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National/Coordinating

NCCR

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EXILES

• **SPECIAL
EDITION
FOR THE
PWV REGION
MARCH 1991**

Reverend Chikane on returnees

Since the 2nd of February 1990 we have envisaged an opportunity of welcoming our brothers and sisters from exile. The preparations we made, with all the accompanying difficulties, were geared towards that opportunity.

There have been many obstacles, the latest relating to the involvement of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. The UNHCR involvement is very important as it actually determines what funds we can get and how soon we can assist our brothers and sisters who are arriving back. It is quite clear now that we are not going to resolve some of these problems before people start coming home. We have been informed that people are coming back very soon. I would like to welcome them to South Africa.

We have been looking forward to meeting them and having them among us to share with us and their families at home. We know the problems and pains of being separated from families, next of kin and loved ones. We are hoping that this coming back and reunion with families and the people of South Africa will create a new climate for the settlement of our problems in the country. We will try our best as the repatriation committee to make their homecoming an exciting and dignified occasion. However, we are also aware of the difficulties and we need to point out to our brothers and sisters that there are difficulties. The Apartheid system is still intact, the regime is still in power. The people are not yet governing the country. We are not in charge of the country at this stage. There are difficulties in making their return and resettlement as humane as possible but we are going to try within that system to do our best.

Frank Chikane - Chairman of the NCCR

Introducing the NCCR

Leading South African religious personalities met from 14 to 16 May, 1990 in Johannesburg to discuss one of the most emotive issues of South African politics - the return of exiles.

The meeting, known as the National Consultation on Returnees, was convened jointly by the South African Council of Churches (SACC), the South African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC), and the World Conference of Religion and Peace (WCRP) which brings together the Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Christian religious groups and faiths.

The consultation was the culmination of a series of meetings with various interested and affected parties. It took place in a climate charged with euphoria and high expectations as a result of F W de Klerk's

parliamentary speech of 2 February 1990. Indeed, the unbanning of banned and restricted organisations created the conditions for the possible return of all South African exiles. True to its tradition, the South African religious community immediately took up the challenge.

The National Executive Committee of the SACC met in February 1990 and constituted a Returnees Task Force which formally came into being on 8 March, 1990. It was made up of representatives of the SACC, SACBC, YWCA, YMCAC, OASSA, and some regional councils of churches. The purpose of this task force was to determine ways and means of facilitating the efficient and dignified return of South African exiles.

The result of these extensive consultations
Continued on Page 2

Continued from page 2

within the religious community and with Liberation Movements and various service organisations, was the working out of a broad framework of 'structure' and programme proposals.

These took concrete form in the constitution on 8 June, 1990 of the National Co-ordinating Committee for the Repatriation of South African Exiles (NCCR).

More than 20 personalities representing various religious bodies and political movements (ANC, PAC, AZAPO/BCMA) met under the chairmanship of SACC General Secretary, Dr Frank Chikane, to found the NCCR. It was decided that the NCCR should be the policy and decision making body of the repatriation programme.

The NCCR is constituted by 10 representatives from the SACC/SACBC, 5 representatives from the WCRP and 2 representatives each from the ANC, PAC and AZAPO/BCMA.

The volatile nature of South African politics made the religious community a natural choice to play the role of facilitator of the project.

As Dr Chikane pointed out at the May consultation, "a consensus (had) emerged that religious leaders in South Africa should convene a national consultative meeting to enable the Liberation Movement in its diversity, religious, professional and service organisations to come together and look at the possibility of co-ordinating the programme of the repatriation of exiles".

An impartial facilitator, not pandering to any particular political interests, was central to the success of the mission. All interested and affected parties had no problem with the church playing this role.

"It was felt that the the return of exiles should be carried out in a dignified, humanitarian and respectful way, regardless of political affiliation or non-aligned position," said Imam Hassan Solomon of the WCRP, "and it was therefore decided that religious bodies were best placed to co-ordinate the operation within a non partisan framework".

The NCCR, however, was embarking on a venture which was unique in South African history. To get the project off the ground, consultations with those who had walked the road before had to be undertaken.

