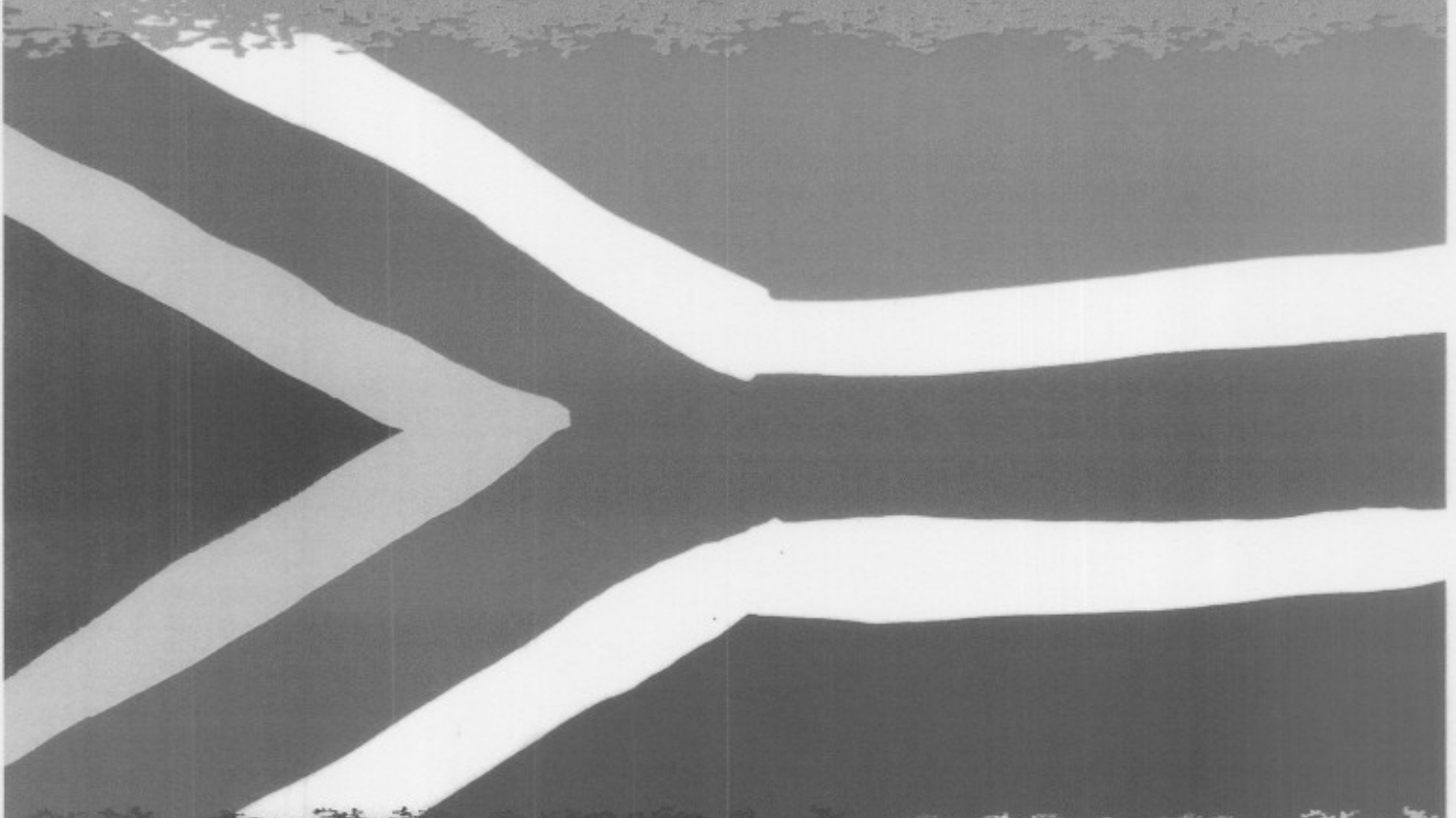


061017 bca r

AFRICA DAY REPORT

Promoting Unity in Diversity &
Expression of a Single African Identity

25 May 2005



Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities
(CRL COMMISSION) COMMISSIONERS



