

THE NATAL WITNESS, THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2003

Traditional leaders slam proposed rules

BENONI — Traditional leaders yesterday denounced government plans they said would limit them to ceremonial roles, stirring an argument that has provoked bloodshed in the past.

Both leaders aligned with the IFP and those siding with the ANC said at a national conference they are unhappy with draft rules they fear will sideline them politically.

Delegates to a conference of the National House of Traditional Leaders said they want a voice in policies including those on land allocation, mining, food distribution and the conservation of wildlife.

They complained the ANC is dragging its feet on promises to clarify their position in legislation — and demanded a constitutional amendment to protect their powers in perpetuity.

"Our powers and functions are being eroded. If we want to solve this problem we must amend the Constitution," said house chairman Mpiyezintombi Mzimela, a Zulu chief.

Seth Nthai, a lawyer who chairs the team preparing the government's draft rules on traditional leadership, said it will address the traditional leaders' concerns.

— Reuters.

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Council defends defaulters' list

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the account, Mbanjwa still owes R12 804,62, according to the list.

Manzi said only that he hires people to do his work while he concentrates on his practice as an attorney.

Council legal advisor Kass Thaver said the list of names was arrived at in consultation with the National Association of Democratic Lawyers, the Black Lawyers' Association and the Legal Circle. He refused to comment any further, saying he is not happy with the turn of events caused by the publicity. "I'm unhappy ... that certain individuals have been high-

lighted subsequent to the publication of the notice. It never was council's intention to cause embarrassment to any ratepayer, but the publication was a necessary step in obtaining relief from the High Court.

"I therefore do not want to make any comment on any individual names, as this may be wrongly construed as perpetuation of the 'name and shame' campaign. I, together with council and [its] officials, distance myself from any subsequent acts of 'naming and shaming'."

•It was incorrectly stated in yesterday's 'Witness' that attorney Robinson Manzi has been handed over to Narend Sangham. Manzi's name was included in the defaulters' list but no collection agent was named.

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World Bank study says SA faces 'economic collapse' if pandemic is not addressed

Treasury dismisses Aids warning

THE national treasury has dismissed a World Bank study saying that South Africa faces "complete economic collapse" if it does not effectively address the HIV/Aids pandemic.

The World Bank's findings were presented to the national treasury about two months ago. However, the treasury said yesterday that several other studies by, among others, the Bureau for Economic Research, international banks and earlier World Bank reports "take a completely different view from this study".

The study concluded that "as

things now stand, the South African economy could be on the brink of a progressive collapse" within "90 years or three generations".

The report, *The Long Run Economic Costs of Aids: Theory and Application to South Africa*, amounts to a stark warning to the government to take a far more aggressive approach in addressing the pandemic.

A large proportion of the economic effects of the pandemic arise from the withdrawal from school of pupils whose parents may have the disease.

The World Bank report suggests

that the government gives subsidies to households to enable children to attend school.

To prolong life, the report backs spending on anti-retroviral therapies. Rather than a drain on the budget, it views measures, including the effective rollout of anti-retrovirals, as a means to boost the country's economic performance.

It concludes that the economic effect of HIV/Aids is likely to be far greater than was initially thought.

There is no strict definition of economic collapse, but the forecast includes the halving of SA's per capita income within 90 years.

With a determined effort by the government and the right policies to tackle the pandemic, the report says that although economic collapse can be avoided, growth will be at a somewhat slower rate even if effective measures are taken to deal with HIV/Aids.

It also warns that a delay in responding to the outbreak will lead to economic collapse in South Africa.

One of the report's authors, World Bank economist Shanta Devarajan, said that previous estimates overlooked the disease's long-term effects on children if one or both

parents die.

The death of parents leaves children vulnerable to dropping out of school, and in this way the disease weakens the ability of today's generation to pass on skills and knowledge.

Two other authors, both economists from the University of Heidelberg in Germany, say some aspects of the study need further refinement, but they stand by their key assumptions.

The treasury said it will continue to look at the findings and give a detailed response later.

— Business Day

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Communal Land Rights Bill will spark rural tensions

The Communal Land Rights Bill must be viewed from a local perspective, writes MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI.

A FEW weeks ago your paper published an editorial titled "Hereditary Power", in which it advocated the disappearance of hereditary power as "a worldwide phenomenon" and urged traditional leaders to accept that their "very patriarchal system... cannot ultimately survive in a democracy". On this basis, the editorial strongly supports the Communal Land Rights Bill (CLRB), which obliterates the power of traditional leadership to administer, allocate and determine the use of land, transferring these powers to administrative structures under the indirect control of the state while repealing the Ingonyama Trust Act, which is described as a "hastily engineered piece of legislation signed three days before the 1994 elections". The editorial adds that, "looking at the CLRB not from a narrow KZN perspective", the law will give security of tenure to people in rural areas across the country.

Your editorial deals with a delicate and potentially explosive issue ideologically rather than pragmatically. What is proposed in the CLRB is a revolution, the consequences of which are not properly understood. It is of concern that those in urban areas look at this imminent revolution as happening far away and not affecting them.

The destabilisation of rural areas is likely to become the powder keg that explodes the already mounting social tensions within the urban areas, which are receiving an ever-growing army of proletariat into an economy that cannot absorb them. For the past 10 years, rural areas have been progressively destabilised both from the social and economic viewpoint. Ten years ago, there was much less poverty in rural areas and subsistence agriculture was providing enough food for everyone. Nowadays, much greater hunger, despair and unemployment in rural areas is going to be compounded by an implementation of the CLRB, which is the worst possible solution for social stability and economic prosperity in rural areas.

Moving the power to allocate and determine the use of land to one or more administrative

structures in a traditional community will lead to the factionalism in communities that in the past created widespread bloodshed, and which traditional leadership constantly and wisely attempt to avoid.

There is a perception that traditional leadership is about the privilege and power of a few individuals when it is rather about an entire system of societal organisation comprising laws, land rights, family relations and a way of life. There is no doubt that this way of life needs to be subjected to an accelerated process of modernisation and progress, but this must take place in accordance with its features and characteristics, not against them.

For this reason, my long-term vision has always been that of empowering traditional authorities to become the engine of development, modernity and progress in rural communities. The Ingonyama Trust Act was not adopted as a hasty piece of legislation but was a holding instrument to enable us to complete the process of transferring the land from the government to traditional authorities. In the past nine years, this process was not completed because of external interferences seeking to frustrate this end.

I remain convinced that traditional authorities should remain the administrators of land while being subjected to structural and functional adjustments necessary to improve on their developmental role, acquiring additional administrative, technical and logistical capacity so as to become engines of modernity. This would be a gradual process of transformation. I urge KwaZulu-Natal to adopt a local perspective. This is not a matter that should be handled uniformly across the country as conditions may differ from province to province.

Also in this respect, there would be a great deal of value in adopting more of the federal approach. Our province has the constitutional power to deal with matters of traditional leadership and perhaps ought to use it despite what central government wishes to achieve. If we can get it right at home, we will be in a much better position to show how these issues ought to be handled at national levels.

** Mangosuthu Buthelezi is the chairman of the House of Traditional Leaders of KwaZulu-Natal and Minister of Home Affairs.*