

LETTERS

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Moreover, the announcement by respected and recently elected IFP KZN chairperson, Musa Zondi, that, "the peace process itself will be in jeopardy as a result of this selfish act by the ANC", is frustrating, embarrassing and displays naivety within the political arena.

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SIPHIWE GWALA
Pietermaritzburg

• Letter shortened

Against alliance

IN view of the current fluid state of our politics at all levels, following the DA-NNP and ANC-IFP divorces, and the ANC-NNP marriage, the political pundits are already predicting a DA-IFP coalition, if not a merger. As a longstanding admirer of DP and DA policies and principles, I hereby caution the DA against any such incompatible union. Any DA-IFP get-together will be just as short-lived and disastrous as the now defunct DP-NNP "alliance".

Yes, Tony Leon and Roger Burrows, oil and water never mix.

Of course, there is no harm in pragmatic co-operation with any party that supports DA thinking on any issue but mergers and alliances are another kettle of fish. The DA is a national organisation with its support and membership cutting across all ethnic barriers, and is a principled party respecting transparency and liberal values. In contrast, the IFP is a dictatorial body under the supreme command of Dr M. G. Buthelezi, wedded to Zulu royalty, traditional powers, Zulu tribalism and confined to KwaZulu-Natal only.

There are other differences, too.

INBA RABINDRAN PERUMAL
Pietermaritzburg

Floor-crossing

MUCH has appeared on the news and the pages of *The Natal Witness* over the last couple of weeks about the floor-crossing legislation but the only words of wisdom I saw appeared in the July 9 editorial.

I understand it took around 100 000 votes to send Tim Jeebodh and Belinda Scott to provincial parliament. One of those votes was mine. They now have decided that, in fact, I meant to vote for the ANC. How dare they presume that I made a mistake? I do not believe in the policies of the ANC, nor did I err.

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GAIL GROSE
Hilton



Fresh start for Africa

THE formal launch of the African Union amid much pomp and circumstance in Durban this week is undoubtedly a significant event. The Organisation of African Unity, born in the era of decolonisation, has gone and Africa has changed gear. Forty of the continent's 53 presidents and monarchs attended as President Thabo Mbeki, the union's inaugural chairman, declared: "Let us proclaim to the world that this is a continent of democracy and good governance."

Yet amid such noble commitments, the impromptu speech by Libyan maverick Muammar Gaddafi, not exactly himself renowned as a model of democratic propriety, struck a discordant note with its appeal to Mbeki and ex-president Nelson Mandela to "forgive your brother Mugabe".

Ill-conceived as his intervention was, in fact it put a finger on a potential landmine on the promised high road ahead. Whereas the OAU was premised on the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of member states, the AU envisages "peer review". The new policy was officially endorsed by the heads of state in their declaration at the conclusion of the AU's inaugural session. But a vague collective endorsement is not the same as accepting inspection of one's government by one's peers. There has been no signing ceremony for those countries that agree to peer reviews lest leaders who refuse might be embarrassed, and nothing to make subjection to peer review any more than voluntary. Clearly, then, the peer review mechanism has got no teeth. And if it doesn't work, what chance is there that the AU, for all its noble rhetoric and high-sounding principles, will appear to the outside world as any more than another emperor who has got no clothes?

Mbeki's inaugural speech suggested that he plans a more forceful role for South Africa in African affairs. Let us hope and pray that he is more forceful. Mugabe remains his first challenge as a BBC World Service television juxtaposition between ruination in Zimbabwe and pomp and ceremony in Durban reminded viewers world-wide. Mugabe has stolen an election, overturned the rule of law and produced an entirely predictable famine by making farming a criminal offence, displacing 800 000 farm workers and 3 000 farmers.

South Africa's so-called quiet diplomacy exercised up until now has been a dismal failure. If nothing is done soon, if his peers do not seize this nettle and review Mugabe's policies and their consequences, whether he likes it or not, then surely the outside world will dismiss Africa as utterly irredeemable.

THE NATAL WITNESS, THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2002

Pongola valley residents prepare for winter flood

LIFE for drought-stricken Pongola River communities will be easier when the Department of Water Affairs (DWAF) releases 150 million cubic litres of water from the Pongola Dam.

However, the controlled flood has drawn criticism from conservationists who claim it could destroy sensitive and unique floodplain flora and fauna, impact on migratory bird species and lead to massive soil erosion.

Moreover, residents in the arid Makhathini Flats have questioned why the Shemula Water Scheme, a 1995 Presidential Lead Project to install piped water, has not yet materialised. They said the flood is a short-term

measure that does not address the long-term lack of potable water.

Concerns have been raised that the cotton industry will use the sudden water increase to plant cotton. Should this happen, DWAF will be unable to release more water later for fear of wiping out newly planted cotton fields.

Fifty cubic metres a second will be released tomorrow, rising to 800 cubic metres per second by Sunday, then reduced to 10 cubic metres by Monday. In all 153 million cubic litres will be released and the Pongola Dam level will fall from 96% full to 89%.

Natal University's Donovan Kotze warned that flood-dependent fish

species could be affected by unseasonal flooding. "There are around 90 pans on the flood plain, which are home to flood-dependent fish. These require flooding when they are breeding in summer months, not winter."

It is a sentiment echoed by KZN Ezemvelo/Wildlife's Dr Robert Kyle who said winter flooding affects migratory birds and increases erosion.

"Winter flooding is unnatural. It is the old debate between the agriculturalists who want water in winter and the environmentalists who don't."

DWAF's KZN regional director, Joe Hansmann, acknowledged that the timing is wrong, but said people are

desperate for water. "This should have happened last summer but the Mozambique government indicated that they did not need more water after their own flooding. We would rather delay until October but the lack of late summer rains this year has made the situation desperate."

