

SA supports Mbeki's continued mediation in Zim

PRETORIA: Government supports former president, Thabo Mbeki's continued assistance in forming a government of national unity in Zimbabwe.

President Kgalema Motlanthe has informed the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Executive Secretary Tomaz Salomao that the South African government supports Mbeki's continued role in the Zimbabwean dialogue.

In a statement issued by the presidency, President Motlanthe said: "Mr Mbeki's facilitation efforts in Zimbabwe have proven his dispassionate vision for a lasting political solution to the challenges facing Zimbabwe.

"Accordingly, our government has full confidence in Mr Mbeki's ability to build on the historic successes already made in the power sharing negotiations under his mediation."

Therefore, he said, government would further fully support him as the facilitator.

There was uncertainty over whether the Mbeki would continue in his role after stepping down as President of South Africa on 21 September, 2008. However, certain media have reported that he was willing to do so.

Earlier, the SADC had called on Mbeki to continue his mediation efforts as he had been a key role-player in getting the three parties to sign the power-sharing deal after seven weeks of negotiations.

President Robert Mugabe, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and another opposition leader Arthur Mutambara signed an agreement forming a power-sharing government to tackle Zimbabwe's long running political and economic crisis.

However, the three leaders have failed to agree on how to share key posts in the new government including the cabinet, stocking up scepticism over whether the power-sharing deal could stand the mistrust between Mugabe and Tsvangirai.

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