Prof. S (Sihawukelo) Ngubane



Dr. MAE (Ashraf) Dockrat



Ms DKK (Khethiwe) Mboweni-Marais



Dr WRJ (William) Langeveldt



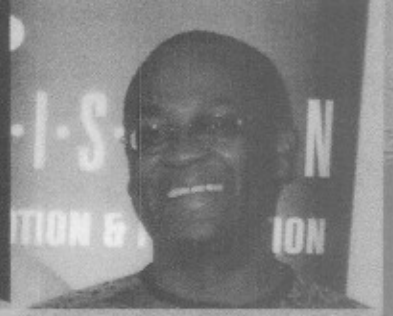
Dr. JCH (Chris) Landman



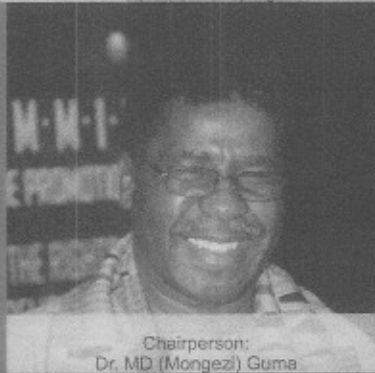
Mr BB (Bhekisenzo) Mgcina



Ms M (Manila) Soni Amin



Pastor MKS (Mos) Ntsha



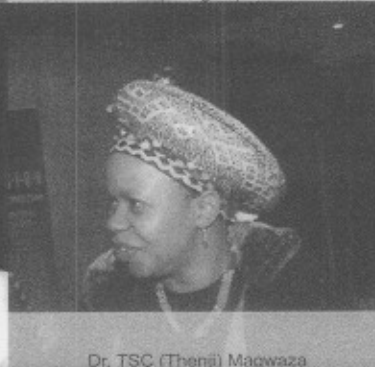
Chairperson:
Dr. MD (Mongezi) Guma



Deputy Chairperson:
Ms M (Marlene) Bethlehem



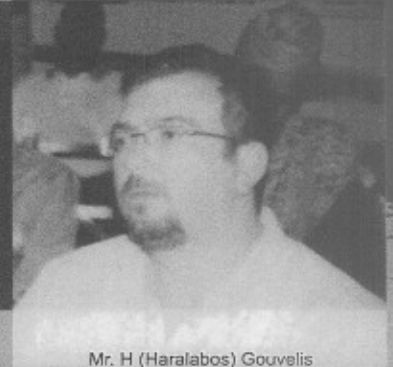
Dr. ON (Nokuzola) Mndende



Dr. TSC (Thenji) Magwaza



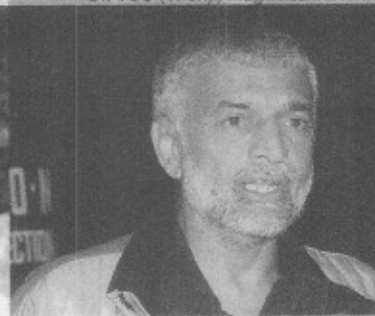
Ms M (Mariane) Le Roux



Mr. H (Haralabos) Gouvelis



Dr. MD (Majorie) Jobson



Prof. S (Suleman) Dangor



Dr. LP (Lepono Peter) Boshego

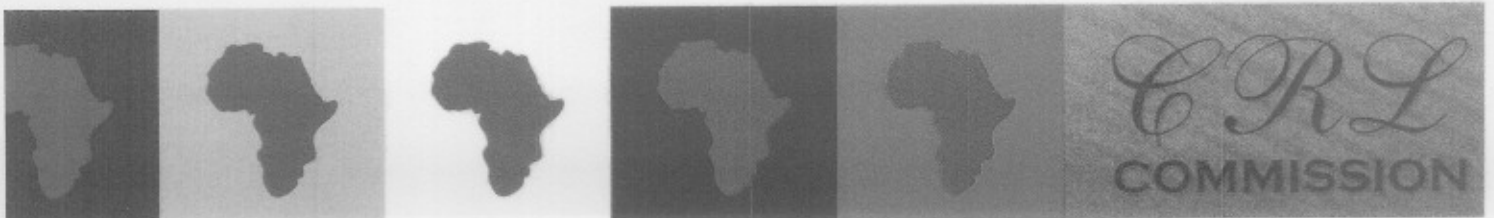
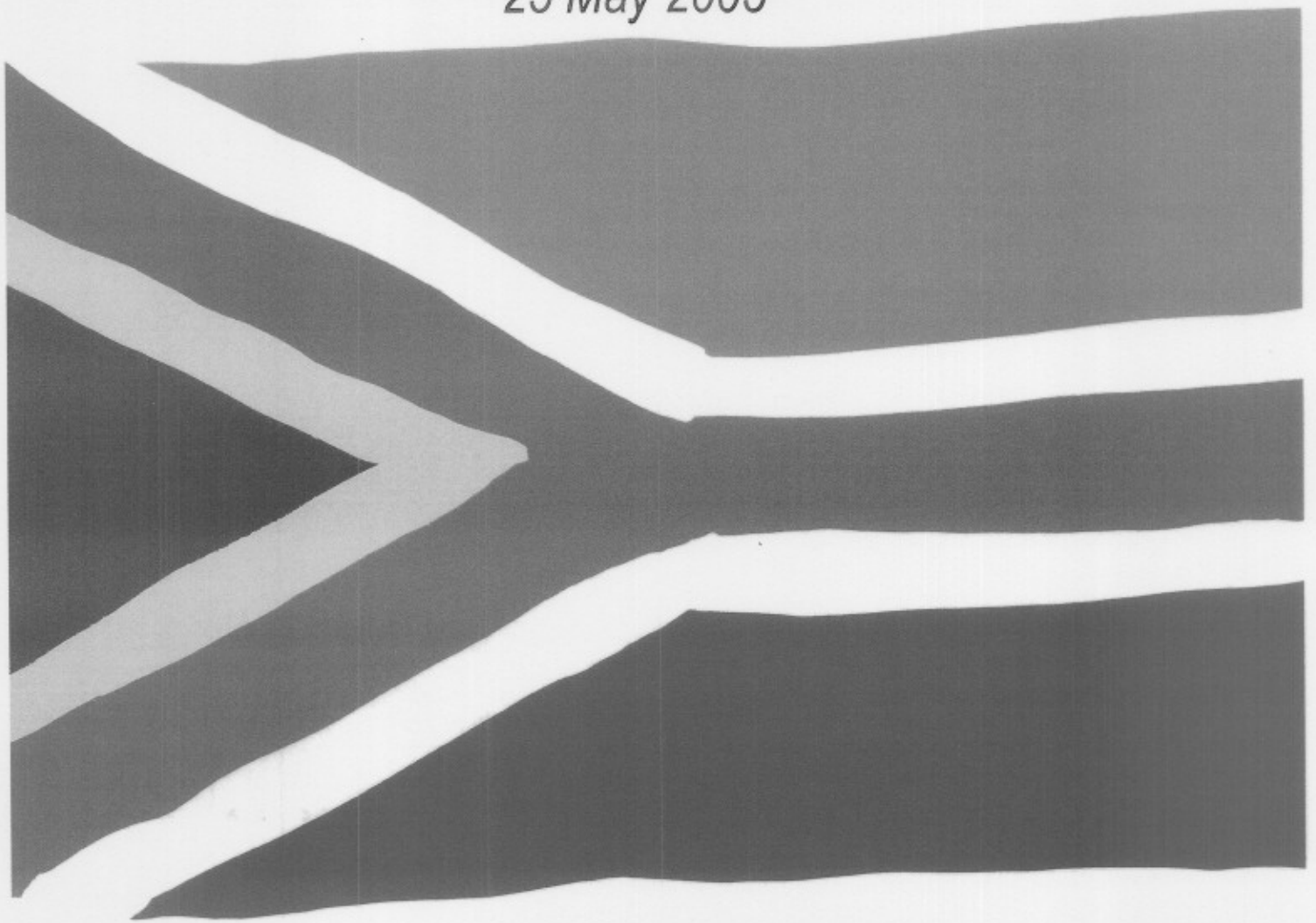


Dr. WA (Willa) Boezak

AFRICA DAY REPORT

Promoting Unity in Diversity &
Expression of a Single African Identity

25 May 2005



Contents

1.	Foreward by the Chairperson	3
2.	Acknowledgements	4
3.	Introduction	5
4.	The Seminar	6
4.1.	Welcome and Introduction	6
4.2.	Panel 1: Status and Challenges for the Promotion of Cultural Diversity in the Africa Continent (Progress in the Implementation of the Cultural Charter for Africa)	7
4.3.	Summary and comment	11
4.4.	Panel 2: Promoting Cultural Diversity in Africa (Giving Effect to the Cultural Charter For Africa)	12
4.5.	Summary and comment	15
5.	Discussion and Issues Raised	16
6.	Final analysis by Prof. Suleman Dangor (CRL Commissioner)	19
7.	Recommendations	20
8.	The Chairperson's Speech at the Gala Dinner	22
9.	Conclusion	23



Promoting Unity in Diversity & Expression of a Single African Identity

1. Foreword by the Chairperson

Our history as a continent is a story of a systematic process of colonial contamination and denigration of our cultures, religions and languages. The Organisation of African Unity, in an endeavour to promote the unity and solidarity of African states, and to celebrate the cultural heritage of Africa, set aside these dates as significant reminders for the task. One of these is Africa Day, 25 May. And preceding it is the International day of Diversity which is also significant in Africa.