Pongola Flood Plain Water Committee member Zeph Nyathi asked why grandmothers have to walk 20 kms to fetch water. "Livestock is dying. We are patient but enough is enough."

KZN Environmental Affairs MEC Narend Singh told the Witness that he will look into the matter if the community faxes their grievances to him.

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THE NATAL WITNESS, THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2002

AU launch ends on note of optimism

AFRICAN leaders wrapped up the inaugural summit of the new African Union yesterday, promising to combine their strengths and expose weaknesses in a bid to end misery on the continent.

They laid to rest the Organisation of African Unity — which was widely regarded as ineffective — and brought to life the AU with the power to tackle conflict and poverty head-on.

After describing the advent of the AU earlier as a giant step for the continent, South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki told the closing meeting in Durban: "The small baby will grow and become a strong person."

There is a new way of doing things, he later told reporters in his capacity as AU chairman.

Evidence of this is the New

Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) and the AU's endorsement of a Peace and Security Council with the authority to help stem war, conflict and other human rights abuses.

This council is a major departure from the old style of the OAU, which attached overriding importance to sovereignty and non-interference.

"The union, in certain instances, can intervene in various countries if various things go wrong. That is very new," Mbeki said.

Nepad addresses the issues of political and economic governance by setting standards by which Africans can judge themselves, Mbeki said.

The economic recovery plan is a key programme of the AU.

It provides for a development

partnership between Africa and richer countries, with a condition that participating countries on the continent practise good governance.

The plan includes a voluntary peer review mechanism that allows for sanctions against countries that fail to adhere to Nepad governance standards.

Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo does not foresee any problems with the voluntary nature of peer reviewing, or that countries would reject criticism from other states.

"You are in a club and if that club says these are the rules of the club of the game, you have to obey it."

Obasanjo said the review mechanism is like a doctor's check-up. It would not look good if a country does not have a doctor at all.

Obasanjo, along with Mbeki, Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade and Algeria's Abdelaziz Bouteflika, are the chief architects of Nepad.

Closing the inaugural meeting yesterday, Mbeki said expectations of the AU and Nepad are high.

"People expect the changes to which we are committed. The rest of the world also waits hopefully to see us do the things we want to do," Mbeki said.

— Sapa.

Freedom Front praises Mbeki

CAPE TOWN — President Thabo Mbeki must be congratulated on his leadership during the formation of the African Union, Freedom Front leader Dr Pieter Mulder said yesterday.

However, there are hurdles in the way of the AU's success.

The AU should have followed the EU and started with "only the top African states".

"Other states could then aspire

[to joining]," Mulder said.

Mbeki's ideals cannot be faulted: "His struggle will be to sell them to older leaders."

Mulder said the world will not be easily convinced that Robert Mugabe and Muammar Gaddafi believe in these ideals.

"With the old leaders, the risk is that all their political baggage will be draped round the neck of the AU," Mulder said. — Sapa.

SOWETAN Thursday July 11 2002

For a better future

THE 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which laid the foundation for the coming World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg next month, helped clarify some of the world's complex problems.

The 50 000 delegates, including 103 heads of state and governments from across the world, emerged from the Rio summit with a common understanding that environmental conservation and economic and social development are not incompatible.

The Agenda 21 document shows that human wellbeing depends on the favourable interaction between environmental health, economic development and quality of life – all, when integrated, define the term "sustainable development".

Though it is not a convention nor legally binding, Agenda 21 places a strong moral obligation on all governments to implement it, and calls for the strengthening of all role-players in achieving sustainable development.

The 65 000 delegates expected to attend the summit in Johannesburg from August 26 to September 4 will, among other things, review some of the social issues at the root of many environmental challenges.

These include poverty, economic disparities and human health.

However, there is debate in environmental circles about whether the cause of the environment itself has been significantly advanced since Rio.

The director of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature-South Africa (IUCN-SA), Salim Fakir, believes the Rio summit was important because "if we didn't have it, it would have been worse".

"That's the positive of it. The negative is that not much has been done to advance the cause of the environment.

"In South Africa there have been a lot of changes within the context of Agenda 21, but more still has to be done," says Fakir.

But Endangered Wildlife Trust director John Ledger remains convinced that Agenda 21 is a "shopping list" for things that the nations of the world were supposed to do.

"The human population has rocketed, and to deliver all the things contained in Agenda 21 appears impossible. This, coupled with the greed of rich nations; has put pressure on the environment," says Ledger.

But he agrees that South Africa has fared much better than other parts of Africa, where political instability remains an obstacle in advancing the cause of the environment to the benefit of the people.

In Mozambique, says Ledger, there is great opportunity to do things, because stability has been established after many years of civil war.

The same does not apply in other countries

The World Summit on Sustainable Development is the 'best chance in a generation' to deal with global environmental challenges, writes environmental reporter **Russel Molefe**

such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe and many other African countries where "environmental terms are still being dictated by people who are hungry".

"Where there is political instability, the environment is always at the bottom of the agenda," says Ledger.

It may be for this reason that Kingsley Amaoko, executive secretary of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Africa, highlighted the "second wasting away" of HIV-Aids during the inaugural summit of the African Union in Durban this week.

"From time immemorial, humanity has managed to pass down an environment from one generation to the next that has had promise for the future.

"If present trends continue, our inheritors will receive a markedly worse environment and much worse prospects," warned Amaoko.

He pointed to the New Partnership for Africa's Development's heads of state and government implementation committee's "Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance" as all-important because "our stakes override those of others".

Though South Africa has made great strides in advancing the cause of the environment – especially in biodiversity, planning, coordination and public awareness – environmental injustices are still the biggest challenge.

