

INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE NATAL/KWAZULU WORK GROUP

OPENING ADDRESS BY MANGOSUTHU GBUBHEHELEZI,
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In my opening remarks I will endeavour to put into perspective the path that the KwaZulu Government has opted for in order to develop its people. I will draw the attention of the members of the Work Group to the statements that were made in the Legislative Assembly as far back as 1980 with regard to the formation of the Buthelezi Commission. These remarks, I think, are equally relevant to the Work Group.

"...we will have to be very patient and understanding in getting Whites in particular to accept that the Commission of Enquiry I am envisaging is not a joint effort between the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and the Natal Provincial Goancil g

In particular the impossibility of confronting the whole South African problem at once is clear. The greatest effect can perhaps be achieved by restricting the focus initially to one region of South Africa. Natal is the most appropriate choice as the region. Firstly, the differing White political interests and party political preferences are most evenly balanced in Natal. Secondly, Natal is the province in which Whites are the smallest minority and in which the dependence on Black labour and public co-operation is greatest. Thirdly, Natal is a province in which the juxtaposition of areas presently under White and Black administrations is so complex and widespread that no single region can be planned or administered without taking the dual administration into agecounts ..

The Commission, while existing as a Black initiative, should give impartial consideration to the prosperity and development of " all groups. It is a Black initiative taken on behalf of all the people of Natal as an example for the rest of the country."

Barlan P1

In his address at the opening of the second plenary session of the Buthelezi Commission, the Chairman ably described the framework of the possible report that the Commission might come up with. Here are his prophetic views.

"As I see the framework of the report it would essentially be a two-tiered report. The first tier would be concerned with recommendations about those developments, economic, planning, educational, social which might be achieved without them necessarily being any fundamental change in the governmental organisations of KwaZulu and Natal. This part of the report would carry recommendations about improvements in systems of interâ\200\224-authority co-operation which could lead to a betterment of the lives of people living in the area Natal/KwaZulu. TE might appear to be a simpler part of the report and it might be expected that in the immediate South African political atmosphere that such recommendations would be more readily acceptable than those involving more fundamental structural change. There are, however, two necessary cautions about recommendations arising from this facet of the report. Firstly, and most obviously, they must not be seen as being necessarily short term, but secondly, and more importantly, they should not be such as to make more difficult the possible recommendations arising in the second-tier of the report. If the recommendations for immediate or medium term improvement were such as to demand the setting up or the entrenchment of organisations which would make the realisation of the second tier recommendations of the Commission more difficult, the Commission must necessarily face the problem as to whether such recommendations were really in the longer term interest of development. The Commission cannot shirk the responsibility of attempting to assess such effects and it should therefore be fully aware of what its second-tier recommendations are before it makes its first-tier proposals so that a conflict of interests can be avoided.

The second-tier of the framework of the report that I am proposing would be concerned with the possible development of fundamental changes in the structural control of the area KwaZulu/Natal and, of course, if such proposals are to be made would also contain the problems associated with the Central Government's interaction with the area KwazZulu/Natal. it s basically in this part of the report that the results of the attitudinal surveys would be discussed although clearly they would have some relevance to some possible first-tier proposals."

Barlan P1

At the function to launch the Buthelezi Commission into the future of Kwazulu and Natal, I made the following remarks:

"Central government policy is now to deal with economic independence and regional inequality by means of a new thrust

for planned decentralisation within a system of formal regional interdependence, called a constellation of states. Here lies a policy for new growth points, perhaps even a new

axis of development here and there. This is essential and the KwaZulu Government will co-operate in any venture to bring

growth nearer to the margins of poverty in our country. Yet we also know that the need for joint planning must go far beyond growth paths and points. Natal/KwaZulu and the

surrounding areas are a mesh of interdependence and at every point on the map the need for integrated development is urgent. Consider that virtually half of Durban's Black population lives in unplanned settlement on a fringe of the city which is formally regarded as marginal, to both Natal and KwaZulu. Our greatest problems, our most urgent needs and our most exciting possibilities often lie in the gaps between formal development plans.

The majority of Natal's Black workers are migrants. How can an economic system prosper and develop its productivity when it cannot be responsive to the community needs of its

employees? I know how mounting land density is robbing the younger migrant contract workers of residential and social security. Our shed economy cannot afford to have the morale

of its labour steadily eroded.

KwaZulu's educational system, severely overstressed, is partly responsible ultimately for the aptitudes and productivity of the emerging labour force in Natal and Transvaal. There has to be reciprocity between supply of and demand for skills. And innovative new strategies are required."

