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POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Letter dated 6 June 1980 from the Chairman of the Special Committee  
against Apartheid to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Declaration and Recommendations of the International Seminar on Women and Apartheid, held at Helsinki from 19 to 21 May 1980.

The International Seminar was organized by the Non-Governmental Organizations Sub-Committee on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Apartheid and Decolonization, in co-operation with the Special Committee against Apartheid, the secretariat of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

I have the honour to request you, on behalf of the Special Committee, to circulate the Declaration and Recommendations of the International Seminar as a document of the General Assembly, under items 28 and 80 of the preliminary list, and to bring them to the attention of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women to be held at Copenhagen from 14 to 30 July 1980.

(Signed) B. Akporode CLARK  
Chairman  
of the Special Committee against Apartheid

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\* A/35/50.

ANNEX

Declaration and Recommendations  
of the International Seminar on Women and Apartheid  
held at Helsinki from 19 to 21 May 1980

1. The International Seminar on Women and Apartheid - organized by the Non-governmental Organizations Sub-Committee on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Apartheid and Decolonization, in co-operation with the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, the Secretariat of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - met in Helsinki, Finland, from 19 to 21 May 1980.
2. The participants included representatives of the United Nations and specialized agencies, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Organization of African Unity, the Southern African Liberation Movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Governments and organizations from front-line countries in Africa, and organizations from the Nordic countries, and more than fifty non-governmental organizations, as well as a number of individual experts. The Nordic Governments and a number of other Governments were represented as observers.
3. The Seminar was convened in pursuance of the objectives of the Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and the Decade for Women, particularly in order to contribute to the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held in Copenhagen in July 1980, which will give special attention to the problem of women under apartheid.
4. Its main purpose was to expose the oppression of millions of women in southern Africa under the criminal policy of apartheid, to stress the plight of refugee women and children, to highlight the heroic struggle of women for liberation from racist tyranny, and to formulate means to promote widest international solidarity with the struggle of the women and their national liberation movements to destroy apartheid and build a just society.
5. After a full discussion of the situation and extensive consultations among the participants, the Seminar adopted the following Declaration and recommendations. It commends them for action by Governments, the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals.
6. The International Seminar on Women and Apartheid pays tribute to the heroic and victorious struggle waged by the people of Zimbabwe under leadership of the Patriotic Front, heartily congratulates them on their recent independence, and welcomes Zimbabwe to the international community.
7. The Seminar draws the attention of all governments and peoples to the oppression, exploitation and persecution of millions of women under apartheid in southern Africa and to their heroic struggle to eradicate apartheid.
8. It appeals to them for urgent and concerted action in support of the women under apartheid in their legitimate struggle.
9. Apartheid is a system of oppression, under which the black women and children suffer most.
10. The abolition of this system must be a matter of utmost priority for all those committed to the abolition of racism and to the equal rights of men and women.

11. Apartheid is not merely a gross violation of human rights, nor simply a forcible imposition of racial discrimination and segregation. It is, above all, a system of oppression and exploitation of indigenous people of South Africa, who constitute the great majority of the population of the country, after the alien settlers and colonialists succeeded through a series of wars in dispossessing them of their land and in destroying their traditional society.

12. It is the domination of the country by a racist minority, to whom power was transferred by the erstwhile colonial power.

13. It is a special form of colonialism established by the illegitimate regime of the white minority in order to consolidate and perpetuate racist domination and exploitation.

14. Apartheid is a criminal system which cannot be "reformed". The liberation movements have stressed that the task is, therefore, no less than to ensure the seizure of power by the people, to destroy all the structures of apartheid and to enable all the people to establish a democratic non-racial society, ensuring equal rights for all men and women.

15. They have further declared that armed struggle has become indispensable to the national liberation movements of the oppressed people and have called for support of that struggle through material assistance and the imposition of sanctions against the racist regime of South Africa.

16. The Seminar expresses its full understanding and support of the position of the liberation movements and respects their right to choose their means of struggle.

