

Challenges to the Promotion of Indigenous Languages in South Africa

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Review Commissioned by the Foundation for Human Rights in South Africa. October – November 2006. Submitted in January 2007

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Introduction

In scientific and anthropological usage, the notion of culture encompasses all that is the result of human fabrication. It includes both tangible objects such as all material products of humanity and intangible creations of the human genius like religion, language, customary usages and everyday practices, especially those that enjoy institutional representation. It is the sum total of these time-tested habits, attitudes, tastes, manners, shared values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, institutions and beliefs of a group of people that define for them their general behaviour and way of life. The total set of these learned activities of a people define culture. Humans make culture on a continuous basis; adapting it, shedding parts, adopting others, acculturating and passing on these features generationally. This is done both consciously and unconsciously. But, if humans make culture, dialectically, culture also makes humans. We are educated and socialized in cultures in as much as we slowly, steadily and increasingly make culture. We are creatures of cultures and to some extent are delimited in our behaviour, by the cultures in which we are formed.

If culture is the main determinant of our attitudes, tastes and mores, language is the central feature of culture. It is in language that culture is transmitted, interpreted and configured. Language is also a register of culture. Historically, the trajectory of a culture can be read in the language and the evolution of its lexicals and morphology. Language is one of the distinctive features, which distinguishes us from the animal world. We are, in effect, “talkative animals.” In this respect we can also extend the logic of the argument to say that culture is the key distinguishing feature between us and the rest of the animal world. Our ability to create culture marks us off from other animals. Culture raises us

above the rest of nature, beyond instinct, and relies on nurture for our enlightenment. Language is the most important means of human intercourse.

Language and cultural rights are therefore central to all considerations of human rights in the contemporary world. *The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* affirms that, “culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, values systems, traditions and beliefs.”¹ Furthermore, it suggests that culture is at the heart of contemporary debates about identity, social cohesion, and the development of a knowledge-based economy. The above understandings also affirm respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding. These are among the best guarantees of international peace and security. They indicate that we should aspire towards greater solidarity on the basis of recognition of cultural diversity, awareness of the unity of humankind and of the development of intercultural exchanges.²

Beyond the issue of rights, it is important to note that language and literacy are very crucial for societal development. A society develops into modernity when its citizens are literate in the languages of the masses. In other words, it is not possible to reach modernity if the language/languages of literacy and education are only within the intellectual ambit of small minorities. Historically, the jump towards expanded knowledge production and reproduction in societies has only been possible when the languages of social majorities have been centrally placed.

South Africa’s constitutional provisions spell out that, “the primary objects of the Commission for Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities are; to promote respect for the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities; to promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance and national unity among cultural, religious and linguistic communities, on the basis of equality, non-discrimination and free association; and to recommend the establishment or recognition, in accordance with national legislation, of a cultural or other council or councils for a community or communities in South Africa.”³ Locating the thrust of the argument at the individual or existential level of social life and relating it to practice with relevance to the above, Section 31 of the Constitution reads that; “persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied right, with other members

¹ This definition is in line with the conclusions of the World Conference on Cultural Policies (Mondiacult. Mexico City. 1982), of the World Commission on Culture and Development .Our Creative Diversity.1995, and on the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development. Stockholm. 1998.

² Ibid.

³ Section 185 of the South African Constitution.

of that community, to enjoy the culture, practice their religion and use their language and to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.” The constitutional guarantees provided here easily rival any that can be found anywhere in the world. It is an achievement. This is now where we are at, on paper. We have been here only since 1994.

This review discusses the language question in South Africa with respect to the challenges, which face the issue of the promotion of indigenous languages. The terms of reference for this work directed attention to the need to answer the following questions:

- What are main debates in the areas?
- Who are the protagonists and their respective positions?
- What are the key issues/challenges for the sector?
- What are the key achievements in the past?
- What are the proposals being put forward to overcome the challenges?
- If support should be given how best to do this?

Background: The Anglo-Boer Divide

For a start, it is noteworthy that the language question in South Africa is one of the undigested features of post-Apartheid South Africa. In its present form, its origins are tied to the settler-colonial system. The cultural edifice of the system was represented by the imposition of Afrikaans and English on the African population. The effects of this imposition still rest with us. The fact that the African language-speakers, from the onset, were pre-literate put them in a weak position vis-à-vis the Western colonialists. The point has been made that the phenomenon of neocolonialism in a cultural sense, relates directly to traditions of literacy. Goody writes that; “Indeed part of the phenomenon called neo-colonialism has to be seen in terms of this very openness which is associated with the absence of a strong, written tradition that can stand up against the written cultures of the world system. There are important distinctions to be made between different socio-cultural regions of the Third World, of the world system, not simply in terms of their relationship with the metropolis but in terms of their own indigenous, socio-cultural organization, in terms of communications as well as the economy. While the major societies of the Asian continent were strongly affected by the expansion of Europeans, they were more rarely ‘colonies’ in the African, American and Oceanic sense; nor are they today neo-colonial from the cultural standpoint. Their written traditions have provided them with a more solid basis for cultural resistance than is the case with most oral cultures.”⁴

⁴ Jack Goody. *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*. Cambridge. 1986. (1989 edition). p.86.

It is often forgotten that historically, in the early years, the tensions and debates between language groups or contending protagonists in South Africa have prominently featured as struggles between the Afrikaans and English-speaking communities. This was culturally a significant strand in the conflict, which led to the war between Boer and Brit, the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). Indeed, this is what the white Afrikaners have called the *taal-stryd*.

In the 1870s, some of the Dutch settlers were calling for the rendering of Afrikaans into common literary currency. In a letter written to the *Zuid-Afrikaan*, Arnold Pannevis pleaded for the translation of the Bible into Afrikaans (in replacement to Dutch). On the 14th of August 1875, the foundations of the first Afrikaans language movement was laid with the creation of the *Genootschap van Rechte Afrikaners* (the Society of Real Afrikaners). The manifesto of this first Afrikaans language movement spoke of Afrikaans as the language of “Afrikaners with an African heart,” (*Afrikaanders met Afrikaanse harte*). C. P. Hoogenhout, S. J. Du Toit and six other people founded this organization. The *Genootschap van Rechte Afrikaners* was created to “fight for our language, our nation and our land” (*veg vir ons taal, ons nasie en ons land*). The Afrikaans paper *Die Afrikaanse Patriot* was established as the organ of this movement. During the first 20 years following the inauguration of this publication, a constituency was slowly built around the ideals of the movement. The first Afrikaans books appeared in this period. The best known amongst these were probably, *Catharina, die dogter van die advokaat* by C. P. Hoogenhout, *Magritha Prinslo* by S.J. Du Toit, and *Die Sewe Duiwels* by J. Lion Cachet.

The struggle to assert the usage of Afrikaans in the face of English hegemony, continued in the years following the Anglo-Boer War. Sometime in 1906, the English Cape Town newspaper *The Cape Times* could condescendingly write that; “Afrikaans is the confused utterance of half-articulated patois.” Afrikaans was often denigratingly described as a *kombuis taal* (a kitchen language), referring to the fact that it was a language used in the kitchen by servants and slaves.

The post-war policy of Lord Alfred Milner, High Commissioner for South Africa from 1897 to 1905, was to “break the back of the great Afrikaner nation” by requiring education in English, actively discouraging Dutch, and encouraging British immigration. The object of this latter policy was to achieve a numerical superiority of English speakers over Afrikaans speakers. Thousands of teachers were imported from England. Milner’s attempts at *anglicization* paralleled those of Lord Charles Somerset, Governor of the Cape Colony, in the 1820s, a background cause of the Great Trek. Needless to say, Milner failed. The Boers reacted at that time by taking their children out of the school system and educating them at home. Likewise, partially in reaction to Milner’s sustained

assault on the Dutch language, a new movement arose after the Boer War to promote Afrikaans. This movement attempted to enforce the official policy of the linguistic equality of English and Dutch adopted at Union (1910), while at the same time attempting to substitute the use of Afrikaans for Dutch. The movement went hand in hand with distancing and some aversion to Hollanders.⁵ It was in the years following the Boer War that the first substantial works of Afrikaans poetry and prose were published. The favorable reception of these works gave the formerly deprecated language worthiness and gravitas.

In 1903, Jan Hofmeyr and other Afrikaners from the Cape revived the idea of a *Taalbond* (Language Association). This revival gave form to the second Afrikaans language movement. The objective of the *Taalbond* was to develop a *volkstaal* (a people's language) that would set the Afrikaner culturally apart, and in distinction from other South Africans particularly the English. The *Afrikaanse Taalgenootskap* was established in Pretoria in 1905; the following year the *Afrikaanse Taalvereniging* was created in Cape Town.

