

MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE
INTERIM NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS,
HELD IN JOHANNESBURG ON JANUARY 19-20, 1991.

CHAIRPERSON: Zola Skweyiya

SCRIBES: Shirley Mabusela
Manto Tshabalala

PRESENT: As per attendance register.

OPENING REMARKS:

The chairperson welcomed the participants on behalf of both Mrs Albertina Sisulu and Sister Bernard Ncube, the patrons of the NCCR project, who were unable to attend because of other pressing matters. He noted that the meeting was taking place at a very crucial time when the situation of children was being worsened by the violence. It was therefore necessary to strengthen the work and efforts geared towards the alleviation of the plight of these children. This work is embodied in the objectives as set out in Gaborone and supported by UNICEF and the progressive peace loving people of our country.

PARTICIPANTS:

. The participants introduced themselves. A list of participants is attached (Annex 1). The meeting was concerned with the absence of participants from the OFS, Northern Natal, Natal Midlands, Northern Transvaal and also that the Border region was not fully represented. The participants from the Natal Midlands was expected to arrive, and indeed one participant did arrive.

PROGRAMME:

Cde Mathole Motshekga informed the participants that the two previous meetings there had been changes in the initial conceptualisation of the NCCR project. The minutes had been overtaken by the latest agreement between the NCCR and UNICEF which dictated the present character of the NCCR, as contained in a document WHAT IS NCCR, which he was to present to the meeting. Discussing the minutes could be a waste of time. He proposed that the minutes be disposed with.

It has been necessary to enter into this type of an agreement with UNICEF as this was the only arrangement through which the project could get assistance, in view of the fact that the sanctions are still in place. Once these were lifted the relationship between the NCCR and UNICEF could be different. Some participants were unhappy about taking decisions on the document they were seeing for the first time, a document they had not discusses.

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They noted that they had in fact been invited to come and discuss the constitution and the Composition of the Board of Trustees, including the Situation Analysis and were not sure therefore at which point these issues would be raised if the minutes were to be dispersed with.

The Constitution, the composition of the Board of Trustees could be discussed as part of the Co-ordinators report. The document authorising the agreement between NCCR and UNICEF was, in fact, not a new document. Neither is it a policy document. It had been agreed upon in Gaborone, in order to get funds from the UNICEF without the latter being seen as sanctions busting. This is an action document, a master plan for the implementation of the programmes on women and children's issues. Therefore there was no question of debating its approval. The document could, however, be enriched through discussions.

The programme as amended is attached as ANNEX 2.

THE DOCUMENT: WHAT IS NCCR:

In presenting this document Cde Mathole highlighted the following points:

- Part 1 of the document deals with history of the NCCR, leading up to the agreements that were reached at the Gaborone Consultative Conference.
- The meeting had then agreed that NCCR be an NGO, a non-profit making structure.
- Each region had been requested to send 2 names of people who were to serve on the Board of Trustees. Only one region responded. The NCCR was thus Constituted in terms of the Deed of Trust and is now accordingly registered.
- The objectives of the NCCR have 3 components:
 1. A nation wide awareness campaign that had been launched in June 1990.
 2. Research
 3. Training. 30 people had to undergo a training programme in Lusaka on how to conduct a situation analysis. It had been hoped that this training workshop could take place between the 24-30 January 1991. This however has since been postponed to April 1991 due to the unavailability of high level resource persons considered by UNICEF as vital for the exercise. It is necessary to decide what dates in April, would be suitable for the workshop.

Project Implementation outlines the agreement between the NCCR and UNICEF. The agreement is referred to as the MASTERPLAN and deals with general policies, priorities, objectives, strategies and management responsibilities.

- The programme strategies and priority projects are not exhaustive of the NCCR scope of activities otherwise could be identified. The three projects deal with empowering the existing NGOs. The NCCR is not meant to replace the existing NGOs. The idea is not to create new NGOs where these already exist, but to identify those with the capacity to do the work. The NCCR will support the evaluation of a network of NGOs, with particular assistance and attention to the rural areas.

- The Institute for Contextual Theology is to receive the funds from UNICEF on behalf of the NCCR and administer them in accordance with the UNICEF accounting guidelines. ICT had been identified as an accredited agency with ability to raise funds internationally.

ISSUES RAISED

- The training is not meant for only those already involved in situation analysis. It is also to benefit service people like teachers, parents and other relief workers.

