



The

Continuing the miracle into South Africa's second decade

**FW de Klerk Foundation**

## **Response of Mr De Klerk on questions posed by *Beeld* regarding a report released on alleged corruption under the apartheid regime**

Mr De Klerk would like to say at the outset that he and his colleagues in former governments were strongly aware of the need to combat corruption in any form and ensured that all allegations in this regard were properly investigated. Where wrong-doing was found those involved were prosecuted and punished regardless of their position - including a cabinet minister and a deputy minister who were sentenced to prison. Mr De Klerk hopes that calls for investigations into alleged corruption under former governments are not an attempt to draw attention away from the serious and systemic corruption that South Africa is currently experiencing. It should be recalled that throughout this period there was an active and energetic process of parliamentary investigation and review of Government finances. The opposition was vigilant and did not hesitate to question the Government vigorously regarding any allegation of corruption. Many of the allegations now being made were publicized in the media at that time and were probed in Parliament.

### **The Foundation responded as follows to *Beeld's* enquiries on the following topics:**

#### **Regarding the extensive destroying of official documents just before the transition:**

As far as Mr De Klerk and his cabinet were concerned documentation was disposed in terms of the Archives Act. During his presidency instructions were given for departments to destroy the many superfluous copies of official and classified documents that they had received from other departments. However, the department that originated the document was required to keep the original and to make sure that it was subsequently treated in accordance with the Act. Any attempt to ignore or circumvent the Archives Act would have been an offence.

#### **Regarding the alleged use of smuggled ivory for self-gain by senior army officers:**

There were reports regarding these allegations in the media. It is also possible that questions were raised in Parliament in this regard. It would be appropriate to investigate allegations of any wrong-doing provided that there is *prima facie* evidence. The question must, however, be asked whether the public prosecutor's time would not be better spent in investigating current charges of serious corruption - rather than digging old cows out of the ditch.

#### **Whether the assets of former cabinet members should be investigated:**

The personal assets of former cabinet ministers - of the NP or of any other party - should be investigated only if there is *prima facie* reason to suspect that they were guilty of

wrong-doing. Simply to go on a fishing expedition would violate their constitutional right to privacy.

**Should there be an investigation on the amount of money that the public service had lost due to corruption from 1976 to 1994?**

Mr De Klerk is quite confident that former governments would emerge relatively well from a thorough investigation of the manner in which they handled public finances and combated corruption. State expenditure was rigorously examined by the Auditor-General and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Public servants and ministers were called to account if there was any reason to suspect irregular management of state finances.

**Was Mr De Klerk personally aware of the allegation that South Africa had paid more for oil during sanctions than was necessary?**

Naturally, South Africa had to pay a premium to obtain oil during the period of the oil embargo. Efforts were always made to secure the best prices under these circumstances. Mr De Klerk's hands are clean and he is also confident that he would emerge well from any attempt to investigate the manner in which he managed the Mineral Affairs portfolio at this difficult time in our history.

**Is Mr De Klerk in favour of a comprehensive investigation into the systemic corruption from 1976 to 1994?**

Mr De Klerk believes that the former governments would emerge quite well from an impartial investigation into the manner in which they dealt with corruption. There was no systemic corruption while they were in power. The question is whether this would be the best way to spend the state's limited resources - particularly at a time when South Africa is confronted by serious corruption.

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