Zimbabwean and Namibian experience

The experience of Zimbabwe and Namibian in the repatriation process was the immediate starting point for South Africans. Although both countries were different from South Africa in terms of the conditions of returning, certain aspects of their experience could be assimilated.

In Namibia the analogous body to the NCCR was the committee for Repatriation,

Resettlement and reconstruction — 3R's. The moving spirit behind the formation of the 3R's was the Council of Churches of Namibia (CCN). The CCN, having already begun preparing for the return of Namibian exiles, was approached by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to be partners in the whole exercise. Having agreed, the CCN went on to establish the 3R's which was made up of sub-organs dealing with finance, logistics, construction, social services, information, health and administration. The choice of the CCN as the sole facilitator and implementing partner of the UNHCR justified itself admirably as Namibia was not without her share of serious political and organisational differences. The Namibian

exercise, as explained by the director of the 3R's Mr Immanuel Dumeni at the May consultation, proved so invaluable that some aspects of it were wholly adopted by the NCCR in it's own programme. This is true especially of such aspects of reception procedure, United Nations involvement, in close consultation with the leadership of returnees and a firm and independent church input in the whole programme.

The NCCR, however, was and still is cognisant of the fact that whereas Namibians and Zimbabweans were returning to their countries to exercise their democratic right to vote, South Africans would the returning to a country still torn apart by Apartheid.

In setting up its infrastructure the 3R's relied heavily on the Zimbabwean experience, a feasibility study of which was made around November 1988. Mr Moss Chikane, delegated by the SACBC to research on the Namibian experience, found it of relevance to the South African situation and made recommendations which informed the mode of operation of the NCCR.

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How does the NCCR operate

The NCCR is responsible for the overall policy and finances of the repatriation programme. It has established an Executive Committee and 2 sub-committees, one dealing with finance and the other with staffing. It has set up task forces that handle different aspects of the programme. Communications, counselling and Welfare, Education and Training, Employment, Health, Housing, Protection and legal matters, Reception and Secondary centres and Reconstruction.

It has demarcated South Africa in 15 regions and initiated the setting up of regional co-ordinating committee and task forces.

The Regional Co-ordinating Committee (RCC)

The RCC's are the functional organs of the NCCR which deal with repatriation issues according to the peculiarities of the demarcated regions. Each RCC is supposed to establish all the relevant task forces that operate at the national level.

Mr Benjamin Muthambi is the convenor of the NCCR - Pretoria - Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) region. He matriculated in 1981 and studied medicine at the Medical University of South Africa. After 6 years he was expelled in his fourth academic year. He worked in Johannesburg for two years "doing all sorts of piece jobs", as he put it.

