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Keeping the evil spirits at bay

When Andrew Mbanga, an administrative officer in the NCOP, returned from a multi-party study tour of the United States recently, he least expected to bring back a bow and arrow from a native American village called Window Rock in the state of Arizona.

It was a present for President Nelson Mandela from Kelsey Begaye, the Speaker of the Navajo

nation who are the biggest of the 21 native American communities with a total population of 270 000. There are 70 clans.

The bow and arrow was presented to Mandela by Mbanga when the President addressed the NCOP during his Mid-term Review.

The bow and arrow is used by the Navajo to ward off evil spirits from their homes. Their houses

are round because it is believed that the evil spirits lurk in corners of houses.

Mbanga explained that the President should keep the bow and arrow at his office door to keep out the evil spirits.

Referring to the press, Mandela quipped there were lots of evil spirits from which he needed protection.

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NCOPNews

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

SEPTEMBER 1998

One nation, one goal



Red carpet treatment: Elmarie van der Horst leads President Mandela to his seat in the NCOP. He is followed by NCOP Chairperson Patrick Lekota, the Secretary to Parliament, Sindiso Mfenyana, and Secretary to the NCOP, Marion Sparg.

Mandela's warning: The forthcoming elections may tempt parties to exploit the country's diversity for short-term ends. This would promote intolerance and violence.

South Africa is one country and the National Council of Provinces has a duty to promote national unity. This was the main message of President Mandela's Mid-Term Review address to the NCOP last month.

Mandela warned that the approach of elections next year might tempt political parties to exploit South Africa's diversity for short-term ends. This would promote intolerance and violence.

"It would undo hard-won achievements in uniting our nation. It would leave us weaker in our striving to build a better life for all. We therefore count on the NCOP's contribution in this period to promote the unity of our nation," he said.

Mandela directed members to the important role the NCOP should play in the process of consensus and nation-building. The NCOP, he said, is uniquely placed to reflect the diversity of South African society and to bring together

the experience of provincial and local government which are charged with the great bulk of the task of implementing the national programme of fundamental change.

The central purpose of co-operative governance, Mandela charged, is after all for national, provincial and local governments to work together for a better life for all.

One of the most important tasks the NCOP faces is that of consensus-building, Mandela said. This would reinforce the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) whose work is now drawing to an end.

Nation-building, he said was even more

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Approval for Ngcuka

Bulelani Ngcuka, the new national Director of Public Prosecutions, could not have asked for a better stamp of approval as the one he received from NCOP members during a moving farewell in the House.

Emotions ran high in the chamber as NCOP members bid farewell to former Deputy Chairperson Bulelani Ngcuka who has been appointed national Director of Public Prosecutions. Members across the party political divide paid moving tributes to his invaluable contribution in the NCOP.

The DP's James Selfe proposed the motion and stressed that it expressed "our personal wishes and not necessarily our political approval of the appointment". Selfe said he had appreciated Ngcuka's leadership and the role he had played in the running and management of the NCOP.

"I believe that he knows all aspects of the criminal justice system. I understand that he was once a prosecutor, that he was once a defence lawyer, and that he was once on the receiving end of the criminal justice system.

"I think that there's an expression to indicate that if one knows something

terribly well, which states that one has been there and has the T-shirt. In his case, he has been there and has the record.

"We wish him well," he said. Gerhardus Koornhof (NP) said he could not imagine the NCOP without Ngcuka. "We will all miss him. He has become a colleague, a comrade and a friend to us as members. We salute him. We wish him well in his new appointment. May he reach the same heights of fairness and respect that he has earned in this house. To him we say: Hamba kahle (Go well)."

Cehill Pienaar congratulated Ngcuka on behalf of the IFP. "One of the more difficult and demanding posts in our country will be filled by a most capable person.

"In these days of advance medical technology, cloning something has become very popular. Unfortunately, it is restricted only to the animal world. It is a pity that we cannot clone the

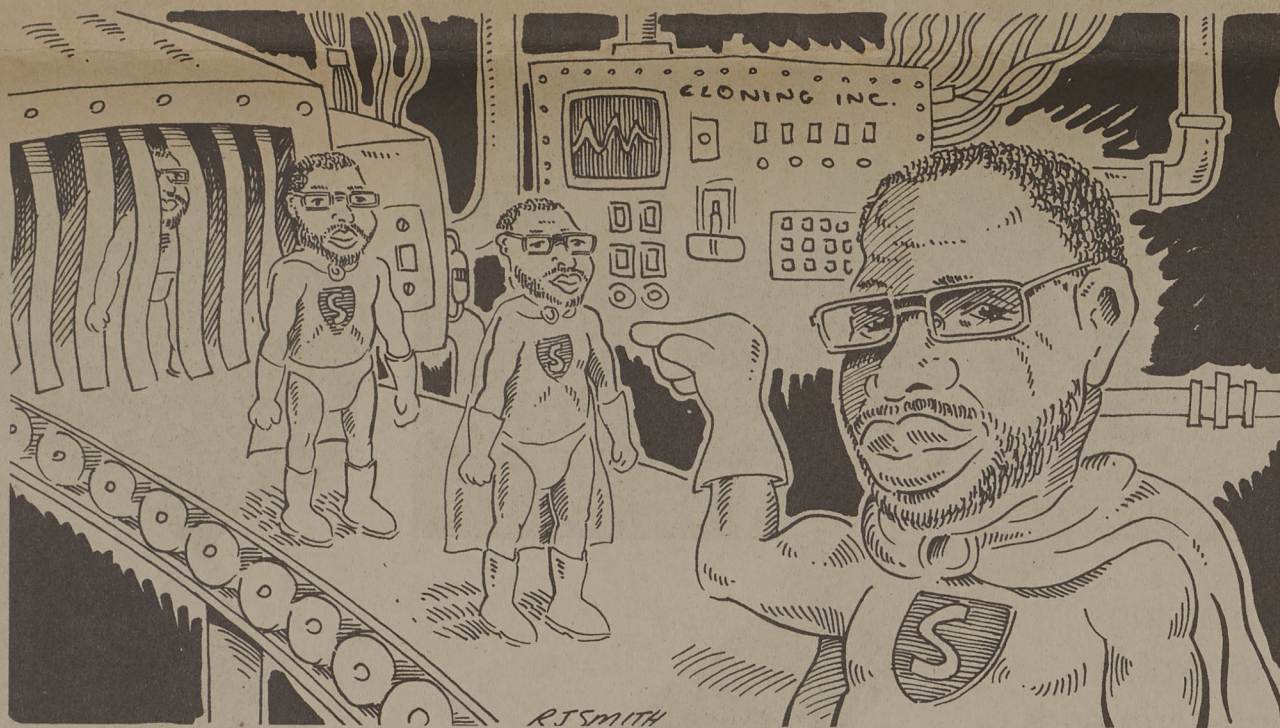
deputy chairperson," he said.

R J de Ville (FF) praised his leadership qualities, enthusiasm, impartial behaviour and skill. "I hope he will achieve his goal as he spelled it out a few days ago. If he achieves it, it will be a very successful story.

In a highly emotional speech on behalf of Mpumalanga, Ngcuka's ANC colleague Mohammed Bhabha said: "I have always maintained that personalities make institutions.

"In a decade or two, when the history of this country is written and annotated, it will record the indefatigable efforts of a personality who tried very hard to edge this institution, the NCOP, into the political and constitutional landscape of this country," Bhabha said.

Ngcuka was overwhelmed by the support. "It is indeed very difficult to take leave of colleagues and friends whom I have been with for every day of my life for four years."



"It is a pity we cannot clone the Deputy Chairperson Bulelani Ngcuka." - Cehill Pienaar (IFP).

Researchers do it for themselves

Parliamentary researchers from all the legislatures in the country have set up a task team to help improve relations between them and to maintain regular contact.

At a recent NCOP communications workshop, ways of improving the flow and quality of research information between the NCOP and the provincial legislatures were discussed.

"It was decided," says NCOP researcher Mills Soko, "that researchers from all provinces should meet regularly to improve communication concerning the exchange of research information. It was proposed that such meetings should take place during parliamentary recess and should focus on tackling common challenges and problems."