It is however important to remember that, originally, within educated white Afrikaans circles, the preferred language was Dutch because the Afrikaans spoken at the time could be identified too closely with the Coloured population of particularly the Cape. Indeed, the first known script in Afrikaans was produced in *Ajami* (Arabic script), in the Cape, by Malay slaves.⁶ However, in the north of the country, which did not have the preponderance of Coloured people as the Cape had, the Afrikaner poets J. D. Du Toit, (more commonly known as *Totius*), Jan Cellier and Eugene Marais actively propagated and propagandized Afrikaans in their literary works. Arguably, Totius succeeded more than the other two to evoke and inspire strong feelings of nationalism in his poetry. The author and journalist, Gustav Preller, sub-editor of the *Volksstem*, who likewise articulated many culturally nationalistic sentiments in his works, supported them. In 1905, Preller wrote a series of articles, under the rubric "let us be serious" (*Laat't ons toch Ernst wezen*), in which he made a case for the recognition of Afrikaans. Preller drew attention to the fact that even many pastors of the church were unable to speak "pure Afrikaans" and often resorted to code-switching, or speaking in English because their Afrikaans was poor. In the Cape, the lawyer J.H. H. de Waal and author of a popular Afrikaans book *Johannes van Wyk*, forcefully on all platforms, pushed for the elevation of the status of Afrikaans. Helena Lochner and C. J. Langenhoven wrote, extensively, books in Afrikaans to provide Afrikaner children with books to read in their own

⁵ See, G.J. Schutte. *Nederland en de Afrikaners: Adhesie en Aversie*. T. Wever, BV. Franeker. 1986. Pp. 117-143.

⁶ This text in facsimile is on view in the library of The University of South Africa, Pretoria.

language. Possibly, no single personality in the early 20th century served the object of elevating Afrikaans to equality with English as C.J. Langenhoven.

The rise of Afrikaans as a language of literacy and education was in the decade following the Anglo-Boer war a *cause célèbre* of Afrikaner nationalists. In 1908, D. F. Malan expressed the view that; “Raise the Afrikaans language to a written language, let it become the vehicle of our culture, our history, our national ideals, and you will also raise the people who speak it ... The Afrikaans Language Movement is nothing less than an awakening of our nation to self-awareness and to the vocation of adopting a more worthy position in world civilization.”⁷ Sensitivities against the social power of English was strikingly registered in 1913 when the Boer leader Steyn cabled the *Kaapsch Taalfeest* the following words; “... the language of the conqueror in the mouth of the conquered is the language of the slaves.”⁸

In 1909, the South African Academy for Language, Literature and Arts (*De Zuid-Afrikaanse Akademie voor Taal, Lettere en Kuns*), which was committed to using Afrikaans, was established. This body has become, the South African Academy for Arts and Sciences (*De Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns*). One of the main factors, which induced J.B.M. Hertzog to found the National Party in 1914, was what he regarded as the lip-service given to the idea of equality of Dutch and English. Afrikaans was accepted as a school subject in 1914. Initially, from random contributions and donations, two hundred Afrikaans-medium “Christian National” schools were established in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The churches recognized Afrikaans in 1916-19, at university level in 1918, and Afrikaans finally replaced Dutch as an official language in both chambers of parliament at a joint-sitting in 1925. The first Afrikaans Bible appeared in 1933. Hertzog and his cultural nationalist acolytes proceeded to adopt measures to strengthen Afrikaans. They in their arguments laid emphasis on the richness and historical significance of Afrikaans, rather than Dutch for the Afrikaner, and widely supported the publication of books and magazines in Afrikaans. When in 1918 the *Afrikaner Broederbond* was formed, a central plank of its platform was the protection and development of Afrikaans. In 1921 when its membership became secret, it went underground with its linguistic platform.

Thus when the National Party Afrikaner elite came into power in 1948, they brought with them a historical baggage and a collective memory of cultural rivalry against the English. They proceeded rapidly in all areas of social life to catch up with the social, economic

⁷ See, *Glo in u Volk: Dr. D. F. Malan as Redenaar, 1908-1954*, S. W. Pienaar (ed). Cape Town. Tafelberg. 1964. P.175. Quoted here from, Heribert Adam and Hermann Giliomee. *The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power*. David Philip. Cape Town. 1983. P.106.

⁸ Quoted here from J.H. Broekman. *Taalverhoudingen in Zuid-Afrika*. Brugge. 1942. P.20. Broekman's source is W.E.G. Louw. *De Nieuwere Afrikaans Poezie* (undated).

and cultural gap between English-speaking white South Africa, and Afrikaans-speaking white South Africa. This process was carried out on the backs of the non-white population. The process of achieving cultural and linguistic supremacy, more or less, continued uninterrupted until 1976, when African school children in Soweto decisively rejected and revolted against the use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction in schools. This protest against Afrikaans as Language of Instruction (LOI) under Apartheid marked a watershed in the history of Apartheid fascism in South Africa. Indeed, it announced to the wider world the coming and eventual demise of Apartheid.

Forced removals and “grand apartheid” from the beginning of the 1960s made the so-called non-white population to various degrees “invisible.” They were geographically and physically kept away from specified areas during certain hours of the day. However, this policy of enforced physical invisibility was matched by an equally pernicious policy of selective cultural invisibility. Cultural visibility was only tolerated in the Bantustans/Homelands. It was on the basis of these Homelands, as territorial units in which specific African languages were spoken that the concept of quasi-independence was developed. By the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the Homelands and the picture of the languages spoken in them was as follows:

- Transkei (Xhosa) – declared independent on 26 October 1976
- Ciskei (also Xhosa) – declared independent on 4 December 1981
- Bophuthatswana (Tswana) – declared independent on 6 December 1977
- Venda (Venda) – declared independent 13 September 1979
- KwaZulu (Zulu)
- KwaNdebele (Ndebele)
- KaNgwane (Swazi)
- Gazankulu (Tsonga/Shangaan)
- QwaQwa (Southern Sotho)
- Lebowa (Northern Sotho/Pedi)

The idea was to treat each Bantustan as a separate “nation” so that practically, the principle of an African majority was obviated. In effect, although African language-speaking citizens form three-quarters of the South African population, their languages and cultures were practically treated as those of insignificant minorities.

The Soweto Uprising and After

English was, in South African society, too powerful to be superseded by Afrikaans. The sociology of language in South Africa after 1976 offers important lessons for the observer. English after the Soweto uprising received a boost. Whereas African schoolchildren had rejected Afrikaans as LOI, this rejection had not been made on the

grounds that they preferred the use of their own languages as LOI. Indeed, part of the strategy of apartheid had been to foist on Africans the use of their languages, but without resources and encouragement to develop these languages into languages of science and technology. African languages were taught not to provide the African masses with a literary base for cultural development, but rather keep them apart from each other, and the rest of South African society while maintaining strict control over the type of literature provided.⁹ Africans had therefore internalized the attitude that working in African languages was part of the apartheid strategy of keeping Africans as “hewers of wood and drawers of water.” African schoolchildren and their parents had developed the impression that English was the language of advancement and therefore whereas they had rejected Afrikaans this disavowal was done in favour of English, and not the indigenous languages. This impression has more or less persisted to the present period.

From the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century (Bantu Education Act of 1953), most of African education was conducted through various christian missionary groups. Their objective was primarily evangelization. For those African children who found their way into the educational system, teaching in African languages was the practice at the primary school level. Beyond the primary level, a smaller selection was steeped more deeply into English as grooming for native elite status.¹⁰

Afrikaans had by the mid-seventies developed into a fully-fledged language of science and technology. One can say that from the time, in the mid-sixties, when the Afrikaans-speaking and Afrikaans-educated Dr. Chris Barnard accomplished his epoch-making heart transplants, the significance of Afrikaans as a language of science and technology, equal to any other in the world, was established for all to see.

Thus under apartheid, the two languages of the white minority, namely, Afrikaans and English, held sway over and above the indigenous African languages. While English retained the preeminence it had historically acquired in the public domain through service as the language of British colonial power, Afrikaans was systematically developed with enormous state resources and blessing into a second official language. Its social role covered the entire range of functions, which any official language in a developed first world society would have. Afrikaans had in fifty years become a language of modernity.

Partial public usages of the indigenous African languages, in formal and informal capacities were restricted to usage in the “Bantustans.” African languages were thus officially tolerated in the, more or less, 13 % of the country where after being denied their

⁹ See, K. K. Prah. *Mother Tongue for Scientific and Technological Development in Africa*. DSE. Bonn. 1993. Pp. 36-37

¹⁰ *Ibid.* P.36

citizenship within the Republic, black South Africans were supposedly allowed to exercise their political rights. However, even in these Bantustans, English, and frequently Afrikaans, functioned as official languages alongside the local African language. Africans in the rest of the country (the so-called “white South Africa”), where Africans formed a clear majority, were treated as foreigners. In the parlance of the Apartheid state, they were “resident aliens” who were, in addition to their own languages, required to learn and be educated through the medium of both English and Afrikaans.

The Apartheid state thus created nine languages located in the Bantustans. With time, the Bantustan elites developed interests in the cultural and linguistic representations of the Bantustans. This linguistic differentiation, nomenclature and dispensation were largely carried into the post-Apartheid era.

The post-apartheid years have seen the limited but principled dismantling of the administrative structure of apartheid-based education and the adoption of a new education system, which reflects better, at least on paper, the cultural and linguistic interests of African language-speakers. The dramatic development of Afrikaans in fifty years, and the prosperity and enlightenment it has brought Afrikaners, should bring to our understanding the relevance of language to social transformation in South Africa. It also implicitly points to the fact that continuing and future transformation in the country will have to pay full attention to the language question. A democratically-based language policy is crucial for the development of a democratic culture. Without a policy, which culturally empowers mass society, development in South Africa will, in the long run, stagnate.

