

The Mercury Friday February 4 2000

SOUTH AFRICANS FIRST AND FOREMOST

While it may be argued that the recent Afro-Indian workshop was necessary to engage people in constructive discussion, what is really required is a “revolution” by individuals.

I believe that democratic South Africa demands that we are South Africans first, South Africans second and South Africans last with all our idiosyncrasies and cultural and religious diversity. Anyone who places emphasis on ethnicity and is pre-occupied with his or her ethnic roots will inevitably experience at least psychological and social conflicts.

We do not need ethnic organisations to transform society because even anti-apartheid political ethnic organisations, while they played a key role in mobilising people to fight for a democratic and just society, unavoidably entrenched ethnicity. We must subscribe to the principle that there is only one race – the human race- and we must strive in every way to shore up the humanity in ourselves and in others.

Every one of us must destroy the bridge to the past and work collectively as we surge forward to build our nascent democracy. Our roots must be deeply entrenched in South Africa because we need to believe, think and act as South Africans to tackle social stratification.

Sayed-Iqbal Mohamed
Chairperson, Organisation of Civic Rights;
Durban Metro councillor

Response to letter by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, chairman of the House of
Traditional Leaders and Minister of Home Affairs