

No stopping reform now says State President

DECISIVE PERIOD IN SA HISTORY

The State President, Mr F W de Klerk, says an "irreversible process" has started in South Africa in which the country is "inexorably moving" to a new dispensation which will include all South Africans.

Addressing journalists at the annual dinner of the Foreign Correspondents Association in Johannesburg in November, Mr de Klerk said the Government sincerely believed that this process, if it was to result in a better, new South Africa, must comply with a number of reasonable requirements. Some of these were:

- The process must be orderly and must take place within the ambit of the law.

- Each step in the process must flow from preceding steps in a natural and logical way. Efforts to straitjacket the process into fixed time schedules are absolutely counter-productive.

- Rigid adherence to so-called "preconditions" will take nobody anywhere. What is needed is dialogue, also with regard to stumbling blocks which might be standing in the way of negotiation.

"I regard the process which has started as the beginning of one of the most decisive periods in our country's history," he said.

"The South African Government is not playing games. People who accuse us of doing what we are doing, and saying what we are saying, merely for the sake of short term goals such as fighting off sanctions, are the ones playing games.

"The truth is that the Government is deeply committed to the goals which I have enunciated since my election, first as leader of the National Party and later as President. Short term and selfish goals have nothing to do with this commitment.

"It is the future of South Africa which is at stake. And it is for the sake of a safe, secure and prosperous future for all South Africans that we have embarked on the road for fundamental renewal through negotiation.

"We are determined to follow that road to its logical conclusion — a new, fair and just South Africa."

Now was the time, he added, to



*Mr F W de Klerk,
State President*

"My view of Mr F W de Klerk is one in which I see him as incapable of halting the gathering momentum of the final victory over apartheid.

It would be so much better for South Africa and the future of the whole of Southern Africa, if during this gathering momentum we allow Mr de Klerk the time and the scope within which to show that he is prepared to tackle fundamental constitutional reform from his side. I believe that South Africans will be getting together around negotiating tables . . ."

Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, letter to Sir Shridah Ramphal, Commonwealth Secretary-General, October 1989

adopt a "positive attitude" toward the positive developments in South Africa and Southern Africa.

South Africa was undoubtedly one of the most fascinating and relevant countries in the world today.

"Although we are a small country, the waves of history are breaking on our shores."

Processes which were now underway in South Africa were part of the normal but turbulent course of societal development.

"They are perhaps more evident in South Africa because, more so than anywhere else in the world, they are all present in one country at the same time.

"They are perhaps more visible in South Africa than in many other societies at our stage of economic

development, because in South Africa the cleavages in levels of economic development often coincide with the cleavages of race. They have probably been more controversial in South Africa because of our practice in the past of attempting to determine inter-group relationships by legislation, rather than allowing them to develop organically, as has been the case elsewhere."

The challenge was to understand that South African society was, in many ways, not so abnormal as some people imagined; that many processes which were at present underway in the country were processes which took place in Western societies not so long ago — processes which were taking place in much of the rest of the developing world at this very moment.