Languages and the New Constitution

In South Africa’s new 1994 *Bill of Rights*, it is stated that; “Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.” In addition, the point is made that; “Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community (a) to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language; and (b) to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.” It is further stated that these rights “may not be exercised in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.”¹¹ These definitions of rights had practically been in force from the late 1920s, for the white minority (both Afrikaans and English speaking), but until 1994 they were denied to the African majority.

¹¹ See, Chapter 2, Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). As adopted on May 1996 and amended on 11th October 1996 by the Constitutional Assembly. Act 108 of 1996.

In the new constitution, which came into force in 1996, the nine African languages that had previously enjoyed official status in the Bantustans were granted formal equality with Afrikaans and English at the national level. The language of Section 6 of the *Founding Provisions* reads as follows: “The official languages of the Republic are SePedi, SeSotho, SeTswana, siSwati, TshiVenda, XiTsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. Recognizing the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.”¹² The letter and spirit of these words is that all are equal as inherited from the old regime. Furthermore, the state is enjoined to correctively take the necessary steps to elevate to equality the formerly depressed languages. It is with this latter view in mind that in the *Founding Provisions*, the provision was made that; “A *Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB)* established by national legislation must promote, and create conditions for, the development and use of, all official languages; the Khoe Khoe and San languages; and South African Sign language; and promote and ensure respect for all languages commonly used by communities in South Africa, including German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Portuguese, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu; and Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit and other languages used for religious purposes in South Africa.”¹³ These provisions represent an enormous achievement for South Africa.

Thus the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) is a statutory body established in terms of Act 59 of 1995 (as amended) for, *inter alia*, the creation of conditions for the development and for the promotion of the equal use and enjoyment of all the official South African languages. Chapter 9 of the Constitution refers to six listed state institutions expected to strengthen constitutional democracy in the Republic, namely:

- a. The Public Protector
- b. The Human Rights Commission
- c. The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities
- d. The Commission for Gender Equality
- e. The Auditor-General
- f. The Electoral Commission

The Constitution clearly provides that these institutions are independent and subject only to the Constitution and the law. They are thus empowered to act impartially and without

¹² Founding Provisions. Chapter 1, Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Ibid.

¹³ Section 6. Founding Provisions. Ibid. Thus PanSALB was created by Section 6 of the Founding Provisions, and defined by the PanSALB Act. Section 4 of the PanSALB Act sets out similarly PanSALB’s independence and impartiality, and also provides that no organ of state or any other person shall interfere with the Board or its staff in the carrying out of the Board’s function and mandate.

fear, favour or prejudice (section 181(2)). Also, no person or organ of state may interfere with the functioning of these institutions (subsection 4), and are accountable to the National Assembly (subsection 5). The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) is not listed amongst these institutions, as the issue of language was perceived to be so fundamentally important to human rights that it was addressed in the *Founding Provisions* of the Constitution.

This body was effectively established, but its track record has in many respects fallen far short of expectations. In practice the African languages for which it was primarily meant to cater have not made much developmental headway. The constitution missed no chance to register the swift desirability of linguistic equality in the country. Exhortatively, it demanded that; “The national government and provincial governments, by legislative and other measures, must regulate and monitor their use of official languages. all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably”.¹⁴

All in all, these constitutional provisions were a compromise between the conflicting positions and demands of the various parties involved in the transitional negotiations. The African National Congress (ANC), representing the majority of black South Africans, favoured a *laissez faire* approach, which many suggested would result, over time, in the emergence of a national language, probably English. The Democratic Party (DP), which largely represented the majority of English-speaking whites, favoured English as the sole official language. This position can be described as *neo-Milnerism*. In contrast, the National Party (NP), representing the white Afrikaans-speaking community, was particularly concerned that Afrikaans should retain its official status alongside English. Many non-Afrikaners saw this position as an attempt to preserve the “ill-gotten gains of Apartheid.” Inkatha, based in KwaZulu Natal, in theory supported the more widespread usage of African languages, but in practice was diffident. Other parties, like the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Azanian People’s Organization (AZAPO) were strongly in favour of the enhanced usage and development of the African languages. These two latter groups however offered no practical solutions to achieve these objectives.

The eleven-language policy was an attempt to satisfy this wide range of contending interests, and to avoid possible future conflicts around this potentially explosive and divisive issue. It imported intact into the post-Apartheid era the nomenclature and classification of the past, and in principle and on paper elevated all eleven languages to equality. This is why the constitution made a cautionary provision that; “The national government and provincial governments may use any particular official languages for the

¹⁴ Ibid

purposes of government, taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole or in the province concerned; but the national government and each provincial government must use at least two official languages. Municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of their residents.” Basically, it was decided that any language, which had previously enjoyed official status in any part of the country would be recognized nationally. But in pursuit of this objective, extenuating, discretionary and mitigating circumstances were thus clearly spelt out. It may be argued that in attempting to satisfy all constituencies, the government failed to chart a truly new route forward, which fundamentally met the needs of the teeming African language-speaking majorities.

In December 1995, Minister Ngubane, the then Minister for Arts, Culture, Science and Technology announced the establishment of a Language Plan Task Group, to be known as LANGTAG. It was appointed to advise the Minister who was responsible for language matters on how to urgently devise a coherent National Language Plan for South Africa. The Minister pointed out that LANTAG was to be a policy advisory group to his Ministry and should in no way be confused with the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB). PanSALB would continue to be an independent statutory body, appointed by the Senate in the new year (1996) in terms of the Pan South African Language Board Act (Act No. 59 of 1995), and will be expected to monitor the observance of the Constitutional provisions and principles relating to the use of languages, as well as the content and observance of any existing and new legislation, practice and policy dealing with language matters. The immediate rationale for this body was that during the preceding months following the end of Apartheid, it had become clear that although multilingualism was indeed a sociolinguistic reality of South Africa, there was a clear tendency towards unilingualism in the country.

Multilingualism was invisible in the public service, in most public discourse and in the major mass media. Emerging wisdom was that the Government had failed to secure a significant position for language matters within the national development plan. Consequently, despite the fact that the Constitution provided for the cultivation of multilingualism, there was still an urgent need for the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology to devise a coherent National Language Plan which not only directly addressed these issues, but also drew on the framework of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and maximized the utilization of the country’s multilingual human resources. Furthermore, it was the view of the ministry that, the need for such a Task Group was essential in the light of (a) the lack of tolerance of language diversity and the resultant “multilingualism is a costly problem” ideology, evident in some sectors of South African society, weighed against the fundamental importance of

language empowerment in a democratic society; and (b) the growing criticism from language stakeholders of the tendency to unilingualism in South Africa.

Minister Ngubane emphasized that a National Language Plan would have to be a statement of South Africa's language-related needs and priorities and that it should therefore set out to achieve at least the following primary objectives: Firstly, all South Africans should have access to all spheres of South African society by developing and maintaining a level of spoken and written language, which is appropriate for a range of contexts in the official language or languages of their choice. Secondly, all citizens of the country should have access to the learning of languages other than their mother-tongue. Thirdly, the African languages, which were marginalized by the hegemonic policies of the past should be maintained and developed. Fourthly, equitable and widespread language facilitation services should be established. With the benefit of hindsight, we cannot say that the establishment of this body has made much positive difference to the situation, which was so clearly diagnosed within a few months of the ushering in of post-Apartheid South Africa. The desirability of all South Africans learning an African language has been frequently aired, but implementationally, little progress has been made in this direction. Currently, Education Minister Naledi Pandor has reiterated it on numerous occasions.

Post-apartheid South Africa had inherited a lop-sided linguistic scenario and proceeded volubly through these constitutional provisions and other government initiatives to dismantle the structure of the racist and unsavoury inheritance. African languages were officially promoted to the status of national languages, but a decade and more after the end of the apartheid regime, the equality of the nine African languages with English and Afrikaans remains more on paper than in reality. As Professor Sizwe Satyo of the University of Cape Town made the point “one plus one equals eleven.”

It is worth pointing out that, across the continent, African language policies, which have emerged in the post-colonial era, bear uncanny formal and substantial resemblances. Everywhere, African post-colonial regimes have on paper raised the status of the indigenous African languages, but nothing beyond this has invariably been achieved. They have from one country to the next, by evidence of the record, been particularly ineffectual in serving as a viable basis for the expansion of democratic and popular cultures or societal development. Thus by default, they have erred on effectively empowering the masses of their societies with their cultural rights. Most observers who have looked at the issue of language policy in Africa are agreed about the fact that there is a big gap between intended policy (planned or espoused policy) and action or implementation. One important reason for the vacillation is that elite interests have become very entrenched in the *status quo* and the use of colonial languages. Indeed, in a

cultural sense, it is arguable that African elites owe their positions of privilege and influence to the use of the colonial languages. They are the languages of power, as dictated by the colonial dispensation and inherited by the elites. Therefore, where many frequently see the logic in the argument for the unstinted use of African languages, the ruling groups and elites are unable to, as it were, cut off the branch on which they are sitting.

