

Democratic Party.  
Agenda Item 3. "One, sovereign state."

In respect of (a) a single, Sovereign State, its Constitutional Assembly is required to give effect to the following constitutional principle:

Schedule 4 (1): "The Constitution of South Africa shall provide for the establishment of one sovereign state, a common South African citizenship and a democratic system of government committed to achieving equality between men and women and people of all races"

The Democratic Party is committed to the creation of a single Sovereign State as required in terms of the above principle.

(a) Provincial autonomy.

The D.P. will argue strongly in favour of a federal system of government because it believes in the maximum devolution of power. The D.P. believes that the people must govern and that there is no more effective way of giving this expression than for the constitution to provide for a variety of sites of power in which the people themselves can participate in making decisions affecting them. By providing a variety of different sites of power, federalism enables more people to take part in the process of government. It brings government closer to the people. This promotes accountability of political office-bearers to their constituents, and promotes the establishment of a democratic culture. It can also reduce the intensity of the struggle for power at the central government level as it ceases to be a 'winner take all' contest.

The Democratic Party believes that an overconcentration of power in central government leads to the retention of power for its own sake, and the use of power and patronage for the advantage of the party or group which is in power. South Africa's history is littered with examples of the use of the monopoly of centralized political power to impose an oppressive philosophy on the entire country. A federal structure makes this very much more difficult, and the system also provides a variety of sites of power in which more people can exercise power, making the retention of central government power relatively less important. The Democratic Party accepts the cultural, linguistic, geographic and political diversity of South Africa. This diversity is a national asset which needs to be developed in a spirit of mutual respect, tolerance and conciliation. Federalism helps to accommodate this diversity by multiplying the sites of power.

Moreover, by multiplying sites of power and competition, new and transcending alliances based on regional or common interests can be forged, which can lead to the resolution of problems and issues at a localized level. This will certainly make the resolution of seemingly intractable problems far easier.

(b) Minority participation

In terms of constitutional principle XIV of Schedule 4 of the interim Constitution, the final constitution is obliged to provide for the "participation process of minority political parties in the legislative process in a manner consistent with democracy." The D.P. fully supports this principle and suggests that it can best be served by introducing a number of constitutional devices. These are:-

- (i) A federal system of government ( as discussed above)
- (ii) A system of voting based on proportional representation as provided for in Section 40, principle B of the interim constitution.
- (iii) The protection of all basic human rights in a justiciable Bill of Rights as provided for in chapter 3 principle 2 of the I.C.

(c) Community self determination.

The D. P. would be opposed to any notion of self determination which was based on race. It would need to be convinced that the "Volkstaat" issue contained no element of racial discrimination before debating it.

(d) Traditional Monarchies.

Because of the, important position which traditional leaders occupy amongst some communities, in some parts of the country, and in some areas of customary law and procedure, it becomes necessary to create an institution through which the views of and leaders can be ascertained. This should take the form of councils organised on a regional basis and remain geographic and political diversity of South Africa. This diversity is a national asset which needs to be developed in a spirit of mutual respect, tolerance and conciliation. Federalism helps to accommodate this diversity by multiplying the sites of power.

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