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COMMUNAUTÉS EUROPÉENNES

Brussels,

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LE COMMISSAIRE AU DÉVELOPPEMENT

The Rev. BEYERS NAUDE  
General Secretary  
South African Council of Churches  
Khotso House  
42 Dr. Villierstraat  
Johannesburg  
South Africa

Dear Dr. Naudé,

May I thank you for the letter of the 10th March 1986, which reached the Commission by telex on the 24th March, signed by yourself, the Rev. Father Smangaliso Mkhatshwa, General Secretary of the South African Catholic Bishops Conference, and Mr. Yunus Mahomed on behalf of the Consortium.

I can confirm that the budget of the Community for 1986 definitely includes an amount of 10 m ECU for the special programme to support the victims of apartheid. The Commission can commit this whole amount in 1986 whereas payments will be spread over 1986 and 1987 (5 M ECU each year). I have carefully taken note of the indication that in the opinion of the SACC, SACBC and the Consortium more funds will be needed on a short-term basis.

It was with great interest that I learned that the SACC, the SACBC and the Consortium would be seeking commitments from the Community, and I hope that we may shortly move to the implementation and funding of projects within this special programme. I am convinced that in this context you will focus on a balance between the speed in which you intend to submit the programmes and projects and the quality of these.

On the criteria and guidelines which should govern our joint action, I believe there is now a close understanding between us on the principles which should guide our work. More specifically I would wish to confirm that the Commission can fully accept the basic proposals which you set out in your letter regarding non-racialism, the ideal of uniting people from different backgrounds, the avoidance of divisive initiatives, and the encouragement of democratic practices and local participation. These principles appear fully consistent with the general objectives of the European Political Cooperation communiqué on South Africa of the 10th September 1985, and of the joint declaration in the Third ACP-EEC Convention of Lomé. I would go on to say that the criteria and guidelines, which you have so clearly set out in your letters of 29th November 1985 and 10th March 1986, should in the Commission's view inform the whole range of Community assistance in South Africa funded under the special programme.

.../...



In this regard we particularly welcome your concern in the Consortium to ensure that the criteria and guidelines agreed upon should apply to all programmes and projects funded by the Community in South Africa. Responsibility for the process of project evaluation, approval and subsequent action would rest with the Commission working in the case of the SACC, SACBC and the Consortium projects in close consultation and concertation with your European NGO partners in the Standing Committee. Offices of EEC Member States in your country would not be involved in Community decision-making, which would be undertaken by the Commission in contact as necessary and appropriate with representatives of EEC Governments in Brussels. Nor would embassies be involved in the preparation, supervision or control of projects funded by the Commission.

Apart from the programmes with the SACC, SACBC and the Consortium whom we regard as our main partners in this initiative, it is the Commission's objective, as Mr. Blonk informed you during his mission to Johannesburg in mid-February, to work with two other groups in South Africa, namely the trade unions and relevant and mutually acceptable educational foundations and associations.

As concerns the trade unions, the Commission services have in recent weeks held separate consultations in Johannesburg and Brussels with senior representatives of COSATU and CUSA. Both groups expressed their appreciation for the work being done by the Churches and the Consortium, but indicated that should they decide to seek support from the Community, the relevant assistance should be provided through unions or agencies of their choice. It is also our understanding that the European trade unions concerned would play a role very similar to that proposed for the European NGO Standing Committee in relation to Church and Consortium projects. From the discussions which the Commission held with COSATU and CUSA representatives, we were of the view that they would wish their programmes and projects to be governed by similar criteria and guidelines to those established by the Churches and the Consortium and agreed with you and your colleagues.

As regards possible cooperation with independent educational foundations or associations, the Commission is aware of the great political sensitivities in the educational sector, and would be concerned to ensure that the relevant programmes were fully consistent with the criteria and guidelines which you and your colleagues have outlined in your letters of the 29th November and 10th March. In this regard we might perhaps examine the possibility that the organisations concerned could work together with the Consortium and the Standing Committee of European NGOs, for example in enjoying observer status within the Consortium.

