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COMMISSION ON REGIONS

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Demokratiese Party
Democratic Party

**SUBMISSIONS BY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
(NATIONAL HEAD OFFICE)
IN REACTION TO THE REPORT OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE DEMARCATION/DELIMITATION OF SPRs**

1. Introduction

1.1 The Democratic Party welcomes the first Report of the Commission. The Commission was faced with a huge task and the DP recognizes that it must often have been faced with difficult choices. For the most part, the DP concurs with the Commission's findings, but, as will become apparent, has suggestions which it would like to make to amend some of the other recommendations.

1.2 In general, the Commission's Report constitutes a useful starting point for discussion, consultation and negotiation. The Party certainly believes that the number of Regions (9) is within acceptable limits.

1.3 As far as the general approach is concerned, the Democratic Party believes that, while planners may have certain strategic objectives, in political, socio-economic and developmental fields, the lives of the people who live within certain Regions must be of dominant importance. We believe that there should be extensive consultation and testing of opinion both in respect of the general concepts of the Regions proposed, as well as of the fine-tuning of the boundaries.

1.4 While the DP will make comments and suggestions about the Regions and their boundaries, these suggestions should not be understood to be prescriptive. The views of the people living in those Regions will have to be sought and evaluated.

2. Northern Cape and Western Cape

2.1 The Northern Cape Region, as proposed by the Commission, is neither viable nor desirable.

2.2 The reasons advanced by the Commission for the demarcation of this Region are utterly unconvincing. By its own admission, the Commission found that the proposed Region

- had no economic core;
- was poorly off in terms of its economic resource base and quality of life indicators;
- did not have enough institutional infrastructure to accommodate a regional government; and
- was the largest Region with the lowest population density.

●o these arguments might have been added the fact that the Northern Cape has no well-developed communications system.

The Commission itself only supported the Region by a margin of 8 to 7.

2.3 To the extent that the proposed Northern Cape Region may have been an attempt to create a relatively homogenous (white) Afrikaner state, it needs to be stressed that the Western Cape is the only Region in the country where Afrikaans is the overwhelmingly predominant language. White Afrikaners live predominantly in the Western and Northern Transvaal, and the creation of a Region in an entirely different part of the country to accommodate the perceived right of such people to "self determination" at the expense of administrative efficiency and economic growth makes very little sense. Besides, the ethnic breakdown of the proposed Region provides little comfort for those wanting a white Afrikaner state as 31% of its population will be black, and 53.9% will be "coloured". (Table 1, p 44)

2.4 Moreover, it makes little sense to sever the West Coast from the Western Cape. All the dominant industries of the West Coast are tied into, or dependent on, the Western Cape. The fishing and diamond dredging fleets operate out of and are serviced in Cape Town. The fruit and wine industries, located all up the West Coast and as far north as Upington, are marketed through agencies located in Cape Town. The lines of communication, and the axis of development of the West Coast are all north-south, stretching from Cape Town to the Namibian border. The tourism industry of the West Coast - and particularly the eco-tourism industry - is integrated into that of the Western Cape. It would seem that at very least a compelling case can be advanced for the inclusion of the magisterial districts of Clanwilliam (eco-tourism, citrus, tea, fishing), Vredendal (fishing, eco-tourism), Vanrhynsdorp (eco-tourism) and Namakwaland (eco-tourism, diamond dredging, fishing) into the Western Cape. Expressed negatively, there are no lines of communication nor axes of development between the West Coast and areas such as Kimberley, Barkly West and Warrenton. The inhabitants of the West Coast do not share common interests, nor common economic activity with the inhabitants of Griqualand West.

2.5 A case could likewise be made out for the inclusion of the magisterial districts of Calvinia, Sutherland, Fraserburg and Victoria West into the Western Cape. The main communication routes connecting the people of these areas to markets and to social services (particularly health services) is along the R29 stretching from George to Beaufort West and then from Three Sisters to Victoria West (now the N13).

2.6 If one accepts the argument for the incorporation of the West Coast into the Western Cape, then the case for the Northern Cape becomes even less convincing. Severed from the West Coast, a very good case exists for not having a bleak, sparsely populated and administratively questionable Northern Cape Region.