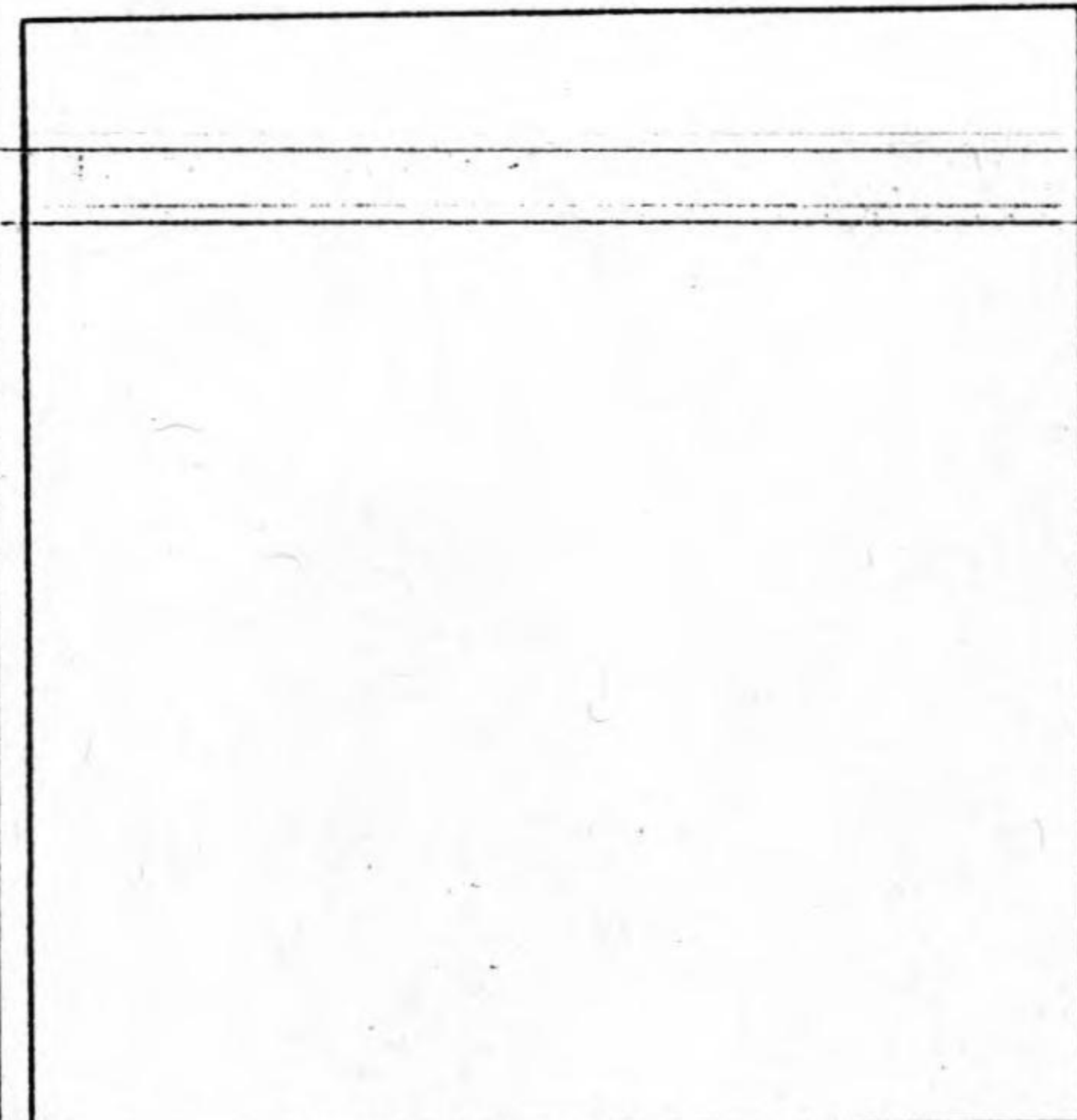
He was admitted at the Witwatersrand University to study for a BSc degree in the Medical Sciences which he completed in 1990. He applied for his present job seeing the advertisement at the office of the South African Health Workers Congress (SAHWCO) of which he is a member.

In an interview reproduced below he answered pertinent questions about the work of his committee.

Mr Muthambi, can you please tell us something about your committee, how it is constituted and how it operates?

Our regional committee consists of the three liberation movements, ANC, PAC, and AZAPO/BCMA and a host of religious organisations the SACC, SACBC, Methodists, Anglicans and many others.

These constituents form the regional co-ordinating committee and it has a functional arm which are the task forces.



Moss Chikane-

We have a number of task forces; Health and Welfare, Housing and Accommodation, Protection and Legal, Education, Reception and registration.

These are the task forces that are, at the moment, functional in the PWV area. The responsibility of the task forces is to carry out the decisions of the committee and address the needs of the people who are returning, according to their specialization. For example, the health, counselling and welfare task force has two sub-task forces: health and welfare and counselling and welfare. These function in unison to address the needs of the returnees and where necessary may have to carry out certain tasks separately.

The functional mechanism is that we have a host of private doctors in the townships and in the city of Johannesburg who are willing to give free health services. They form same kind of network in our region. However, we believe that every citizen of this country should be able to receive health services from government institutions.

If one were to be interested in consulting a private doctor what would be the best way of doing this?

The private doctors can be consulted through the regional co-ordinators office at 62 Marshall Street, 5th floor, Tel: 836-2031.