South Africa in its 1996 Constitution recognized the peculiar challenges of cultural diversity and inserted sections for specific recognition of culture, religion and language as human rights. This was important for the sake of protecting cultures, religions and languages and also to create the space for the development of historically diminished heritage. As President Thabo Mbeki maintains, "It rejoices in the diversity of our people and creates space for all of us voluntarily to define ourselves as one people." It is against this background that we, the CRL Commission, convened this seminar: To hear about challenges relating to identity formation within the context of the South African nation, Africa and the Diaspora; an opportunity to provide a platform for discussion on identity and re-search of identity.

The speakers reminded us that the task of redefining ourselves and asserting our identity is a journey we all have to undertake. This would enable us to free ourselves from the benevolent cultural imperialism of the West. I take this opportunity to present this booklet to you as an invitation to unleash action against all forms of cultural, religious and linguistic oppression.



AFRICA DAY REPORT



2. Acknowledgements

When the CRL Commission identified Africa Day, the 25th of May, as one of the significant days in its calendar of activities, it based its decision to recognize this day on the basis of the fact that South Africa is an African country and that it is an active member of the African Union (AU). In conceptualizing the content of the celebration we remained conscious of the need to promote unity of the diverse communities and had to link our programmes with the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) of the AU. Obviously the two pronged approach to celebrating Africa Day required a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP).

The CRL Commission is grateful to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) for not only sharing its plans for Africa Day 2005, but embraced the need for a close partnership in this regard. Both the DFA and Eskom, its sponsor, raised the CRL plan from small beginnings to a true international and African celebration. We were highly honoured by the powerful messages of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Me Sue van der Merwe and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador AA Alzubeidi of Libya.

The main drive for celebrating Africa Day is the sustained consciousness that the history of Africa is a history of cultural, religious and linguistic colonization and oppression whose consequences plunged us into abject political, social and economic poverty. Any attempt (and all attempts) to save Africa is to be anchored on strategies to restore her identity and heritage. Hosting Africa Day had to be holistic - political, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and economic hence the invitation of representatives of the diverse African communities to partake in the promotion and protection of their cultural, religious and linguistic rights.

As we launch the first report of Africa Day Celebration, we wish to express our indebtedness to ABSA Bank which instantly matched its vision, "Today, Tomorrow, Together," in a resourceful way and made our dream come true.

We value the free participation of MTN, the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), the Gauteng Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture (GDSRAC) through displays of meaningful paintings, heritage information and relevant books.

This booklet comes out of a process of serious engagement and discussions by about 600 participants gathered at Gallagher Estate, on the 25 May 2005. On behalf of the CRL Commission family I take this opportunity to thank all speakers, Mr Hosia Mohlabane (Africa Institute of South Africa); Dr Willa Boezak (National Council of Khoi Chiefs and CRL Commissioner); Advocate Mildred Aristide (University of South Africa); Major-General Gert Opperman (Voortrekker Monument); Dr Mulalo Nemavhandu (Kara Heritage Institute); Prof André Mbata Mangu (University of South Africa) for their thought-provoking presentations. Last but not least we thank all participants for their invaluable contributions during the Africa Celebration.

Indeed we owe this to our African posterity. Let us not struggle to recover our African identity. The past is history, the present an opportunity, the future our heritage.

Motho ke motho ka batho.



Promoting Unity in Diversity &
Expression of a Single African Identity

3. Introduction

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (hereafter the CRL Commission) began its first term of office during 2004. Established in terms of Chapter 9 of the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), it is the last of the six state institutions supporting constitutional democracy to come into being, after the office of the Public Protector, the Human Rights Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality, the Auditor-General, and the Electoral Commission.

In terms of Article 4(b) of the CRL Commission Act (no. 19 of 2002), among the objectives of the Commission is "to promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance and national unity among and within cultural, religious and linguistic communities, on the basis of equality, non-discrimination and free association". Furthermore, the Commission is "to foster mutual respect among cultural, religious and linguistic communities" and "to promote the rights of communities to develop their historically diminished heritage". This legislative mandate informs the vision and mission of the Commission.

