

AFRICAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY
6th June 1995

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, CITIZENSHIP AND SUFFRAGE

The ACDP supports the idea of making provision in the constitution for structures of civil government to be representative. Citizens should be able to vote for people who will represent their interests and the values they esteem highly.

From this basis flows the following corollaries. Firstly, in order to reflect balanced and differing opinions, there is need for more than one political party. This may be limited to two diametrically opposed parties representing all the major interests as with the Republicans and Democrats in the U S. with provision being made for those citizens who do not feel that their aspirations are being properly addressed, to mobilise and associate themselves into another representative political grouping.

Secondly, the need arises to allow citizens to mobilise support for their particular legitimate interests, both in and outside government. The ACDP therefore, strongly objects to a member of any one political party using the national broadcaster unchallenged, to inform the largest interest group in this country that they do not have to exercise their rights in terms of sec 16, of Act 200 of 1993 because their interests are being taken care of. This flies in the face of the right to assembly, demonstration and petition and does not bode well for the future.

Thirdly, individuals and parties in government should be accountable to ordinary people - both politically and morally. We refer to the submission made on accountable government and incorporates those terms herein. This necessitates the need for elections with secret ballots to be held on a regular basis every 5 years.

We equally call, however, for the constitution to enable voters to remove office bearers from national regional and local government following a petition supported by two-third of a particular constituency based on non-compliance with a code of conduct drawn up by all political parties collectively.

SUFFRAGE

Voting is at the heart of democracy - the right to make one's voice heard through the ballot paper vindicates the existence of a democratic system. The ACDP therefore, supports the right and further proposes that the constitution should lay down a minimum of 18 years as a qualification to vote. With every right comes responsibility and equally so with suffrage. This is why we state that all citizens should have the to vote if they are legal majors and conform to specific requirements

that will show they did take up their responsibility as citizens. This includes *inter alia* not having a criminal record for serious offences.

The ACDP feels that citizenship and suffrage go hand in hand. Ideally, only citizens should be able to vote. We, however, acknowledge a shrinking of the world due to progress in modes of transportation and the like. There is also a need to stimulate the economy of this country by including the expertise of the holder's of work and residence permits. Because of their interest and investment into the economic growth of South Africa, the ACDP feels that they should be given the opportunity to vote.

The emphasis in suffrage always is on citizens, with non-nationals being exceptions to the rule who may become entitled to vote after meeting certain requirements - e.g. duration of stay in this country.