Can you please give us a blow by blow account of how you assist a returnee from the point of entry until his or her integration in South African society? I am quite aware that you have not reached the stage where you can say a given returnee has been fully integrated. What I am interested in is the ideal situation.

We meet the returnee at the point of entry. We monitor the process of their arrival through customs. From the airport we take them to a primary reception centre. There the process of registration takes place. This is where, ideally, we see returnees meeting with relatives and friends who might have come to fetch them. They may have met at the airport but we prefer that they remain within the fold up to the point of the primary reception centre, and not just head straight for home from the airport. At the reception centre we debrief them.

Debriefing is a word that has other connotations for some of the people who are returning. Can you please explain what you really mean?

During the debriefing we explain who we are and what we are doing. We also go on to explain the situation in the country as we know and see it, in an effort to help them relate to it better.

They will then have to provide some basic information through the form prepared by the NCCR. The information concerns names, address, contact person, education history and the type of assistance they require from the NCCR.

You have registered the returnees, they go to their relatives. Suppose they do not have any relatives — and even if they have, they will need assistance in terms of upkeep and maintenance?

At the reception centre, a recommendation of assistance is made by the interviewer. A sum of R300 per adult will be available within a short space of time after the interview. For married couples with children we are able to offer a maximum amount of R800. At the moment we are unable to alter the amount in proportion to the number of children due to financial

constraints. However, where the number of children is large the interviewer may recommend an amount to be approved by the executive committee of the NCCR as this would be falling outside general policy. In other words, an amount above the maximum sum can only be accommodated upon consultation with the policy-making body. Those returnees who, for whatever reason, have nobody to go to, remain with us and we have to find places where we can accommodate them.

How would you evaluate the road which your committee has travelled so far?

We have made some progress in some areas and less progress in others. I speak of progress in terms of preparations for the formal process of repatriation. A good amount of the progress we had hoped for has been impeded by the people who have returned on their own accord.

This has led to us being engaged in servicing them in the interim instead of preparing for a full scale programme from the point of our official beginning. However, we have battled on and I would say we are able to give as much as we can.

Can you please tell us what the typical problems of a returnee are, and perhaps touch briefly on how these are attended to?

The problems that have emerged are, first, financial. People always express a need for financial assistance. Another problem is accommodation although those who have returned have somehow found some form of shelter.

We have been unable to provide funding specifically for accommodation due to difficulties in raising the necessary money.

The other problem is the insufficiency of the grant we are able to avail. This leads to a lot of distress among many people who end up having to move from where they initially secured shelter as tension begins to grow between family and returnee.

The other problem concerns legal and protection matters. Most of those who are already in the country came on their own accord and many did not have indemnity. In some cases many of these people are harassed by the police, some area arrested for short periods of time and one person is

still in detention.

Are there any means of protecting the returnees in such situations?

At the moment the amount of protection that we have regarding indemnity has its limitations. When it comes to our attention that a person may require indemnity, we are able to refer the particular case to the legal task force and in some cases make a referral to an attorney. The attorney usually services those referred under the auspices of the established human rights organisation in this country.

How many returnees have you processed in your region?

So far we have processed approximately 260 returnees. There are many more who have not registered with us. There could be five times the number.

The Task Forces

Perhaps as a reflection of the legal mist in which the issue of the returnees is still shrouded, the protection and legal task force has been rather active in collating the vital information which every returnee should know. The information, reproduced here in full, deals with such important issues as indemnity, citizenship, identity documents and other general immigration issues.

Indemnity

This is no doubt the question that is uppermost in every exile's mind. In the case of not having applied for indemnity before returning or if such application was made and not favourably attended to, then please inform an NCCR official. The process of dealing with applications for indemnity is complicated. There are many aspects which you may find unacceptable. The NCCR will render assistance in dealing with the application and advise with any queries on this question.

Indemnity-Identity Documents

There have been many changes to the law in the last few years. The pass laws were

abolished in 1986 and there are no more reference books or different identity documents for the different racial groups. The new identity document, which has nothing showing the holder's racial classification, is a small green book. It is the same for all South African citizens and permanent residents. The government has undertaken to scrap the population registration Act this year (1991).