Among the concerns expressed was the disparity in research capacity between provincial legislatures — some provinces have better resources than others. Even the roles of researchers differ from province to province.

A task team was formed to compile guidelines to bring about uniformity. The team would consult with provincial stakeholders and seek international guidance.

On the question of the location of NCOP researchers, the workshop called for a research structure that combined extra researchers for provincial legislatures to do all provincial research — including NCOP — and a pool of researchers linked to the NCOP who would help all provinces.

"It was emphasised that provinces must develop and strengthen the research capacity of their legislatures. It was proposed that a workshop be held on legislative research methods for interested provincial researchers," said Soko.

The task team suggested that provincial research forums must be created to help address the long-term research needs of the provincial legislatures.

Religious and Linguistic Communities and the efforts of major private corporations in South Africa who had embarked on projects with communities to meet urgent needs such as schools and clinics.

Reconciliation and the building of national unity are complex processes, Mandela said as he brought the national unity debate back to basics and bread-and-butter issues. None of the processes mentioned can succeed alone. But, he said, all of them combined — including a practical partnership to overcome poverty — are important prerequisites to lasting reconciliation.

Pandor a hot shot, indeed

New NCOP Deputy Chairperson Naledi Pandor must feel on top of the world over her appointment, if not top of the list of the Mail & Guardian's 'Hot 100' people to look for in 1998.

Naledi Pandor, former Deputy Chief Whip of the ANC in the National Assembly, is the new Deputy Chairperson of

the NCOP. She told delegates she was honoured to be chosen to serve in the NCOP and said: "I look forward to making some contribution to the fuller realisation of the meaning of co-operative governance."

Noting that she was the first woman presiding officer of Parliament's second chamber, she said: "We have a woman elected and supported by members themselves as deputy chairperson of the NCOP. This is a first for provinces in our country."

She also recognised the unique style of life in the NCOP saying she had "never had support from all parties" in her province (Western Cape).

Pandor succeeds Bulelani Ngcuka who was appointed national Director of Public Prosecutions.

Pandor was on the Mail &

"I look forward to making some contribution to the fuller realisation of the meaning of co-operative governance"

Guardian's list of "Hot 100" people to look out for in 1998. Indeed, she made it. She was elected to the National Assembly in 1994 and was soon made a party whip. In 1995 she was elected Deputy Chief Whip in the National Assembly. Her parliamentary career has also included membership of committees on Education, Public Enterprises and the Arts, Culture, Language, Science and Technology. A firm believer in politicians being



Naledi Pandor is sworn in as deputy chairperson of the NCOP. Looking on are procedural services manager Desirée le Roux (seated) Winkie Direko and Joe Foster, both members of the NCOP.

accountable and accessible, she was one of the first MPs to get on the internet and to have e-mail.

She has taken a keen interest in education and gender equality issues. She has been a member of a number of trusts and organisations that seek to improve education and educational opportunities for all. This included a spell as executive director of the Desmond Tutu Educational Trust.

Before her election to Parliament she was a senior lecturer and assistant director of the Academic Support Programme at the University of Cape Town. Earlier in her career, she had a number of posts teaching English in Southern Africa and London.

"Naledi brings with her a strong reputation as an intelligent, no-nonsense and hard working person," said NCOP Chairperson Patrick Lekota, who celebrated his 50th birthday last month. She also has a reputation for fairness and regard. I am happy to welcome her to the NCOP and look forward to working with her."

OTHER APPOINTMENTS

There have been numerous new appointments to the NCOP:

- **Dorothy Mahlangu (ANC, Gauteng),** was appointed provincial whip. She replaced Joyce Kgoali, who was appointed MEC for Transport.
- **Nyambeni Mudau of Mpumalanga** also became provincial whip. He succeeds Siphso Lubisi who was appointed provincial speaker.
- **Francois Engelbrecht (NP, Northern Cape)** takes over from Bishop Khanyile.
- **The NCOP has appointed Lindikhaya Sipoyo as manager: provincial and municipal liaison.** Sipoyo joins Parliament after an eight-year stint at the World University Service. He is already hard at work in preparation for "in-house restructuring and systems development".

Le Roux wants to break down barriers

There are many similarities that describe the NCOP and its new procedural services manager Desirée le Roux. Both are young, dynamic and exciting.

Le Roux is a true representative of the new generation of people to join Parliament. She arrived in January 1996 as an assistant legal adviser after a short spell as a labour relations adviser at the Cape Town City Council. Although it took a friend to "force" her to respond to a boring advert, she soon discovered that: "Parliament is a dynamic institution that requires dynamic people — both politicians and staff. Being a lawyer, I find it very exciting to be part of the legislative process. I enjoy seeing my recommendations adopted."

One of her tasks was to advise the presiding officers, committees and the parliamentary administration on various legal matters concerning Parliament. "Since we merely give opinions that are not always acceptable to those whom we are advising, we have to get used to our suggestions sometimes being totally ignored. I



Desirée le Roux

think I am confident enough not to fall to pieces when my opinions are not accepted," she says.

Then she joined the NCOP as manager: procedural services. Le Roux felt she was ready for the challenge of being part of a new and exciting institution. "I'm not just saying that because it sounds good. I'm really quite excited about the NCOP and especially my unit. I enjoy my work and I enjoy the interaction with members and ministries."

Her job description develops daily. Although she describes the advertisement for this position as "another one of those boring, unimaginative adverts", for servicing the NCOP table, NCOP Rules Committee, recording members' attendance etc, she soon discovered there was a lot more the advert did not reveal.

"Luckily, my understanding of parliament, the legislative process and the constitutional obligations of the NCOP made me realise that there was a lot more that the advertisement was not saying.

"It definitely was not saying that I'll be interacting with members on a daily basis, dispensing procedural, legal and constitutional advice; liaising with departments to ensure that the NCOP programme runs smoothly; monitoring legislation, among others," she says.

Born to Sylvia and Stephen le Roux in Port Elizabeth 35 years ago and now married with two children — Lisa and Zara, Le Roux left the friendly city in 1976 for Cape Town. She went to Livingstone High in Claremont, then to the University of Cape Town.

"My childhood," she says, "has had an influence on me. I enjoy being with people and I feel quite comfortable in a large group. I am also quite confident and am not easily intimidated.

"I feel very strongly about standing up for my beliefs, although I try not to impose my views on others — it's not all that easy though, and I think I sometimes do come on too strongly, especially when I really believe in something," she adds.

If there was anything Le Roux would like to change in Parliament, she would "definitely improve communication in this institution."

"As a manager, I'm talking about improved communications between management and the staff. I've been saying for a long time that Parliament lacks a comprehensive communication strategy.

"It's amazing something so simple cannot seem to get off the ground. We all know what happens in our personal lives when we do not communicate with those close to us. It leads to mistrust, anger and resentment. The same goes for the workplace," she says.

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important now since the TRC had revealed the extent of the evil of the apartheid system.

"We never thought that it would be easy for us as a nation to confront the terrible things we did to each other. But few could have foreseen how far we would come, with the help of the TRC, towards knowing the past, so that, in the interests of all South Africans, it should not be repeated."

Mandela hit out at critics of the TRC, saying that it was wrong to interpret its work as a persecution of

"We count on the NCOP's contribution in this period to promote the unity of our nation"

Afrikaners. While the majority of individuals who had confessed to the TRC may be Afrikaners, the overall work of the TRC had confirmed that apartheid, as a system of government, was a crime against humanity, he said.

"The international community condemned apartheid as an evil against humanity. We knew that this was the case but what has been revealed in the

TRC shows not only what human beings can do to other human beings but has actually confirmed that condemnation by the international community of apartheid as a crime against humanity."

The work of the NCOP in nation-building, he said, would also reinforce the task of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Cultural,



Premiers report improvements

In the premiers' response to the President's address in the NCOP, the provincial leaders reported good progress in the fight against corruption, crime and the improvement of the quality of life of the people.