It is in terms of these objectives, identified in the Act, that the CRL Commission organised a seminar around the theme "Promoting Unity in Cultural Diversity and Expression of a Single African Identity". The seminar was organised to coincide with Africa Day, marking the 42nd anniversary of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU). More than simply a celebratory event, the seminar's presentations and discussions identified the Cultural Charter for Africa, established in July 1976, as an anchor for critical reflection on the theme, couching such discussion in the accomplishments and limitations of the 42 years since the founding of the OAU.

To give direction and structure to the theme, the programme was comprised of two sessions. In each session, a panel of three presenters would deliver papers responding to the session's topic. The first session deliberated on the topic Status and Challenges for the Promotion of Cultural Diversity in the African Continent and its panellists were directed to present papers examining progress in the implementation of the Cultural Charter for Africa. The second session was devoted to Promoting Cultural Diversity in Africa and its panel directed to reflect on giving effect to the Cultural Charter for Africa. Examining, respectively, the challenges facing the Charter's implementation and initiatives that give effect to the Charter, the two sessions drew critical attention to the continuity between theory and practice.

Panellists were drawn from a diverse cross-section of South African and African society and intelligentsia. Sitting on the panels were representatives of the National Council of Khoi Chiefs and the Voortrekker Monument and its Heritage Foundation, as well as participants drawn from the Kara Heritage Institute, the Africa Institute of South Africa and the University of South Africa. Not simply a South African affair, among these participants were a Congolese academic working in South Africa and a human rights lawyer previously working in the Caribbean who presented a paper from the perspective of the African Diaspora. Though attendance on the day was less than the 270 delegates who confirmed they would attend, a substantial number did arrive and informed lively debate.



AFRICA DAY REPORT



4. The Seminar

4.1. Welcome and Introduction

In his welcoming address, Chairperson of the CRL Commission Dr. Mongezi Guma set the terminal points of the discussion. Noting that today all Africa is liberated and exists in a state of self-determination, he observed that the persistent challenge is to give meaning to this freedom, a challenge he identified with the urgency to give expression to the ideals and aspirations of the Cultural Charter for Africa. Recalling Article 30 of the Charter, Guma argued that genuine intercultural cooperation and exchange is required between African states, but also between Africa and the rest of the world.

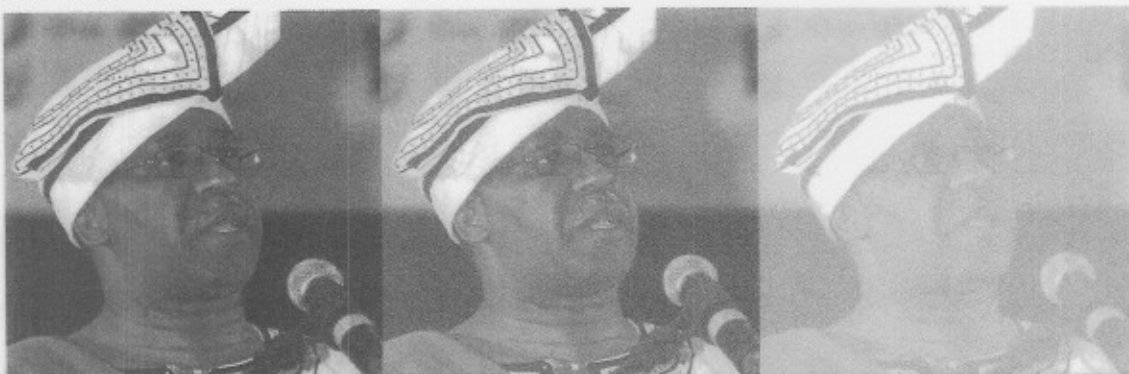
While acknowledging that manipulation of cultures, facilitated by processes of globalisation, is impacting negatively on Africa, Guma argued that this need not be so. Pointing to pre-colonial civilisations in Zimbabwe, Mali, and elsewhere, he recalled that Africans have historically been active agents in the furtherance of their self-determination and expansion of their agency in a globalising world. This kind of globalisation, so crucial in Africa's historical development, is a model for development in Africa today. Guma called on Africans to appropriate and recover their cultural profiles to make a world we as Africans want to share with others, thus transforming how others want to engage with Africa. Not only a political action, this kind of globalisation that recovers agency in authoring cultural identity Guma argued is essential to Africans' cultural survival if we as Africans are to avoid being pushed to the margins and reduced to complaining.