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism agrees that pollution and exposure to dangerous chemicals "seems to be the price we pay for development, but the hazards can be kept to a minimum if managed correctly".

It also agrees that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions in South Africa, as measured per capita, compare with those of developed countries, and the country could still be hit hard by the resultant climate change.

At least South Africa has now acceded to the Kyoto Protocol – one of the by-products flowing from Rio,

Kyoto requires industrialised countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. South Africa is the 52nd country to ratify the protocol, agreed to in Japan in 1997.

But in many cases, the environmental injustices faced by people in Africa are not of their own making. They can be traced back to the unwillingness by highly industrialised nations to abide by conventions.

The floods that devastated Mozambique two years ago were blamed by scientists, though not all, on climate changes induced by greenhouse gas emissions.

This may be one of the reasons Amaoko spoke of the need for rich nations to fund accelerated implementation of the key agreements reached in the past on climate, desertification and biodiversity.

"The rich countries are main polluters and the main cause of global climate change. They must be held to account. I believe we need commitment from key governments to back the Kyoto Protocol and other vital agreements," Amaoko said.

In Bali, Indonesia, where the final UN preparatory meeting for the Johannesburg summit was held, some non-governmental organisations branded the United States, Canada and other developed countries the "axis of environmental evil" for refusing to ratify Kyoto.

But Ledger this week expressed unhappiness with the "insulting terms used to describe countries that we disagree with. It's just not in the interest of anyone if the cause of the environment is to be advanced".

The words may be inappropriate but developed countries should not be allowed to build their economies at the expense of the environmental and social conditions of the poor nations.

The summit in Johannesburg, among many other issues, will try to find a solution that puts the environment on an equal footing with economic and social development.

As British prime minister Tony Blair put it earlier, the Johannesburg summit is the "best chance in a generation" to deal with global environmental challenges.



Hopes and fears about HIV-Aids

TWENTY years after the discovery of Aids, the fight against the epidemic is far from over. Sufferers, particularly those in Africa, look at the battle with mixed feelings of hope and fear.

The fact that after 20 years there is still no cure is in itself reason enough for despondency. It also begs the question: had Aids been a rich man's disease would there still be no cure? Probably not.

Even if a cure were found, it would not be affordable to those who desperately need it in the poor countries.

There is a glimmer of hope, though, that a vaccine – not a cure – will be found within five years. Hopefully this will be affordable to all.

Still, a vaccine would merely help maximise the effects of other preventative methods such as condoms and abstinence from sex.

The worst disservice African governments, including ours, can do now is to repeat past mistakes. Having failed for a range of reasons to act early enough against the disease, our guard should not be lowered. Aids awareness campaigns should be stepped up.

After all, the disease is proving to be worse than war itself. New infections in the US are fuelling fears where the disease was thought to be on the retreat. Similar fears are being expressed about Uganda – hitherto an African success story in the anti-Aids war.

Worse, hopes that the disease will level off in the worst-affected regions are at risk of being dashed.

As if this is not enough, those following reports from the 14th International Aids conference in Barcelona, Spain, have been told another depressing piece of news about the disease: it is becoming more resistant to half of the anti-Aids drugs, which have alleviated sufferers' pain (not cured them of the disease).

Apart from being hideously expensive, some of these drugs require a sophisticated infrastructure to administer and can, at times, have disastrous side-effects.

So, if it is this bad, what should sufferers do? Nothing, really, other than staying positive. They must not give in to hopelessness. Even the poor can afford this, particularly with caring governments ruling them.

But none of this means that governments should refuse treatment to those who want (or need) it – regardless of how dangerous the side-effects can be.

Also, none of this should absolve rich countries and pharmaceutical companies from the moral responsibility of funding and expediting the search for a vaccine that will be affordable to all.

Fresh hopes are being raised about new anti-Aids drugs that can stop the disease's spread. While this might take years to arrive, particularly in Africa, all of us bear a moral responsibility to remain vigilant against this enemy.

Echo

Thursday, July 11, 2002

Hiccup at AU launch after Gaddafi tirade

DURBAN — In a far from smooth launch, Africa's new political union rallied after Libya's maverick leader Muammar Gaddafi grabbed centre stage with a trademark anti-Western outburst to begin the task of healing a continent ravaged by war and poverty.

The African Union is determined not to fall prey to the infighting and financial woes that plagued its predecessor.

"The time has come for Africa to take her rightful place in global affairs," President Thabo Mbeki said on Tuesday at the launch of the African Union, successor body to the long ineffectual Organisation of African Unity. Mbeki is chairman of the AU for its first year.

There was virtually no mention in keynote speeches of the Aids pandemic ravaging the continent, the food crisis gripping southern Africa or the political tension in Zimbabwe.

Mbeki called a special or "extraordinary" AU summit after Gaddafi called for radical amendments to the AU's founding charter to be held before the AU's next planned summit in Mozambique in a year's time.

"That has been sorted out. It will be held within six months," Mbeki's spokesman said.

But a summit communique on Tuesday night by the OAU/AU secretariat made no mention of the meeting.

Gaddafi wants Africa to be a single state with one army and believes the serving AU chairman, Mbeki, should move to the body's headquarters in Ethiopia.

His ideas are likely to be ridiculed in Western capitals.

"It is clear they are way off the path if they are thinking of indulging in this kind of pie-in-the-sky," said William Zartman, an African specialist at Johns Hopkins University in the U.S.

"I think the Africans are romping down the path to ludicrousness and undermining the serious attention that is being given by the (President George W.) Bush administration to political and economic reform in Africa."

The AU upheld an controversial OAU policy on Madagascar, refusing to recognise millionaire businessman Marc Ravalomanana as president, saying his administration took power unconstitutionally and calling for fresh elections.