North West Province Premier Popo Molefe said his government had spent R690 million to build 72 schools with an attendance of 53 000 children, 66 new clinics set up to cater for 372 000 people, R230 million on projects that would provide water for 500 000 people and 120 000 houses had been electrified, mainly in rural areas.

"Our R1,1 billion budget, for housing has created opportunities for 46 000 families who would otherwise not have homes," Molefe said.

North West, which boasts 92 community policing forums, recently held a "farm crimes summit" attended by farmers, workers, the army and police.

Northern Cape Premier Manne Dipico said the fight to alleviate poverty through the Reconstruction and Development Programme and other projects is getting good results.

The province's challenge was to service its vast area which stretches into the Kalahari where people had been neglected in the past. However, there was now water and electricity in numerous areas and houses were mushrooming in areas where none had been built in the past 30 years. "I think that is progress," said Dipico.

"We have started right-sizing. The executive council – the provincial cabinet – has been reduced from 10 to seven members."

The administrative staff had been reduced to one director-general, three deputy directors-general and four chief directors. This should result in a small, mean and lean, effective, efficient and high-class administration, he said.

The province is still trying to attract good financial managers to control the budget. With regard to charges of corruption in the provincial government, Judge Heath had been invited to open an office there, he said.

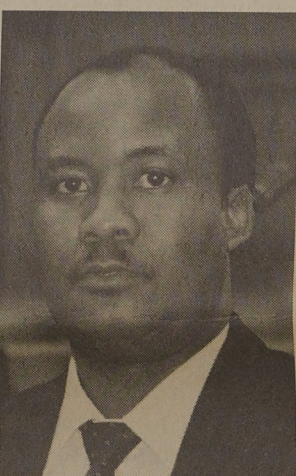
A Rural Safety Plan had been implemented and since then only two farm attacks were reported in the past two years. Those involved were arrested.

Eastern Cape Premier Makhenkesi Stofile said they had exposed many "ghost" claims made for salaries, pensions and grants. This saving meant millions of rands could be ploughed into other areas. "We have built more schools, more clinics than anyone else. These are not our statistics, but statistics from the national officials."

The school book delivery programme will start in November and should be completed by the beginning of the new school year. But all these achievements were not enough because there were a number of backlogs which continue to outweigh the resources. "There is, of course, no joy or solace on our part. On the contrary it has been a catalyst



Mr Sekhophi Malebo, MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport responds to the Presidents address.



"It is quite remarkable to think that at the dawn of the new millennium, one will be able to drive from the Indian Ocean at Maputo to the Atlantic Ocean at Walvis, a distance of about 2 000km, on the new road."
– Siphso Lubisi

for creative measures to augment the little bit that we get from the Minister of Finance," Stofile said.

The Eastern Cape had created partnerships with the private sector and the elements of civil society and, as a result, had been able to address some of the ills identified in 1996.

In Mpumalanga, the Maputo Development Corridor has become a corridor of hope for the people in the province and neighbouring Mozambique, said Siphso Lubisi who stood-in for Matthews Phosa. The Premier is recovering from injuries received in a car accident.

The Maputo Corridor was already linked to the Rustenburg Corridor, the Trans-Kalahari Highway and the coast of Walvis Bay. "It is quite remarkable to think that at the dawn of the new millennium, one will be able to drive from the Indian Ocean at Maputo to the Atlantic Ocean at Walvis, a distance of about 2 000km, on the new road," said Lubisi.

Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga reported that the province had identified transformation of the public administration and facilitation of economic growth as key objectives.

A poverty alleviation programme has been started. It is based on economic

empowerment projects targeted at single and unemployed women, particularly those with young children. The projects create opportunities for them to acquire skills to enable them to compete in the open labour markets.

The provincial public works programme has started 35 projects including the construction of creches and new community centres.

KwaZulu-Natal says it has made significant progress in correcting over-expenditure experienced in the late phases of the 1997-98 fiscal year.

Premier Ben Ngubane reported: "We have implemented an internal audit system that is now working."

Northern Province Premier Ngoako Ramatlodi said the province, which incorporated the old bantustans of Lebowa, Venda and Gazankulu, was initially riddled with ethnic rifts.

However, the formation of the province has helped to bring people closer. The challenge the province faces is to make administration more effective and efficient, he said.

The Premier of the Western Cape, Gerald Morkel used the opportunity to bring to the attention of the President issues that were of concern to his province. He said the Western Cape was deeply concerned about the impli-

cations of the Public Service Amendment Bill and Public Service Regulations.

"It is not acceptable that our administration, which everybody admits functioned efficiently and effectively as an integrated whole, be dismantled and replaced by a loose arrangement of departments," he said.

In the Free State Sekhophi Malebo, who stood-in for Premier Dr Ivy Matsepe-Cassaburi, reported that his province was also forging ahead. The process of decentralisation was complete and departments will be able to deal with appointments. He added that they managed to deliver books within a record space of time.

He said the Arrive Alive Campaign was successful in his province. "A record of 30 percent reduction in fatal accidents was achieved. Typical of the Free State, I wish to say that we achieved more with less, but the challenge remains to make the Arrive Alive Campaign part of our lives," he said.

"The reports which premiers of all the provinces provided in preparation for today's address confirm that indeed progress is being made across our land; that we do have problems; and that in the spirit of co-operative governance we are taking measures to prevent those difficulties from undoing our best efforts," responded Mandela.

He said it must be recognised that the measurement of the success of government's policies and programmes is the extent to which they help improve the lives of the people – especially the most vulnerable and poor sections of the society – and that was central to the national consensus to which they aspire.

"In the unfolding of these programmes our vision of the transformation of our society and the lives of our people becomes real. Co-operative governance has flourished as the different spheres of government co-operate with each other and forge partnerships with communities and the social structures.

"The enthusiasm with which the social partners and the public have responded to the call for proposals and commitments to promote employment bodes well for a unified effort to combat unemployment.

He said the government was addressing some of the problems that were crippling provinces. The problem of right-sizing of the public service was before the central bargaining chamber and R100 million had been allocated in this year's budget for provinces to implement financial management.

He added that the new Treasury Control Bill will promote good management by making provincial heads of department responsible for the management of budgets. The Department of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development was assessing the provincial system of government, focusing on, among other things, financial management and administrative systems.

Will the leaders please stand up

President Mandela shocked politicians with a challenge to put away their prepared speeches in response to his Mid-term Review. Be frank and fearless – and off-the-cuff, he urged.

President Mandela confounded premiers, political party leaders and other heads of delegations in the NCOP last month, when he told them at the end of his address not to bother to respond with carefully prepared speeches. None of them, he said, had known in any case beforehand what he would say in his Mid-term Review.

The mark of the true leader, he said, is the individual who is able to respond immediately to the content of his speech in a frank manner with no fear and yet who is also able to bring South Africa closer together by the end of the debate.

"These debates," he said, "tend to identify who the real leaders of this country are, both from the majority party and the opposition. I know who the real leaders are. I can foresee what somebody is going to say. I want to urge members to be frank and discuss matters without fear. But I would prefer it if they did not bother us with speeches that they drew up a fortnight ago to come and deliver here, not knowing what we were going to say."

Nervous ripples of laughter echoed across the Chamber as Mandela delivered this stinging challenge. Premiers and others on the speakers' list hastily discarded typed speeches and began to scribble notes instead.

Premier Makhenkesi Stofile of Eastern Cape, a man who is never lost for words and the first speaker on the list after Mandela, said he had not prepared a speech since his office had tried in vain and had fortunately failed to get an advance copy of the President's speech.

David Malatsi, representing the National Party, assured the President that he had prepared two speeches – one a week ago and the other on the same morning as the address.

Malatsi said he would use the later speech in deference to the President's directive.

Premier Manne Dipico of Northern Cape however went further and told the President he had put his own prepared speech back into his briefcase and would speak from notes he made during the President's speech.