- UNICEF is not setting up any new structures and will not employ additional staff (regional coordinator) to run the project. The project must utilize the existing NGOs and the expertise available.

- The ICT will receive funds on behalf of the NCCR and the NCCR Board of Trustees will allocate funds in response to regional needs.

- Project proposal guidelines to facilitate application for funds have been worked out and are available.

- the Board of Trustees will inform all the regions how funds have been allocated.

- Because the NGOs are independent there is no need for a constitution. A constitution will infringe on the independence of the organisations. NGOs must account to the regional forums not only financially but also on services rendered.

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- A working document is necessary for consultancy, liaison purposes and national campaigns and should include some aspects of working with other donors. It should not therefore be based on the UNICEF agreement.

- , It is necessary to democratize the Board of Trustees to ensure that it reflects the non sectarian character of the NCCR and regional representation. The objective should be to curtail' its powers and also ensure accountability. Regions might consider removing some members of the Board of Trustees and replacing them with candidates from the regions. The Board of Trustees in consultation with the regions will effect the democratization of the Board of Trustees. It was necessary for 75% of the Board of Trustees to agree to the changes in the Board.

- The National Committee on Children's Rights as agreed in Gaborone to remain as before. The Trust will deal with issues related to fund raising and funding.

- At regional level it is necessary to identify all the organisations that deal with the children's issues, report back and then elect regional representatives and a convenor who will then represent the regional structure on the national committee.

- At regional level the forum of NGOs will play a consultative role to which proposals will be submitted, discussed, approved and then forwarded to the NCCR with recommendations for funding. The forum will give guidelines to the NCCR with regard to funding.

CO-ORDINATORS REPORT

Some of the issues raised in the Coordinators report were discussed in dealing with the document on the character of the NCCR. The Coordinator highlighted the following points:

- UNICEF has postponed the training programme to April 1991.

- The regional project proposals for funding for the February/September period should be submitted in February 1991.

- There is a lack of understanding of the objectives of this project and the co-ordinator has no mechanism of assessing work that is being implemented on the ground. There is also poor communication between the co-ordinator and the regions and also within the-regions. This necessitates round-trip-tours by the co-ordinator.

ISSUES

- Regions were called upon to propose what the training programme should include. This will be in co-operated into the programme envisaged by UNICEF. It is important to recognise that UNICEF has the expertise in the area of training and it is necessary to use this. s
- Some participants noted that there is enough expertise inside the country and therefore there is no need for the training outside the country. This would be an expensive exercise. It was however agreed that training outside the country would afford us the possibility of sharing experience with countries in the subregion. The training has two components, internal and external.
- The situation analysis will not be carried out only by experts but by people from the community and NGOs as well, hence the necessity for the training.
- NGOs may wish to attach the people who have been trained to their organisations. In this regard the NGOs are called upon to submit proposals through their regions.
- The co-ordinator sent out to the regions, a set of criteria on training. These criteria must be discussed and adopted. Regions were called upon to make their inputs

REGIONAL REPORTS

WESTERN CAPE

Had a workshop to consult on the constitution, Board of Trustees and the situation analysis. Participating in the forum were different NGOs, health units, child welfare, ANC Women's League, SAYCO, ICD Committee consisting of various organisations. Rural areas have not been activated. The workshop raised amongst other things issues around the situation analysis, the necessity for simplifying and translating the documents into relevant languages, the initiation of extensive consultation within the community and the necessity to balance participation between the professionals, the community and NGOs.

Budget proposals have been submitted to the coordinator. There is poor communication between the coordinator and the regions. Sometimes information has been confusing and needs clarification. WC observed the International Children's Day with over 8000 children participating.

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Participating at the forum are NGO such as SAHCO, NAMDA, Housing, COSATU, Child Welfare, Women for Peaceful Change, NECC, WCRP, Justice and Reconciliation, ANC Women's League, End Conscription Campaign. At the beginning the CDS supported the regional NCCR forum but it seems to have collapsed. It is necessary to get guidelines on the relationship-between CDS and NCCR. How should the regions relate to the Independent Development Trust (Steyn Fund). Two committees have been established: the research and media committees. The media committee is to focus on the rights of children and the violation of these. A media skills workshop was held.

The region had a Christmas for peace campaign and anti-war toys campaign. The "Bring your child to work" campaign initiated by COSATU was not successful. This was meant to demonstrate the number of children without creche facilities. Noted that the committee is still Durban based. The difficulties in broadening the committee were partly attributed to the lack of resources. There is need to ensure that projects extend to the most needy people and areas.