Ex-president Didier Ratsiraka, now in Paris, had held power for more than two decades on the island of 16 million people. Ratsiraka fled to France last week after the U.S., France, Germany and China announced they would work with Ravalomanana.

At their meetings on Monday, the heads of state approved the creation of a Peace and Security Council that will have greater powers to tackle conflicts than its predecessor in the OAU.

Top-level talks continued into the early hours yesterday to try to resolve one of Africa's worst conflicts. Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Congolese President Joseph Kabila gathered at talks chaired by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and in the presence of Mbeki and his deputy Jacob Zuma.

One Congolese official said Annan urged them to show some flexibility if they want to resolve the conflict. — Reuters.

ANC-IFP marriage turns sour

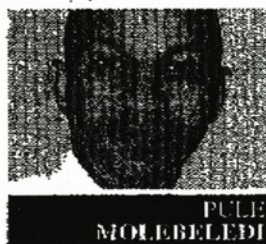
PERHAPS it is time for the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) to seek a divorce, which will be welcome as long as it is not at the expense of the people of KwaZulu-Natal who have enjoyed relative peace of late after enduring years of violence.

Despite what the leaders are trying to portray, it is no longer a question of whether the tentative relationship will end but when.

This should come as no surprise because there has been no love lost between the two former adversaries since they began sharing a bed in 1999. Disagreements fuelled by deep-seated mistrust have driven the relationship to the cliff's edge.

The decision on who will govern the province will be decided by the outcome of the legal challenge to the defection laws made by the United Democratic Movement (UDM).

The ANC appears determined to ditch the IFP and jump into bed with the New National Party. The NNP's support, coupled with that of the Minority Front and a few defectors lured from the IFP, Democratic Alliance (DA) and UDM, will give it



PULE MOLEBELEDI

the premiership of the province.

The IFP, on the other hand, is trying to fight this off by wooing the DA, with which it has a co-operation agreement at local government level. Such is the quicksand that characterises SA's

political landscape.

Many will argue it is premature to speak of an end to the IFP and ANC co-operation. But the reality is that the two organisations are not seeing eye to eye in KwaZulu-Natal, which is bad for the quality of governance in the province.

From the beginning theirs was a marriage of convenience, forced on them after KwaZulu-Natal failed to choose an outright winner in SA's second democratic elections in 1999: the IFP won 40,45% of support to the ANC's 39,77%.

Their agreeing to co-operate was hailed because it heralded much-needed peace, and active steps were agreed to consolidate the uneasy relationship. These included a joint address to IFP and ANC supporters by the parties' presidents.

At provincial level, the parties were to draft a constitution, which would, among other things, give

them equal seats in the legislature.

Leaders were also expected to tone down emotive rhetoric. Only a few of these steps, including token appearances at each other's national conferences, appear to have been carried out, even partially.

ANC leader Thabo Mbeki and his IFP counterpart Mangosuthu Buthelezi went to the East Rand and addressed the parties' supporters, spreading the message of peace. The ritual was not undertaken with the same zest in KwaZulu-Natal, where it was needed most.

Despite increasing differences and tensions among provincial leaders, there has not been a return to violence in the province. Instead, KwaZulu-Natal's politics appear to have come of age and public disagreement among leaders has not resulted in loss of life, which was not so in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Take, for example, the hotly disputed issue of the province's dual capitals, Maritzburg and Ulundi. The IFP lost the battle for the legislative seat of KwaZulu-Natal to the ANC's choice of Maritzburg without loss of life. This is despite the palpable tension this issue had generated in the province.

There should be no denying that things are not the same in KwaZulu-Natal as they have been in the recent past.

The national leaderships of the ANC and the IFP enjoy a relatively better and cordial relationship at national level than is the case in the province, and have been streaming to the province in an attempt to soothe relations.

The measures by the parties' national leaders have managed only to paper over the widening cracks because the provincial leaders are still having a go at each other.

The ANC accused the IFP recently of abusing public facilities for party-political activities, a claim the IFP dismissed as "fantastical nonsense". It said its leader, Buthelezi, was one of only two ministers paying rent for their homes in Cape Town.

While the coalition has brought peace, accountability issues have escaped the watchful eye of the public. Errant behaviour by MECs and public officials has attracted little attention, a common feature of rule by a coalition government.

The prospect of one of the two parties sitting as the official opposition promises better things because KwaZulu-Natal needs a strong government and an equally strong opposition. If this were to occur successfully, without resorting to violence, the province will have come a long way from a past of conflict.

■ Molebeledi is Political Editor.

Zimbabwe's land policy sure recipe for famine

passive humanitarian aid is needed as agriculture withers under Mugabe

Iries Botha

COMMERCIAL farmers in Zimbabwe have been forbidden to farm on pain of incarceration, states the latest directive of President Robert Mugabe.

The warning is tantamount to issuing a starvation directive to the population since commercial agricultural production, and not subsistence farming, feeds the people.

A Democratic Alliance (DA) delegation to Zimbabwe led by Tony Moyo learnt that this situation has confirmed the worst fears of an impending catastrophe.

The United Nations (UN) World Food Programme office in Harare noted that it would be impossible to avert the crisis. It is estimated that, in Zimbabwe alone, between 10 million and 16 million people will face starvation during the next six to nine months.

An estimated 1.8-million tons of grain, representing a 75% food gap, have to be imported.

This food gap — the difference between minimum nutritional requirements and what is available — is the biggest in recent world history. 50 years ago in Ethiopia the gap was a mere 10% by comparison.

Dan Maluleke, DA spokesman on land affairs, marvelled at Mugabe's effrontery in begging for aid abroad while forbidding production of food.