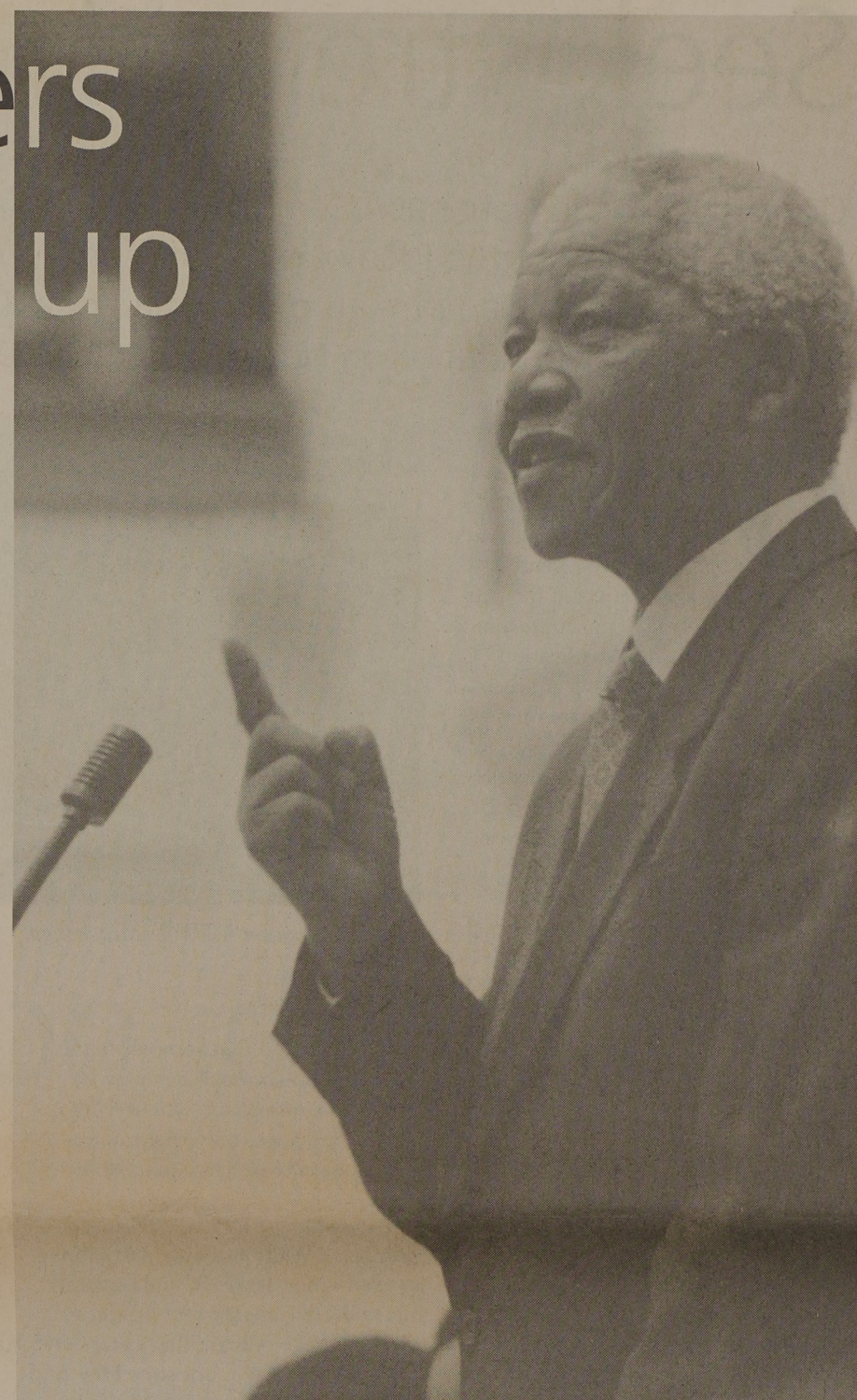
While the President's off-the-cuff remarks provoked laughter, they underlined a serious issue highlighted

in his address. Throughout his speech, Mandela challenged party and provincial leaders to cross traditional boundaries and unite in the interests of all South Africans.

Real leaders, he said, do not just come to meetings of this nature to voice the point of view of their political parties. The real leaders who came both from the majority and opposition parties, "see those things that unite us. They have a sense of responsibility to ensure that at the end of each debate we come closer and are more united with one another."

He lashed out at defenders of white privilege, whom he said, were unable to see the progress that had been made since 1994. The world regards South Africa as a miracle, he said, and urged all members to appreciate what had been achieved through the labour and sacrifices of many.

Mandela defended the role of the opposition, whom, he said, had to exist "because one of the dangers we face is the arrogance of the majority party." He pledged himself as friend and ally of



President Mandela challenges party leaders to put aside their prepared speeches and calls for off-the-cuff responses to his Mid-term Review.

"Every night I go to bed feeling strong and full of hope because I can see this rainbow nation, in spite of all the difficulties, emerging in front of our eyes ... That is what inspires me"

those who pitted themselves against such arrogance and domination.

"I will be with them whether I am in government as President or whether I have retired. I will help those forces which want us to respect one another, whatever power we enjoy in government."

Mandela said it was too early to judge whether the NCOP was succeeding in advancing the objectives set out in the Constitution. However, he said, it was clear from reports received from Speakers of the various provincial legislatures, that many provinces were still grappling to come to terms with the full implications of the NCOP for their own institutions.

With regard to the NCOP's relationship to the executive, the President said various incidents in the past had been misinterpreted as signs of tension

between the two houses of Parliament or between the NCOP and the executive. He echoed the words of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki to the NCOP conference in May, and said that these were "inevitable teething problems to be expected in the early life of this unique system."

Mandela, ended his mid-term address with words of praise and encouragement. He thanked speakers in the debate for their "frank but constructive comments."

In a clear reference to some of the recent heated exchanges in the National Assembly, he said that "certain forums, some of which are not very far from this Chamber, could learn from the discussions here. Nobody has screamed, nobody has burned tables, but the message has been effective precisely because of the

quality and the tone of the debate."

He said he had expected comments in defence of privilege, but was pleasantly surprised. "What strikes one when dealing with some speakers elsewhere," he said, "is that whatever they say and however they articulate they may be, what they are really doing is trying to defend privilege."

On a more positive note, the President said: "Every night I go to bed feeling strong and full of hope because I can see this rainbow nation, in spite of all the difficulties, emerging in front of our eyes ... Leaders are emerging from all parties who are positive and constructive and who ensure that at the end of all the differences that we have, we emerge more united. That is what inspires me."

In his closing words, NCOP Chairperson Patrick Lekota committed the NCOP to building unity. While most in the NCOP, he said, accepted that the NCOP was an institution representing provinces, in practice many still found it difficult to accept this.

For this reason, he said, political parties in government in various provinces, had nevertheless still asked for permission to speak as political parties in the debate.



Seek strength in diversity

On August 4, the National Assembly and provincial legislatures held simultaneous debates on the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities. The Department of Constitutional Development has invited submissions on the topic and will hold a conference on National Heritage Day. NCOPNews covers some of the debates.

Our strength lies in the recognition of our unity in diversity, Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga, told his legislature recently.

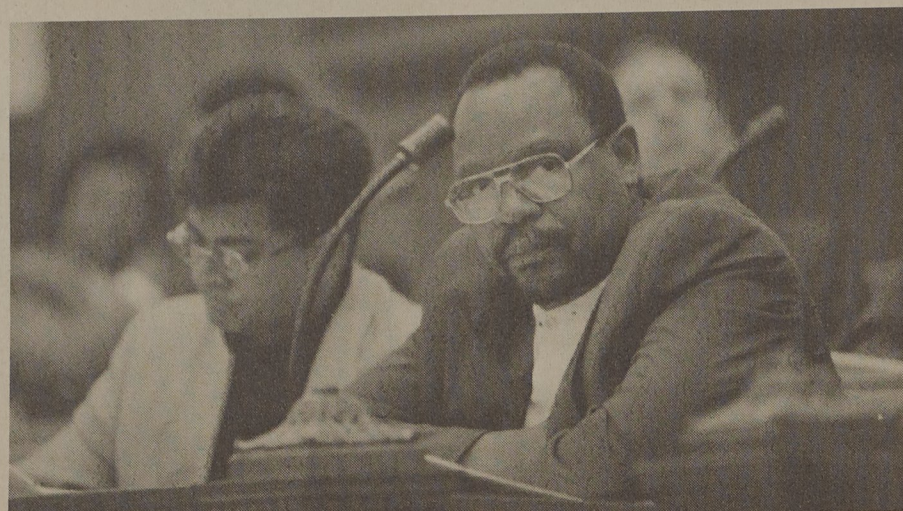
"The moral regeneration of the people and the removal of the confusion that was caused by the desecration of their cultural values will occur when the nation deepens the debate on these issues," he said. "As a nation with a culture that was deeply embedded in the African spirit of ubuntu, we must start to live and behave like a nation that is indeed free at last."