However, there will not be any change of classification to those already racially classified, except for newly borns and those who were never classified before. While the classification according to race may be in the process of being abolished, old habits die hard. In the event of encountering any obstructions from officials in local offices please consult an advice office in your area.

All South African citizens and permanent residents must apply for an identity document ID. The application is made at any office of the department of home affairs. There are various things to know about making an ID applications.

Applications for an ID

It is not only with bureaucrats that old habits die hard. Certain categories of exiles had to assume pseudonyms. This is also known by government institutions like the home affairs department. When applying for an ID it is very important that you give your correct particulars. Officials of the home affairs department may want to see your travel documents but this should not disturb you even if the name appearing in the documents is a pseudonym as long as you give the correct particulars. At the home affairs offices you fingerprints will be taken. This applies to everybody irrespective of colour. If you had a reference book before leaving South Africa your fingerprints are stored in the population register and they will be checked against your application for an ID. When going to the home affairs offices do not forget to take the following documents, naturally if you have them, ~ passport/travel document, birth certificates including those of children under 16 years, your old reference book or the number thereof and two ID photographs.

On receiving your ID please check carefully

if there are mistakes. There were many errors made in the old reference Bureau regarding birth dates. In the event of any error you should contact any advice office which should help in having the error rectified (see the list of advice offices below).

In checking any possible errors in your ID please look at the first six digits in your New ID and the birth date. If, for example you were born on 7 December 1932, the first six digits should be :321207 first comes the year the follows the month and then the day.

DRIVERS LICENCE

A drivers licence issued in another country is not valid in South Africa. It should be exchanged for a South African licence and this must be done before applying for an ID. This is done at the licensing department of your local authority whose address can be found in the local telephone directory under municipality.

The licensing officer should issue you a South African licence in exchange for your foreign one without necessarily making you go through another test. In the event of encountering problems because of the discrepancy in names please consult an advice office.

Immigration and citizenship

The holder of a foreign passport/travel document should carefully note the terms of the visa. The visa is stamped in the passport/travel document and it indicates the permitted length of stay in South Africa. The visa should be extended at a home affairs office to allow for more time for the processing of the application for permanent residence or resumption of citizenship. This application for visa extension should be made before the expiry date indicated in the passport/travel document.

If you are a South African citizen who took up another country's citizenship you should apply for resumption of your South African citizenship. At the time of writing it was still not clear what the position in law is to this particular issue as the amendments to the citizenship act had not been passed in parliament. Those born in exile to a South African parent who is a citizen can apply for South African citizenship when applying for the ID.

Foreign spouses of South African citizens who want to reside in the country should apply for a permanent residence permit and an ID. Children under the age of 16 who were born in South Africa or elsewhere need to be registered as South African citizens

when the parents is applying for an ID or citizenship. Children over the age of 16 have to apply for their own ID.

The independence of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei had inevitable negative consequences as it deprived those South African in these areas of their rights as South African citizens. Although the restoration of South African Citizenship Act went some way towards undoing the injustice, a returnee whose mother tongue is Xhosa, Tswana, or Venda may face problems. Those who were not resident in South Africa outside the PBVC on 30 June 1986 are not covered by the act. In the event of complications an advice office should be consulted. Should the advice offices not be in a position to assist the NCCR will help in getting legal assistance and settle any expenses incurred.

Advice offices

The advice offices are established in various places throughout South Africa. They can help with most problems relating to documents and other difficulties which returnees may experience.

The NCCR office in your home areas should always be contacted if the advice office cannot help. The list of advice centres which may be contacted:

Pietersburg 0699

Box 2282 Pietersburg 0700

Tel: (01521) 5634

56.Itsoseng Advice Office

1259 Zone 2

Itsoseng 2744

Box 109 Itsoseng 2744

~~57.Ipeleng Advice Office~~

Roman Catholic Church

Khutsong

Carletonville 2505

Box 180 Carletonville

Tel: (01491) 3475

HEALTH SERVICE INFORMATION

HEALTH TASK FORCE FOR RETURNEES SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL

Health and Health care is a basic human right of every individual irrespective of race, class, gender or religious conviction. The apartheid health system is in a state of near collapse and unable to deal with the burden of illness and disease the afflicts our nation. The health system has been ^{that} segregated, fragmented, undemocratic, inaccessible and essentially curative.