The procedures you propose for presenting applications from the SACC, SACBC and the Consortium to the Commission seem entirely practical, as do the arrangements for applying, reporting and accounting to the Commission.

.../...



We accept the view of the Churches and the Consortium that once a project has been accepted and initiated on the basis of agreed criteria and guidelines, its progress should not be impeded or interrupted unless for clearly evident technical reasons and on the basis of mutual agreement. In this regard the Commission would not exercise any direct control over the implementation of projects, but would entrust technical monitoring and requisite supervision to the NGOs concerned.

A first meeting with experts from Member States on the implementation of the special programme was organised by the Commission on 26th March in Brussels. At that meeting information in general terms on progress made up till now was given. I am pleased to say that this meeting took place in a positive and constructive atmosphere. It appears that in general the experts support the Commission in the choice of potential channels. It is also to be noted that no disagreement was expressed concerning the criteria and guidelines agreed upon between you and the Commission.

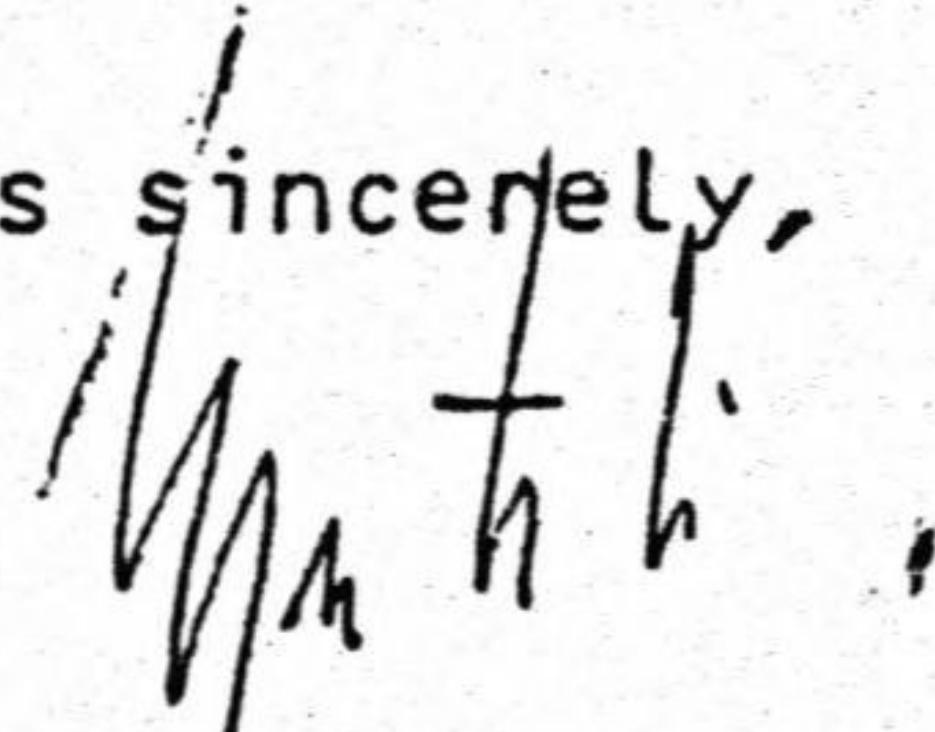
I do hope that these responses to the questions which you and your colleagues have raised in your letter of the 10th March as well as the positive outcome of the meeting of the 26th March will help to dispell any problems which may have arisen over the Community's approach to this special programme.

As to the future, we would now look forward to moving ahead with the implementation and funding of programmes and projects which you will shortly be forwarding to the Commission.

As you requested, I am sending a copy of this letter to the Secretary of the Standing Committee of European NGOs.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



Lorenzo Natali  
Vice-President of the Commission  
of the European Communities

cc: The Secretary  
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