

The ANC must abandon violence

# HEUNIS SPEAKS FOR THE GOVERNMENT



Mr Chris Heunis with the Speaker of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, Mr S. T. Mthimkulu.

**I**n his speech opening this year's session of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, Mr Chris Heunis outlined his Government's approach to "political reform" which he said he preferred to call "political progress."

The Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning said his Government was committed to negotiated political progress and called upon political leaders to become involved in the process.

There was a world-wide growing spirit for reconciliation which opposed confrontation and called for compromise.

There were signs that this spirit was growing in South Africa and people were reaching out to each other on all levels and in all spheres of society.

"We, the political leaders, will forsake our responsibility if we do not use the moment and join the process," he said.

The leaders of the Zulu nation had declared themselves in favour of negotiation and against violence but

had "encountered impediments" on the way to the negotiation table.

"They have reformulated the items found to be obstacles into preconditions to be fulfilled before negotiations can start," he added.

"We, the Government, have acknowledged the existence of important obstacles and recognised the circumstances creating these obstacles.

"Jointly we have appointed a committee to identify and address the obstacles and also to identify common ground . . .

"I am not going to prejudge the work of the committee, but there is a certain matter that will certainly land on its agenda and that is in any event of such importance for the process of political progress, that I nevertheless want to deal with it.

"There are many political groups and leaders that will have to be accommodated in the process.

"Some are more important than others, some are in numbers much larger than others, some are more

powerful than others.

"The African National Congress is perceived as such an organisation.

"Where its place is in the hierarchy of relevant political groupings or organisations, is a question on which there will be widely divergent opinions; so also is its legitimacy.

"Be that as it may, it has become clear that the ANC's absence from the list of participants in the political negotiation process is seen by other essential participants as an obstacle to progress.

"On the other hand there are those whose participation is equally essential, who in turn do not see their way open to participate in the process if the ANC were to be present in new prevailing circumstances.

"There is only one single factor that keeps the ANC itself from coming out in favour of joining others in the negotiation process.

"That factor is the ANC's continuing commitment to violent confrontation and terrorising the population in an effort to seize power.

"I am inclined to think that this continued commitment is linked to the ANC's alliance with the South African Communist Party which in turn has trans-national commitments . . .

"If the ANC now wants to act in South Africa's national interest it can best do so by abandoning violence and declaring itself in favour of the peaceful process of political negotiations together with other political leaders in South Africa.

"All South Africans have so much in common, that there is no reason why we cannot together repeatedly find and agree on the next step to be taken on the road of constitutional progress . . ."

Mr Heunis said the Government was working for a negotiated, democratic, political dispensation, acceptable to all, in which everyone would participate in decision-making from local to national level, and in which minorities would share power in national affairs but would have maximum control over matters affecting their own groups most intimately.

**"What we work for, is a negotiated, democratic, political dispensation, acceptable to all, in which everyone will participate in decision-making from local to national level, and in which minorities will share power in national affairs but will have maximum control over matters affecting their own groups most intimately . . ."** —

*Mr J C Heunis, Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning.*