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AHI apologises for apartheid wrongs

THE Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut on yesterday accepted moral responsibility for Black South Africans being wronged by apartheid and those who supported it.

In its submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing on the role of the business sector under apartheid, the AHI expressed regret at its failures, and urged South Africans to work together to ensure the success of the policy of reconciliation.

Immediate past president of the AHI Theo van Wyk, who presented the submission in Johannesburg, said apartheid made South Africa poorer than it should have been through loss of human potential, wasted resources and the flight of capital.

"It cannot be denied that apartheid disadvantaged Black business. It is clear that the AHI committed some major mistakes through supporting separate development," Mr Van Wyk said.

He said instead of bringing wealth to the Afrikaners, separate development stifled economic development and reduced South Africa's competitiveness on the international market.

"A further mistake we made was that of omission. No moral and economic objections to apartheid were lodged for many years... there was insufficient appreciation of the hardships and suffering caused by the policy.

"Whether those hardships were shacks being demolished in the wet and cold Cape winter, or people being shot while protesting, or the consequences of bombs which killed civilians in Pretoria's Church Street, the AHI could not have escaped the impact of those policies."

He conceded that the AHI, in addition to turning a blind eye to the evils of apartheid, also failed to remove the barriers that

hindered the advancement of women.

These shortcomings, Mr Van Wyk said, came about as a result of a growing aversion to Communism and the growing tide of nationalism that was sweeping through Southern Africa.

The fall of Portuguese rule in the region (Angola and Mocambique) and the political settlement in the then Rhodesia pushed the country's Whites into a cocoon that was security-oriented.

● The AHI yesterday urged the government to use the Sasria fund, created during apartheid to cover losses incurred through political unrest, to compensate victims of human rights abuses during apartheid. - Sapa.

TREFWOORDE

- 1 *President*
- 2 *AHI*
- 3 *Geskiedenis*
- 4 *Kommisies w*
- 5 *Waarheid*
- 6 *Johannesburg*
- 7 *apologies*
- 8 *faat*
- 9 *Medelidigheid*
- 10 *Centraalbestuur*