

>> *This is a photo-copy processed and mailed to a small circle of presumably interested personalities in their private capacity with the hope of receiving constructive critique, supportive comments and/or engaging in an exchange of views and experiences on this matter. First, spontaneous replies expected by return of post. Thanks. <<*

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The National Heritage Council
- The National Place Names Division -
Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology
PRETORIA
Republic of South Africa

through the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa
in the Federal Republic of Germany
Auf der Hostert 3
53170 BONN

oThukela

Greetings!

The document attached contains an overview of points to substantiate my proposal of [a new name for the region north-east to south-west of the river uThukela](#) presently known as "KwaZulu/Natal".

Hoping to have contributed to a fruitful exchange of views on the issue, I would be very pleased to be hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully

“oThukela”
 towards a common destiny
 for all people
 living
 in the province
 north-east to south-west of
 the river uThukela -

proposal
 of a new name for the province
 presently known as “KwaZulu-Natal”

made to
 The National Place Names Division
 Of
 The National Heritage Council
 - Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology -
 Republic of South Africa

on the 21st of January, 1998
 by

Dr. Ben Khumalo - Seegelken

1 A new name? Is it at all necessary? How could it be realised?

- °to make a new start together
- °to learn from the past for today and tomorrow

2 Does a new name automatically open new perspectives or create any new society?

- °birth of a new identity
- °gain a new sight on rivers, mountains, landscapes and neighbours
- °reconciled interdependence

3 “oThukela” - What’s in a name?

- °symbolically holding together
 - `phezulu + phansi = simunye!´
 - `mpumalanga + ntshonalanga´
 - boundary converted into a stream of life-spending water
- °non-discriminatory life-spending tradition

4 “oThukela - and ?”

- °eye-opener for the richness and diversity
- °exercise in reconciliation/ lesson in peace-making
- °encouragement: **growing-together**

1 A new name? Is it at all necessary? How could it be realised?

A new name gives all the people concerned an opportunity

° to make a new start together

A new start is unquestionably necessary also in the region concerned. The past has as a matter of necessity to be retained in good memory; it may, however, not curtail possibilities towards new perspectives in a common future based on new terms. A new start for all began with the birth of the new democratic nation in April 1994 and still has to carry on humanising and reshaping the society once torn apart.

Together - at last (together!), after centuries of multilateral atrocities aimed at subjugation and conquer, exploitation and perpetual subordination, sons and daughters of the "missis" and the "baas", the "coolie" and the "kaffir" of yesterday can now learn to grow together as people with a common destiny. There is room enough for them all in the region they know as their home; the Constitution and its implementation encourage them to be creative in finding ways and means of growing together as a democratic society. Together:
Dlamini; Smith; Naidoo; van der Merwe; Lee; Nyuswa;
Chrysakopolos; Schäfer; Miya; Maharaj; Hurley; Xulu;
Koekemoer.

People of a variety of origins but with a common home and a common destiny learning to develop a common identity.

° to learn from the past for today and tomorrow.

The "good old days" come to memory when people start thinking of redefining themselves:

- Laws and traditions of the day kept over the half of the adult-population in that region in a status of "perpetual minority" who, even for getting married, required the consent of a male guardian. The basic human right to self-determination was denied them.
- Laws and traditions of the day justified the greed and well-being of a minority at the costs of the rest of the people living in that region. The following terms are but a small reminder: "importation of cheap labour for the sugar-cane industry", the "labour-tenant system", "baasskap", "black-spots", "homelands".

Skills and minds of generations of people had been harnessed by laws and traditions of undemocratic rule at the expense of peace and well-being for all. Given the possibilities brought about by the birth of the new democratic nation in April 1994, the people of this region can go on overcoming the visible and the invisible fences still existing and discover each other on paths leading to a better tomorrow for all.

People of this region are faced with an assignment comparable to the lesson facing the people in East- and West-Europe in general - in the eastern and the western part of Germany in particular - since the end of the cold-war and the fall of the iron-curtain: A task of great significance for peace in our times.

2 Does a new name automatically open new perspectives or create any new society?

Of course not. However, birth of a new identity needs a new name. Remember: At no stage in history have the people living in any part of this region been ever consulted by the powers that be on any name their region had to bear or still carries. Names born largely out of arrogance, apartheid and greed have in the most instances been the result:

- "Natal" and "Zululand" became at some stage in history two main designations this region had to bear and partly still does. Some parts of it continued generally being called as they always had been known (eBaQulusini, KwaMthashana, oKhahlamba, ...), others were renamed (Port Natal, Vergenoeg, Weltevrede ...), retained or lost the new names.
- "KwaZulu/Natal" as name for this region would not help open the eyes for new horizons; it bears in it a thick mixture of unhappy memories on days of tears and blood under illegitimate rule.

In finding a new name for their common home, the people living in this area could possibly gain a new sight on rivers, mountains, landscapes and neighbours hardly taken notice of up to now, discover further common interests and so learn to continue living in reconciled interdependence as part of a world-wide community involved in facilitating and maintaining life and peace for all.

3 "oThukela" - What's in a name?

For the region presently known as "KwaZulu-Natal" I propose the new name **oThukela**, this being a word derived from the name of that significant river flowing from north-west to south-east of the said region, meaning "at/adjacent to, on the banks of uThukela". That river symbolically holds together what prevailed even the harshest of unjust policies this region has gone through.

The following could be helpful as guideline:

- °` phezulu + phansi = simuye!`
uThukela forms a link between the heights of the Drakensberg and the depths of the Indian Ocean. People sharing an identity derived from this symbol remain at all levels one entity in diversity and always in living contact with the rest of the world - *by land, by water, by air*.

- ° mpumalanga + ntshonalanga

uThukela forms the one, the Orange River the other arm that together maintain a certain relationship between the waters to the east (the Indian Ocean) and the waters to the west (the Atlantic Ocean), symbolizing two important ribs on both sides of the back-bone (Drakensberg) holding the eastern and the western halves of the one big body (South Africa) together.

- ° boundary converted into a stream of life-spending water

uThukela has often been given the function of dividing and keeping settlements apart; all the same this river has through generations been seen and used also as a stream of life-spending water by

the Khoi-San and the abaNguni;
the amaZulu, "amambuka", "amazemtiti" and other native communities;
the Voortrekker and the missionaries;
the contract-labourers and the imperialists;
the villagers, the farmers and industrialists.

The non-discriminatory life-spending tradition of this African old lady, "uThukela", would certainly inspire present and future generations seeking for reconciled co-existence and set a good example for others in similar situations.

Symbolic significance and historical reasons not being the only factors for finding a new common identity, it is nevertheless encouraging to note how far they help in widening the scope and delving in some depth in this issue. Geopolitical and constitutional guidelines on the one and economic considerations on the other hand will be in favour of [a process of consolidation under new perspectives](#).

4 "oThukela - and ?"

Exchanging views on the suggestion of "oThukela" as new name could serve as

- eye-opener for the richness and diversity yet not adequately activated;
- exercise in reconciliation and further lesson in peace-making;
- encouragement in "growing-together in order to grow together".

Dr. Ben K h u m a l o - S e e g e l k e n
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>> "[COLENSO - proposed capital of the province to be named oThukela](#)"