It is estimated that 76 % of the population of South Africa speak at least one language from one of the following two groups, namely, Nguni and Sotho, as home language. 63 % of first-language speakers within the Nguni and Sotho groups also know a language in the other group as a second or even third language. Afrikaans language-speakers form about 12 %, and English mother-tongue speakers about 8 % of the population. The smaller and non-cognate languages are spoken by about 4 % of the population. South Africa also recognizes other non-official languages, these being Fanagaloor, Lobedu, Northern Ndebele, Phuthi, South African Sign Language, Khoe Khoe and San. These non-official languages may be used in certain official circumstances, in limited areas where it has been determined that these languages are prevalent.

In the decade after Apartheid, what has in fact happened is that the public dominance of English, one of the smallest languages in the country, spoken as a home language by only about 8% of the population, has been strengthened at the expense of all the other languages. Afrikaans, spoken by about 12% of the population, has compared to English lost its stature. The African languages, including languages like isiZulu and isiXhosa, the two largest languages in the country, and which are almost fully mutually intelligible, continue to be almost completely neglected. In fact, the nine African languages are probably in a weaker position today than they were before the 1990s. More than three-quarters of the population speak these languages. Serious English proficiency among African language mother-tongue speakers does not count more than 12 %. In this respect, the language scene in South Africa is not much different from the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, where less than 10% of Africans are proficient in the official languages of their country, usually a colonial language like English, French or Portuguese. What has been happening is that the supremacy of English, above all else, is becoming patently clear.

The state of affairs described above has evoked considerable resistance from some quarters. The white Afrikaans-speaking community has been particularly vehement and often vociferous in their protest. The “Coloured” communities, who constitute the majority of Afrikaans-speakers, do not generally show much public concern for the diminishment of the social power of Afrikaans. Indeed, many of the “Coloured” population in the Western Cape, particularly at the younger age levels in urban areas are drifting into the camp of English speakers. Another remarkable fact worth noting is that

in the post-Apartheid period, some Afrikaner public intellectuals and linguists have started openly associating the defense of Afrikaans with the general defense of African languages against the hegemonic position of English.

Debates about the positions of English, Afrikaans and African languages in South African society appear regularly in the newspapers. In a letter which appeared in April 2002 in *The Star* (Johannesburg), the author, Bob Broom, in reaction to Dan Roodt's earlier letter (*Government suppresses Afrikaans in favour of English*, April 8th, 2002) suggested that: "Far from oppressing Afrikaans in favour of English, our government has realized that English is a universal language, spoken and understood by the majority of our trading partners and is the chosen language of instruction of most faculties of learning. This government that is 'hell-bent' on promoting English above all others, does so despite the inconvenience to many of its own people, as English is not their first language. Yet they also see the indisputable sense of it. Pity the Afrikaners could not/would not acknowledge the same." The battle between Afrikaans and English in South Africa continues, above the interests of the majorities, who speak African languages.

In a sharp reaction to Roodt, Ettiene van Zyl in another letter; (*Don't perpetuate Afrikaner imperialism*), pointed out that; "Apart from the gross misrepresentation involved, Roodt presents us with the aggravating spectacle of someone claiming his right to self-assertion while bemoaning the use of that same right by the majority of South Africans. What Roodt fails to see is that the use of the right to self-assertion in the language of their choice by the majority of South Africans will of necessity involve a rather drastic scaling down of the use of Afrikaans in the public domain." Some may argue that no language should be down-scaled, rather all languages should be elevated to the same level by providing the necessary resources to enable and permit this.

One hardly notices much reaction from the African language-speakers in South Africa against the increasing predominance of English, but occasionally we hear and read strident African language-speaking voices. They are however, generally few and far between. In a sharply worded *cri de coeur* written by an African language-speaking reader, which appeared in *The Star* (K.C. Motshabi. *Africans opt for English as the Language of 'Brainy People'* 9.6.2006), the writer trenchantly observed that; "It is disheartening to see people actively shunning their languages. African languages are relegated to second best, compared to English, despite the fact that the constitution advocates for equality with respect to languages. What is more disturbing is that Africans are assisting in the marginalization of their mother-tongues. The country is currently busy producing African youth who can hardly read, let alone write a text in their mother-tongue. These youths fail to even pronounce African names correctly, let alone spell

them. In some extreme cases, some African children can hardly construct a sentence in their parents' mother-tongue. The poor kid's identity is lost because they are supposed, for example, to be Tswana and yet they know nothing about the Tswana culture and language. These children look down upon African culture just like most Caucasians do. They look down upon African religious practices as backward superstition. They are alienating themselves, with the help of their parents, from their own cultures. It is unfortunate that most parents still believe that speaking eloquent English necessarily means you are intelligent. The fallacy of this observation is the suggestion that the English in England are all intelligent because they speak English. The interesting thing is that when parents enroll their children in township schools they insist that their children attend schools that offer their mother-tongue. When these kids move to schools in town, mother-tongue preference is shelved for English and Afrikaans. Granted, the school may not be offering any African language at that stage even though it has African pupils in the majority. African parents resign themselves to the status quo more often than not. Our children should learn other languages in addition to their mother-tongue. Imagine if White, Coloured and Indian children were to learn African languages as their second language at school that would add some impetus to nation-building."

The writer's perceptions of the issues around the LOI debates in South Africa were equally perceptive and forthright. Going to the heart of the excuses, which are often made to justify the hegemony of English and to a lesser extent Afrikaans he reiterated that; "Some argue that as English is an international language, it must receive priority and that African languages are restricted to Africa and therefore there are no opportunities arising from mother-tongue proficiency. Others argue that African languages have limited vocabularies, hence there are no sufficient academic textbooks written in African languages. As a start we need to vigorously promote the teaching of African languages while simultaneously developing academic books in African languages. The Christian bible, for instance, has been translated into all African languages so that the less Anglicized can access the teachings of Christianity. It is important that we decolonize our minds and avoid giving in to the *status quo*. By the way, one does not need to be conversant in English for one to be an electrician or mechanic, for example. This can be achieved if we could develop material in African languages for our children to study. The Afrikaans, French and Russians, to mention but a few, are all living examples of excellence through mother-tongue teaching." In one letter, this writer summarized the issues as seen from the viewpoint of a sensitive and socially conscious African language-speaker.

Language Policy for Transformation in South Africa

The point that must be forcefully made is that multilingualism, not bilingualism or unilingualism, needs to be cultivated if all voices in South African languages are to be

heard. If and when this new spirit and policy based on multilingualism becomes operative, a new impetus to a more democratic and majoritarian approach to languages use in South Africa could move into gear. As things currently stand, the overwhelming majorities of South African society are culturally relatively-deprived and linguistically silenced. Another way of making this point is to say that they are culturally dominated. So that, as we may say, “apartheid may be dead, but long live apartheid.”

One of the most unfortunate myths doing the rounds in South Africa in particular, and Africa in general, today, is the myth of the viability of additive bilingualism as language in education policy for Africa. In some circles, it is made to appear as if it is an altogether new paradigm, when in fact in as far as its objective of effective dual-language acquisition is concerned, has been with us in various guises since the early years of colonialism and missionary education in Africa. In its recent reinvention, it is largely, as a paradigm, borrowed from Canadian academic circles which is now being presented as a model for African language education.

Additive bilingualism is said to be achieved when the acquisition process of a second language does not interfere or inhibit the learning of the first language. Our attention has been drawn to Cummins argument that “there are thresholds of linguistic competence. The lower threshold must be achieved in the first language or subtractive bilingualism occurs. Additive bilingualism is achieved through the attainment of a higher threshold in the first language while in the gap between the two thresholds, neither positive nor negative cognitive effects as a result of bilingualism are experienced.”¹⁵

With respect to South Africa Heugh has written that; “The latest in a succession of ironies in South Africa is, that 20 years after the SOWETO riots and the reduction of mother tongue education, the country has embraced through its Constitution the principles of a language policy which espouses the validation and promotion of multilingualism and, in particular, the development of indigenous languages. Within a year of the final Constitution (1996), the Department of Education released its language in education policy, which is based on the notion of additive bilingualism, and promotes the use of the home language alongside an additional language (which for most students will mean English). In other words the policy, by implication is geared towards the promotion of African languages alongside English, for the duration of the school system. At face value this appears encouraging. It is exactly what had been proposed over a

¹⁵ Quoted here from, Zana Bell. Bics & Calp: Fluency is not Necessarily Proficiency for Second Language Speakers. http://www.tki.org.nz/r/esol/esolonline/teachers/prof_read/bics_and_calp_e.php J. Cummins. Language proficiency and academic achievement revisited: A response. In C. Rivera (ed.), *Language Proficiency and Academic Achievement*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. 1984. Also, J. Cummins. Wanted: A theoretical framework for relating language proficiency to academic achievement among bilingual students. In C. Rivera (ed.). Ibid.

decade of intensive lobbying from the NGO education sector.”¹⁶ Implicit in this argument is the accepted preeminence of English in a country where mother-tongue English speakers number less than 10 % of the population. The multilingualism of the South African majority of African language speakers is undermined by stressing bilingualism as opposed to multilingualism in education. In the guise of promoting African languages, this sort of solution enhances the status of English above all else and makes English the preferred twin in any single bilingual choice.