It is generally believed drought is a cause of the crisis, but this is simply not the case. Droughts are endemic to southern Africa, have long since been allowed for by rational agricultural practices and have never caused regional famine.

The present human tragedy is man-made through the self-inflicted folly of the Zimbabwean regime at has turned a regional breadbasket into a begging bowl.

The UN office in Harare was opened in 1997 as a procurement centre for food distribution elsewhere. As a result of the policy of land reform (PF) this has now been turned to the largest food aid centre in Africa, if not in the world.

John Makumbe of Transparency International describes the land policy as the "repeasantisation" of the Zimbabwean society. It was initiated

FOOD SECURITY IN ZIMBABWE

"The realities of this century are very different from the past. Just since independence in 1980 the population of Zimbabwe has doubled. Subsistence production can no longer feed the population."

in a bid to regain flagging popular support while simultaneously removing one of the economic support bases of popular opposition.

The move displays a callous disregard — or at best complete ignorance — of the disastrous consequences for food security.

The realities of this century are very different from the past. Just since independence in 1980 the population of Zimbabwe has doubled. Subsistence production can no longer feed the population. Urbanised society needs commercial production for its nutritional needs.

The new settlers represented by well-off political insiders and so-called war veterans simply do not possess the necessary skills to farm, as our visit dramatically revealed. The fertile Mazoe Valley not far from Harare is a snapshot of the larger picture in Zimbabwe.

In just two short years this remarkable breadbasket has been

turned into a begging bowl. Most of the infrastructure such as dams, silos, orchards and horticultural units developed since independence in 1980, and many farms acquired since then, have been confiscated without compensation.

Farms have been occupied by the likes of the governor of the province, the mayor of Bindura, the wife of the chief of the army and the Zimbabwe ambassador to the UN.

Even farmers' household goods are included in this theft. The stolen implements, fertiliser, seed and fuel have been utilised to plant some wheat. The yield from this will be neither sufficient nor sustainable. We witnessed overflowing irrigation dams next to which oranges were dropping off the trees and orchards were dying for want of watering.

Of particular concern to us has been the targeting of South African-owned farming enterprises. We visited a project where an irrigation

dam was built in 1986 at a cost of R3m, enabling the transformation of virgin bush into 2 000ha of irrigated fields. We saw irrigation fields overgrown with weeds and returning to bush.

Unlike the governments of Italy, Holland and Germany, SA's government has done nothing to date to protect the interests of its nationals. The result is that the management and staff of these farms have been chased off, dispersed and added to the unemployed. The rural schools set up and maintained by commercial farming enterprises have closed down, which must eventually result in a lost generation like the South African experience of 1976.

The belief that the present land policy, described as "indigenisation", can benefit the indigenous population is a fallacy. The policy requires replacing 4 000 commercial farmers by untrained new settlers. Even if 100 settlers replaced each commercial farmer, only 400 000 people would be accommodated out of 12-million people.

This will be a reduction in the total number of people sustained by agriculture since it is estimated that 1.5-million people formerly employed by commercial farmers will be displaced.

In addition to reduced agricultural output must be added the reduction of industrial activity dependent on commercial agriculture. The net result will be a meltdown of the economy in general and large-scale unemployment.

An immediate reversal of the present policy could return the production of annual crops to previous levels quite soon. It is, however, a different matter with regard to the production of orchards and horticulture where a time lag of up to 10 years is involved. Likewise the replacement of entrepreneurial and managerial skills, once lost, will require considerable time.

The DA has been gathering the names of South African citizens adversely affected by the land policies of Zimbabwe and is in the process of providing these to SA's government. It is government's duty to protect the interests of its citizens.

■ Botha is leader of the DA in the Free State and the party's spokesman on agriculture.

Activists demand cheap drugs

Zachie Achmat of Treatment Action Campaign in video appeal for generic competition

Patricia Heaney

Reuters

BARCELONA — Activists demanded cheap generic drugs for HIV/AIDS sufferers yesterday so poor countries can launch a sustainable offensive against the spreading epidemic that has already killed 24-million people.

Zackie Achmat, of SA's Treatment Action Campaign, was too ill to attend the 14th International AIDS Conference. But in a video address, he accused wealthy countries and drug firms of not doing enough to help infected people like himself.

Despite price cuts, drugs that have drastically reduced deaths from AIDS in wealthy countries are still too expensive for people in developing countries.

"What is required is generic competition, therefore we appeal to all the brand name drug companies to issue nonrestrictive voluntary licences," Achmat told the conference.

"This will eliminate the unnecessary conflict between the activist community, governments and drug companies." He said that companies might get a 3% to 4% royalty payment in return.

SA's Stubbs Maluleke of the Township AIDS Project of SA attended.

Only about 230 000 people in poor countries had access to antiretrovirals at the end of last year. Nearly half of them were in Brazil, where the government has ignored complaints about patents from drug makers to promote use of generics.

British relief group Oxfam issued research on Uganda showing it was only the arrival of generic competition from India's Cipla that had brought down the cost of AIDS medicines.

Five western drug firms pledged price cuts in May 2000, but prices did not start falling until the arrival of copycat Indian drugs in October 2000. Since then, prices in Uganda have fallen as much as 97%, said Oxfam policy adviser Mohga Smith.

Activists trashed the European Commission's stand yesterday demanding the European Union contribute more to the United Nations' Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

They spray-painted "Shame" on the counter, scattered leaflets on the floor, and plastered the booth with stickers saying "Where is the \$10bn?"

Contributions to the fund so far fall short of the \$10bn goal.

US Health and Human Services secretary Tommy Thompson was the target of demonstrators on Tuesday as



SA's Stubbs Maluleke, left, of the Township AIDS Project holds a joint media conference with fellow countryman Dr Phillip Coetzer at the International AIDS Conference in Barcelona.