This kind of exercise of agency through the recovery and recentering of culture and heritage is inevitably linked with questions of identity. Recovered cultures and heritages serve as invaluable resources for remaking identity, whether local, regional, national, continental or Diasporic, in ways that give expression to and further self-determination and autonomy. Stressing that "children need to see in their environment elements of who they are," Guma emphasised that Africa needs to assert itself within the context of diversity. The more extensive and detailed the recovery of culture, in other words, the more diversity at plays in the exercise of agency, the greater the stock of resources available with which to shape and mould an African identity. That African identity will necessarily be multifaceted and multidimensional. Indeed, diversity is the locus of its strength and unity.

In drawing critical attention to the recovery of culture under globalising conditions and linking this expression of agency with authoring identity that reflects as well as mobilises diversity, Guma's presentation anticipated many of the prominent themes to emerge in the subsequent panel presentations and discussions.

These themes focus attention on the kind of society we want to make, one that Guma characterised as respectful and accommodating of diverse cultural expressions, committed to cultural integrity, accountable to a framework of human rights and social justice, and committed to the transformation of hierarchies of power.

Dr. Mongezi Guma, Chairperson of the CRL Commission



Promoting Unity in Diversity &
Expression of a Single African Identity

4.2. Panel 1: Status and Challenges for the Promotion of Cultural Diversity in the African Continent (Progress in the Implementation of the Cultural Charter for Africa)

The panel consisted of Mr. Hosia Mohlabane of the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), Dr. Willa Boezak of the National Council of Khoi Chiefs and also a CRL Commissioner, and Adv. Mildred Aristide of the University of South Africa. The session was chaired by Commissioner Ms. Khethiwe Mboweni-Marais.

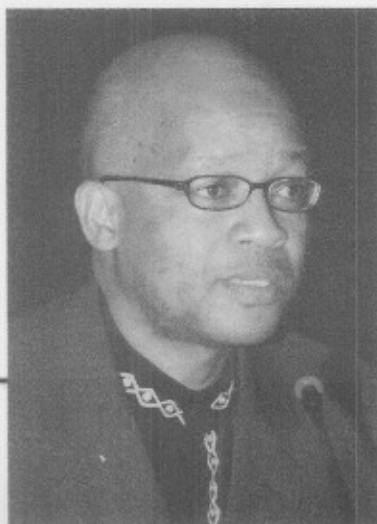
Commissioner Ms. Khethiwe Mboweni-Marais



Mr. Mohlabane's presentation began with a brief introduction to AISA and its legislative and developmental mandate. Founded in 1960 by the Nationalist government to further the interests of apartheid, the institute was re-established as a legislated body in 2001 to look at socio-economic and development issues in Africa and to conduct research and participate in policy development. It is this mandate that identifies AISA's responsibility to monitor the implementation of the Cultural Charter.

With respect to promoting cultural diversity on the African continent, Mohlabane drew attention to Article 1(f) of the Cultural Charter that identifies as an objective of the Charter "the encouragement of international cultural co-operation for a better understanding among peoples within which Africa will make its original and appropriate contribution to human culture". This objective should be guided by the principle set out in Article 2(e) calling for "exchange and dissemination of cultural experience between African countries, in the field of cultural decolonization in all its forms." Mohlabane also directed attention to Chapter 2 of the Charter, dealing with the Democratisation of Culture. Recalling Article 7 that asserts that culture is not a privilege of the elite, he reminded the audience of the objective detailed in Article 8(a) that African states would create conditions to facilitate access to and participation in the development and implementation of cultural policies. Having established the parameters of the question in terms of the letter of the Charter, Mohlabane presented an assessment of the progress made in implementing the Charter.

Mr. Hosia Mohlabane, Africa Institute of South Africa



AFRICA DAY REPORT



Much of Mohlabane's assessment focussed on the transformation of the OAU into the AU. He argued that this transformation was concomitant with a shift towards increased recognition of the value of cultural diversity and a view of development as an organic process, that is, a process driven by people. Whereas the OAU tended to subscribe to a view of development as state driven and saw government officials as the lead agents in implementing government sponsored development programmes, in Mohlabane's assessment, the AU seems keen to deemphasise the driving role of state actors and favours a more people-orientated approach that seeks wider consultation with, for example, civil society, labour, women and children's groups, and non-government organisations, as well as seeks their involvement in the deliberations and activities of the AU. The shift from government-centred development under the OAU to people-centred development under the AU reflects not merely sensitivity to the fact of cultural diversity, but demonstrates an appreciation of the strategic benefits of pursuing development in this manner. Mohlabane pointed to the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECCOSOC), a new committee established by the AU to promote civil society participation in the AU's work, to demonstrate an effort to draw benefit from this new direction.

