.

It will be especially important that certain of the recruits will be able to be re-inserted back into schools in a training capacity - for instance in sport and recreation, courses on democracy/political tolerance, election processes, conflict resolution and so on.

Many can help to physically re-build communities destroyed/affected by violence while others can help in the upliftment of townships in programmes in which, following proper consultation with residents, these projects have been identified (link with Socio-Economic, Reconstruction and Development arm of Peace Accord). Literacy training, care of the aged and help for those physically afflicted by violence would be included in multi-faceted programmes. There are numerous existing Government and NGO community/religious initiatives to which the youth could be associated while others should be established, including defence of our environment.

The youth must not be viewed as a source of cheap labour and funds must be found and allocated to reward their efforts adequately.

Under no circumstances should any member of the National Peace Corps be involved in any action whatsoever involving so-called "community defence" (as it is commonly understood today) or be equipped (arms/ammunition) in any way for such activity as focus must be directed towards non-violence and peaceful negotiation within communities. All National Peace Corps members must be responsible and accountable to regional and local Peace Committees for the purpose of facilitating non-violence and reconciliation and must not have any para-military function at all. Their efforts must be directed away from acts of aggression and towards peace, a solution to problems, whatever they may be, and non-violent behaviour.

It should be the intention of the National Peace Corps that the majority of its recruits will eventually gain meaningful individual employment in the private/public sector and, should they so wish, continue their educations. (Some may also be drawn into reconstructed Police/Defence Force structures - see note below.)

The Inkatha Freedom Party draws the attention of the Negotiating Council and others to a recently completed draft report (still to be finalised) by International Alert, a non-government organisation employing international expertise and engaged in the resolution of social and ethnic conflicts worldwide, which was recently requested by the National Peace Secretariat (in tandem with a South African component) to evaluate our Peace Accord structures. The report, in its section under "Youth", noted, in part:

"... Angry, hungry and unemployed youth have been at the forefront of violent conflicts in this country. To address this problem we recommend that the peace structures take the needs of young people seriously by:

- 1: Promoting a youth programme dealing with socio-economic roots of violence; providing training and creating jobs for youth;
- 2: Encouraging a youth initiative to enlist young men and women in a nation-wide campaign against violence and including them at all levels of the peace process;
- 3: Actively promoting the participation of young men and women in a new multiregional and multiracial National Service, educating and empowering the young at community levels -- urban and rural..."

Civil society:

Such a venture will require the voluntary participation of a myriad of professionals and others with a variety of skills in public life, commerce and industry throughout South Africa, who should be encouraged to give of their time and expertise freely and without compensation to the National Peace Corps.

We are of the view that following recruitment psychologists and others with medical training as well as criminologists and sociologists will, in particular, be required to assist many of the youths who will require counselling and assistance as a result of their backgrounds and experiences.

The value of this help should not be underestimated. We are advocating an holistic approach towards the development of these youths. Specialists in conflict resolution and human rights must also form an integral part of the educational process to be devised and implemented.

Tradespersons will be especially needed to teach their crafts. There will also need to be effective links to existing trades schools, technikons and so forth. All skills training should be certified upon completion. There should also be liaison with police and local authorities etc during their training period for the purpose of a proper understanding of their roles in society and effecting cooperative communication and liaison thereafter. Solutions/problem-solving mechanisms could be embarked upon in this process.

#### Funding:

We believe that the South African Government should look to the national fiscus and re-prioritise the allocation of sections of its budget (particularly that of the Defence Force and monies already allocated to job creation) in order to fund such a venture of national importance. Funding and facilities previously earmarked for National Service training should be substantially diverted to the National Peace Corps. Finance should also be sought from commerce and industry and substantial donor funding/foreign aid should be requested from the international community which has already indicated a willingness to assist victims of apartheid. Tax incentives should be given to those who assist.

#### Housing/Training facilities:

Present facilities and infrastructure used for the housing and training of National Servicemen throughout South Africa could be used on the condition that these barracks be de-militarised -- ie, repainted, Peace Accord logos used throughout and the organisation and discipline be strictly controlled by qualified civilians. International expertise should also be sought with regard to training and community work thereafter.

#### Southern Africa:

It could be possible, when the National Peace Corps has sufficiently established its bona fides, that our youth could be made available to assist other countries in Southern Africa, very much along the lines of the Peace Corps initiated by U S President John Kennedy.

## Legitimacy:

For this project to enjoy any success and credibility it must, from its inception, be perceived as legitimate and enjoying the full support of all parties/organisations/administrations and South African citizens in general.

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There have been suggestions that this initiative could initially be organised as something parallel with National Service training and, thereafter, converge (in part) with this Service "facilitating the transformation of the traditional notions of military defence and police enforcement." A member of the International Alert team, in his own capacity and following requests for his views, has written that "... the notion of non-military or weapon-free defence could develop together with the further development of the notion of community self-policing. In all this evolution the youth in the 25 to 35 age range could play a crucial role. In the longer term a totally new concept and organisation of "National Defence" could emerge, in an all-Africa context. For the foreseeable future a classical professional army and police force would continue in existence but important permanent links with the youth service would modify both substantially in some respects..."

The point is made that the financing of a National Peace Corps (or National Youth Corps, as has also been suggested) would be productive expenditure socially (by reducing violence) and economically (through protection and recuperation of natural resources and the tasks of socio-economic reconstruction).

"A healthier and productive youth is the major act of asset creation... There is a growing realisation in South Africa that neither peace will be secured nor development attained without the youth committing itself to the former and partaking in the latter..."

(FURTHER SUBMISSIONS IN THIS REGARD TO FOLLOW.)

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