"Our various cultures contain a wealth of ethical rules and values such as ubuntu, both. The concept of respect for the worth and dignity of the human personality, the inner value human personality which is embodied in the concept of ubuntu, is colour-blind, non-racial, non-ethnic and it is a universal principle."

This philosophy, he said, must be used to unify and the people must not allow appearances based on ignorance to divide them.

Speaking during the same debate, Johan Killian (NP), said the present generation had the responsibility of healing and nurturing where others failed and faltered. He said from the side of the NP they would "do their damndest" to prevent anything that would drag the country back into turmoil.

"I hope that this debate will not become a platform for punting partisan rhetoric or be reduced to a token attempt to satisfy a constitutional



Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga.

requirement."

Killian added that some demands from certain communities may be deemed as unrealistic, self-serving or unfair, and some downright outrageous, but the process must be inclusive.

"If we do not follow an inclusive process of really listening and talking to each other. If we do not apply all our collective energy and insight to accommodate one another's fears and aspirations... if you not somehow find a way to really hear what our fellow South Africans say, democracy and stability will be the ultimate sacrifice."

Mpumalanga

Lucas Nel (NP) told the Mpumalanga Legislature that nation building was hard work that required commitment

towards a common destiny and a focused building of a new and common patriotism.

He said the pre-requisite for nation-building was an acknowledgement of diversity within a society.

"There must be an acknowledgement that in South Africa the various building blocks of our nation represent minorities and majorities. A balance between their rights should be attained and their aspirations and ideals must be reconciled."

"It was essential for all groups or societies to work towards attaining this balance."

He added that nation building could only succeed if all people in South Africa – irrespective of their culture, religion or language – feel safe and secure with a sense of belonging and share a common love and patriotism

for their country.

"If SA fails we all lose, if it succeeds we all benefit. The choice is ours. Let us grab the opportunity," he said.

North West

In the North-West, the Freedom Front said it would not be easy to overcome the prejudice and the deeply rooted suspicions on all sides. The party's Stefanus Deventer said the path of peace they had chosen was a long-term project that would not be without setbacks and testing times.

He said the essence of the mandate of the FF was the expression of Afrikaner self-determination within a territorial and a cultural component. The FF welcomed the formation of the commission and said it must have people with specialised knowledge and experience in promoting cultural, linguistic and religious rights.

In Northern Province, Premier Ngaoko Ramathlodi, said the challenge was to balance the legitimate aspirations of minorities with the interest of the majority. "Linguistics and cultural rights should not be hoisted as a red herring in opposition to the opening of public amenities to black people. This can only lead to further conflict."

He said in the Afrikaner community there were numerous leaders who continued to make excellent contributions to the political stability and economic development of his province.

"We thank these leaders for having ensured that we do not sink into an abyss," he said.



Reaching out in the quest for a national identity Minister Mohammed Valli Moosa.

No easy talk on identity

The commission provides an opportunity to lay the foundation for the building of the nation, says Minister Mohammed Valli Moosa.

We are all members of the human race and must attach primary significance to that fact if we want our endeavours to promote and protect cultural, religious and linguistic rights to succeed, Mohammed Valli Moosa told the National Assembly recently.

The Minister of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development was speaking during a debate on the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities.

The debate took place simultaneously in many provincial legislatures at the request of the ministry. The commission is one of several institutions in chapter nine of the Constitution that are aimed at strengthening democracy.

"We must," he said, "practise a universal humanist culture, observe the religion of mutual respect and speak the language of love."

He said the commission and the process towards its establishment provided an opportunity to purposely and deliberately lay a foundation for the building of the nation in a manner that is compatible with the full expression of each community's culture, religion and language.

"A question that does arise is whether or not the question of this commission gives credence to ethnicity, tribalism and racialism. Does it, for example, give credibility and perma-

"We must practise a universal humanist culture ... and speak the language of love"

nence to divisions in South African society which were promoted by apartheid?"

Apartheid emphasised differences for the purpose of "divide and rule" to justify its policies of separation.

"We may not agree on the nature and origins of ethnic identity, but we probably will agree that there is a certain reality in South Africa. Most South Africans do have a cultural, religious and linguistic identity."

"Apartheid granted privileges and meted out oppression along ethnic and racial lines. Ethnic and racial prejudices continue to prevail and there is a striking coincidence between the ethnic-racial divide and class in our society."

"The concept of this commission is a response to this reality, together with the objective of striving towards nationhood, national patriotism and a national identity. Ours is not just a vain search for a solution to the national question," he said.

The main thrust of the national democratic struggle was not to promote fractured identities but was to encourage emergence of a South African identity, said Sonwabile Mancotywa, the MEC for Sport and Culture in the Eastern Cape.

Speaking during the consideration of the report of the Standing Committee on Education and Training in the legislature, he said the commission must not be an instrument for those people who might seek to mobilise around ethnic and racial differences.

"The national question," he said, "centres around a continuous search for equality by various communities which have historically merged into a single nation state... In the global context the national question is an ongoing search for national sovereignty of self-rule."

The main objective was to create a united, non-racial, non-sexist and a democratic South Africa. "When we talk about issues of cultural, linguistic and religious communities we should at all times understand that individuals are social beings with different social experiences, class backgrounds, political histories, religious affiliations, as well as sport and music affiliations. Races, ethnic origins, language and sometimes even religion have an important role to play in defining a person's identity."

He added that these identities do not necessarily disappear into a melting pot of a broad South Africanism but they all co-exist in a healthy combination. "The

fundamental question that has to be asked is, which identity assumes prominence and under what condition?"

He said people will continue to have multiple identities and the main challenge was to maintain equilibrium between the "disintegrative and integrative tendencies".

"Indeed, as we seek to integrate South African society across racial, language, ethnic and other barriers, we are also engaged in the process of developing those individual elements that distinguish these various communities from one another," he said.

Tyrone Liberty, National Party MPL, said he did not think it was the government's intention to rush mechanically into the establishment of this commission. "The form and context of this commission must be a product of discussion and exchange of views between political parties in the society in general."

He said he was concerned that traditional leaders in his province did not take part in the public hearings.

"It is very essential for all communities who are interested in our country to respond to the call of the President to rally around a new patriotism, which would result in an agreement for a common national agenda," he said.

He added the agenda should include an agreement on how we should protect and enhance the interests of all the cultural, language and religious groups that make up the population.

Differences 'need not be divisive'

While there was consensus in the Northern Cape provincial legislature that the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities was important, some speakers raised numerous concerns.

Kgosiebonya Abraham Bogacwi (ANC) cited a number of sources in supporting the commission. He quoted from the Freedom Charter and from the ANC's recent Mafikeng conference resolution.

"It is important that we come to terms with the significance of ethnic and racial identity in our organisation and our country. These identities are not necessarily divisive. They have progressive aspects that can certainly be

harnessed as part of nation-building."

He added: "It has to promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance and national unity."

Bogacwi called for more discussion on what it means to be South African. "What does it really mean to say one nation, many cultures? And, very importantly, what can we do, practically, to make this a reality?"

The Volkstaat and the protection of Afrikaner culture and language was vital, said Caryl Boshoff (FF). He expressed concern about the loss of Afrikaner identity and cited Section 235 of the Constitution, which, he said, recognised a possible separate territory to protect a common cultural and language heritage.

The Khoisan and Griqua communi-

ties had been devastated by the apartheid regime, said Tina Joemat-Petersson (ANC).