2.7 What alternatives present themselves? The DP accepts the Commission's argument for the viability of the North West Region. The crisp question remains what should happen to the rump of the Northern Cape once the West Coast is excised from it. One possibility is to include the rest of the proposed Northern Cape Region into the proposed North West Region. While this is possible, the area would be vast, and the communications within the Region no more satisfactory. Moreover, there would be significant diversity of the people and geography within the area : the Region would simultaneously include a sheep farming, winter-rainfall area in the extreme south-west of Calvinia with a summer-rainfall, cattle

and maize producing community in the Swartruggens area. In addition, the Region would include a wide variety of languages and cultures, development nodes and separate administrative infrastructures.

2.8 Because of these considerations, it is proposed that the Western Cape's northern border be the Orange River, thus including (most of) the magisterial districts of Namakwaland (as previously argued), Kenhardt, Prieska, Hopetown, Philipstown, and Colesberg in the Western Cape. The Orange River is a clearly defined natural border, and this border takes into account existing transportation, commercial and administrative infrastructure. It is further proposed that the eastern border of the Western Cape correspond with the border recommended by the Commission, which coincidentally corresponds with the border between development regions A and B (on the western side) and D (on the eastern side). Adopting this proposal will retain the whole of development region A within the Western Cape, as well as all of development region B south of the Orange River. To the extent that development regions have contributed to economic community of interests, it would seem sensible to retain these where possible.

2.9 As has been stated, the DP accepts the viability of the North West Region, as proposed by the Commission. The Party likewise accepts the proposed Orange Free State Region. The magisterial districts of Gordonia, Postmasburg, Hay, Herbert, Kimberley, Barkly West, and Warrenton could be included in either the Western Cape (as proposed in this submission), or the North West Region, or the Orange Free State. It is suggested that there be a high degree of consultation with, and testing of the opinion of, the inhabitants of these districts to determine into which Region they would like to fall.

3. Pretoria and the PWV

3.1 The argument has been advanced that Pretoria is an integral part of the larger PWV economic region. The DP doubts whether this is correct.

3.2 Pretoria has in historical context always been separate from Johannesburg., and to a lesser extent the Vereeniging component of the PWV area, has traditionally been orientated towards mining and industry, while Pretoria has been geared towards government and administration. Indeed, in historical context, there has traditionally been a tension between the inhabitants of the two centres, most visible, but by no means confined to, whites.

3.3 The hinterland of Pretoria has always stretched north and east, and it is only in recent years that there has been the phenomenon of Johannesburg and Pretoria growing towards each other, largely as a result of urban sprawl. There is actually an East-West dividing line, roughly corresponding to the border between the Brits, Pretoria and Bronkhorstspuit magisterial districts (to the north), and the Krugersdorp, Randburg, Kempton Park and Benoni districts (to the south).

3.4 The Commission's Report concedes that their proposed PWV Region will be the most populous (9,2672 million). The Region will also be concentrated in other respects : most of the country's political and commercial power will be concentrated in that one region. Virtually all the headquarters of the country's NGOs will likewise be concentrated within one Region.

3.5 Despite superficial considerations which might incline recommending Pretoria's inclusion with the Johannesburg and Vereeniging areas, there is the real fact that virtually all institutions of civil society are replicated in both Johannesburg and Pretoria. Each has its own Chamber of Business, Press Club, Bar Council, and even Rugby Football Union. In addition, Pretoria replicates many of the administrative and educational institutions available in Johannesburg. Both Pretoria and Johannesburg have their own Supreme and Regional Courts, universities and technikons, and municipal and regional services council areas. Moreover, the Pretoria subregional population characteristics differ markedly from the rest of the PWV (as represented by development region H). Only 54% of Pretoria's population is urbanized, compared with the rest of region H, which is 96% urbanized. The city of Pretoria is distinctly different, too, in that it is completely surrounded by either a rural or a peri-urban environment.

3.6 The DP believes that it is not desirable to have too great a concentration of power (whether this is governmental, economic or communal) within one Region, when the intention is to create Regions of roughly equal size and power.

3.7 On the contrary, in countries where decentralized political systems have been chosen, great care has been taken to separate the administrative capital from concentrations of economic power or of population. In Brazil, for example, the capital was not centred in Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo, but in Brasilia, a federal district. Similar examples can be drawn from the experience of Canada, Australia, the United States, Germany and Nigeria.

3.8 What are the alternatives? One is to include Pretoria within the Eastern Transvaal Region, proposed by the Democratic Party in its original submission. The reasons for Pretoria's inclusion into the Eastern Transvaal have not been addressed by the Commission in its report, but in our view remain valid. Were Pretoria to be the capital of the Eastern Transvaal, it would be unnecessary to replicate many of the existing administrative infrastructure in Nelspruit.