Picture: AP

they drowned out his speech in protest at US' level of funding.

Anthony Fauci, a leading AIDS researcher and director of the US Na-

tional Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said the fact there was no cure for AIDS was no excuse not to treat people.

BUSINESS DAY, Thursday, July 11 2002

Banks and HIV/AIDS

Talks at the Banking Council on a reinsurance scheme that would cover banks against the risk of people living with HIV/AIDS defaulting on their home loans are a welcome sign that the industry is taking the AIDS issue seriously.

This is not surprising — already banks are beginning to feel the financial squeeze and damage to their reputations when they repossess houses, only to discover that the breadwinners have died of AIDS, leaving only the orphans who are being turned out of their homes.

But it is not clear that the way to go is a new national scheme to which all mortgage holders would contribute and which would probably require some form of government guarantee.

The real problem is that faced by low-income home owners. The more affluent have little problem securing mortgages and, unless they are already HIV positive, can take out the life and disability insurance banks usually require, at premiums they can afford.

SA's banks are well aware they need to finance homes for low-income earners, but it is a problem that, for the most part, they have yet to crack. Microloans aside, few banks are taking on the risk of larger, longer term loans in the low-income market. Pension fund-backed home

loans are taking off but have their own risks, especially for borrowers.

The point though is that AIDS is not the only reason — and possibly not even the main reason at this stage — that low-income borrowers struggle to get bank mortgages. Retrenchment is still probably much more of a risk factor. And where retrenched workers struggle to find jobs in the formal economy again, those with HIV/AIDS can be treated.

The evidence is that effective treatment, properly administered, could return them to their jobs so that they could resume their bond repayments and keep their families housed — which is why the not-for-profit Home Loan Guarantee Company has linked its new HIV/AIDS insurance product to a treatment and education programme.

It is in the area of HIV/AIDS education and treatment that government should focus its efforts — not on assisting banks with one particular financial risk. Would a guarantee not give the banks an incentive to declare as many defaults as possible to be AIDS related?

The best insurance against financial risk from HIV/AIDS would be a concerted government effort to extend antiretroviral treatment to as many low-income people as possible in effective treatment programmes.

BUSINESS DAY, Thursday, July 11 2002

Fight the good fight

IF AFRICANS were Europeans, they would take note of the launch in Durban this week of the African Union and then go to sleep on the matter for the next 40 or so years before taking another peek at the AU's progress.

That is about how slow this is all going to be. The first inklings of the European Union, as a trade association focusing on trade in steel and basic commodities, emerged in the early sixties. Currency unions, political unions, open borders and continental parliaments were simply not discussed.

Of course, in the minds of the French and German intellectuals, business leaders and politicians that drove the EU, there was the burning desire never to go to war again. They had, so to speak, a motive.

So do the African leaders, or at least some of them, who assembled in Durban this week to shut down the Organisation of African Unity, and reopen it as the African Union.

The motive of leaders like Thabo Mbeki, Olusegun Obasanjo and Festus Mogae of Botswana is simply to escape, as soon as possible, the ruinous political and economic reputation brought upon Africa and the OAU by the despots it counts as "leaders", who include Robert Mugabe, Muammar Gaddafi, Daniel arap Moi, Charles Taylor and others.

Of course, none of these psychopaths now goes away because the AU has been formed. In fact, they will make it their business to twist and deform it. But the intention of the African democrats is clear. They want to build an institution, open, effective and democratic, that can transform Africa. To the extent that its programme is already set in Mbeki's and Obasanjo's New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) the AU can count itself lucky. Nepad is developing into a credible and solid piece of work and is a credit to its originators.

The important thing for Africans and the rest of the world now is to be patient. Mbeki, in the face of some devious lobbying by the Libyan

leader, has secured the presidency of the AU for the first year. That is not a long time. If the AU presidency is to revolve annually, as the EU's does, then SA will next be president in 52 years' time. Equatorial Guinea will have a year at the helm. So will Somalia and Zimbabwe. Clearly, the presidency is not the place in which to invest much hope.

The thing is to keep trying to do the right thing. A parliament must be formed. A standards authority. Borders should be opened. Mechanisms to censure errant members and to enforce responsible economic and political conduct have to be designed, discussed, agreed to and implemented. It will take ages, just like it has in Europe.

Mbeki is the right person for this task, though how he will maintain his influence after one year is not clear. But he is a methodical, almost plodding, African visionary with the right values. It will be easy for local critics to snipe at him if things in the AU or Nepad go wrong, but it may often be unfair.

Our only regret, and it is not a new one regarding Mbeki, is the distance he keeps from people. While Africa needs his vision, it also needs a larger-than-life figure capable of speaking directly to its people. Mbeki, with the best will in the world, cannot. He will be effective in the smoke-filled rooms of power. But not on the streets.

Perhaps that task will fall to another leader at another time. Perhaps this is too early on in the process anyway. But an African Union need not be a whimsy provided people like Mbeki are prepared to fight for it and for the right democratic values. The moment they retreat from that, the hope will fade.

What happened in Durban is a very big deal. Remember the smirks of Gaddafi, of Mugabe, at the summit. They are the enemy here. Mbeki knows it, and we should know it. Mbeki's fight to overcome the insidious influence on African politics of men such as them should be supported by all South Africans.

BUSINESS DAY, Thursday, July 11 2002

State under fire for delay in releasing AIDS grant

Kerry Cullinan*Health E-News Service*

PRESSURE is mounting against government for continuing to delay a \$72m grant to KwaZulu-Natal from the Global Fund to fight HIV, TB and malaria.

