

Anti-disinvestment petition to the US Government

"No mass meeting of Black South Africans has ever approved of disinvestment as a strategy against apartheid..."

"No democratically elected Black leader in a membership based organisation has ever been given the mandate to accept disinvestment as a viable option..."

"We petition President Reagan, the Senators of the United States of America and its Congressmen to reject all pressures exerted on them to express abhorrence of apartheid through disinvestment in South Africa..."

The following is the text of the petition delivered by workers and Inkatha supporters to the US Government:

We as leaders elected to positions of authority in Inkatha, have a mandate to speak on behalf of Black South Africa.

This is evident because:

1. Inkatha is the largest Black political organisation ever to have emerged in the history of South Africa and has a paid up membership of nearly one million.
2. Inkatha's leaders are elected to office by its Annual General Conference which is attended by members chosen at local Branch and Regional levels.
3. Inkatha leaders are not only elected by the Annual General Conference, but they are held accountable to it for the way they pursue the aims and objectives set by the conference.
4. The vast majority of Inkatha's members are workers and peasants and it is representative of Blacks in urban areas as it is representative of Blacks in rural areas.
5. Inkatha's aims and objectives and the tactics and strategies it pursues are determined by democratic procedure which enable ordinary members to direct the affairs of Inkatha.

We are mandated to tell Western industrial nations that Black South Africans do not support disinvestment as a strategy which will help them in the struggle for liberation which they wage as Blacks here in this country.

This mandate has been repeatedly given to us at:

1. Every Annual General Conference where resolutions rejecting disinvestment as a strategy are passed unanimously after the question is re-opened for debate every year.
 2. Central Committee debates and branch and regional debates which take place in the process of giving practical political effect to the expressed wishes of the Conference.
 3. Mass open public meetings which draw crowds of tens of thousands who acclaim the President of Inkatha and other leaders of Inkatha as they inform the Black public of Inkatha's intention to ask for increased investment in this country.
- Our stand opposing disinvestment has mass support and we challenge any Black leader who disputes this fact to share a platform with us in Soweto, the country's industrial heartland, to test public opinion.

We inform the United States Government that:

1. No mass meeting of Black South Africans has ever approved of disinvestment as a strategy against apartheid.
2. No democratically elected leader in a membership based organisation of any importance has ever been given a mandate to accept disinvestment as a viable Black political option.

On behalf of Black South Africa, we petition President Reagan, the Senators of the United States and its Congressmen to reject all pressures exerted on them to express abhorrence of apartheid through disinvestment in South Africa.

We thus petition because:

1. Disinvestment will minimise positive Western influences which we need in South Africa to speed up the process of change.
2. Disinvestment will further the politics of violence and damage the politics of reason.
3. Disinvestment is advocated by those who can not see that economic progress gives rise to inter-group dependencies which favour the politics of non-violent negotiation.
4. Disinvestment is most vehemently called for by those who favour the employment of violence to bring about change.
5. Whatever happens in this country, massive backlogs in Black housing, education, health and welfare services and all things Americans recognise to be essential to a decent quality of human life, will only be wiped out at some future time if we do not damage the economic foundations of South Africa in liberating it from the tyranny of racial oppression.
6. Existing Black poverty will be greatly increased if effective disinvestment campaigns deepen already very problematic unemployment levels.
7. The United States, as the world's leading industrial democracy, should do everything in its power to foster the economic development of the whole of Southern Africa. This obligation to Africa and to the Third World will not be served by damaging not only the South African Economy, but also impoverished neighbouring economies.