



THE KwaZulu Government has recently begun to assert its presence around land issues. Its representatives have attended public hearings in Natal, called by the government-appointed Advisory Commission on Land Allocation. What does the KwaZulu government think about current debates around land? AFRA asked KwaZulu's Minister of Interior, Stephen Sithebe.

Stephen Sithebe has been KwaZulu's Minister of Interior since 1989. Before that, he held the position of Minister of Welfare and Pensions. He was a founder member of Inkatha in 1975 and has been a member of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly since 1977. He told AFRA his interest in land issues arose when forced removals took place in Ladysmith in 1979.

KwaZulu govt

What is your view of the government's plan to transfer land to administration under the self-governing territories?

We are saying that the land which belongs to us must come to us. We made the tribes move from the Inanda area to make way for the dam. This was done on the basis that they would be compensated with other land. After making these promises the government goes and writes the White paper. We are not worried about the government's stupidity in writing the White paper and also making these promises to us. We say the land was part of the promises made to us and must come back to us.

What about how the government has handled the issue - the secrecy around it?

We are sure the government knows how to handle things. It's their problem.

How do you think the problem of landlessness may be addressed in South Africa?

I have not given much consideration to this. It should be the subject of negotiation of an interim government.

How do you think contesting land claims may be resolved? Some people have, for example, argued for a land claims court to adjudicate. What is your view?

I haven't given consideration to this.

What do you think of the Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (ACLA) as a mechanism to deal with land allocation?

I'm not sure whether it is an adequate mechanism. You need a body that can satisfy all parties. At present, ACLA is made up of a bunch of academics, so we are not sure which side they are on. I think it would be necessary to have the major political parties represented on such an advisory body. Whether or not the present government is illegitimate, it is the de facto and de jure authority. Therefore, it should make the decisions.

The state president should identify which political parties need to be represented on such a body and call for these parties to forward representatives.

wants state land

What is KwaZulu's view of land reform in South Africa?

Land reform must be handled by an interim government. I haven't yet given much consideration to what KwaZulu would be putting on the agenda on this issue but I think land reform should be open to the negotiation process.

What is KwaZulu's view of future rural development?

In Natal/KwaZulu we have in our agenda a federal arrangement. Already in place are the JSBs (Joint Services Boards), which no other region has. Through the JSBs we are aiming to handle development - not only in certain areas and not others, but all-inclusively. Through the JSBs development will occur in rural areas. We already have so much cooperation in the Joint Executive. The JSBs are the infrastructure for a federal structure. They are already there. We are trying to bring development to rural areas now, even before an interim government.

What is KwaZulu's attitude to private individual tenure?

We are for private individual ownership. In 1989 the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly passed legislation

allowing private ownership in tribal areas. The law was not passed because the state president did not sign it for some technical reasons. During the last session of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (March to June this year) we passed another law saying that there could be private ownership in tribal areas. I don't know if the state president has signed it.

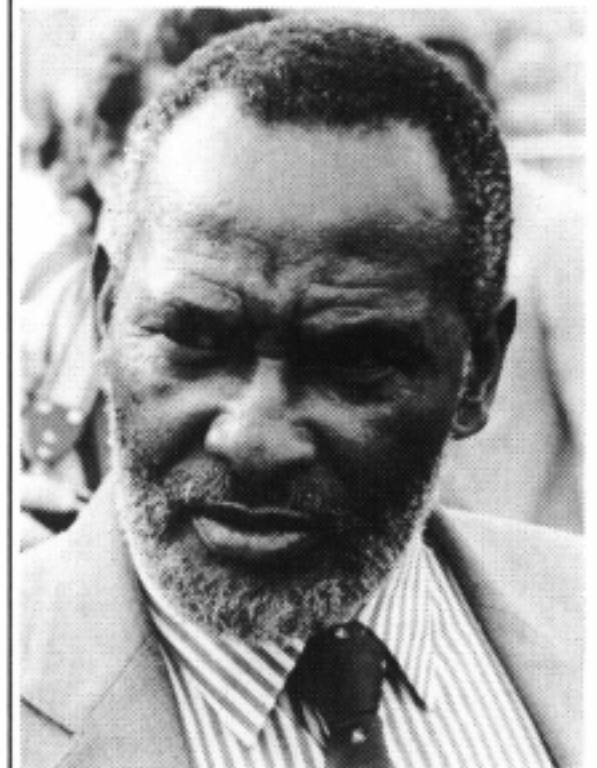
We see private ownership as the best solution. If something is privately owned then people look after it better.

What is KwaZulu's attitude to communal landownership?

We are prepared to let it live side-by-side with private ownership in tribal areas. But we see private ownership as better.

Any other comments you wish to make about land issues?

Your organisation, AFRA, behaves like a scavenger, feeding off the gains I've made. This is viewed in a very serious light by the local IFP leadership in that area.



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