

Mr Chris April, Minister of Health Services and Welfare in the Ministers' Council of the House of Representatives

... On humanity

It is the responsibility of every privileged individual to do his bit in helping his fellow-man and motivating him to help himself. Each of us has a God-given and moral duty to become involved, to love our neighbour, and to help bear one another's burden. Therefore, it is our duty as privileged members of the community to ensure that the community in which we live is healthy, well-equipped and maintains sound values and norms. (On March 21 1990 in the House of Representatives)

... On vagrants

Vagrancy is a world-wide problem assuming serious proportions in the Republic of South Africa in particular. Regarding adult vagrants, the principle has already been accepted that subsidy schemes be instituted to assist private initiative in operating night shelters. However, my department links its willingness to grant financial assistance to the standpoint that shelters for adults must make a real contribution to the rehabilitation of the residents. (On March 21 1990 in the House of Representatives)

... On South Africa

The development of a person in his entirety is essential for South Africa's continued existence and the happy cohabitation of all its people. The responsibility does not rest with the state alone, but also with all responsible citizens of the country. Together sacrifices will have to be made. There is no hope for a poor South Africa; there is hope only for an equipped South Africa. (On March 21 1990 in the House of Representatives)

Motivation for minority participation

Government's point of view on the protection of minorities in a future constitutional dispensation was put forth on May 11 this year by the Minister of Constitutional Development, Dr Gerrit Viljoen, in the debate on the budget vote: Constitutional Development. According to Dr Viljoen, the protection of minorities does not cancel or undermine majority rule, but qualifies it. It results in power-sharing which can be described as a balance between majority rule and the protection of minorities. RSA Policy Review publishes excerpts from Dr Viljoen's speech.

Government policy on the 'protection of group and minority rights' is questioned in many quarters. This is the case because, on the one hand, 'group' is seen as the White group, 'rights' as existing discriminatory privileges, and 'protection' as the retrenchment of existing discriminatory privileges for Whites. Fear or suspicion thus exists that Government does not really intend to eliminate discrimination.

On the other hand, the 'protection of group rights' is questioned because 'group' is also seen as the White group, 'rights' also as existing discriminatory privileges and 'protection' also as the retention of those privileges – but in this case with the fear that such a method of protection will not be effective. The suspicion thus exists that Government is using semantics to trick people in order to quietly abandon discriminatory privileges for Whites.

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The discriminatory privileges both sides have in mind are existing legal arrangements relating to residential areas, rural land, own schools, privileged social pensions and many public services provided by the state.

Meaning

But what does Government actually mean with the 'protection of group or minority rights'?

It is envisaged that the proposed human rights charter, besides protecting *individual* rights and freedoms, will also be able to protect *group values* such as language, culture and religion, by protecting the individual concerned to exercise or practise those values and rights in a group context. As regards the protection of the *political* rights of groups, the Law Commission has indicated that this objective should be achieved by provisions in the constitution.

Government has the following in mind regarding other aspects of the protection of minority rights that cannot be achieved by the proposed charter: An assurance to minority groups that they will have a special say in the new constitutional system through representation and decision-making, in spite of the fact that they do not form part of the majority. This means that minorities are going to be defined according to a new, acceptable and non-racial set of guidelines. Owing to their particular values and aspirations, a special say in the new constitutional dispensation will be negotiated for such minorities. In this way it will be possible to ensure that those aspirations and values cannot be nullified by a simple majority vote.

Rights

In whatever way the minority groups may be formed or composed, the 'rights' that are to be 'protected' by the formation of such political groups are not special privileges for those political groups alone, but are rights and values that are available and considered beneficial to the entire nation. These include:

- That the nation should not, through a misleading, unsophisticated majority vote, be plunged into a one-party state or dictatorship;
- That it should not be possible to abolish or alter a charter of individual human rights in an arbitrary fashion;
- That there should be regular elections;
- That a free-market system should be retained;
- That a communist dictatorship should not be forced upon the nation;
- That those who wish to live within the context of a particular community should be allowed to do so without being legally obliged to do so;
- That all schools, including those for minority groups, should be entitled to equal state support without anyone being legally obliged to attend a specific school;
- That property rights, including landownership, should be respected and that land should not be expropriated without proper compensation or in an arbitrary fashion;
- That the security forces should be properly managed and staffed so that a safe environment is maintained for all to work and live in;
- That an independent judiciary should adjudicate between one person and another and between citizens and the state;
- That private property and a free economic system should not be ruined by an unjust system of taxation, and
- That minority groups should be represented in government institutions by leaders who maintain the above values.

Support

The constitutional ideas of various political groupings inside and outside Parliament already tend to support Government's constitutional policy on minority rights. However, some of them do not go as far regarding the measure

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of protection considered necessary as Government would wish. I am, for instance, thinking of the Labour Party's idea of a federation; Solidarity's desire for the protection of minority rights; the Democratic Party's geographical federation and proportional representation; the Conservative Party's support – as expressed by Dr Andries Treurnicht on May 9 this year – for Government's ideal of group rights and its own concern about the rights of population groups; Inkatha's tendency towards a regional government with special powers; the repeated statements by Mr Nelson Mandela and other African National Congress members that White concern must be taken into account in a mutually acceptable manner; the reference in the Freedom Charter to cultural rights and the Natal Indaba's recognition of 'background groups'.

Government is convinced that that which it wishes to place on the table is going to form the core of a new constitution, originating in South Africa for South Africa.

Purposeful restructuring

The Minister for Administration and Economic Co-ordination, Dr Wim de Villiers, reviewed Government's objectives with the restructuring of the South African economy on May 3 during the debate on his budget vote in the Chamber of Parliament. Dr De Villiers said there is no doubt that South Africa's medium and long-term economic future lies in the development of its industrial capacity. In his budget speech he emphasised that the viewpoints put across by him are representative of the economic policy of Government in its totality as approved by all the participating ministers and their departments. RSA Policy Review publishes the complete speech.

The reason for the appointment of a Minister of Economic Co-ordination is binary:

- Government has identified it as a matter of the highest priority to reach and maintain the highest attainable level of economic growth as soon as possible in as far as it is reconcilable with the maximal creation of new prosperity and job opportunities; and
- It is obvious that the economy will have to be restructured drastically.