



SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL LEXICOGRAPHY UNITS

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Constitutional and Legislative Obligations of Departments of Education, Arts and Culture and NLUs to enter Memoranda of Understanding and Sound Reasons for Doing So

From the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa:

Chapter 1 2: Supremacy of Constitution: This Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic; law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled.

Chapter 1 6 (2): “Recognising 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.”

Chapter 6 (4) 2: “all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equally.”

Chapter 14 237: Diligent performance of obligations: “All Constitutional obligations must be performed diligently and without delay”

Chapter 3: Co-Operative Government between all spheres of Government and all organs of State as follows:

(2) All spheres of government must observe and adhere to the principles in this Chapter and must conduct their activities within the parameters that the Chapter provides.

41. Principles of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations:

h) co-operate with one another in mutual trust and good faith by –

(i) fostering friendly relations;

(ii) assisting and supporting one another;

(iii) informing one another of, and consulting one another on, matters of common interest;

(iv) co-ordinating their actions and legislation with one another

Chapter 14 237: Diligent performance of obligations: “All Constitutional obligations must be performed diligently and without delay”

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa ATC Report dated 24 October 2017 requires that:

The dictionaries in indigenous languages should be made available to the respective groups and schools as soon as possible

Until such time as National and Provincial Departments of Education, Arts and Culture and the National Lexicography Units have formal Memoranda of Understanding governing the development and implementation of materials in all our indigenous languages Government cannot claim to be taking all “practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages”. Nor can there be any consistent application of a programme to “ensure that all languages are treated equally.”

Driving Implementation of National Language Policy

“Recognising 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.”



PanSALB
PAN SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGE BOARD



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



2019 | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
Indigenous Languages

Mpumalanga Departments of Education and Sport, Art and Culture have signed a MoU with the NLUs to support all languages spoken in the Province but with a development focus on isiNdebele and Siswati for which they share our mandate. Limpopo SAC has done likewise for Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Sesotho sa Leboa, while the North West Legislature, following a presentation by the Units, has authorised the signing of a MoU by Education and SAC.

Presentations to Legislature Portfolio Committees have been fixed or dates arranged in Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Gauteng, Free State, Kwa Zulu Natal and Northern Cape. Once these are fixed, we will approach the Western Cape.

Unless National Departments and other Provinces do likewise, they will fall further foul of the Constitution by allowing the languages whose mandate they share with us, to be disadvantaged over those for which Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West have responsibility.

The PanSALB Act 8. (1) provides powers and functions as follows:

(a) shall make recommendations with regard to any proposed or existing legislation, practice and policy dealing directly or indirectly with language matters at any level of government, and with regard to any proposed amendments to or the repeal or replacement of such legislation, practice and policy;

a) may request any organ of state to supply it with information on any legislative, executive or administrative measures adopted by it relating to language policy and language practice;

b) may advise any organ of state on the implementation of any proposed or existing legislation, policy and practice dealing directly or indirectly with language matters:

c) may monitor the observance of any advice given in terms of paragraph.

The National Development Plan – Recognises and restates the importance of African languages as integral to science and technology education and to the development and preservation of these languages.

The NLUs were put in place by Parliament to develop dictionaries and other material in our indigenous languages which, when used, will provide the State with the tools and means to achieve its Constitutional obligations.

On the basis of the above there can be no doubt there is an obligation on the above-mentioned Departments, and indeed all others and the NLUs to work together in advancing our indigenous languages.

Why your Support for the NLUs is Essential:

a) As important and as binding as all the above are the need to work co-operatively with National and Provincial Education Departments for benefit of the vast majority of South African learners who are required, from Grade 4 upwards, to study in a language which is not their mother tongue is an even greater reason to do so. Most never see dictionaries in their mother tongue and English before school or during their most formative years of primary school (Foundation Phase). This is in stark contrast to most English and Afrikaans learners who while having the advantage of studying and writing exams in their mother tongue, are exposed to children's illustrated dictionaries and children's books before reaching school going age.

b) The majority of school drop outs between Grades R and 12 fall into the indigenous language HL category. They are falling out because they don't have a sufficient grasp of English to understand what is being taught in their content subjects.

c) To correct this the NLUs have developed CAPS linked Foundation Phase bilingual IL-English dictionaries in all official languages. These have been produced in full colour to the highest quality specifications in order to hold the young learner's interest, build their vocabulary in both languages,

improve spelling, develop basic reference skills and counter the damaging attitude among numbers of young indigenous language speakers that their languages are “less important” than English and Afrikaans. By building their English at this level learners will be in a better position to make the transition to English as the language of teaching and learning at Grade 4.

d) These dictionaries also support English and Afrikaans home language learners to learn an indigenous language, ultimately contributing towards social cohesion by creating a more multilingual society.

e) Higher level mono and bilingual dictionaries, both language and subject specific, support and build learners vocabulary and understanding of subject specific terminology throughout the higher Grades.

f) Support for the Units will not only localise the development of dictionaries and other material by South African entities in South Africa but will locate this activity within the Province and Provincial district that is home to the majority of each language’s speakers. This will create employment and drive demand for language and lexicographic skills in the Provinces which share our mandate for the language concerned and ensure that mother tongue speakers have control of materials development in their language.

g) As copyright is held by Government through the NLUs we can insure the long-term availability of titles. They won’t be declared out of print after a short spell in print.

h) The dictionaries we produce are the official dictionaries of Government. The Units require co-operation with DBE and DoEs to ensure what is produced is properly vetted by Curriculum staff. We cannot be put in a position where the dictionaries we are producing, carrying the ten Coats of Arms of the Republic, are unsuitable for purpose.

i) If we work together with all Provincial and National Departments, then we can rapidly version the existing Foundation Phase dictionaries into other, as yet, unofficial South African languages. Higher level dictionaries will take more time to develop.

j) The only way to ensure that a variety of dictionaries and other material is published in all languages is by using the Units.



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