

Markets & monopolies

plying their goods or services. As a result prices, including wages, will be higher or the quality of the goods or services supplied will be inferior," he said.

There was a simple way to judge whether an act of economic policy was an exercise of political power that redistributed income and opportunity in favour of a small minority of producers at the expense of the majority. If it meant higher prices, wages, taxes or lower standards of service or quality - it would represent a gain for a few producers at the expense of many consumers.

"Fairness in practice would mean simply putting the interest of the great majority of consumers first," Kantor added.

On the question of the role of the unions, Barrett said Cosatu affiliates were already analysing their industries. They were looking for answers to questions such as what skills training existed and how it could be developed on a massive scale; what possibilities there were for the industry to reduce its reliance on imported machinery; how productivity could be enhanced by the re-organisation of the workplace and what products could the industry produce cheaply for mass consumption.

Replying to a question from the audience on what long-term planning was being done regarding South Africa's economic future in the global context, Barrett said international competitiveness was crucial.

"We need to acknowledge that our capacity to compete with European economies is limited, but we need to develop new products that can be sold on the international market," she said. Greater research and development were vital to identify commodities that could be produced and sold cheaply to Southern African markets.

Sue Valentine in Idasa's publications division

Pretoria talks transition too

TRANSITION and the possible scenarios for South Africa were also discussed in Pretoria recently at an evening meeting arranged by Idasa which was attended by more than 350 people, including senior civil servants.

The change South Africa will undergo in the next few years will not be through the step by step implementation of a specific programme of democratisation.

Addressing the meeting, Dr Van Zyl Slabbert and Wits Centre for Policy Studies researcher, Mark Swilling said the chances were far greater that it would happen in a haphazard, unpredictable way, continuously posing a number of challenges to all parties involved.

In countries such as South Africa one should rather talk of a process of transition, from self-imposed liberalisation at one end, to democratisation at the other. This transition will be a complex and crisis-ridden affair, and the rules determined not by the consent of the majority, but "the cut and thrust of the conflict between ruler and ruled".

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

UN code 'ignored' in SA

By Bea Roberts

JUNE 1 was International Children's Day. To celebrate this, Idasa, in conjunction with the Border Early Learning Centre, held a public meeting in East London on the rights of children.

Issues raised by the four speakers - Rayna Taback from the Wits School of Social Work, Shirley Mabusela from Johannesburg Child Welfare, Jinny Rickards from Grassroots Educare Trust in Cape Town and Sue Power from the Black Sash in East London - included future social welfare policy, educare needs and child rights in the Border/Ciskei area.

In 1989, the United Nations adopted the "International Declaration of the Rights of

Migrant labour has forced black men to leave their homes to earn a living, while many black mothers working as domestic servants see their children only once or twice a year.

"Handicapped children have a right to special treatment and education".

Most schools for physically and mentally disabled people are racially exclusive.

"Children have a right to free education and training which will help them earn a living when adult".

The shocking disparities in the South African education system are well known and have been widely discussed. One aspect that is often overlooked, however, is the early education - or educare. Jinny Rickards said educare integrates the universal need of children for health, education and care. It allows children to learn through active,



Delegates at the Child Rights Project.

the Child" as part of the Human Rights Campaign, but South Africa has not yet endorsed it. The declaration enshrines the following rights:

"Children must be protected regardless of race or creed".

In South Africa, race is the primary factor in the allocation of welfare resources and social service delivery. Jinny Rickards pointed out that in 1989, white children received R2 per day for early childhood educare, "coloured" children received R1,25 and black children received nothing. Only since April this year have black children been eligible for 60c a day.

The tri-cameral government system means that even non-racial organisations have to implement the policies of several departments, resulting in high administrative costs and fragmented services.

"Children have the right to a name, enough to eat and a decent place to live".

The failure to register children's births seriously affects the state's ability to plan for the needs of its children. In some rural areas, only about 15 percent of children are registered largely because of transport costs, or the fear of being arrested for living illegally in an area, or other political reasons.

Research shows that one third of all black children are underfed, yet South Africa produces enough food to ensure a daily energy intake of well over 6 000 calories a person.

"Children should grow up with love and security".

The apartheid system has been instrumental in the disintegration of family life.

stimulating and developmentally appropriate play.

Society can benefit immensely from healthy children who can think for themselves, listen, share and take turns, and are secure and independent.

"Children should be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation, and be the first to receive relief from distress".

There is a need to protect children from the culture of violence. Thousands of children experience violence around them all the time and may be led to believe it is the only way to achieve one's goals.

An integrated child and family national policy was essential, Rayna Taback said.

The policy should embody non-racialism, a democratic model of service delivery and allocation of resources to children and families to improve their standards of living. Child and family health services should be accessible to low-income families, education should be offered at all levels as a housing and a fair rental formula would ensure a safe home environment for all.

"Children should be brought up to understand that their energy and talents should be devoted to the service of their brothers and sisters".

There are 14,6 million children in South Africa who comprise 40,6 percent of the population. Ensuring and protecting their rights is a necessity, but as Shirley Mabusela pointed out, human beings are the least protected of South Africa's resources.

Bea Roberts is Idasa's regional co-ordinator in East London.