The above remarks, hopefully put the current developments into perspective. The KwaZulu Government and the Natal Provincial Council are, as you know, currently involved in establishing high level links for Natal/KwaZulu. As part of the investigation three workshops were held which were attended by representatives of both authorities. The first two took place in Pietermaritzburg and the final one in Ulundi. Throughout all the discussions a very high priority was given to improving liaison between the two bodies.

Barlan P1

On 6 February 1985 Natal's Executive Committee approved a joint memorandum which had been produced by the Secretary for Economic Affairs in the KwaZulu Government and the Administration's Chief Town and Regional Planner. The KwaZulu Cabinet subsequently approved the document at its meeting on 5 March 1985. In terms of the Memorandum three joint committees have been established - a strategic policy group consisting of Executive Committee and Cabinet Member - a work group comprised of directors of certain NPA Departments and Secretaries of KwaZulu Departments and a Planning Liaison Committee <consisting of members of the Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission and its staff and members of the PCAC Technical Sub-Committee and the staff of the Department of Economic Affairs.

The Policy Group as its name implies will consider broad strategic issues at a regional level. The work group will discuss both strategic issues and issues at a more specific administrative level, while the planning liaison committee will be a forum within which the planning of such areas as Newcastle, Richards Bay, Compensation/Tongaat can be discussed.

The philosophy behind the liaison
In essence the new liaison is based on four premises:

KwaZulu and Natal are inextricably interlinked

In virtually every field which one considers, the linkages are strong and deeply entrenched. They range from the obvious ones such as money flows, people movements and water flows, to the less tangible, but no less important ones, like perceptions of a shared historical experience and feelings that we have a common destiny. The future investigations indicated that the interlinkages will in fact become greater.

In Natal/KwaZulu we face major problems which demand innovative solutions

These problems are both socio-economic and environmental in nature. The major socio-economic issues are unemployment and poverty while the key environmental issue is the systematic reduction in the carrying capacity of the land. Soil erosion is the most obvious manifestation of this environmental trend. Cutting across all these and other issues which have been highlighted is the high rate of population growth and the increasingly rapid movement of people from rural to urban areas.

Barlan P1

We can achieve significantly better results through co-ordinated action

Times of economic difficulty highlight what is in fact an ever present reality - it is absolutely essential that in our region we use our limited human and natural resources in an efficient and rational manner. It is therefore important that unnecessary duplication of effort, conflicting policies and a variety of hindrances in the process of development need to be eliminated or at least reduced to a minimum. It is envisaged that in broad outline, co-ordination could be effected on two levels. Firstly, there could be a search for short-term pragmatic answers to our common problems and other problems which, although separate, may have pervasive effects on our common circumstances. For example, a sharing of computer expertise to solve a restricted but nevertheless important problem in say the education field falls into this category. Secondly there could be a striving to develop a feasible medium to long term joint vision of the growth path and society we wish to have in the region. The longer term strategies required to address the deep-seated problems would no doubt form part of the exercise at this broader level.

The local people should have wider opportunities to solutions to their local problems

Acceptance of this premise does not mean that we see ourselves as separate from the larger South African state and hence not subject to national policies and regulations. Rather, it is the freedom to innovate within broad national guidelines which is desired. This flexibility at the regional level is seen as a necessary ingredient in the ongoing process of solving our regional problems. When one thinks of the self-help approach, one normally thinks of poorer people or communities relying on their own often limited resources to uplift themselves. This is of course a very narrow view of self-help, for it can apply equally well to regional authorities such as . ours. I believe that self-help at this level offers numerous and exciting possibilities. For example, if we can develop a shared vision of our future, if we can explore the opportunities and means available to move towards this future, then I believe we will be able to speak out with one voice to the powers that be. Your role as officials will be crucial in this exercise. You have the ability to make or break it. The responsibility which you bear will, I am sure, be exercised wisely. You have our fullest confidence.

Barlan P1

Conclusion

The improved liaison represents a major initiative within the region as it can have significant long-term consequences, not only for the people in our area but beyond the borders as well. I have heard it said that South Africa is at a crossroads. In some ways it is but in others it is not. In one important way we are beyond the crossroads and we are already starting hesitantly down the path marked "power-sharing and joint decision-making." Certainly the stability of our region and that of South Africa rests on initiatives such as this. There are some who wish our path to be strewn with rocks or even bombs so that we cannot reach our destination. I would not like to lecture you - that would be quite inappropriate - but I would like to emphasize as strongly as I can the need for urgency in your path. It is unrealistic to expect everything to proceed smoothly - there will be rocks, but I believe that with trust, mutual respect and a willingness to give and share in the interests of us all, we will find that our road will be long and rewarding.

This work group has much to do, so I will not detain you for much longer. I would however like to wish you well and declare this meeting open.