

Constitution still the sticking point

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Cloud over Codesa II as talks stall

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Ramaphosa said the failure to resolve the issue placed a "very dark cloud" over the negotiations. "Codesa II is on the brink of failure unless there is movement towards agreement."

Government delegate Roelf Meyer disagreed, saying substantial agreements had been reached, even in working group 2. He conceded, however, that the decision on how a new constitution should be passed was fundamental.

The NP provided a foretaste of what might be expected today by saying in a statement that the ANC had adopted a "totally intractable attitude to very reasonable proposals" which were supported by at least nine delegations. It said the ANC had informed the international community early yesterday morning that it would not budge.

Ramaphosa labelled the NP statement "highly irresponsible and provocative".

The ANC, which also rejected the DP's compromise proposal of 70%, appeared to be spoiling for a fight. But government's compromise proposals also left other delegates unimpressed.

The ANC claimed that government's new proposal to include the senate "abrogate" composition is not yet defined, in the process of constitution-making was counter-productive. ANC delegate Albie Sachs said its inclusion was a bargaining chip which served only to complicate the issue.

Meanwhile, our Durban correspondent reports that Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini said KwaZulu Chief Minister Mangosuthu

Buthezi had "turned down the international linelight of being in Codesa to stand by his king". He was referring to Buthezi's decision not to attend this weekend's meeting because Codesa had not given the king full representation.

In an address to a meeting of Zulu chiefs at Ulundi yesterday, the king said he had no doubt that, under the leadership of Buthezi, KwaZulu would eventually be represented in Codesa. "It is unthinkable that this country can move ahead without KwaZulu. That will not happen."

He told the chiefs: "You must now go back to your people and you must inform your people of the way in which His Majes-

CRUCIAL Codesa talks dlocked last night and parties will meet early this morning in a last, desperate bid to avoid a bruising public battle at today's Codesa II plenary session.

Codesa's working group 2 failed last night to reach agreement on how the provisions of a new constitution would be decided, prompting ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa to state that Codesa II was on the brink of failure.

After a tense day, negotiations appeared close to collapse last night before a key proposal, from the DP, was put on the table. Just minutes earlier government and ANC delegates had been due to hold separate news conferences to explain why negotiations had failed.

If the working group fails to agree this morning, the stage will be set for acrimonious debates at the plenary session.

The working group had met for four consecutive days to discuss the percentage required to pass a new constitution.

The ANC insisted that a new constitution be passed in a national assembly by a two-thirds majority. When the parties met yesterday morning, government delegate Tertius Delpert tabled a new proposal according to this demand, but insisting that an upper House, the senate, have a say in these decisions. This — and a subsequent government proposal that the constitution be passed by a two-thirds majority, with some issues being decided by a 75% majority — was rejected by the ANC.

The resolution of the issue is considered pivotal because agreements in other working groups are dependent on agreement in working group 2.

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ANC, govt on collision course as Codesa II opens

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CODESA II promises to be a rough ride for participants when it opens today following a decision by the ANC and its allies to stick to key demands aimed at defeating government.

This emerged yesterday when more than 85 political, religious, trade union, women's and student organisations ordered the ANC to throw down the gauntlet to government and force it to concede to voting percentages in a legislature and time frames for democratisation.

A statement read on behalf of "patriotic forces in Codesa" and other organisations which met yesterday said participants had agreed that one-person one-vote for a constituent assembly was central to the negotiation process.

Representation in the assembly must be along proportional lines, with no second chamber to veto legislation, said the statement read by Patrick Maduna of KaNgwane's Inyanga National Movement.

Maduna also said representatives agreed that an interim government with executive powers be instituted immediately.

ANC International Affairs director Thabo Mbeki said participants at the meeting had agreed on a joint ap-

proach towards government today.

He said they agreed that a two-thirds majority was necessary to have legislation passed. Government wants it to be passed by 75%.

This was still being hotly debated last night by Working Group II, which is dealing with constitutional issues.

"We agree to put forward the following time frames at Codesa II tomorrow: legislation to implement an interim government must be passed before Parliament goes into recess by June and a transitional authority in place by July. This body should oversee elections for a constituent assembly which should be in place in December this year," he said.

Mbeki said the constituent assembly would sit for a further nine months drawing up a new constitution, to be followed immediately by elections for a new government.

The meeting, which was also attended by representatives of the OAU, the UN and foreign diplomats, was officially opened by ANC president Nelson Mandela.

Mandela said all political parties should realise they were prisoners of the past.

"The efforts of the National Party in the current process must be seen from the point of view of their back-

ground ... that of being a political party brought about by apartheid.

"We, as a democratic movement, also have our own background ... an 80-year tradition of resistance against apartheid. But we are approaching Codesa II with optimism."

He said the ANC was determined its course of action should be to talk to all South Africans and address the fears of the minority.

"We will not tolerate racism, but any group that wants its own schools, language and culture will have to be allowed to do so," he said, noting that these rights would have to be subject to a bill of rights.

Mandela also reiterated his call for the immediate installation of an interim government, saying once such a body was in place the ANC would call for the lifting of all sanctions, except for the oil and arms embargoes.

He said the ANC was already sending representatives abroad to urge foreign businessmen to conduct feasibility studies in SA.

The head of the OAU delegation in SA, Chief Olusegun Olusola, made a passionate appeal to liberation organisations not represented at Codesa to reconsider their refusal to participate in the forum. — Sapa.

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