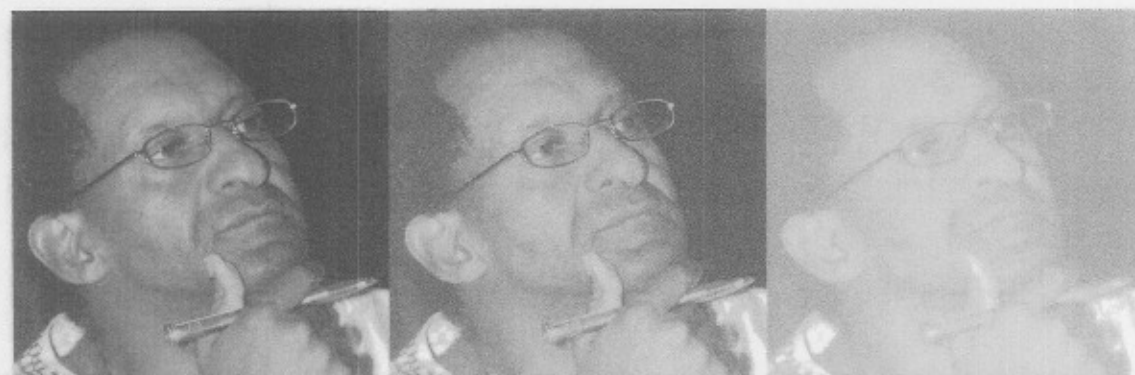
Wider consultation outside of the narrow purview of government actors makes sense if one considers that an African identity must comprise many facets reflecting the different sectors of African culture and society. However, Mohlabane made the point that the Diaspora is a part of the context of Africa and therefore part of its identity. A challenge therefore is to link the Diaspora with the new vision of people-centred development as well as with discussions about developing a single African identity. Adv. Aristide's presentation later in the session went some way toward addressing this question.



Dr. Boezak began his presentation by noting that the Khoi-Khoi and San people were the first Southern African people to experience the brutality of colonial rule. Arguably, they bore the brunt of colonial oppression, being hunted for sport and persecuted on a scale amounting to genocide.

The post-apartheid era has seen renewed efforts to consider the position of these indigenous communities. In 1995 the Griqua National Conference, an organisation representing the interest of Griqua and other indigenous communities, petitioned government to direct resources and policy efforts towards addressing their continued marginalisation. Since then, a number of positive steps have been taken. The question of Khoi-San languages has received some attention through the establishment of the Pan South African Language Board that is obliged in terms of Article 5(a) of the Constitution of South Africa to promote and create conditions for the development and use of these languages. In 1997 Mr. Thabo Mbeki, then Deputy President of South Africa, handed over six farms in the Kalahari to local San communities for the preservation of their heritage. In 1988 an intergovernmental body, then called the National Khoi-San Forum, was established. In 2002, following extensive negotiations with the French government, the remains of Sara Baartman were returned to South Africa and given a decent state burial in which Khoi-San leaders participated. Finally, the national motto, *!Ke e: /Xarra //Ke*, is taken from the extinct !Xam language and means "people from different cultures coming together", and anticipates the theme of the seminar.

Dr. Willa Boezak, National Council of Khoi Chiefs



Promoting Unity in Diversity &
Expression of a Single African Identity

It is not only the South African government that the Khoi-San have engaged in their effort to recover their heritage and cultural identity and raise their profile in the community of African cultural (and religious and linguistic) communities. They have taken their claims and demands to United Nation's Working Group for Indigenous Populations in 2000, following which they organised themselves into the National Khoi-San Consultative Conference, a unified, representative organisation comprised of 36 different communities.

However, Boezak argued that an outstanding issue, and the most important of all, is the "constitutional accommodation and political positioning of the Khoi-San". Some work is being done in this regard and Boezak pointed to a Department of Provincial and Local Government report in 2000 that saw the creation of an interdepartmental forum on Khoi-San related issues. Still, Boezak emphasised that much more needs to be done, though he did not elaborate.