In a paper which appeared a few years ago by Sifree Makoni, he raised serious doubts whether the notions of additive and subtractive bilingualism meaningfully fit the African context.¹⁷ Pointing to Fillmore, Makoni rightly indicated that in some situations, particularly in immigrant situations, the acquisition of a second language could result in the loss of the mother-tongue.¹⁸ This phenomenon, described as subtractive bilingualism, invariably occurs where resources and supportive inputs are societally on short rations for the first language/mother-tongue. Under conditions of subtractive bilingualism, the result is incompetence in both languages referred also to as semilingualism. Martin-Jones and Romaine have criticized this latter terminology as pejorative.¹⁹ Makoni makes the important point that one should remember that in the African situation, language one and language two are used in sociologically differing circumstances and societal domains. English, French and Portuguese are languages of power, modernity, school, government and officialdom. African languages overwhelmingly dominate the domestic domain, primary groups and primordial solidarities.

Obviously, given its rich cultural mix, which should be a source of economic social and cultural strength, South Africa, like all the other former colonial countries of the continent is still yoked with the burden of language and cultural colonialism. Sagacious multiculturalism will permit the celebration of all South Africa’s languages and cultures and should allow cross-fertilization and inter-penetration of individuals and groups across cultural and linguistic boundaries. But even then, democracy requires the pre-eminence of the cultures and languages of the majorities. Development in South Africa cannot be

¹⁶ Kathleen Heugh. Languages, Development and Reconstructing Education in South Africa. In, Leslie Limage (ed). *Comparative Perspectives on Language and Literacy. Selected Papers from the Work of the Language and Literacy Commission of the 10th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies.* Cape Town. 1998. UNESCO-BREDA. Dakar. 1999. P164.

¹⁷ Sifree Makoni. In the Beginning was the Missionaries’ Word. The European Invention of an African Language: The Case of Shona in Zimbabwe. In, K.K. Prah. *Between Distinction and Extinction.* CASAS Book Series No.1. Cape Town. 1998. P.160.

¹⁸ W. Fillmore. When Learning a Second Language Means Losing the First. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly.* 6:323-46.1991.

¹⁹ M. Martin-Jones and S. Romaine. Semilingualism: A Half-baked Theory of Communicative Competence. *Applied Linguistics,* 7, Pp. 26-38.

sustained in conditions where the majorities are by purpose or omission, culturally and linguistically disempowered.

When this has been said, the point also needs to be made that; empowerment through eleven languages is neither economically feasible nor technically justifiable. Of the nine African languages currently officially acknowledged in law, all except two can be grouped under either Nguni or SeSotho-SeTswana. TshiVenda stands out of this clustering. XiTsonga/XiChangana/XiRonga also stands on its own. IsiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, enjoy a degree of mutual intelligibility to allow written forms accessible to them all. Sotho-Tswana, likewise, will include a mutually intelligible cluster of SePedi, SeSotho, and SeTswana. As Washington Kwetana has passionately and with cynicism made the case; “History has unwisely created isiXhosa, isiZulu, siSwati and isiNdebele into separate languages, which divided the biological grand-grand-children of the Nguni House, and, in later generations, history again mischievously gave the impression that the speakers of these languages are different nations, not even tribes. The same goes for the Sesotho groups, who are biologically linked amongst themselves, first, and to the Nguni, too.”²⁰

During the course of the colonial period colonial administrators and missionaries, sometimes through considerations of administrative expediency and convenience, at other times through evangelical work, and biblical translations in particular, hoisted up small dialects and narrow local groups to the status of “tribes” or ethnicities. Compounding this problem further has been the tendency among some ethnologists who have also been inordinately keen “to discover” their own tribes. In this drive, “tribes” have been “discovered” which are more appropriately subunits of much larger groups and extended cultures.

Banda writes that, “the manner in which African languages were transcribed, left much to be desired. Through the random selection of African languages to be standardized, dialects that had been standardized had their status unnecessarily elevated at the expense of others. Thus, different nations were created out of people who otherwise spoke more or less the same language and belonged to the same linguistic and oftentimes same geographical boundaries.”²¹ Themba Msimang also provides a another example that, in the Eastern Cape in South Africa, Thembu and Gcaleka dialects were harmonized and elevated to form standard Xhosa at the expense of Bhaca, Mpondo, Ntlangwini, Hlubi

²⁰ W. Kwetana. Beyond the “Merger” of Nguni and Sesotho Languages. In, K.K. Prah (ed). Speaking in Unison. The Harmonization and Standardization of Southern African Languages. CASAS Book Series, No.22. Cape Town. 2002. P.191.

²¹ F. Banda (eds). Introduction. Language Across Borders. The Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society. Book Series, No.12. Cape Town. 2002. P.2.

and others, all of which were reduced to an inferior position.²² Banda makes another point that, “the emerging of SeSotho, SeTswana and SePedi as distinctive languages owes much to the three different missionary societies whose activities were centered in different areas where SeSotho was spoken. The London Missionary Society was active in the western side, and the SeSotho language there became SeTswana; the Catholic missionaries were active in the south, and the Sotho languages there became SeSotho, while the Lutheran missionaries were located in the north, and the Sotho language there became SePedi. As a result, not only were three varieties of the same language created, words pronounced the same way were now spelt differently.”²³

Regarding the Nguni and Sotho-Tswana groups of speech forms, in each instance, varieties of these two clusters are spoken in seven countries in the Southern African region. There is certainly more sense in producing a book which 10 million people can read instead of 1 million people. For this, the development of new orthographic and spelling forms need to be undertaken, with an eye on the economies of scale. It is important and necessary that the relevant departments in the South African state co-operate with neighbouring countries, which have mutually intelligible languages. This can be done in the framework of the Southern Africa Development Conference (SADC). All of this will require firstly, systematic planning and secondly, adequate resources, especially at the initially stages of implementation.

Language and the National Question in South Africa

For reasons of the history of centuries-long white dominance of South African society, which is the most thorough and intense of such cases on the African continent, it is often forgotten that South Africa is indeed, an African country like all others on the African continent. At least three-quarters of its population are made up of African language-speaking people whose histories and cultures are coterminous with those of all the neighbouring countries. White dominance and repression has submerged this African character of the society, and through the operation of an economic system which involves all, but in which again Africans are kept at the bottom of the heap. Thus, the cultural and linguistic oppression of Africans in South Africa, which affects Africans more profoundly than any other group in the country, is paralleled by an economic structure of subordination. The national question in South Africa refers to the anomalies arising out of this situation, and how these can be corrected, as processes for the emancipation of the structurally suppressed majorities of South African society. Another way of making the point is that, how do we ensure that the African character of South Africa is fully and

²² T. Msimang. The Nature and History of Harmonization of South African Languages. In, K.K. Prah (ed). Between Distinction and Extinction: The Harmonization and Standardization of African Languages. Johannesburg. Witwatersrand University Press. 1998. Pp.165-72.

²³ F. Banda. Op cit. P.2.

democratically represented in the economic, cultural, linguistic, political and social life of the people? How do we ensure that the cultural rights of the majority, the African languages-speaking three-quarters of the population, are given primacy and centre-stage in the development and future of the country? A judicious policy of Africa-centeredness is necessary.

For those to whom an Africa-centred approach is like a red flag to a bull, the prospect of the above raises the ire and frightens others. But this does not need to be so. The elevation of African languages and cultures in South Africa to equality, and the demographic centrality they deserve is only an exercise in democracy and an expression of the cultural rights of the people of South Africa. The situation in South Africa is such that African language-speakers are the overwhelming majorities with cultures, languages and histories, which have been ruthlessly suppressed under colonialism, and the legacy of this inherited into the neo-colonial or post-colonial era. Here, Africans must as of necessity, if the emancipation process and human rights of mass society is to continue and progress, reclaim centre-stage. This is no different from what is found in all free societies.

All European countries have minorities from the four corners of the world. If we take Britain as an example, there are Turks, Kosovars, Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis, and Africans etc. Indeed, these minorities in any European country are almost as sizeable as non-African minorities in South Africa. But the existence of these minorities does not obliterate the cultural and national character of these countries. They are all European countries in which, above all else, European culture is celebrated.

In South Africa, the idea of the “rainbow nation” has rightfully been extolled as a desirable end; a South African world in which all its distinct cultures and people find accommodative cultural space and acknowledgement. But, sometimes the “rainbow nation” idea has also tended to be interpreted as meaning that South Africa has no pre-eminent national character; that its national character is amorphous and nondescript; that the present situation is the ideal manifestation of “rainbowism.” This argument implicitly denies the fact that in the present situation, the cultures and languages of the majorities are suppressed and silenced in favour of a dominant Eurocentric high culture, which everybody is willy nilly obliged by force of circumstance to emulate. Democratic pluralism is thus usurped in favour of undemocratic pluralism.

The technological culture of South Africa is constructed on the cultures, and in the languages of its white minority. Knowledge, its production and reproduction, is negotiated and built in the languages and cultures of this culturally European minority. An Africa-centred approach in South Africa implies that if development is to take place

which provides the masses of South African society cultural and linguistic access into the process, this will have to be done in the cultures and languages of the masses, unless we want to suggest that the African languages and cultures of the masses are inherently inferior and can provide no basis for social and cultural advancement.

