

Commission critical of 'sidelining' by government

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CAPE TOWN — Financial and Fiscal Commission chairman Murphy Morobe has launched a broadside against government for the sidelining of the commission and for leaving it with the feeling that it is regarded as irrelevant.

In the commission's annual report for 1998-99, Morobe said it "should not have to fight for its place in the sun".

"Being born of the constitution, its role should be understood, welcomed and even facilitated so as to enhance the critical role it has of contributing to the integrity of the revenue-

sharing regime in SA."

The commission was concerned "the ministry still had not developed a clear view on how to deal with the FFC's (commission's) inputs despite the constitutional provisions governing the budget process."

Morobe hoped the relationship between the commission

and government could be formalised.

"It would ... serve the system well were bodies like the FFC not left at times with the feeling (real or imagined) that the absence of clear protocols to facilitate its interactions with either the executive or legislative branches of government derives from a

political expediency which renders the institutions irrelevant."

Draft protocols were submitted to Finance Minister Trevor Manuel in 1999 but there had as yet not been feedback. A document detailing the problem of unfilled vacancies in the commission was presented to the president in 1999.