Speaking at the World AIDS conference in Barcelona yesterday, Global Fund director Richard Feachem said the fund was "concerned" by the delay. "It is incredibly important that states, provinces and local governments can seek funds from the Global Fund. In SA this has proved difficult. We hope and expect that this will be resolved quickly internally in favour of KwaZulu-Natal. If not, we will enter into negotiations with Pretoria to see what we can do to unblock the blockages," said Feachem.

The Treatment Action Campaign's Mark Heywood said his organisation also wanted an explanation from Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang about why she was delaying the grant, which was announced in April.

The grant has been stalled as government was unhappy that the money did not go through the national co-ordinating mechanism. According to the fund's rules, all applications should be agreed on by an inclusive group of stakeholders constituted in such a co-ordinating mechanism.

Government's head of HIV/AIDS, Nono Simelela, said at the time she was unsure why the fund had approved a grant for KwaZulu-Natal. "KwaZulu-Natal wrote to the fund and withdrew its application after in principle agreeing to channel all applications to the fund through the SA national AIDS council," said Simelela.

However, the fund said it had decided that "sub-national proposals are eligible for funding, provided they receive endorsement of the co-ordinating mechanism.... The provincial co-ordinating mechanism from KwaZulu-Natal, therefore, has been asked to co-ordinate its proposal with that of the mechanism".

BUSINESS DAY, Thursday, July 11 2002

DA wants disciplinary action against Masetlha

THE Democratic Alliance (DA) called yesterday for disciplinary action to be taken against former home affairs director-general Billy Masetlha, alleging he misled Parliament by providing false information in reply to a parliamentary question. DA spokesman Mike Waters said: "This came to light when, in an unprecedented move, Home Affairs Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi contradicted his own director-general's written reply by adding information of his own." In a written reply to a question on the cost of annual strategic planning sessions, "Masetlha said this amounted to R360 000 for the 2002 session". However, Buthelezi said it was R360 000, said Waters. Masetlha, who has been redeployed to the president's office as President Thabo Mbeki's adviser, was not available for comment yesterday. Sapa



Billy Masetlha

Thursday, July 11, 2002

EF AS BROTHER LEADER LEAVES DURBAN

Gaddafi roadshow moves on

JOHN BATTERSBY
& BEAUREGARD TROMP

NATIONAL security personnel will be heaving a collective sigh of relief – and release days of pent-up anger – when the Muammar Gaddafi roadshow leaves Durban after near-catastrophic encounters with the heavily armed entourage of the Libyan leader.

And Durbanites will no longer be puzzled by sudden interruptions of their cellphone conversations as large convoys of vehicles pass by. The Libyan president's security detail consisting of several dozens of operatives will take a special jamming device installed in one of his vehicles with them when they leave the country.

Col Gaddafi is scheduled to depart for Mozambique after leaving his colourful mark before, during and after the launch of the African Union.

On more than one occasion proceedings had to be halted while the Brother Leader railed against the West, Africa's new development plan and other obsessions of the moment.

Security personnel of all colours and departments had to bear a special brunt. One protested: "He works totally above the law. They came here with the attitude that Gaddafi is the 'Golden Leader' and they as Libyans are above all of us."

Another, who was part of a tense stand-off between South African and Libyan security personnel on Saturday, said: "There was almost a war here. There were about 40 of us against almost 400 of them. We were totally outnumbered and outgunned, and nobody would back us."

South African security officials had grounded about 60 armoured vehicles belonging to Gaddafi. Their ostensible purpose was to provide a safe return by road for the Libyan leader through Africa. But SA government officials feared that he would use the vehicles to visit black townships in a bid to steal the limelight from Nepad founder and first AU chairman, President Thabo Mbeki.

Yesterday morning one of Gaddafi's planes was grounded

some of their baggage to be searched and said it belonged to 'the Golden Leader'," said the security source.

As the situation became tense the South African contingent called in back-up and moments later deputy minister of foreign affairs Aziz Pahad arrived in a bid to defuse the situation. Shortly thereafter the minister sent a fax instructing security personnel to release everything to the Libyans.

Although the Libyans were issued with permits for 21 AK-47 assault rifles, when the guns were checked in at a Durban beachfront hotel they had multiplied to 48.

Protocol allows for four firearms to be carried by the president's personal detail although special permits are sometimes issued for extra armaments. Once a foreign leader is in South Africa his security is regarded as the responsibility of the South African president.

Another near calamity was when heads of state convened for a Nepad meeting and there was a scuffle between local security forces and the Libyan bodyguard contingent.

"He jeopardised the security here and now he's going to jeopardise the security of all the civilians all the way to Mozambique."

Although the travel arrangements for Gaddafi are being kept a closely guarded secret, insiders reveal that he plans to take a road trip through Messina to Harare and from there travel all the way to Libya on a self-promotional tour.

Libyan officials declined to comment. – *Independent Foreign Service*



MUAMMAR GADDAFI
'Golden Leader'

in Mozambique after the discovery of rocket-propelled grenade launchers on board the aircraft.

Gaddafi arrived with two Boeing 707 airplanes and two more planes including an Antonov, the second largest cargo plane in the world. An initial search of some of the cargo turned up 27 submachine guns.

Along with a phalanx of vehicles and armaments, Gaddafi also brought a container ship filled with goat carcasses and two 46-seater buses.

"Each vehicle was packed to capacity and we even found \$6 million (R600 million) in hard cash in one car," said the South African officer.