EASTERN CAPE:

Covers 5 areas: P_E, Tsitsikama, Albany, Karoo and Midlands. A meeting was held on 24.10.90 in which COSATU, ANC Women's League, IDAMASA and other academics participated. There are concerns over delays in repayment of funds to the regions. Endorsed the training should take place outside, two people have been nominated. P.E is dealing' with the identification of street children. Necessity for a regional coordinator was identified.

SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL:

Two meetings have been held in the Southern Transvaal with sectoral participation and projects that deal with children. A workshop in February 2, 1991 will discuss the relationship between the N.C.C.R and parastatal organisations including the programme of action. The workshop will also extract from the Harare Conference, the Malibongwe Conference and other UN documents those issues that have not been implemented. The workshop will also elect a permanent regional structure.

BORDER:

The representative was attending for the first time and could not submit a report.

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EASTERN TRANSVAAL:

The representative was also new and did not come from a forum. Work has been done around the issue of children has been done in collaboration with the SACC. Work has been done around Bushbuckridge, Carolina and Kwanyamazana. As a women's organisation, together with the SACC observed the International Children's Day, read and discussed the UN Declaration on Children's Rights, visited children in hospital. Have set up discussion groups. Addressing the problem on street children, child labour in the farms and mining villages, and are addressing the issue of school drop outs.

In September 1990 the Children's Rights Committee together with the women's organisation workshopped and launched an awareness campaign on the children's rights. Proposes a regional children's conference to facilitate the broadening of the initiative to the farms and Trust areas.

Eastern Transvaal was commended on work done so far without resources and for the fact that the region had gone beyond the confines of political ideology.

NATAL MIDLANDS:

A task force has been set up and consists of 3 women, 3 men, 2 church representatives, 2 health workers, 1 social worker, 1 educationist and a member of the community. Four (4) creches have been opened in the rural areas. Violence has led to an increase in the number of street children. Noted overcrowding in the creches and schools in the urban areas. Highlighted drug abuse among children. Poor communication with coordinator. Identified the need to run regional workshops. Loans for the International Children's Day (1.6.90) have not been refunded. There is a general problem concerning finances.

ISSUES RAISED FROM REGIONAL REPORTS

At the UN Children's Summit, the problems and situations of South Africa children was raised by the delegates from Zambia and Swaziland. At these forums the S.A. issue of children is consistently raised by the ANC and PAC as these organisations both have observer status. Unfortunately, both organisations were not invited to the Summit.

The U.N. International Convention on Children's Rights has been ratified and adopted by some countries. The African Network on the Protection of Children Against Abuse is adapting the Convention to the African situation and its cultural practices.

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After this Summit, Dr. Sullivan, the U.S.A. Secretary for Health and Human Services, at the insistence of President Bush came to South Africa to discuss the question of Child Survival and AIDS. NCCR together with ANC Department of Health and other progressive health organisations met and informed his delegates about the plight of children on this country.

There is no definite relationship between the NCCR and the CDS but due to the constraints experienced by the latter at the beginning CDS was approached to use its pool of resources in favour of NCCR. CDS also assisted delegates to attend NCCR meetings.

With regard to the IDT Fund, it has been generally accepted that all sectors can engage the Trust on our terms. Different organisations should develop their own positions on how to utilize the IDT Fund.

The need for a News briefing was identified.

The NCCR Coordinator will attend the ANC donors Conference to be held in Tanzania from 6-8 February 1991. This will enable the NCCR to present its project to different donors outside of UNICEF.

The agreement between the NCCR and UNICEF does not facilitate communication within the regions and with the Coordinator.

,UNICEF is against the formation of new structures and does not favour the employment of additional and full staff for this project. There is a need to fundraise outside of UNICEF in order to be able to set up operational regional structures.

The need to coordinate with other national structures such as SABSWA, SASPCAN, PPHC, NACCW, Child Welfare, DPSA and others which deal with children's issues was identified.

There is also a need to contact professional associations and organisations that provide humanitarian assistance in the area of child survival. In this regard the League of the Red Cross and the International Committee on Red Cross were identified.

There is also a need to expose the S.A. Red Cross.