In education, knowledge production and reproduction is carried out exclusively in either English or Afrikaans. The African languages do not feature in this area. By and large, we can say that the process of transformation in South Africa at the cultural and linguistic levels point to a steady integration of the emergent African elites into the cultures of the white minorities, principally the English. For as long as this trend continues it is difficult to see how the cultures of mass society, the African language-speaking majorities can move into modernity with their linguistic and cultural belongings. The dominant trend is to integrate the majorities into the languages and cultures of the minorities.

Thus while an Africa-centred approach would be misplaced if it was suggested as a developmental paradigm for contemporary Britain, Ireland, Germany, France, or Sweden, where Africans are minorities, in Africa it is only natural that the African cultural and historical belongings of the people should be provided relevant space. When this is resisted, the development of South Africa is restricted and the cultural rights of the majorities dismissed.

Multilingualism and polyglottism have to be more diligently pursued as desirable goals. To do this an even-handed approach which respects cultural variation and diversity will have to be systematically pursued so that there is, inherent in our practice, a way and a system for protecting the cultural belongings and artifacts of different groups whilst at the same time encouraging cultural and linguistic coexistence and interpenetration. Greater capital outlay would have to be apportioned to literature and translations, which reflect the rich diversity of the cultural make-up of the country. To do this we have to move away from the current dominance of English to a situation in which all the languages of South Africa are treated equal, and properly resourced not only on paper but, in fact. The African languages will need to be greatly empowered and developed to be languages of science and technology.

The situation we currently have is one in which the languages of the African majorities are marginalized and underdeveloped, in comparison to Afrikaans and more particularly English. This condition of relative cultural deprivation of the languages of the majorities cannot serve as a viable basis of social and economic development, which needs the enlistment of the cultural energies of mass society. It is not possible to develop the society in a balanced or socially sustainable fashion when the languages for the production and reproduction of knowledge are exclusively located in small minorities.

The persistence of this condition undermines democracy in a cultural sense and entrenches a sense of inferiority not only to the African languages but those who use those languages. It makes for a one-way-traffic of cultural integration of the majority into the cultures of the minority. It will be therefore useful to encourage multilingualism on the basis of full equality of the cultures and languages of South Africa, as matter of public policy.

There has been a tendency in some circles, particularly within the African language-speaking communities, to pull Afrikaans down and support the hegemony of the English language. This is often rationalized on the grounds that English is a universal language and Afrikaans is not. Sometimes one suspects that this reaction to Afrikaans is a leftover from the period predating 1994. English has therefore gained considerable ground and supremacy since 1994. The argument should be different. Globally seen, Afrikaans is one of the three linguistic miracles of the last 100 years. Together with Modern Hebrew and *Bahasa* (Indonesia/Malaysia) these are languages, which literally from zero have become powerful languages of modernity, science and technology. From the status of a *kombuis taal*, (kitchen language) Afrikaans has successfully been developed into a language capable of carrying all knowledge including space rocketry and heart-transplantation. What the African language-speaking majorities in South Africa need to do is to ensure that, in a short time as possible, we develop African languages into languages of science and technology and become equals, culturally and linguistically, of the English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking communities in the country, and not endeavour to undo the gains of Afrikaans to the benefit of English. Indeed, one could learn a lot from how this miracle was achieved for Afrikaans. We need also to remember that Afrikaans is a language created and located in the South African experience.

In a news report which appeared in the Western Cape *Weekend Argus*, of the 7th May 2005, we are informed that, the Western Cape government may compel schools to offer all three of the province's official languages, English, Afrikaans and Xhosa, to promote multilingualism and give pupils more options. The Provincial Minister of Education said the national education department was reviewing its legislative policy and certain indigenous languages needed to be made compulsory in the curriculum.²⁴ The previous week the *Weekend Argus* had reported that, some former white schools in the Western Cape were "keeping their schools 'white' by not offering Xhosa." Remarkably, "there are 503 schools offering Afrikaans as a second or third language in Cape Town, but only 81 offer Xhosa. Township schools offer pupils the opportunity to learn all three languages but many schools in areas previously dominated by Afrikaans and English speakers offer

²⁴ Myolisi Gophe. Xhosa to get Boost in W. Cape Schools. (Policy Review: Indigenous Languages may be Compulsory). *Weekend Argus*. Western Cape. 7th May 2005. P.6

only these two languages.”²⁵ The Provincial Minister of Education admitted that, “the ideal situation is when every learner is given options to do all three languages. We are not there yet and the current framework presents major challenges.”²⁶ As things stand now, the understanding is that there have to be at least 40 pupils in a grade needing Xhosa for the Department of Education to make provision for the language to be offered. Otherwise it was up to the governing body of the school to decide on the issue. The report notes that although a great number of African language-speaking children have moved into former coloured and white schools, the demographics of teachers and governing bodies do not reflect this reality. Premier Ebrahim Rasool notes that, “this has implications for multiculturalism, and Xhosa learners coming to such schools are forced to leave their Xhosa at the gates.”²⁷ A point, which needs to be made, is that because many of the African language-speaking pupils live in areas far removed from the location of these schools, they have little or no representation on the governing bodies, particularly with respect to languages which should be offered at these schools. The Provincial Minister of Education, Cameron Dugmore suggested that; “I appeal to all schools to embrace multilingualism and make every effort to give learners options to chose from the three languages even if it is not compulsory to do so.”²⁸ This reality obtains to different degrees in other parts of the country and reflects the contradictions we live with 13 years after the demise of apartheid.

Another report, linking land and language in the Richtersveld reiterated some of the challenges facing South African society today with respect to culture, language and identity. Reporting on a study which has been recently done by Susanne Berzborn, the researcher observed in the Lands Claim Court in Cape Town that; “These people have a deep emotional attachment to the land. It is very important to them. Land is the basis of their life. They cannot imagine living without their land.”²⁹ According to the account given by the reporter; “The Richtersvelders are claiming the return of 85 000 hectares of diamond-rich land, and compensation that could amount to R2.5 billion. Berzborn asserts that, “putting up a fence which excluded the community from some of the land was part of process which stripped them of their identity.” What is clear to the researcher is that; “It is very difficult to separate land, language and identity. When robbed of their language and their land, it amounted to an attack on their identity.”³⁰ We are reminded that this area of the country had been the home for centuries of the Nama people, that is, even before the British occupation of the Cape. The reporter points out that; “Among the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ David Yutar. Land ‘Basis of Life’ for Claimants, Court Told. *Cape Argus*. Wednesday, 4th May 2005. P.7.

³⁰ Ibid

sites regarded as sacred by the community were waterholes, cemeteries and religious sites, including the grave at Buchberg of Captain Paul Links, and that of Piet Cupido, forefather of many community members, on an island in the Gariep River delta.”³¹ This is a clear picture of the strategic and systematic erosion of the standing of indigenous cultural, religious and linguistic communities. These socially vexatious realities of language, land, identity and culture need to be addressed in such a way that justice is done, and is seen to be done, to the people. Again it is a reality, which is replicated many times in various parts of the country, and ties in closely with the issue of land reform. It is an issue, which haunts all the former settler-colonial societies of Africa.

Without doubt, the most threatened linguistic communities in South Africa are the Khoe Khoe and San language groups. Many of these communities have literally, over decades, been Afrikanerized and become ethno-culturally “Coloured,” with the effect that they have been brought to the point of almost losing their languages. Every historical culture which becomes extinct dies with the language or languages on which it was constructed. Ethnocide refers to the effacement of ethno-linguistic, sometimes religious and other cultural attributes, and their replacement with other, invariably imposed cultural equivalents. This is the real danger facing the Khoe Khoe and San communities in Southern Africa as a whole.

An endangered language is a language headed for perdition. It is a language with very few, or no monolingual speakers; people who speak only that language. It is a language spoken by a steadily diminishing minority of people, who are relatively disempowered. It is a language with poor societal premium and which in the wider order of things is held in low esteem. Such conditions cause its speakers to avoid using it, are ashamed and sometimes sanctioned for using it, or passing it on to their children. In South Africa, over the past 40-50 years, languages like Korana, Nghuki, Seroa, //Xam, //Xegwi, Xiri have become extinct. All these languages are Khoe Khoe and San.