3.9 Another alternative would be to recommend the creation of a separate Region for the Pretoria functional area, including the Brits, Pretoria and Bronkhorstspuit magisterial districts (and possibly Wonderboom as well), thereby creating an administrative capital Region. Such a recommendation would be justified in terms of Pretoria's population size (metropolitan population 2,8 million) and population growth rate, and would reduce the unacceptably high population of the proposed PWV Region (9,2 million).

4. The Eastern Cape and Border/Kei

4.1 The Commission proposes one SPR covering the territory from East Griqualand in the east, to Nature's Valley in the West. This is a vast stretch of land, encompassing people whose interests differ very markedly.

4.2 The DP believes that the differences are such that a separation of the Eastern Cape from the Border/Kei would be in the interests of the inhabitants of both sub-regions. Two distinctive functional areas have developed historically – one centred in Port Elizabeth, serving the Midlands hinterland, and one centred in East London, serving the Border and Transkei interior, and latterly the Ciskei and North Eastern Cape. These centres are 300 km apart, and communications routes between the two centres are, apart from by air, not direct.

3 These functional areas have developed in this way for a number of reasons, but chiefly because the agro-ecology of their hinterlands are vastly different. When Port Elizabeth and Port Rex (now East London) were first established, their communication links were established inland, as the most efficient communication links between them were by sea. As these inland communication links developed, each port began to cater differently for the markets in the hinterlands. As the Midlands hinterland is for the most part arid, Port Elizabeth catered for, and became renowned for, wool exports. The port of East London, by contrast, became the centre for the import and export of barter goods. This pattern has persisted, in different form, to the present – given the relative decline of the importance of agricultural exports through Port Elizabeth, the city has geared itself increasingly to the beneficiation of primary goods.

4.4 The two ports, and the economic interests each represented, developed on distinct paths, and the rivalry implicit in such separate and distinctive development pertains to this day. While this rivalry was misused for ideological purposes during the era of the deployment of grand apartheid, it needs to be stressed that the competition predated apartheid, and will persist beyond its eradication. By way of illustration, despite the fact that both centres have been in the same development region since 1982, different voluntary development associations have been established in each centre, competing, inter alia, for development assistance from the central government.

4.5 It has been argued that the Border/Kei region will not be economically viable as a separate unit. While this is technically true, it is doubtful whether the Eastern Cape and Border/Kei together is any more economically viable. The region, as a whole (whether separate or linked), will be in need of large-scale fiscal transfers from the central government; it is, in short, a myth to believe that joining the two sub-regions would allow for economic self-sufficiency. The Eastern Cape, by itself, could be described as relatively economically self-sufficient (with a GGP of R3 033 at 1990 figures), but the inclusion of the Border-Kei sub-region within the Eastern Cape would do little more than to cripple the development potential of the Eastern Cape, since it would lose R1 755 per person, while the Border/Kei would gain only R549. It needs to be emphasized that the tax base of the Eastern Cape is far too small to support the whole region.

4.6 Economic considerations aside, it also needs to be stressed that, largely because of the difficulties in communication between the two centres, each has developed its own administrative infrastructure. Most, if not all government departments have situated their regional offices in Port Elizabeth. Telkom and Transnet each maintain offices in both Port Elizabeth and East London, and have telecommunications and rail networks operating independently from each centre. (Indeed, in the latter case, there is no direct rail link between the two cities). Many NGOs and sporting bodies have separate organizations based in the two centres.

4.7 As far as expensive government infrastructure is concerned, Port Elizabeth is the home of the University of Port Elizabeth, the PE Technikon, a campus of Vista University and the Wool and Textile Research Institute. The Eastern Cape Local Division of the Supreme Court is also situated in Port Elizabeth. Within the Border/Kei area is a campus of Rhodes University in East London, and the Universities of Fort Hare and of Transkei, while Supreme Courts exist in Bisho and Umtata. The implication is clear : creating two regions would not lead to the expense of constructing costly administrative infrastructure anew.

4.8 The political and administrative issues which are likely to be dealt with by the two regions also differ. The population of the Border/Kei region is overwhelmingly rural (82%), while that of the Eastern Cape is overwhelmingly urban (83%). The Border/Kei is characterized by a different land-tenure system; it experiences different challenges in terms of job-creation and water supply; the age structure of its school-going population (and the necessity of providing many more facilities for education) is significantly different from that of the Eastern Cape; and so the list of differences could continue.