STRENGTHENING THE NCCR

Comde. Zola called for concrete suggestions from the participants. The Western Cape delegation raised its concerns regarding the Deed of Trust and submitted its proposed amendments. These will be considered by the board of Trustees. It was agreed that in future important documents should be drawn with broader input and participation by regions. The strengthening of regions will strengthen the NCCR in that broad representation will be ensured.

Convenors were charged with the task of finding out who and which organisations are concerned with children's regional issues, call them together, give feed back and elect regional representatives who will serve on the NCCR. This will ensure that the structure is no longer an interim one, but a structure elected on the will of the people at grassroots level. '

CHILDRREN'S RIGHTS ADVOCACY Z June 1st Campaign

The following were proposed as ways in which the advocacy issues can be dealt with:

- On-going workshops in regions highlighting children and women's issues.
- Pamphleteering and use of media
- Presentations to welfare organisations to influence policies on Children and women issues.
- Campaigns against war toys
- An on-going documentary on children in this country is needed to sensitize communities about children's issues
- There is a need for an action committee to take on issues affecting children
- After discussions, it was agreed that a National Conference on children be held in June 1991. The coordinator and chairman of the board to discuss this and inform regions so as to ensure that ground rules for the conference encompass majority sentiments.
- _ - There is a need to address issues that will impact on the children's situation positively. This should be done through concrete projects and the strengthening of existing projects.
- Note was taken of the need to rehabilitate children for a new South Africa. This should involve all children but white children in particular.
- There is a need to set clear objectives to build a national character for children's rights which should also reach the children themselves.
- Regions to share ideas and learn from experiences in other regions on advocacy issues.
- Addressing child abuse issues in urban and rural communities is important and the family approach to issues needs to be advocated.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Regions to immediately start working with other organisations on the above issues. It was proposed that because the SACC has experience in organising many of the above issues, that they also be approached regionally for input.
- _ Regions were urged to submit their plans to the National Coordinator by the 15th April 1991 to ensure that efforts are coordinated nationally.

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- Regions were charged with the responsibility to tap local resources for their efforts, and if possible to share with regions that do not have resources.

- June the 1st will be Nationally celebrated as it is the International Children's Day.

LOGLSTLCS EOR THE CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE

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To continue the work that was started in Harare and review the children's situation in South Africa. Despite the moves towards negotiations, children's situation has not been impacted upon.

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This Conference will be organised in order to:

- Highlight children's issues
- Strengthen the NCCR and formally launch it
- Introduce the International fever to NCCR
- Put the children's issues on the national agenda

Regions were urged to launch regionally before June 1991 in order to ensure that when the National Committee launches in June, elected representatives from regions are in place.

Regions will be approached regarding' conference content and propose names of people to be on the conference committee.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

- Regions to start collecting information and immediately compile it.

- Regions to identify trainees for the UNICEF training programme in April and these be send to the coordinator by the end of February 1991.

- National Coordinator to circulate a document on which areas to cover in the situation analysis to regions immediately to facilitate this process.

- That areas of importance not covered in above document be included by regions

GENERAL

- Minutes will be circulated within the next two weeks

- Regions to submit budget proposals to the National coordinator by the end of February 1991. As the Western Cape has already submitted its budget proposal, it will be sent to regions to use only as a guideline to facilitate completion of the budget.

- National Coordinator to negotiate UNICEF training dates early in April with the latter and inform the regions.

Training will take 6 days.

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It was noted that UNICEF is now ready to finance the translation of children's rights documents into other languages. Regions were urged to take this up through the National Coordinator.

NCCR to start coordinating outside exposure for the organisation.

Uniformity in action should be ensured by circularising information to other regions Via the national office.

It was proposed that the ANC be approached to consider the NCCR's existence and be urged to pass on invitations regarding children from other organisations and overseas to the NCCR and to consult with N.C.C.R on women and children issues.

There is a need to put together a directory of children's organisations, UNICEF is prepared to finance this project. Again input from regions will play an important part.

Regions were requested to provide the national office with information as to which organisations are involved with NCCR structures in their area.

The Coordinator was requested to tap resources like Universities, Human Awareness Programme etc. for information on children's programmes and projects. This information will have gaps and regions are urged to fill and update them. Suraya offered to assist by putting this information on computer.

The Coordinator was urged to make use of the NCCR membership to carry out her tasks as there is no way she can be expected to cope with the demands on her own.

CLOSURE

Cmde.

Zola closed the meeting after a brief summary of the proceedings.