While we believe in a comprehensive Primary Health care service which intergrate physical, mental and social well being, we have to endure the health resources currently available. We cannot provide a fully alternative health service for returnees. The state has a duty to provide for the returnees. Using the state service will help in fighting segregation and minimise costs.

The Regional Co-ordinator will be based at:

Khotso House

62 Marshall Street

A7

Johannesburg

Tel: 836-2031

All health problems will be co-ordinated from this office.

If you have an immediate problem requiring attention please inform the officer at the reception centre on arrival. If you have an ongoing problem for which you have been managed at your point of departure, report to the regional co-ordinator at Khotso House, who will arrange for your to be seen by one of the network health workers or at an institution.

There are well baby clinics in most areas for all children where Road to Health Cards and vaccinations will be seen to. Sexually transmitted diseases, Tuberculosis and other communicable disease are managed as well.

Family planning and pap smear are also done. These services are provided without charge.

Most areas are serviced by Primary health clinics, where minor problems are attended to. This service is charged for according to income and it is again advisable to consult the regional co-ordinator before attending.

There are central teachings hospitals which require a referral from the Primary care clinics or general practitioners where specialist services are rendered. Most areas also have regional hospitals where a certain amount of specialist service may be rendered. These services are also charged according to income. Arrangements for fees are to be made with the co-ordinator.

some general practitioners will provide a service but this may only be done through the regional co-ordinator. If blood test and X-rays are required before proceedings with these investigations, the co-ordinators must be informed. The high cost of private investigations will not be met. This will also apply to medications from pharmacies.

In the event of an emergency refer to your nearest hospital

WHAT DO I DO IN AN EMERGENCY?

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Call 999 this is the emergency number at ambulance control all hospitals have casualty departments.

WHERE DO I GO FOR AN ONGOING PROBLEM?

Diabete - High Blood Pressure Arthritis etc
attend primary health care clinic in your area.

WHERE DO I GO FOR MINOR PROBLEMS?

Attend a primary health care clinic

WHERE DO I GO FOR MY PREGNANCY?

Attend the antenatal clinic in your area

WHERE DO I TAKE MY BABY FOR VACCINATION?

Well baby clinics provide a free service in all areas.

DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR THESE SERVICES ?

The following services are provided free

- Well baby clinics
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Tuberculosis
- Family planning

Other services including primary care clinics and provincial hospitals apply the "means test" where people are classified according to income and the number of dependents. A single person with no dependents earning less then R400 a month is classified as H2, this would also apply to pensioners and unemployed persons H2 patients pay R10 for consultation. As income increases one may become H4 and the fee is R30. Consult the co-ordinator ofr payment for fees.

WHAT IF I WISH TO SEE A DOCTOR OF MY CHOICE ?

You wil have to pay the cost and will not be refunded.

24

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency 999

Ambulance

Johannesburg

Soweto 950-4011

Westonaria 753-1121

HOSPITALS

Johannesburg General 488-49111

Hillbrow 724-1121

Baragwanath 933-1100

Coronation 673-4200

Krugersdorp

Randfontein

Sebokeng

Natalspruit

H F Verwoed Pretoria 012-213211

Middelburg 0132-25311

Health Care by Network by general practitioners and primary health care clinics will be done on a geographic basis.

The following areas have facilities:

West Rand: Potchefstroom Westonaria

CarletonvilleKagiso

SowetoAzadeville

Lenasia

Johannesburg:West

CoronationBosmont

FordsburgMayfair

Central

CityHillbrow

East

BereaYeoville

East Rand:BenoniActonville

VosloorusThokoza

KetlehongThembisa

Deveyton

Witbank

Middelburg

Pretoria:Central

AttridgevilleMamelodi

Garankuwa

Brits

Vaal:EvatonSebokeng

RoshneeZamdela

Health Bodies and Services

NMADA (National Medical and Dental Association)