4.9 It has been argued that the "people" of the Eastern Cape and the Border/Kei regions desire to be together, on the grounds that they share common interests. Given the preceding arguments, it is difficult to discern what such common interests might be. One possibility might be the perception that the "people" share a common language, culture and tradition. While it is true that the majority of people living in the Cape Province (as demarcated in 1910) speak Xhosa (and thus could share common cultural and historical roots), this picture changes when one examines each of the regions which make up the Cape. In the Border/Kei, the overwhelming majority (94%) of the population speak Xhosa, but the picture changes the further west one goes, the more the picture changes. Certainly, in the Western Cape the overwhelming majority of the people speak Afrikaans, while in the Eastern Cape, the proportion of Xhosa speakers to non-Xhosa speakers is roughly 50 : 50. "Community of interest", if this argument is correct, would thus depend very largely at what point the western boundary was drawn, and at the very least, the opinions of the non-Xhosa residents of the Eastern Cape need to be canvassed to ascertain whether they share the commonality it is alleged they feel with the people of the Border/Kei.

4.10 All things considered, it would appear as if there is merit in recommending the separation of the Eastern Cape from the Border/Kei. There certainly seems to be no compelling reason why one region would be preferable to two, and rather more reasons suggest themselves as to why there should be two regions rather than one. One alternative would be to recommend the establishment of two regions for a set period (of, say, ten years), after which the matter could be reconsidered. The chief advantage of this would be to defer the final decision on this regional boundary until such time as the economic viability of the respective regions could more accurately be determined; it is our view that many of the arguments presented both in favour of one region or two are presently clouded by the fears and uncertainties of transition and of the economic depression gripping both areas.

5. East Griqualand

5.1 The East Griqualand/Umzimkulu area has been identified by the Commission as an area in which extensive consultation with the local population would be desirable.

5.2 East Griqualand and Umzimkulu are problematic areas largely because of the various institutions which have administered the territories over time. Originally both were annexed by the British government, and were administered, since 1910, as part of the Cape Province. However, with the gradual deployment of the policy of apartheid, the Umzimkulu area was administered from Umtata, while administration of the Mount Currie magisterial district formerly passed to the Natal Provincial Administration in 1978. Even before this time, effective administrative services were provided from Pietermaritzburg.

5.3 Because of its relative proximity to Pietermaritzburg and Durban, extensive and close economic ties have existed between both areas and the rest of Natal. This reality was recognized by the inclusion of both areas into Development Region E in 1982, and has been well substantiated by evidence provided to the Commission by, inter alia, the Natal Agricultural Union, the East Griqualand Regional Development Association and the local chambers of commerce.

5.4 It would seem common cause that had it not been for the Umzimkulu area, the border of Natal/Kwazulu would have been the present Transkei border. It would therefore seem that two competing criteria need to be weighed up : one, the economic ties linking both the areas to the nodal points of Pietermaritzburg and Durban, the other, the 'community of interests' of the people of Umzimkulu (and, to some extent, those in East Griqualand) with the people of the Border/Kei region.

5.5 The issue of community of interests has been addressed in respect of the Eastern Cape and Border/Kei above, and the arguments apply mutatis mutandis to East Griqualand. What is clear, though, is that the Natal/KwaZulu region is far more economically viable than the Border/Kei (or indeed the whole Eastern Cape, as proposed by the Commission) and that the people of the area are likely to be 'better off' in Natal/KwaZulu than they would be under other administration. Expressed differently, the people of the area would be less dependent on development grants from the central fiscus (through whatever formula may be agreed to) in Natal/KwaZulu than they would be in the Border/Kei. Likewise Border/Kei would be less burdened in terms of meeting the challenges facing it with the people of East Griqualand and Umzimkulu excised from its area of jurisdiction.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Democratic Party (National Head Office) has made these submissions in support of the submissions made by its various local and regional formations. In some cases, the latter submissions are guided by the wishes and aspirations of our members on the ground, and further detail or refinement has been provided by these formations.

6.2 What we have attempted to do is to point out the country-wide implications of the suggested changes to regional boundaries as well as to provide some macro-political considerations which we believe ought to guide the Commission in making its final recommendations.

Cape Town
22nd September 1993