

STATEMENT GROUP 3

XIMOKO PROGRESSIVE PARTY

We in the Ximoko Progressive Party wish at this stage to indicate that we still keep an open mind in regard to certain of the principles and issues relating to interim or transitional government.

We recognise that the critical economic situation in this country, the instability which results therefrom and particularly the the incidence of violence around us, renders it necessary for all the parties in the country to accept co-responsibility as quickly as possible for a return to orderly government.

We are all committed to as speedy a form of transitional government as is humanly possible. We wish to sound a note of warning, however, namely that we regard the formation and adoption of a code of conduct by Codesa as an absolute prerequisite to the establishment of any interim arrangement. Any change in the existing governmental structures we regard as being dependent upon and married to the acceptance by the whole nation of a set of principles which will prevent and abuse of power by those who do not respect the rights of minorities. To us any Constituent Assembly or Council of Leaders without a formal code of conduct and a Bill of Rights to guide it leaves such a body free to do exactly as it wishes in the name of so-called majority rule. We must all be realistic enough to realise that with the present polarisation a great deal of mistrust still prevails in the country. We therefore need those constitutional guarantees to ensure that we all go into this new experiment without fear. But, Mr Chairman, we need time to institute these guarantees, and the setting of unrealistic timetable to effect a hasty transfer of power is something to which we object.

In seeking constitutional guarantees we do not minimise the onerous tasks that lie ahead in the social field to address the enormous backlogs that still exist in our country between the haves and the have-nots. We therefore wish to see any interim government concentrating just as arduously on affirmative action as it may on guarantees for minorities. The latter will be protected by courts

whilst the former must come from a willingness to bind ourselves to reduce the inequities of the past through sheer financial sacrifice and brotherly compassion, the former always within the constraints of the capacity of the economy.

We regard it as vital that any interim arrangement should NOT BE QUICK-FIX SOLUTION. and should therefore accord with the broad constitutional principles on which there is already agreement in Group 2. This progress to date is such, we suggest, that there is at this stage no necessity for either a Constitutional Conference or a Constituent Assembly, both of which could be called in at a later stage to formulate or legitimise the final constitution. Codesa, we suggest, is quite capable of reaching whatever guarantees are necessary to allow a transitional government to operate and to set the principles from which any future Conference or Assembly may not deviate. In this regard we suggest that a distinction be drawn between an ad hoc interim government which prepares the ground and a transitional government that takes the process by measured steps towards the defined constitutional objective.

In this regard we consider decentralisation, regionalism and entrenched devolution of power, whether in a unitary or federal state, a since qua non of any interim or permanent dispensation.