She outlined action the executive was taking to redress the situation, saying there would be an audit of Khoisan languages in the province to identify speakers of languages such as Xam, Khomani, Auni and Kora en Gri.

"Language is one of the most important media for perpetuating and preserving the cultural heritage of any group," she said.

Goolam Akhtarwaray (ANC) said many of society's problems were intertwined and that "race and material division happen to coincide".

Race divisions had gone, but the economic divisions were still very much in force, he said. Few societies were gen-

uinely of the same race. A report by the UN several years ago stated that of the 185 member nations, less than 20 could be categorised as homogeneous in terms of language, culture and religion, said Akhtarwaray.

He called on all South African to become involved in rebuilding the nation: "Institutions will not build the nation — it's people that will. Institutions are only there to facilitate the process."

Akhtarwaray told members how far the Government had gone down the road of reconciliation and had done much for South African groups.

"In doing all of these things we are not only facilitating the recognition of individual rights but more importantly, we are building a nation."



Barking up the right tree

The new National Forests Bill opens the way for people who were previously denied the right to operate in the forestry industry under the apartheid regime.

The path to transformation will also be lined with trees – thanks to the principles behind the new National Forests Bill.

Not only does it propose to promote the sustainable management and development of forests and provide for special measures aimed at protecting certain forests and trees, but also includes measures to promote community forestry and increase the participation of previously disadvantaged communities in forestry and the forest products industry. It will give access to those people who were previously not allowed in their local forest environment under the previous regime.

The bill was passed by the NCOP in August and is expected to become law shortly.

It sets out principles which must guide all official decisions and policies. The key principle is that natural forests must not be destroyed except when the Minister of Water Affairs and Forests is satisfied that a proposed new land use is preferable on economic, social and environmental grounds. The development and management of forests must consider the need to conserve biological diversity, ecosystems and habitats and to advance those people who were previously disadvantaged by discrimination. A minimum of each woodland type must also be preserved.

The minister will set targets for sustainable forest management that will be flexible according to type of forest and will be required to undertake or commission research on and monitor the state of forest management and must present a report to Parliament every three years.

The bill sets out special protection measures for declared “natural forests”. This will prevent the destruction of such trees – except where a special licence or exemption has been granted by the minister. Certain forests can be declared “specially protected areas”. Similarly, a particular tree, group of trees, woodland or species can be declared “protected trees” if they are not adequately protected by other legislation.

All members of the public will be entitled to use State forests for recreation, education, culture or spiritual upliftment – with some restrictions.



Trees can safely reach for the skies – the new National Forests Bill ensures the protection of natural forests.

The Sterilisation Bill

The Sterilisation Bill, passed by the NCOP in August, gives force to section 12 (2) of the Constitution which says that everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity. It seeks to regulate the circumstances under which a sterilisation (removal of the ability to reproduce) can be performed, particularly in relation to people who are not able to agree or understand what is happening.

Anyone above the age of 18 and capable of giving consent can undergo sterilisation, provided consent is given. Consent must be given freely and voluntarily, without any inducement. The plan of procedure, consequences, risks and irreversibility must be explained to the person involved, and it must be made clear the person can withdraw consent. Section 3 outlines the procedure for sterilising people unable to con-

sent or incompetent to consent. A parent, spouse, guardian or curator must consent to a request to the person in charge of the hospital. A panel, consisting of a psychiatrist (or medical practitioner), psychologist and a nurse must concur considering that the person is 18 years or older and that there is no other safe and effective method of contraception. Sterilisation must be carried out in a way that holds the least risk to the person's health.

Sterilisations can only be performed at a facility designated for that purpose by an MEC responsible for health. The designation can be withdrawn if the conditions are not complied with. The bill requires that a record be kept by the person in charge of the facility. Breaking the law can result in imprisonment for up to a maximum of five years.

Every State forest must designate an area for public use. Concerns over the designation of the public area, the rules, the fees charged or access, can be submitted through a written objection to the minister. The minister may also take steps to promote the voluntary grant of access to forests other than State forests.

The Bill allows communities who wish to engage in community forestry to enter into agreements with the minister or any other person or organ of state. Any community wishing to manage a State forest or part of it, or to do anything in a State forest for which a licence is required, may make an offer to the ministry with a view to entering into a community forestry agreement. This includes small scale plantation

forestry by people disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.

The bill has run into some opposition from companies who have existing contracts with the Government.

The National Home Builders Registration Council Bill

Another bill passed by the NCOP in August is the National Home Builders Registration Council Bill. This bill is a significant piece of consumer (or home buyer) protection legislation that plans to improve the regulation of the house-building industry. It is also aimed at weeding out “cowboy” builders.

The bill establishes a National Home Builders Registration Council – a national registration board that will

regulate the activities of the home building industry. The council will provide protection for home buyers, improve and maintain ethical and technical standards in the home building sector, and assist state subsidy providers to regulate home builders undertaking projects with state subsidies.

The bill stipulates that all agreements between home builders and buyers must contain warranties that home builders will rectify any defects brought to their attention within one year of occupation, repair any roof leak reported within one year of occupation and repair any major structural defect notified within five years of the date of occupation. The buyer can enforce these contractual rights through the courts, if necessary.

The key mechanism for regulating the home building industry will be through the registration of home builders. A home builder will be registered by the registration council if the latter is satisfied that the builder can meet obligations in terms of the legislation and that he or she has appropriate financial, technical and construction or management experience for the business.

The income of the registration council will be derived primarily from enrolment of fees paid by home builders or fees raised from agreements with subsidy providers.

The bill will be enforced through obligations placed on mortgage lenders, conveyancers and subsidy providers. This will ensure that homes which receive mortgage bonds or housing subsidies are built by a registered builder. Homes can be inspected by the registration council's inspectors.

Breaking the new law can lead to a fine of up to R25 000 or imprisonment or both.

A reminder on why we went provincial

Calls for a review of the provincial system of government were often made all too lightly, says Minister Mohammed Valli Moosa. Debate on the future of the system should be conducted in perspective, he warns.

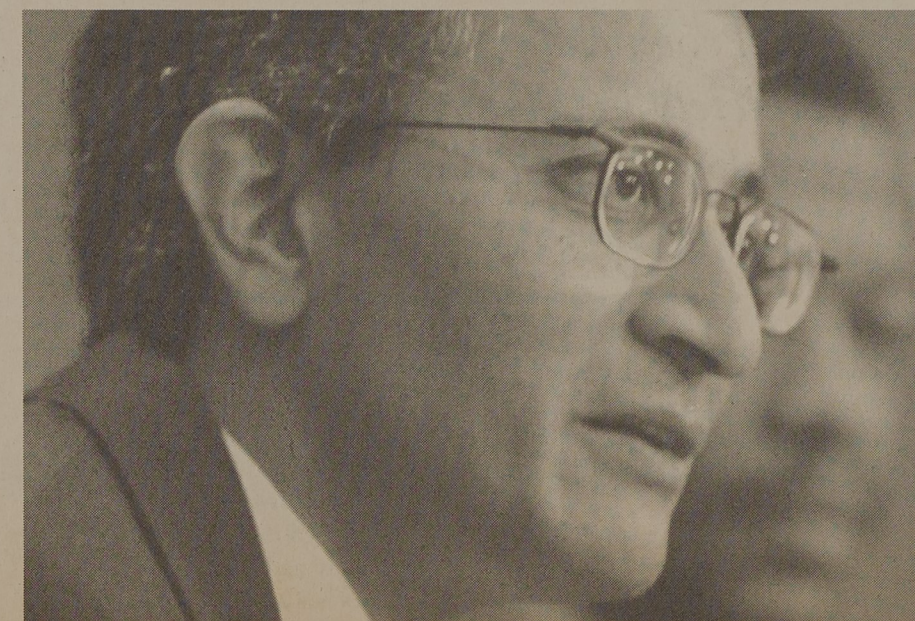
Constitutional Affairs Minister Mohammed Valli Moosa has once again forcefully argued in favour of the provincial system of government and called upon the NCOP to play a leading role in assessing whether or not the provincial system requires reform.

