

ANC SUBMISSION

THEME COMMITTEE SIX - SUB-THEME THREE **COMMISSION ON GENDER EQUALITY**

The ANC believes that the principle of racial and gender equality shall be embodied at all levels in government policy. To this end the state shall establish appropriate institutions to ensure the effective protection and promotion of equality for women. These institutions shall be accessible to all women in South Africa (Women's Charter) The following are some of the institutional options to be considered:

1. Commission for Gender Equality, as provided for in the Interim Constitution:

What should be its role and functions (confined in IC to promoting gender equality and advice on legislation affecting women)? These could include:

- * the injection of gender concerns into policy making and legislation
- * information flow within government and between government and civil society
- * implementation and enforcement of laws and policies
- * monitoring government departments and the Budget.

It has been suggested that the Commission could result in the marginalisation of women's issues especially in respect of tasks which could be carried out by the Human Rights Commission? However this need not occur if tasks related to the advancement of gender equality were properly located.

The Gender Commission could :

- *ensure the HRC developed and promoted the concept of gender equality,
- * could engage, in public education on gender where this did not conflict with the role of the HRC
- * could monitor progress in the area of gender equality where this did not fall within the ambit of the HRC.
- *act as an interface between government and civil society.

The Commission could be complemented by other institutions.

2. A Women's Ministry: This would be costly in terms of staff and resources. Would it be able to influence other Ministries and ensure that gender/women's needs are addressed ? Would it have enough clout to improve the status and conditions of women? (Women's Ministries in Africa have generally been ineffective.)

3. Women's desks in various Ministries: To whom should these be responsible? should they be represented in the Cabinet? Would they result in conflict in lines of authority? What powers should they have?

4. A Cabinet Committee convened by the President and chaired by a gender sensitive Minister: This would ensure, that at the level of the executive, with specific reference to policy and budget allocation, responsibility would be taken and women's status attended to. Questions have been raised regarding accessibility and visibility to women. How would this committee co-ordinate with Ministries in the Cabinet. These are all matters which need more debate.

5. A focal point for women in an appropriate Ministry at national and provincial level which could review policies and programmes in all Ministries and departments and ensure that women's disparities are addressed. Would there be a danger of gender issues side-lined in competition with other priorities?