

Guidelines for writing a submission

- 1 Use a letterhead, if you have one. If you don't, just include your address and the name of your organization on the top right hand side. If you are not a formal organization you can refer to yourselves as 'ad hoc committee', 'land rights committee', 'community forum' or whichever term you choose, but you should include the name of the place in the title you choose.
- 2 Include the date of your submission.
- 3 You may include the name and address of the NCOP (National Council of Provinces) on the front page but this is not strictly necessary. PO Box 15, CAPE TOWN, 8000.
- 4 You need a subject line that is bolded or underlined. For example:
Submission on the Traditional Courts Bill by Magwaza Community Forum
- 5 The first paragraph should introduce who you are and why the Bill is relevant to you.
- 6 The next section could, for example, explain the *problems* your members currently have with traditional courts or land rights or disputes – whatever these are – and then explain how the Bill would affect those underlying problems.
- 7 The next section could expand the above and explain particular problems or sections of the Bill that would concretely affect your community.
- 8 Then you need to make *clear recommendations*. For example:
 - certain sections of the Bill should be scrapped or amended, or
 - the Bill should be withdrawn in its entirety, and
 - a proper consultation process with rural people should be begun and new legislation drafted from that.
- 9 It is very important to include a section on *consultation*. You need to explain when and how you found out about the Bill and, if there has been no communication about its contents by government or parliament, you need to set that out.
- 10 You need to explain why you think it is important for ordinary rural people to be consulted about laws that will affect their lives. You should also add what kind of consultation you think is acceptable. For example:
 - people must be given sufficient notice;
 - consultation should take place in venues that are accessible to ordinary people even if this means that multiple consultations take place;
 - appropriate means to enable ordinary people's attendance should be provided.
- 11 You can end there, or add your overview impressions of the impact of the bill. For example:
 - how it affects your rights as South African citizens,
 - that it takes South Africa back to the Bantustan days, or
 - whatever point you wish to make about democracy, accountability and chiefs.

Please note:

We have included a few examples of submissions for you to look at. Do not copy these but rather use them as a guide for the structure of your own submission.

The most important thing is to give concrete examples of problems in *your* area and how the Bill would affect these underlying problems.

It is best to write in very simple and straightforward language (English or any other) and to avoid using long words or legal terms. Try to write from the heart. It is fine if you want to use your own structure and order, but try to cover the issues set out above. Remember that the day may come when you could be cross-questioned about your submissions in parliament so be sure to have your facts right.

It is crucial that the voice of the community comes through in the wording and content of the submissions. It looks suspicious when submissions are written in very formal or legal language. Parliament must be convinced that these submissions are made by ordinary rural people and reflect their experience and concerns – not by lawyers or NGOs

Remember, too, that each group has the right to say what it likes. It is much better and more convincing if the submissions are different from one another and *not* all the same.

Good luck!