In a wide-ranging address to the NCOP at the end of last term Moosa warned that the debate on the future of the system should be conducted in perspective. The system had been the subject of public debate and the value of provinces had been questioned, especially in the light of overspending, administrative inadequacies, perceived or real corruption and the perceived inactivity of provincial legislatures, he said.

His remarks followed shortly after the NCOP National Conference in May where he took part in a debate on the same topic. Speaking in his budget debate in the NCOP in June, Moosa said that calls for a fundamental review of the system were often made “all too lightly”.

Provinces, he emphasised, were not merely a product of a political compromise between so-called federalists and so-called unitarists. Instead, he argued, provinces had been created because of the following needs:

- To promote development outside of South Africa's major urban areas.
- To ensure responsive government close to the people.



Minister Moosa makes a strong case for provinces.

- To prevent an overbearing bureaucracy through creating decentralised administration.
- For national integration.
- For the recognition of unity and diversity.
- For detailed attention to transformation.
- For cultural and language richness.

None of these reasons had disappeared and he pointed out that while local government was also experiencing severe difficulties, this had not led anyone to call for the dismantling of local government. He also reminded delegates that while it was true that

provinces were experiencing difficulties, it should be borne in mind that they had also been “saddled with the biggest administrative and transformation challenge and backlogs faced by government since 1994”.

“There is no telling whether, if provinces had not existed at all, national government departments would have fared any better in coping with apartheid's inherited chaos.”

However, none of this should lead one to believe the system was perfect and the NCOP should lead the discussion in reforms of the provincial system.

Co-ordination for the nation

Good governance is about good co-ordination. These are the words used by Constitutional Affairs Minister Mohammed Valli Moosa in his budget debate to the NCOP last term in which he said the NCOP has a key role to play in developing Government's policy and approach on co-operative governance and intergovernmental relations.

He said his department will soon issue a document entitled Strategic Issues and Options for Policy on Co-operative Governance and Intergovernmental Relations.

The purpose of the document, he said, was to raise the key strategic considerations and options for policy and legislation and put them up for debate.

The concept of intergovernmental relations is relatively new. Ongoing interactions between the various spheres of government is a constitutional and practical reality.

The Constitution “expressly recognises the important role intergovernmental relations play in good governance by requiring an act of Parliament to provide for intergovernmental relations and dispute settlement mechanisms.”

Moosa reminded delegates of NCOP Chairperson Patrick Lekota's words referring to the “new political culture” of consultation and co-operation the NCOP had brought to government. Many intergovernmental structures had been put in place at both a technical and political level. All of these required careful co-ordination and it was for this reason that the importance of co-ordination in government had been highlighted in the Report of the Presidential Review Commission.

The framework which government would put in place by means of new legislation should balance the need for prescription and guidance with the “evolutionary and information energies of intergovernmental relations”.



Shield of protection: Andrew Mbanda (right) hands over a bow and arrow to President Nelson Mandela after his Mid-term Review address to the NCOP. It was a present from the Navajo nation in the American state of Arizona.



Why provinces find it hard to stay within their budgets

Incompetence has become a cheap and popular "blame word" for provincial overspending. However, as Parliamentary finance researcher, **Samantha Anderson**, writes in these special opinion pieces, it is one of many factors that lead to budgets being blown.

The way money is divided between the three spheres of government has long been the subject of hot debate. Perhaps the most crucial division is the one between the national and provincial spheres. This relationship is crucial in the attempt to transform the way in which public funds are managed successfully.

To identify the causes of overspending, we need to weigh up the responsibilities between national and provincial governments to effect improvements to both the quantity and quality of service delivery.

This relationship is being carefully moulded by the Budget Reform White Paper and the new Treasury Control Bill. They manage the spending formulas that set out how much provinces get from national government. Currently, this relationship is a rather 'love-hate' one. Neither can do without the other in terms of the Constitution, but national government holds the purse strings.

Ninety five percent of provincial revenue is in the form of transfers from the national revenue fund and therefore national government determines how funds are allocated between the three spheres of government – i.e. the division of revenue. However, the buck ultimately stops with national government when it comes to spending problems in the provinces. National government decides the total amount of funding that each province receives. This can result in "finger pointing" at the

"Provincial budgets cycles are completely independent of one another, making it difficult to co-ordinate with national government"

national executive when there are problems with overspending in provinces as they feel their particular problems have not been taken seriously enough.

Because provinces raise very little of their own revenue, there is currently no other option available but for national government to transfer funds to provinces by means of the vertical split. Although the final decision is taken by national government, a major part of this decision is based on information from the provinces.

Provinces do carry an equal amount of responsibility for ensuring that this split is fair and accurately reflects their spending needs and priorities. The big problem is whether or not provinces are motivated to stay within the budget they agreed to.

It could be argued that because provinces do not have revenue-raising ability, they have little incentive to stay within budget: in other words they have power without responsibility. Provinces are therefore less enthusiastic about looking after the way in which funds are managed and spent because

they do not actually have to raise it themselves. There is the contention that somewhere in the back of every provincial official's mind is the belief that national government will bail them out when they overspend. This is perhaps why national government sometimes has a "finger pointing" attitude towards the provinces and has been encouraging fiscal discipline and improved delivery of public goods and services.

This is the classic example of "the pot calling the kettle black": national government and provinces blaming one another for their problems instead of deciding how responsibilities should be apportioned to begin to eliminate overspending. This is not a particularly difficult process if responsibilities are apportioned equally where the origin of overspending is a result of problems common to both levels of government. Generally these common problems are the most important and have the most significant impact on the ability of provinces to stay within budget.

One major cause of provincial overspending is poor systems of financial

management and control in departments. This is because of the very pressing need to increase the number of skilled financial managers. However, there is also a severe lack of co-ordination in the sequencing of the national budget cycle with each province. Additionally, provincial budgets cycles are completely independent of one another, making it difficult to co-ordinate with national government. For example, budget plans are submitted to the respective provincial treasuries in August in Gauteng, and in July in the Eastern Cape. National departments submit budget plans in May or June to State Expenditure.

This results in provinces being unable to lobby national government as a united and co-ordinated voice with regard to common sector specific concerns, for example health. While provinces are in competition with one another for funds in the case of regional specific concerns, there needs to be a comprehensive provincial impact assessment of national expenditure proposals which cannot be done unless there is co-ordination between provinces on sector specific concerns.

The consequences of not having a sequenced budgeting process between provincial governments, and in relation to national government, can lead to the problem of "unfunded mandates". The responsibility for ensuring that budgeting processes are sequenced and more importantly, cross-referenced, rests with every provincial and national department.

Debate blown out of proportion

The debate on provincial overspending has been taken out of context and placed in a realm all of its own. This has resulted in the impression that overspending can be addressed by improving financial management systems alone. In reality, a whole problem approach to provincial overspending is required. This means improving the financial management of departments in conjunction with transforming personnel management, nationally. Government is not just about how funds are allocated and spent, government is about people.

Figures from the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) show that government as a

whole employs 360 000 teachers, 200 000 police and defence personnel, 150 000 public servants and 200 000 unskilled workers. This is nearly 1 million people. The table on page 11 provides a breakdown of the percentage of total spending committed to salaries in each province:

If we take a "whole problem" approach to overspending, we need to be aware of the flexibility and control that can be exercised over the allocation of funds and expenditure within a budget. As a very large proportion of provincial spending, 57,4% on average, is allocated to salaries, this portion of the budget is very "inflexible". In other words, there is a substantial

time lag and cost involved in changing funding allocations to salaries.

This means that departments have very little discretion when it comes to changing amounts of expenditure to reflect changes in policy directives or to manage funding cuts. The ability of provincial departments to stay within their budgets whilst transforming the delivery of public goods and services is severely constrained by the "inflexible" nature of spending on salaries. Departments have very little control over the number and wages of their employees, and their terms and conditions of service.

Every year wage increases are negotiated in the Central Bargaining

Chamber after the budget has been passed for that year. This means that overspending can be the direct result of the illogical timing of this process.