17. The Seminar notes with appreciation the advance of the liberation struggle in South Africa and Namibia led by their respective national liberation movements - the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), and the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) - as evidenced by the progress in the armed struggle, the mass demonstrations of black students and other developments.

18. It recognizes that the struggle of women in South Africa and Namibia is, in the first place, a struggle of the African people for inalienable rights to their land and its resources, their dignity, and their honour, and for national liberation.

19. The Seminar recognizes that this struggle of the women of South Africa and Namibia and their national liberation movements is a major contribution to the purposes and principles of the United Nations and to international peace.

20. Support for women under apartheid requires assistance not only to them in their struggle against all manifestations of injustice, deprivation and dehumanization, but also to their national liberation movements.

21. Further, it requires assistance to enable the oppressed women to make their rightful contribution to the liberation struggle and to the reconstruction of their country.

22. The Seminar declares that apartheid is not only a crime against humanity but a danger to international peace and security. The nuclearization of South Africa, and the recent detonation of a nuclear weapon by the racist regime, threaten all people of Africa and world peace.
23. Apartheid must be eradicated by collective action of all governments and peoples committed to peace, freedom, human dignity and international co-operation.
24. The Seminar draws particular attention to the heinous crimes of the apartheid regime in killing and maiming women and children in peaceful demonstrations against injustice; to the forcing of thousands of villagers into concentration camps in northern Namibia; to the acts of aggression against neighbouring States, especially Angola and Zambia; and to the bombing of women and children in refugee centres.
25. Women and children fleeing from the barbaric and appalling persecution of the apartheid system constitute the majority of the refugee population from South Africa and Namibia in the neighbouring countries. They require the granting of durable asylum, food, shelter, medical care, legal protection and guarantee of fundamental human rights, intensive counselling, education, training and employment.
26. The Seminar denounces the hypocrisy of those governments which profess abhorrence of apartheid but prevent the United Nations from deciding on mandatory sanctions against South Africa. It particularly deplores that the Governments of France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, which are permanent members of the Security Council, veto proposals for effective action against apartheid.
27. The Seminar notes with alarm and indignation that certain Governments - such as the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Israel, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Belgium and Italy - transnational corporations and other interests continue to collaborate with the Pretoria regime in military, nuclear, economic, political and other fields. It declares that any collaboration with the Pretoria regime is a crime against all peoples and against peace.
28. The Seminar hails the heroic role of women in the liberation struggle in South Africa and Namibia, and pays tribute to the many leaders and martyrs in that struggle.
29. The plight of the women and their role in the struggle must be publicized so as to mobilize world public opinion for action in solidarity with the women of South Africa and Namibia.
30. The Seminar expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women for the excellent work her Secretariat has done in preparation for the consideration of the agenda item on the Effects of Apartheid on the Status of Women in Southern Africa at the World Conference. The Seminar urges that the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women, in the light of its themes of Equality, Development and Peace, focus a special emphasis on women in South Africa and Namibia where conditions for women have steadily worsened during the first half of the Decade. It further urges full support of the Copenhagen Conference as an expression of the solidarity of the women of the world with the oppressed men and women in South Africa and Namibia.

It welcomes General Assembly resolution 34/93 K of 12 December 1979 on women and children under apartheid.

It commends the Special Committee against Apartheid for giving special attention to women under apartheid and promoting co-ordinated and intensified action in solidarity with the struggle of women in South Africa and Namibia and their national liberation movements.

It notes with appreciation the programmes and activities of UNESCO, FAO, ILO, UNHCR, WHO and other United Nations agencies in support of women in South Africa and Namibia. It also notes with appreciation the material and moral support that various non-governmental organizations give to the fighting people of southern Africa.

31. The Seminar recommends the following:

(a) Condemning the political, military, nuclear, economic, sports and cultural links with the South African regime which are maintained by States, especially certain Western States, in violation of the resolutions of the United Nations calling for an end to all such collaboration, the Seminar calls for and commits itself to mobilizing for total sanctions against the racist regime of South Africa, including an effective embargo on all military and nuclear collaboration, oil and oil products, loans, investments, trade, tourism and sports and cultural contacts. It recommends that all organizations publicize and support the upcoming initiatives of the United Nations and OAU for the implementation of sanctions against the South African regime.