"They point-blank refused for

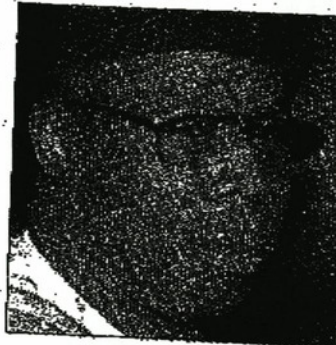
Obasanjo upbeat after talks with Mugabe

PETER FABRICIUS
& BASILDON PETA

NIGERIAN President Olusegun Obasanjo said he had been encouraged by a meeting he had in Durban with Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe to discuss the faltering political reconciliation talks between the ruling Zanu-PF and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change.

However, MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai remains pessimistic about the chances of persuading Mugabe to back down in his clamp-down on opponents in Zimbabwe.

"We are making progress. Maybe not as much as we would like," Obasanjo said about his hour-long meeting with Mugabe which took place on the fringes



OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
'Making progress'

of the summit of the new African Union launched on Tuesday.

Obasanjo said at a press briefing that the meeting had taken place in a better atmosphere than had existed since the

Commonwealth troika met in London earlier this year to suspend Zimbabwe from the organisation.

Obasanjo, President Mbeki and Australian Prime Minister Howard formed a troika to decide what to do with Zimbabwe after Commonwealth observers determined that the March presidential elections were not free and fair.

Obasanjo said he had reported on the outcome of his meeting to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan who was as a result eager to meet Mugabe.

Mugabe's spokesman George Charamba said later Mugabe had been unable to meet Annan who had already left Durban for the Sudan but that the two men would probably speak later.

Tsvangirai said he would wait to get the details of the substantive issues discussed between Obasanjo and Mugabe before making a firm comment.

He said he was, however, pessimistic about the chances of Mugabe reforming into a reasonable leader.

The best option was for African leaders to exert pressure on the ageing Zimbabwe leader to re-run the disputed March presidential election.

Although they did not formally put Zimbabwe on the agenda of the launch of the AU, Tsvangirai said it was good that the leaders had "marginalised" Mugabe by not giving him any prominent role at the summit. — *Independent Foreign Service*

THE MERCURY
Thursday, July 11, 2002

Prison officers to fight corruption

THABO THULO

AMID mounting evidence emerging at the Jali Commission of inquiry into corruption in South Africa's prisons, the Department of Correctional Services has launched a countrywide anti-corruption campaign.

Today, the Minister of Correctional Services, Mr Ben Skosana, together with his national commissioner, Mr Linda Mti, will conduct an anti-corruption workshop at Durban's Westville Prison.

The first such workshop was held on June 28 at Bloemfontein's now notorious Grootvlei Prison where prisoners made a video showing shocking evidence of sex, drug-dealing and corruption at the institution.

Westville Prison itself hit the headlines in February when evidence emerged before the Jali Commission that drugs, alcohol and blue movies were freely available over the prison's kitchen counter.

Evidence was also led that an inmate at the prison managed to father a child while in custody, courtesy of bribes to corrupt warders.

The Jali Commission was established by President Thabo Mbeki to probe corruption, maladministration and nepotism in prisons.

Mr Vusi Shabalala, provincial spokesman for the department, recently admitted that his department had received bad publicity and the workshops were an effort to rectify the situation.

He said the workshop would be attended by among others, prison officials, prison heads, section heads and provincial heads.

End of municipal strike in sight

VERNON MCHUNU

THE biggest municipal strike in South Africa's recent history, which has been raging on for more than a week, looks set to come to an end soon with the disgruntled trade union expected to accept a lesser wage offer than its initial demands.

Well-placed union sources described as a victory that the employer body, the South African Local Government Association (Salga), could agree to a 9% salary increase for lowest paid workers and an 8% offer to those earning above R3 000 a month.

The South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) and Salga have been at loggerheads over the union's demand of 10% across the board.

Salga offered 8% for every

employee and vowed it would not budge, sparking anger from the workers who then downed tools starting from last Tuesday.

Mr Rio Nolutshungu, the labour relations manager for Salga, neither dismissed nor confirmed the speculation, but said he did not see the strike proceeding into the weekend.

Talks

He conceded that the 9% for lowest paid workers and 8% for workers paid above R3 000 formed part of the ongoing talks.

Mr Roger Ronnie, the general secretary of the union, said: "Generally, we are looking at making shifts from our initial position. . . That is the nature of any negotiations during a strike action."

He expected that the negotiations planned for tomorrow would yield results acceptable to both parties.

"We are quite keen that the talks on Friday will allow both parties to emerge in a win-win situation," he said, and added that whatever the outcome, it would benefit the low income worker, who make up the majority of Samwu's membership.

"It has always been Samwu's central area of concern that the lowest paid worker should benefit more."

But should the union accept an 8% offer for workers earning more than R3 000, will that not upset those workers?

Ronnie said that whatever position would be taken at the end of the strike, it would be based on a wide consultation with workers.

At depots in Durban yesterday union members were briefed on the expected resolution, and a source said the outcome would "not be so bad for us".

"The main concern has been around the proposal by Salga to fix any agreement for three years," the worker said.

Victorious

Samwu is expected to emerge victorious in getting Salga to withdraw its position that any agreement reached would be fixed for the next three years.

Ronnie said the strong support from the heavyweight Cosatu affiliates, with a total membership of more than 500 000, had boosted Samwu's confidence during the strike.

The Food and Allied Workers Union, the National Education,

Health and Allied Workers Union and the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union rallied behind Samwu and threatened to engage in a sympathy strike in support of the municipal workers.

As the end to the strike is now in sight, Cosatu president Willie Madisha's intervention will be remembered as having helped to get Samwu and Salga back to the negotiating table.

Last Friday, Madisha helped foster talks from which the expected agreement emanated.

Meanwhile, the strike is set to continue today with thousands of workers staying away from work in Durban.

Picketing in the eThekweni municipality area and several towns in the Midlands, on the South Coast, and in Zululand was expected to take place.