After setting out the position of the Khoi-San with regard to the state and the government, that inter alia the Khoi-San accept that the Constitution is the supreme law of the land and that the Bill of Rights it contains is a sufficient framework for advocating political rights, Boezak reiterated Khoi-San communities' call on the South African government to ratify the International Labour Organisation's convention 169, adopted on 27 June 1989, that affirms the right to self-determination. Boezak concluded his presentation by affirming Khoi-San communities' desire to be regarded as part of the ideal of the Rainbow Nation and the revival and reconstruction of its heritage as part of the African Renaissance.



Adv. Aristide presented a paper on challenges to implementing the Cultural Charter from the perspective of the Diaspora community. She begins by noting that if, as the Charter states, its aim is "the rehabilitation, restoration, preservation and promotion of the African cultural heritage", and history is one of the spheres of cultural heritage highlighted in the Charter, then the inclusion of the African Diaspora is inherent. The African Diaspora has always been and continues to be a part of Africa's cultural landscape.

Having introduced her topic, Aristide briefly traced the history of the dispersal of Africans outside of Africa. While acknowledging that migrations occurred periodically in ancient times as Africans travelled to Europe, the Middle East and Asia as merchants, soldiers and sailors, and that the internal slave trade took Africans to Arabia, India and the Far East, Aristide noted that when we talk about the African Diaspora, we usually mean two more recent migrations of people. First, the communities created through the Atlantic slave trade and their descendents, and second, the voluntary migration of people during the 20th century, often linked with anti-colonial and nationalist movements.

The dispersal of Africans, whether violent or voluntary, is historically and inevitably related with struggle against oppression, whether revolutionary, as happened in Haiti and elsewhere, or intellectual, as was the case with the Pan-African movement. Yet, as Aristide points out, key liberation struggles in the Diaspora have always centred on Africa, and liberation struggles in Africa have been nurtured by the Diaspora. She points to the Pan-African Movement and anti-colonial movements to demonstrate the point. Aristide's presentation then focuses on Pan-Africanism as a precursor and lead up to her analysis of the Cultural Charter from a Diasporic perspective.

Adv. Mildred Aristide, University of South Africa



AFRICA DAY REPORT



Aristide argues that the Pan-African tradition made a significant contribution to modern African political theory which is grounded in a call for a united Africa and the institutionalisation of the relations between the continent and the African Diaspora. She notes, for example, that the Pan African Manifesto, adopted at the 3rd Pan African Congress in 1921, formed the template for the OAU Charter adopted on 25 May 1963, subsequently celebrated as Africa Day and the occasion for the CRL Commission seminar. A further example of the intrinsic link between the Diaspora and the struggle for African unity is that the 6th Pan African Congress in 1945 afforded the opportunity to link leaders of the continent's liberation movements, Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah among others, with leaders of the Pan African movement in Diaspora.

Out of the traditions of the Pan African movement and the OAU has emerged a desire and willingness within the organs of the AU to develop closer ties with the Diaspora. Aristide agrees with Hosia Mohlabane when she discerns a shift towards a people-centred view of African development, in the realms of culture and heritage as much as socio-economic development, which she suggests is conducive to furthering the objectives of the Cultural Charter.

With respect to progress on implementing the Charter, Aristide welcomed the initiative undertaken at a meeting to the AU's Executive Council in May 2003 to officially name the Diaspora the 6th region of the continent. Further developing ties between Africa and the Diaspora was the focus of a meeting in March 2004 jointly organised by the AU and South Africa and hosted by Jamaica. The meeting undertook to affirm and celebrate historical and cultural bonds between the continent and the Diaspora; create linkages between the continent and the Diaspora; establish mechanisms for building stronger political and economic relations; acknowledge the contributions of the Caribbean to the Pan-African tradition; and develop an agenda for confronting common challenges in order to support the implementation of AU decisions on the African Diaspora.

Yet while these signs of significant progress are encouraging, a number of challenges remain. Among the most challenging is the brain drain from Africa to the West. Aristide quoted statistics suggesting that on average Africa loses 30% of its qualified professionals to the benefit of western countries. This figure is supported by the statistic that 60% of doctors trained in Ghana during the 1980s have left the country. As much a caution as a opportunity, Aristide warned her audience that although we speak of the Diaspora, there is little homogeneity and nothing monolithic about it. Not only is the Diaspora culturally diverse, it is of course also politically diverse. Echoing Mongezi Guma's sentiments about globalisation and diversity, the caution here relates to not arbitrarily limiting one's vision and thereby constraining the possibilities of action, while the opportunity lies in harnessing the richness and vitality of this diversity. For this is how to further and deepen the links, ties and exchanges between Africa and the Diaspora.



Promoting Unity in Diversity &
Expression of a Single African Identity