(b) The Seminar calls for urgent action by the international community to grant all necessary assistance to the oppressed people of South Africa and Namibia and their national liberation movements in their legitimate struggle.

(c) The Seminar calls for the immediate withdrawal of the illegal South African occupation regime from Namibia in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 385 (1976), and demands the immediate implementation of resolution 435 (1978) of the Security Council. It supports the position of SWAPO as the sole authentic representative of the people of Namibia, including Walvis Bay, which is an integral part of the Territory.

(d) The Seminar condemns the aggression by South Africa against Angola and Zambia. It commends the front-line States for their assistance to and solidarity with the oppressed people of South Africa and Namibia, and their national liberation movements. It urges increased international assistance to and co-operation with the front-line States, including assistance, at their request, to prevent and repel acts of aggression by the racist regime of South Africa.

(e) The Seminar expresses concern over the plight of refugee women, victims of apartheid, and commends the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the protection and humanitarian assistance his Office is providing to refugee women and children from South Africa and Namibia, and strongly urges all Governments and humanitarian organizations to increase their moral as well as material support for the High Commissioner's humanitarian actions in favour of southern African refugees.

It commends non-governmental organizations that have provided assistance to refugees from apartheid and freedom fighters, and urges them to intensify such assistance.

(f) The Seminar strongly supports the campaign launched in South Africa for the release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners.

It calls on governments and organizations all over the world to support that campaign.

It recommends that the period from Africa Liberation Day, 25 May, to the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners, 11 October, be devoted to an intensified campaign for the release of South African and Namibian political prisoners through petitions, demonstrations, etc.

(g) The Seminar condemns the inhuman and vengeful persecution by the racist regime of South Africa of many women leaders and dependents of political prisoners - in particular the severe restrictions imposed under banning orders to isolate them.

It invites organizations and individuals to send greetings and letters to them in order to assure them of the concern of people of conscience everywhere.

(h) The Seminar requests the Commission of Human Rights to investigate crimes against women and children in South Africa and Namibia.

(i) The Seminar recommends that the United Nations, in consultation with the OAU, proclaim an International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa and Namibia in order to promote the widest mobilization of world public opinion in support of the righteous struggle of the women of South Africa and their national liberation movement, as well as all necessary assistance to them to ensure the speedy triumph of that struggle.

It recommends that, in the meantime, all organizations should publicize the struggle of women in South Africa and collect material assistance for them through the national liberation movements.

(j) The Seminar urges the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women to give high priority to the question of measures of assistance to women in southern Africa in the final preparation of the Programme of Action in the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women.

(k) The Seminar notes with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General of the World Conference on measures of assistance to women in southern Africa (A/Conf. 94/6), which were endorsed by the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference and which will be considered in Copenhagen, and encourages the Conference to further strengthen the measures in the light of the conclusions of this Seminar.

(l) The Seminar urges the Special Committee against Apartheid and the Secretary-General of the World Conference, in consultation with the national liberation movements and other concerned organizations, to plan the establishment of effective machinery to implement the World Programme of Action regarding assistance to women in Southern Africa and mobilize the international community for this purpose.

(m) The Seminar appeals to all governments and organizations to support the various projects of the national liberation movements, especially those designed for women and children.

(n) The Seminar expresses appreciation to those organizations whose participation in the campaign for the release of Victor Matlou has forced the racist South African regime to release him.

It urges that such campaigns be continued and intensified to free other political prisoners and to prevent the execution of freedom fighters like James Mange.

It condemns the kidnapping of many surviving victims, both men and women, of the infamous South African raid on Cassinga in 1978, their detention in secret military prisons and the maiming and mutilation of these prisoners. It calls for the application of the Geneva Convention of 1949 on the treatment of prisoners of war, and the protocol thereto, to these imprisoned Namibians, as well as all other freedom fighters captured in the national liberation struggle in southern Africa.