Since the end of Apartheid in South Africa in 1994, noticeably, there is an increasing self-consciousness and historical soul-searching amongst the “Coloured” people of the Western Cape. Part of this movement and process can be characterized as Africanist, in the sense that it attempts to reclaim the African historical and cultural roots of the people of the Western Cape, who since the beginnings of the Western encounter have been in various ways, steadily, culturally denationalized, and in most senses Afrikanerized. In the words of Zenzile KhoeSan, one of the most eloquent advocates of the movement, to reclaim African culture and history among the people of Khoe Khoe and San descent, the movement is to stem and arrest the process of “cultural strip mining” which has gone on

³¹ Ibid

for centuries against the Khoe Khoe and San peoples in this part of Africa.³² Zenzile KhoeSan adds that; “most of the people who currently form part of this movement, especially the linguistic aspects, grew up speaking Afrikaans (colonial, post-colonial situation). The movement will dignify the progeny of the Khoe Khoe and San through a process of reconstruction, and restoration of the most important aspect of the communicative tradition, which is the tongue of their forebears. ... A people without a tongue, that is a line to their ancestral heritage, are people that are dumb.”³³ Willa Boesak makes the further assertion that, “with the rediscovery of Khoe Khoe and San roots we must also rediscover our language.”³⁴

While this movement for Nama revival in the Western Cape cannot be, currently, described as a societally sustained case, the gathering strength of the movement and the youthfulness of its ranks suggest that it is a process and movement on the rise and is likely, one way or the other, to have far-reaching implications for the reclamation of African identities amongst people of the Western and Northern Cape. The Khoe Khoe and San cultural revivalism we are seeing is resonating in some state structures. In November 5th, 2002, South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) *Radio News* in Kimberley appointed the first San journalists in the world on Tuesday. Tumba Alfrino (!Xu) and Tressel Katembo (Khwe) have been trained as *Radio News* journalists and current affairs producers. This was announced by SABC spokesperson William Heath. Alfrino and Katembo, it is planned, would eventually compile seven daily news bulletins, in addition, they will produce a lunch-hour current affairs programme on XKFM. The XKFM community radio station was launched in 2000 in Schmidtsdrift for the !Xu and Khwe San communities. Heath made the revealing point that the radio station had grown to such an extent over the past two years that there was a need to introduce news bulletins.³⁵ Interactions with various arms of government have been generally met with open arms.

³² Recorded Conversations: Zenzile KhoeSan and Kwesi Kwaa Prah. Cape Town. 7th November 2002. During this conversation the present author made the point to Zenzile KhoeSan that the process of “cultural strip-mining” is not in the experience of Africans restricted to what is taking place in the Western Cape of South Africa. Indeed, while clearly the effects in the area have been most deleterious in its extent and the sociological depth of its impact, the same thing has happened to all parts of Africa. Although the impact of cultural denationalization has in most instances been less. The other part of Africa where such cultural strip-mining has been equally grievous has been in North Africa and in the Afro-Arab borderlands where the agency in these latter instances has been Arabism and Arabization, as opposed to Europeanization and Afrikanerization in the Cape in South Africa. See, K. K. Prah. Nama Language – Khoekhoegowab; Hope for Resurgence in the Western Cape. In, K.K. Prah (ed). *Silenced Voices. Studies on Minority Languages of Southern Africa. CASAS Book Series. No. 34. Cape Town. 2003. P.141.*

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Telephonic Interview, Willa Boesak. 8th May 2003.

³⁵ See, SABC Appoints Two San Journalists. IOL Newsletter. *The Independent News and Media Online Newsletter*. November 05, 2002. The news item reported also that, The !Xu and Khwe San languages had not yet been developed as written languages, due to the lack of a San alphabet. Heath said the journalists would compile the news contributions in Afrikaans as a “bridging language” between the !Xu and the

The choice of Nama is judicious because of its relatively strong historical and demographic strength on the ground. It is found in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. In these three countries, it enjoys its strongest societal role in Namibia. Interestingly, in Botswana, it is variously called Nama or Khoekhoegowab, Sekgothu, Sekhikwe and Seqhanakwe and is also identified as Nama/Damara in Namibia. Other names spelling forms have been given to this language including; “Hottentot”, “Khoekhoegowab”, “Khoekhoegowap”, “Klipkaffer”, “Klipkaffern”, “Kupkafern”, “Kupkaffer”, Berdama, Bergdamara, Dama, Damaqua, Damara, Kakuya Bushman Nasie, Khoekhoe, Khoi, Koekhoegowap, Maqua, Namakwa, Naman, Namaqua, Rooi Nasie, Tama, Tamakwa, Tamma.

The marginalization of African-language speaking South Africans extends to the media. In a country where the overwhelming majority does not speak English or Afrikaans, over 90 % of the print media is in these latter languages, with English taking precedence. This means that the majorities are culturally, literally and metaphorically, cut off from what appears in the print media. English dominates television and with that dominance goes the preoccupations of the minority, which speaks English. Television, implicitly, largely addresses their concerns and interests. Strikingly, in adverts the faces of the majorities are marginalized, sometimes to an extent, which borders on invisibility.

The Balance Sheet

As earlier indicated, the growing supremacy of English above all South African languages is not peculiar to South Africa. A similar situation prevails in the whole of post-colonial Africa. Right across the continent the languages of colonial dominance have managed to maintain the hegemony and indeed increased in their power and influence as African elites continue to wholeheartedly embrace the usage of these languages.

In the South African media, the dominance of English remains unchallenged. Today, Afrikaans newspapers manage to hold their own. In this latter instance capital and other resources help to maintain the solidity of the Afrikaans presence in the media. In the media, both print and electronic, the subordination of the interests of African language-

Khwe communities. (SAPA). The argument that Afrikaans could serve as a “bridging language” will be regarded by many as a weak and contentious argument given the fact that much of the erosion to KhoeSan cultural particularities in South Africa and Namibia has been carried out through the agency of Afrikanerization. The argument of the “bridging language” (i.e. Afrikaans) is therefore an unhelpful one. Henry Jatti Bredekamp summarizes the historical reality of this “bridging language” phenomenon thus, “Die Europeërs het nooit die Khoitaal aangeleer nie. Die Khoi het die Europese tale aangeleer. As gevolg van ruilhandel en toenemende kontak met die Europeërs het die Khoi meer en meer die Europese kultuur aangeneem. Om dié rede het die Khoi mense vandag ‘n Europese kultuur. Daar is egter ‘n bloedlyn wat nagespeur kan word deur middel van vanne soos Koopman, Baartman, Kok, Stuurman en Rooy. Die berg- en riviername spreek ook van ‘n Khoitaal wat gepraat was.” See, Verslag oor die KhoeSan taalwekswinkel oor Khoekhoe- en San tale in the Wes-Kaap gehou op 8, 9 en 10 Maart 2002 by die *Southern Comfort Western Horse Ranch* naby Knysna. Saamgestel deur Mnr. Louis Nel. P. 8.

speakers continues to be very marked. At the national level all daily and weekly newspapers are either Afrikaans or English. The implicit presumption is that only those citizens who are either literate in English or Afrikaans need to know what is going on in the country. The silent majorities who speak African languages are thus kept in the dark. Except in the cases of isiZulu, where in KwaZulu-Natal, there are two regional papers published in the language and one isiXhosa paper.

When in South Africa, as is currently the case, one comes frequently across the view, mainly among African language-speakers, that most of the newspapers, including relatively prestigious ones like, *The Argus*, *The Independent*, *The Mail and Guardian* or *Business Day* pandy to the white minority, its interests, and politico-philosophical liberalism, it is often forgotten that the narrowness of the social base of the audiences of these papers is not exclusively defined or dictated solely on account of the views articulated in these papers. Even more importantly, what is at stake here is that, the language of discussion is the language of a small minority. By the very fact of the use of English, the nature and character of the audience is defined. Is this shocking? No, indeed, this is to be expected. The simple truth is that the language defines the audience.

Radio requires a low resource threshold for effective usage in any language. However, even in this area, in South Africa, the approach to the usage of the medium is weak and unsystematic. In television and cinema, African languages are hardly featured. In the case of television, over the past few years some scope has been provided for African language broadcasts on the public broadcaster.

The South African parliamentarian, Duma Nkosi who in the past consistently chose to address parliament in South Africa in isiZulu, in an interview, informed me (the present author) that he is convinced that many politicians are unsuccessful and unable to express their views properly and correctly to the masses they address because they speak in English, a language in which their proficiency is limited. This compounds further the problem that, they also invariably address audiences for whom the use of the English language is totally foreign. Indeed, Nkosi remarked that a few years ago, at the height of the conflict and bloodshed in the Gauteng area of South Africa, in the months preceding the 1994 elections, some of the conflicts between different parties in his view were exacerbated by poor communication in English and misunderstandings arising thereof.

What Is to be Done

In a publication which appeared in 1944, written by Jacob Nhlapo, then editor of the *Bantu World*, entitled “*Bantu Babel: Will the Bantu Languages Live?*”, amongst other things, the author suggested the fusion of the Nguni languages of South Africa into one written form and the Sotho-Tswana group into another conglomerate. Many critics

regarded the proposal, at the time it was put forward, with misgivings and derision. Today the argument has been resuscitated and is slowly winning adherents, of which Neville Alexander is the best known. It is indeed, a route which many language groups on this continent, and I dare say beyond, may have to follow, if African languages and cultures are to live after us and ensure the development of Africans.³⁶ Regarding the inspiration of Jacob Nhlapo, Govan Mbeki wrote that; “Way back in the 40s and 50s, Dr Jacob Nhlapo, who was then the editor of the *Bantu World*, was obsessed with the idea of developing only two African Languages in South Africa. He argued on the one hand that the relationship between the Nguni languages - Xhosa, Zulu, Tshangaan, Ndebele and others - was so close, that they could be merged to form one language, and, on the other hand, that the Sotho group - Southern Sotho Sepedi, Northern Sotho, Setswana, for example - could form another block. The various national languages of South Africa could thus be reduced to no more than four or five. As editor of the *Bantu World*, he placed in every issue of that paper an article related to the unification of these languages. After his death that debate went into the grave with him.”³⁷ Govan Mbeki’s remembrance of the *Nhlapo Thesis*, resurrects in South Africa the thesis from the grave. In a conversation with Mbethe in 1999, he indicated that Nhlapo had been making this point as far back as 1932.³⁸ Ridge has also pointed to the fact that Lestrade in an article from 1935, Louw and Doke at a Conference in July 1934, under the auspices of the New Education Fellowship with the theme *Educational Adaptations in a Changing Society*, had pleaded for the harmonization of the South African languages.³⁹ Nearer our times, in recent years, Neville Alexander has also been reminding South Africans of the relevance of the Nhlapo thesis for the present period.