Cavendish Chambers

Jeppe Street

<p>Johannesburg: West Coronation, Bosmont, Fordsburg, Mayfair Central, City Hillbrow, East Berea and Yeoville</p> <p>East Rand: Benon, Actonville, Vosloorus, Thokoza, Kettlehong, Thembisa, Deveyton, Witbank and Middelburg</p> <p>Pretoria: Central Atteridgeville, Mamelodi, Garankuwa and Brits</p>	<p>South African returnee programme</p> <p>Description The South African Return Programme, (SARP) is a programme aimed at assisting returning exiles and ex-political prisoners intergrate into the South African community. It is implemented in cooperation with the National Co-ordinating Committee for the Repatriation of South African Exiles. (Employment and Education and Training task forces)</p>	<p>Tel: 0461-26833/29247</p> <p>3. Border Council of Churches P O Box 966 King Williams Town 5600</p> <p>4. Cape Town Dependents Conference Cowley House 126 Chapel Street Cape Town 8001 Tel: 021 452100</p>
<p>Vaal: Evaton, Sebokeng, Roshnee and Zamdela</p> <hr/> <p>Health Bodies and Services</p> <p>1ADA (National Medical and Dental Association) Cavendish Chambers, Jeppe Street, Johannesburg, 2001 Tel: 23-3244/29-4060</p> <p>SAHWCO (South African Health Workers Congress) 187 Harley Chambers, Jeppe Street, Johannesburg, 2001 Tel: 337-4775</p> <p>NEHAWU (National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union) Auto Mutual Building Wanderers and Noord Streets, Johannesburg, 2001 Tel: 331-9542/3/4</p> <p>Alcoholics Anonymous</p> <p>...s Support Group</p> <p>Detainees Services Tel: 23-3244</p> <hr/> <p>Education and training</p> <p>The NCCR task force on education and training, is in a position to assist returnees, albeit in a limited manner, through a programme established in partnership with the World University services.</p> <p>The undertaking benefits not only those in the PWV areas but others throughout the country as well. It is known as the South African Return Programme. Mr Mikki Xayiya, the programme officer based in Cape Town, supplied the information which we reproduce below.</p>	<p>SARP will offer grants to be administered by organisations and institutions able to offer:</p> <p>(1) In House training or employment (2) Short term training courses.</p> <hr/> <p>The programme will aim at</p> <p>1. Assist intergration of returning exiles and ex-political prisoners. 2. Promote self-reliance of the returning exiles and ex-political prisoners 3. Enable returning exiles and ex-political prisoners to acquire skills and experience relevant to the process of building a new South Africa. 4. Enable returning exiles and ex-political prisoners to contribute to the strengthening of community based organisations.</p> <hr/> <p>Administration of grants</p> <p>All grants will be administered by the organisation or institution training or employing the grants. An agreement will be signed between the WUS and the organisation or institution. Grants will not cover transportation to interviews. Where a grantee stops working or training the grant will be terminated immediately.</p> <hr/> <p>Contact Addresses for NCCR</p> <p>1. NCCR- National Office c/o SACC Khotso House 62 Marshall Street Johannesburg</p> <p>2. Albany Council of Churches P O Box 663 Grahamstown 21 Bartholmew Street Grahamstown 6140</p>	<p>5. Durban Dependents Conference 20 St Andrew Street Durban 4001 Tel: 031-3010944</p> <p>6. Eastern Cape Council of Churches P O Box 1035 Port Elizabeth 6000</p> <p>Pioneer Ford Building North End Main Street Port Elizabeth Tel: 041-436831</p> <p>7. Karoo Council of Churches P O Box 177 Carnarvon 7760 Tel: 0201-51830</p> <p>8. Lowveld Council of Churches P O Box 2824 Nelspruit 1200 Tel: 01311-25568</p> <p>9. Midlands Council of Churches P O Box 425 Graaf Reinet 1280 Tel: 0483-23494</p> <p>10. Northern Cape Council of Churches P O Box 1533 Kimberley 8300 Tel: 0531-43337</p> <p>11. Northern Cape Council of Churches P O Box 2039 Pietersburg 0700 Tel: 01522-3872</p>