(o) The Seminar recommends that the United Nations, governments, non-governmental organizations and the whole international community mount immediate campaigns to oppose the bill presently being debated in the South African Parliament which, if passed, will make it a criminal offence for the press to publish any details whatsoever regarding persons detained without trial.

It also recommends a related campaign to end all detention without trial in South Africa and Namibia.

(p) The Seminar expresses great appreciation to the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, under the leadership of the Reverend Canon L. John Collins, for its assistance to political prisoners, banned persons and their families in Southern Africa, as well as for its efforts in publicizing the oppression of women under apartheid and the heroic struggle of women against that inhuman system.

It appeals to Governments and organizations to make increased contributions to that Fund in order to enable it to provide adequate assistance to women in southern Africa in this crucial period.

(q) The Seminar invites the United Nations and specialized agencies, Governments and organizations to assist women from the national liberation movements and from women's organizations in the front-line States to attend conferences, seminars and educational and other institutions in different regions of the world. This should take the form of all necessary financial or other assistance for adequate representation and also, for the liberation movements, the issuing of travel documents or the recognition of travel documents.

The Seminar also suggests that regional and national organizations hold meetings focussing on the plight of women under apartheid and their fight for liberation.

(r) The Seminar urges the United Nations, UNESCO, FAO, ILO, WHO and other specialized agencies and United Nations bodies, as well as non-governmental organizations, to strengthen and augment programmes of assistance to national

liberation movements recognized by the OAU, including projects of co-operation with women of national liberation movements for promoting their participation in the liberation struggle and in training programmes for future national reconstruction, and to furthermore augment funds from their regular budgets in order to implement these programmes.

Governments are requested to contribute and/or increase their contributions to the various funds established by the United Nations and specialized agencies and by intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations that support the oppressed peoples of South Africa and Namibia.

The Seminar further requests organizations of the United Nations system to involve women of national liberation movements in all programmes of the United Nations system, including invitations to experts' meetings and training seminars, as well as involvement as consultants and beneficiaries of projects.

The women in national liberation movements should be consulted by the United Nations specialized agencies and other organizations to determine women's needs and wishes. Women should participate fully in planning, formulating and implementing all assistance programmes and they should have equal opportunities for obtaining grants, scholarships and training. If otherwise qualified women lack certain academic credentials or training to qualify for grants and scholarships, they should be given the necessary prerequisite education and training rather than being disqualified from assistance from which they would benefit.

Women in southern Africa must be provided all necessary assistance to upgrade their present skills and acquire new skills that will enable them to participate fully in both the present struggle for national liberation as well as in national reconstruction. Increased support should be provided to the national liberation movements for their women's sections or programmes and opportunities made available for the training of women in appropriate fields, in accordance with the needs of the national liberation movements.

(s) The Seminar calls for a greater role by women and women's organizations all over the world in solidarity with the struggle for liberation in South Africa and Namibia. It recommends greater co-ordination of action by all such organizations in co-operation with the Special Committee against Apartheid and the United Nations Council for Namibia.

(t) The Seminar urges the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women to consider generous assistance to the national liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia for their information activities and other projects.

(u) The Seminar urges that United Nations and its specialized agencies, all governments and non-governmental and other organizations collect information on the situation of women in South Africa and Namibia and their fight for freedom and that they give the widest possible dissemination of such information through existing means, including publications, films, photographic exhibits, radio programmes, etc. It further advocates the development of new means of communication and distribution of such information in order to reach and mobilize new and wider audiences. Such intensified dissemination of information on apartheid, invited also by the Mass Media Declaration of UNESCO, is an essential element of the struggle towards a new international information order.



(v) The Seminar urges the Special Committee against Apartheid, the Secretary-General of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women and any follow-up machinery for the Programme of Action of the Decade, UNESCO, non-governmental organizations and others, in consultation with the national liberation movements, to mobilize the international community in support of the women of southern Africa in their struggle for national liberation.

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