

Bron
nr.
0 1 7 5

Datum
9.7.11.0.15.28.8

Onderwerp
nr.
1.5

Knipsel
nr.
23076

3

0

Pretoria News

Jg..... Nr..... P...17... Dat...15 OCT 1997

BUSINESS EDITOR ROY COKAYNE REPORTS

AHI admits to economic cost of apartheid system

Portion of R9-billion special risks fund should be used for reparation

Although the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI) has admitted it "specifically endorsed separate development", its notion that apartheid benefited business in general was a fallacy.

This is one of several startling statements made in the AHI's eight-page submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

However, the AHI also admits that "apartheid disadvantaged black business".

The AHI has suggested that a portion of the about R9-billion Sasria (SA Special Risks Association) fund should be used as a source of funds for reparation because of apartheid.

TREFWOORDE

1. A.H.I.
2. getuienis
3. Kommissie
4. erkenning
5. sake
6. skedokke
7. skedokke
8. SASRIA
9. skedokke
10. skedokke

INSTITUUT VIR EIETJDSE GESKIEDENIS

Die Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat

Bron

0 1 7 5

Datum

9 7 1 0 1 5 2 8 8

Onderwerp

15

Knipsel

23076

Pretoria News

Jg..... Nr..... P...17... Dat: 15 OCT 1997

It said Sasria was a unique creation of the apartheid years to cover losses incurred through political unrest and that risk had now largely fallen away.

The AHI also states that it was aware of perceptions that business, in particular Afrikaans business, benefited from apartheid.

But it stressed that "in as much as individual businesses benefited from apartheid, the AHI's structures were not used for this purpose and neither was it AHI policy to promote individual favouring".

The AHI said the policy of apartheid had made South Africa much poorer than the country and its people could have been.

"Lost and unutilised human potential, wasted resources, people and capital that left the country, growth that did not occur and jobs that were not created - all

these and many more examples prove that we are much poorer - not to speak of the effect on the moral values of our society.

"A poorer society simply means less business and fewer opportunities. Business did not benefit from this.

"In fact, business could have created significantly more wealth had apartheid not been in force, assuming a peaceful transition," it said.

In regard to apartheid disadvantaging black business, the AHI said many whites owned land and accumulated capital by realising profits on it but blacks, until fairly recently, were denied this opportunity.

"Restrictions on trading and commercial activities also prevented blacks from establishing and operating businesses when they saw opportunities to do so.

"Latent entrepreneurship, potential skills and hidden talents - none of these assets in the black community could be utilised.

"The practice of job reservation denied the black community access to skills and progress and thus prevented fair competition in the job market," it said.

Commenting on its endorsement of separate development, the AHI stressed that without in any way detracting from its willingness to accept responsibility for such pronouncements, it should be noted that support for separate develop-

ment was part and parcel of the majority of the white community's thinking at the time - and the AHI was part of that collective thinking.

However, the AHI emphasised that the main focus of its activities were not concerned with the promotion of a particular social policy but the promotion of the business and economic interests and the principles of free enterprise among its members.

But the AHI acknowledged that with the benefit of hindsight, it was clear it had committed major mistakes.

It said it supported separate development "in the belief it would bring about acceptable results for all in the country".

"It did not. Separate development in the end meant social engineering with brutal human costs and enormous wastage of resources.

"As a business organisation, we should have appreciated much earlier that moral and economic realities militate conclusively against even the loftiest interpretation of separate development.

"This failure was without doubt one of the worst mistakes the AHI made."

The organisation added that a further major mistake was one of omission.

It said no moral or economic objections to apartheid were lodged for years and, at the time, there was insufficient appreciation for the hardship and suffering caused by apartheid - and the AHI could not have escaped the impact of

TREFWOORDE

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

INSTITUUT VIR EIETDSE GESKIEDENIS

Die Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat

Bron nr.
0 1 7 5

Datum
9.7.10.15.288

Onderwerp nr.
15

Knipsel nr.
23076



Pretoria News

Jg..... Nr..... P...17... Dat: 15 OCT 1997

these policies.

It said that for its part in these omissions and commissions, the AHI "accepts moral responsibility; admits that fellow South Africans were gravely wronged by these actions or inactions; wishes to express its sincere regret for these failings and apologises to those affected".

"In doing so, the AHI earnestly wishes to contribute to reconciliation in our country and the building of a South Africa in which all can grow and prosper," it said.

The AHI said it had learned a number of lessons. These included:

☐ Humility and the ability to be critical of itself and its history, which had given it the "confidence not to flee into hegemony but to admit our mistakes and to move forward to build our country together with all our compatriots".

☐ Socio-economic development of the total populace was vital and South Africans needed to agree on a common policy framework for socio-economic development.

☐ Self-help was the road to an African renaissance and the country should not expect aid or depend on handouts and pride: self-reliance and self motivation were the keys to the future.

☐ Capital and expertise coupled with drive and sweat helped South Africa to become an economic leader in Africa despite apartheid and all the country's resources and talents, some of which were previously expended in conflict, should be harnessed constructively to develop an increasingly prosperous society.

TREFWOORDE

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10