The major problem facing provinces is what are they going to do when the national funding for the improvement in the conditions of service runs out? Will national government continue paying this form of subsidy or phase it out slowly? Provinces may face a situation where they are left to work out a budget where they can cut non-salary expenditure to meet the obligation to pay the higher wages.

This will be a very difficult exercise, particularly for departments such as education which currently spends

Total expenditure on salaries in provincial budgets

PROVINCE	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Eastern Cape	52.30%	50.67%	58.50%
Northern Cape	45.36%	46.03%	49.80%
Western Cape	51.56%	52.65%	55.10%
KwaZulu-Natal	50.12%	54.93%	58.80%
Free State	53.20%	53.20%	50.80%
Mpumalanga	47.20%	54.00%	60.00%
Northern Province	55.60%	59.97%	65.40%
North West	43.30%	52.60%	58.20%
Gauteng	52.30%	50.70%	60.00%
Average	50.10%	52.75%	57.40%

Source: IDASA Budget Office

between 90% and 100% of their budgets on salaries.

Currently, the DPSA determines the terms and conditions of public sector employment in consultation with the relevant unions. Retrenchment policy, voluntary severance packages, redeployment and disciplinary proceedings are all nationally determined using a similar system to wage negotiations. How much flexibility departments have to manage their numbers of employees will depend on funds for predetermined severance and retrenchment packages together with considerations of the time and cost of redeployment or retraining.

The Government has already announced its intention to retrench around 100 000 public sector employees. Who is currently carrying all these people? Is provincial overspending primarily a result of national government's inability to budget for a timeous and affordable plan to reduce the size of the public sector at all levels of government?

Productivity and the behaviour of public sector employees has a big impact on financial management. The current disciplinary code in the public service makes no distinction in procedure for the severity of the alleged offence. Whether one is caught stealing R100 or R1 000 000, the procedure is exactly the same as if one were caught sleeping on duty.

This has direct budgetary implications for departments who have to follow a long and arduous process to discipline or fire employees who are under-performing, have been caught stealing or involved in corruption.

"a whole problem approach to provincial overspending is required. This means improving the financial management of departments in conjunction with transforming personnel management, nationally"

The DPSA is reclassifying categories of offences to create a distinction between offences of differing severity. This initiative has direct implications for strengthening the accountability of officials responsible for overspending.

The new Treasury Control Bill is aimed at strengthening financial accountability at both national and provincial levels. This means devising ways of holding officials publicly accountable for the way in which funds are managed and spent. Contained in the bill are a number of disciplinary actions that can be taken against Accounting Officers in the event that there is overspending, fraud, corruption, mismanagement etc.

The disciplinary actions contained in the bill have not been linked to existing regulations in the Public Service or Labour Relations Acts. As a result, the bill's aims could be jeopardised by a lack of co-ordination between those responsible for designing effective financial management systems and those responsible for designing effective personnel management systems.

Fortunately a process of ensuring that there is cross-referencing between the Treasury Control Bill and the Public Service Act has begun. This illustrates the need for a first practical example of the need to integrate financial and personnel management to address overspending.

The second example of a lack of integration is contained in the Department of State Expenditure's "Manual on the Financial Planning and Budgeting System of the State". This manual contains guidelines for all departments on strategic planning, the compilation of budget planning submissions and the management of funds during a fiscal year.

One of the steps highlighted in the budget planning process is for political heads of departments to take decisions whether or not to discard activities identified as no longer fulfilling the mission and goals of a particular department. There is no mention of how departments are meant to "discard" the personnel who are employed under a particular programme, and who have been identified

as unnecessary.

There are no guidelines about what departments should do in the case where the skills composition or number of employees does not suit the functions and activities of the department. Here the responsibility is shifted to the DPSA without financial consideration about how to deal with the time delays and costs of changing the people employed to implement changes in policy.

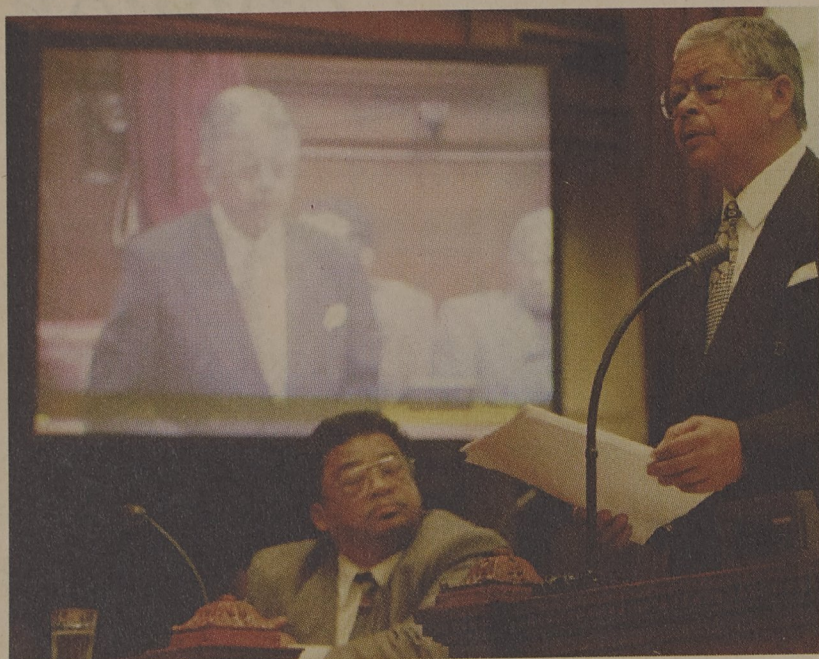
If the goal of improving both the quantity and quality of public goods and services is going to be achieved, all levels of government will have to begin to assume equal responsibility for ensuring that financial and personnel management problems are solved in conjunction with one another.

The current "finger pointing" scenario has to be replaced by mutual respect and understanding of the concerns, needs and constraints faced by different provinces and by national government.

This means an improvement in communication that needs to start with a co-ordinated sequencing of all budgeting processes and an increase in the flow of financial data and policy information between national and provincial governments.

Transparency means less time spent trying to find out what the other is up to and anticipating events that may or may not materialise.

Provinces would benefit enormously if they collaborated more closely and together tackled common problems like overspending instead of constantly being in competition with one another and with national government.



Peter Marais listens to colleague Gerald Morkel.



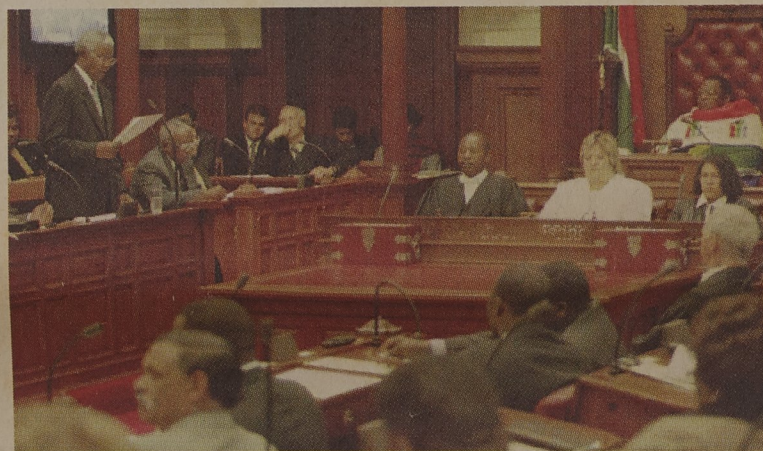
Julius Radue (left), Govan Mbeki and Mkhangelisi Matomela applaud President Mandela.

NCOP Mid-term Review

Matters political: friendly chatter, finger pointing, intense concentration and fiery speeches added colour to the President's Mid-term Review.



Cyprian Cwele (left) and Jacob Zuma.



Patrick Lekota (seated at the back), Sindiso Mfenyana (left), Marion Sparg (centre) and Desiree le Roux (right).



Peter Marais grabs the attention of Louis Swanepoel.



Joan Fubbs and Dorothy Mahlangu are all ears.



Makhenkesi Stofile in discussion with Alfred Motele.



Ben Ngubane and Bongumusa Bhengu (left) in discussion.