If the indigenous South African languages are to be used in transforming and leading South Africa to modernity, the whole exercise needs to be undergirded by economic rationality and the cultural empowerment of the masses. Literacy in the indigenous African languages is crucial. For without literacy in the languages of the masses, science and technology cannot be culturally-owned by Africans. Africans will remain mere consumers, incapable of creating competitive goods, services and value-additions in this era of globalization. How can African languages be developed to meet this challenge?

³⁶ See also, K.K. Prah. African Languages for the Mass Education of Africans. CASAS Book Series, No.7. 1995, 1997, P.84.

³⁷ See Govan Mbeki. Foreword - The Relevance of African Languages for Education and Development. In, K. K. Prah (ed). *Between Distinction and Extinction*. CASAS Book Series, No.1. Witwatersrand University Press. Johannesburg. 1998.

³⁸ Interview; Mr Makosi Mbete. 17th October 1999, Cape Town.

³⁹ Stanley Ridge. Mixed Motives. Ideological Elements in the Support for English in South Africa. In, Thomas Ricento (ed). *Ideology, Politics and Language Policies*. John Benjamin. Amsterdam. 2000. P. 165.

Some years ago, it was realized that if we want to produce literature and related materials in large economically viable quantities, we first needed to harmonize existing orthographies. When the *Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society - CASAS* (Cape Town) was created in 1997, the immediate issue the institution addressed was, what bases existed for the contention that there are literally uncountable numbers of languages on the continent; somewhere between 1250 and 2100 languages, as suggested by figures provided by the 1980 Lome Seminar on the *Problems of Language Planning in a By- or Multilingual Context*. What soon became clear was that this is nowhere near the truth. It was found that, as first, second, and third language speakers, 80 – 85% of Africans speak no more than 15 to 17 “core languages” (clustered languages, e.g. Nguni and Sotho-Tswana). In fact, when the size of Africa is taken into consideration, as the second largest continent after Asia, the variation of speech forms in most of Africa hardly exceeds the variations found elsewhere. True enough most of the variation is found in what is called “the fragmentation belt”, which runs roughly from the Senegambia to Ethiopia and down to the latitude of North Tanzania. More importantly, the overwhelming majority of so-called languages in Africa are in fact dialectal variants of “core languages.” Because these mutually intelligible variations have been introduced as written forms by different often rival missionary groups keen on preserving “their flock” from the possible evangelical poaching activities of rivals, on paper, an appearance of difference has been invested in speech forms which can easily be written in the same way, enabling their accessibility to larger literate communities.

The case of South Africa in particular, and Southern Africa in general, is possibly the least complicated region in Africa. With two principal clusters and a relatively few minority languages, the development of the indigenous languages can be achieved. Furthermore, it needs to be remembered that South Africa is the most resourced country on the continent. If headway can be made in developing African languages, South Africa, resource-wise probably is best placed to make the necessary advances.

The Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society’s work in harmonizing the principal South African clusters (Nguni and Sotho-Tswana) has been completed. In addition, the Xitsonga/Xichangana harmonization has also been done. The work was done collectively by Mbulelo Jokweni, Sihawu Ngubane, Langa Khumalo, Mntuwoxolo Kwetana, Jane Nkosi, Eric Sibanda and Nomsa Zindela for the Nguni languages, and Andy Chebanne, Makali Mokitimi, Lits’episo Matlosa, Rosalin Nakin, Mildred Wakumelo Nkolola, Sekgothe Mokgoatsana and Mats’epo Machobane for the Sotho-Tswana group. The work on Xitsonga/Xichangana was accomplished by Bento Siteo, Feliciano Chimbutana, Ximbani Eric Mabaso, Paul Henry Nkuna, Ntiyiso Elijah Nxumalo and Madala Crous Hlungwani.

In Southern Africa, following on a series of Workshops held in Lilongwe, Johannesburg and in Maputo early in 2002, the *Unified Standard Orthography for South-Central African Languages: Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia*, was published as number 11 in the CASAS Monograph Series. Languages such as ciNyanja/ciCewa, ciNsenga/ciNgoni, eLomwe, eMakhuwa, ciYao, ciTumbuka/ciSenga, ciBemba, kiKaonde, Lunda and ciLuvale, and related dialects will now have a single spelling system, rather than three or more spelling systems within the same language, or even more systems across related Bantu languages. One major spin off is that second or third language speakers of African languages in the various countries will not have to relearn their alphabets to be able to read material in another language as is currently the case. This in turn means materials will be accessible to a wider audience. Another related text published by CASAS in 2002 was *Language Across Borders: Harmonization and Standardization of Orthographic Conventions: South-Central African Languages*, number 12 in the CASAS Book Series. Since then, four language clusters, which represent collectively the speech forms of the majority of people in Southern Africa, have been harmonized. These are Nguni, SeSotho/SeTswana, Shona and XiTsonga/XiChangana/XiRonga. The new orthographies and spelling systems for the above languages have been finalized and published. Their listing and titles are as follows:

1. *A Unified Standard Orthography for the Nguni Languages of Southern Africa (CASAS Monograph Series, No.30)*
2. *A Unified Standard Orthography for the SeSotho-SeTswana Languages of Southern Africa (CASAS Monograph Series, No. 31)*
3. *A Unified Standard Orthography for XiTsonga/XiChangana (CASAS Monograph Series, No. 32)*
4. *A Unified Standard Orthography for Shona Language Varieties (CASAS Monograph Series, No. 37)*

The completion of the above work has opened a way for the beginning of the production of literacy and educational materials on a large scale.⁴⁰ However, in order to proceed further the need has been identified for large numbers of writers and teachers workshops to be undertaken which will educate prospective authors in the use of the new orthographies. Some literature has already been produced following initial writers and teachers workshops.

Glossaries for science and technology are compendia of terms, which capture the scientific terminology relevant to a given discipline or area of science, both natural and social. All developing and advancing languages, worldwide, use glossaries either as separate compendia or integrated into general dictionaries. As the scientific knowledge in

⁴⁰ For a full picture of CASAS literature visit website www.casas.co.za

a discipline develops it becomes crucial to assemble terms, which reach out, into all corners of the knowledge world captured by science for a given discipline. It is one of the vital tasks, which would need to be undertaken in South Africa, in a systematic fashion if advancement is to be made in science and technological development, using African languages. Glossaries are vital, also, for teaching science in local languages. Once they have been produced, they feed directly into the production of textbooks for primary, secondary, and subsequently tertiary education. Indeed, it is inconceivable that scientific and technological education in South Africa can proceed without the development of glossaries in African languages. Closely related to the glossaries are monolingual dictionaries, which would need to be produced. These can be constructed from existing word-lists or reconstructed from existing dictionaries.

It is important that greater advocacy work, contact with governments, NGOs and public officers, who are crucial to the use of African language, be drawn into the exercise.

Concluding Remarks

In South Africa as indeed the rest of Africa, language policies need to move from being pious articles of faith enshrined in constitutions and policy documents by inconsequent ruling elites. If South Africans are to make progress in social, economic, political and cultural development, we will need to pursue these policies at the level of active practice.

Arguably, the continued social and political inferiority of African languages in South Africa is a component and reflection of the general status of Africans in contemporary South Africa. For how long can these conditions of African language and cultural inferiority continue? One cannot tell. What one can say with certainty however is that; it cannot go on forever. Ultimately, the power, strength and voices of the democratic majorities must and will prevail.

Recommendations

Arising out of the review and in address of the terms of reference, the following recommendations are being suggested:

1. The importance of active advocacy work and campaigns cannot be overstated. This should involve both state and civil society organizations. A systematic plan for this work needs to be drawn up.
2. Cooperative linkages should be established with bodies involved with similar or related work of cultural and linguistic kind.
3. Publications flowing out of this work should be done in the indigenous languages using harmonized orthographies. This will provide the Foundation

for Human Rights invaluable opportunity to reach a wider audience in its work.

4. A conscientious attempt should be made to learn from the Afrikaans experience. We have argued here that, “the dramatic development of Afrikaans in fifty years, and the prosperity and enlightenment it has brought Afrikaners, should bring to our understanding the relevance of language to social transformation in South Africa.”
5. Where possible regional cooperation should be encouraged. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) framework provides the most readily available structure for this.
6. In the dissemination of human rights literature special attention should be directed to the needs of the “silenced voices.” These marginalized minority languages include TshiVenda, XiTsonga/XiChangana/XiRonga, the Khoe and San languages. All these are trans-frontier languages within the SADC.
7. We recommend a follow-up workshop to discuss this text and advise on findings. This workshop should address issues including, mandate, advocacy, linkages, dissemination of human rights materials, publications and possibly electronic dissemination, in indigenous languages. Such a workshop should include all stake-holders.