



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/36/290
29 May 1981

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-sixth session
Item 32 of the preliminary list*

POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

Letter dated 27 May 1981 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of
the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to Your Excellency the enclosed letter dated 27 May 1981 from the Honourable R. F. Botha, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Information of the Republic of South Africa.

I should appreciate it if the Minister's letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 32 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) David W. STEWARD
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

* A/36/50.

ANNEX

Letter dated 27 May 1981 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs
and Information of the Republic of South Africa to the
Secretary-General

At the behest of the Special Committee Against Apartheid and the Centre Against Apartheid the General Assembly agreed to the holding of an International Conference on Sanctions against South Africa from 20 to 27 May 1981. Participants in the Conference used the Conference to vent their spleen on South Africa. Your Excellency's statement was regrettably no exception.

In the course of the past five months in particular I have apprised Your Excellency of the situation in South Africa and South West Africa/Namibia, as well as in southern Africa and in Africa as a whole. An analysis of Your Excellency's statement shows that no cognisance has been taken of these facts which are readily verifiable from various sources, including those in the United Nations system. Your Excellency simply continues to reiterate sweeping statements and accusations echoing the same emotional sentiments as expressed in General Assembly resolutions. I would remind Your Excellency of my letter of 1 January 1981 (A/36/34) in which I stated:

"By transposing its chagrin at its own impotence into fury against South Africa, the General Assembly not only demonstrates its own incompetence to accomplish anything to alleviate the oppressive living conditions of the majority of peoples of the world, but ironically focusses attention on the one country in Africa where progress is marked in every important sphere of life: I challenge the institutionalised bodies of the United Nations to prove statistically that black Africans in

/...

the rest of Africa today enjoy more effective political rights, greater stability and security, better employment opportunities, higher wages, better housing and medical facilities, communication and transport systems, healthier diets, more civil rights that are in practice enforced, better quality education and training than the black peoples of South Africa.

A society or country should be judged not by impressions, but by the long term direction it is taking and the degree of advancement it is able to generate for all its peoples."

As Secretary-General of the United Nations Your Excellency should be acquainted with the real problems of Africa. Yet scant attention is paid to the unbearable conditions under which millions of Africans live. Ironically a non-Governmental Organization attempted to bring some perspective to the proceedings in Paris when it poignantly drew attention to the fact that the costs of the Conference could have been utilized in buying food for the 4,5 million children dying in Africa. Instead of attending to the ills of the African continent a Conference is arranged to castigate and threaten South Africa ostensibly to escape facing the tremendous task of developing the continent. Mere lip service is being paid to the improvement of living conditions on our continent where millions are deprived of the most basic human requirements such as food, shelter, health, education, freedom of expression and security of the person. Africa stands before a stark choice. Either serious attention must now be given to development or the peoples of Africa must resign themselves to a future of retrogression and poverty. The ordinary men and women of Africa now demand from their leaders some tangible evidence of concern for their plight. Condemnations of South Africa are not and cannot

be a substitute for the urgent needs of the peoples of Africa.

The implications and consequences of the imposition of sanctions on South Africa will be far-reaching. I reiterate that South Africa will not take sanctions lying down. The South African Government will certainly react appropriately to safeguard her own interests. Sanctions against South Africa will in effect amount to sanctions against southern Africa, because the economies of a number of independent countries are so closely interlinked with the South African economy that they, and not in the first instance South Africa will undoubtedly be the foremost to suffer, and it would inevitably be the poor in these countries who would suffer most.

Your Excellency also implied in your statement that the South West Africa/Namibia issue is a colonial problem. When Your Excellency categorized the South West Africa issue as a "colonial problem" at the Conference of Ministers of Non-Aligned countries in New Delhi on 11 February 1981, I expressed my surprise. I regret that Your Excellency persists in using phraseology taken from resolutions of the General Assembly on South West Africa/Namibia despite the fact that we have so often been told that these resolutions do not constitute your premise of departure in respect of South West Africa/Namibia. I should be grateful to be informed of the basis on which Your Excellency considers it to be a "colonial problem". South Africa has never claimed - and does not claim - an inch of that territory. The usage of such terminology in respect of South Africa and South West Africa/Namibia is clearly misdirected.

Your Excellency's statement as a whole does not convince those endeavouring earnestly to find solutions to the intricate problems of southern Africa that you are prepared to approach the problems of southern Africa in a calm, sober and realistic manner. Consequently you are contributing to the growing body of opinion in southern Africa that the United Nations has not

only become redundant as far as the future of our region is concerned but is fast becoming a menace and a burden to those dedicated to the goal of peaceful negotiation and constructive development.

May I avail myself of this opportunity of renewing to Your Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration.

R F BOTHA
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION
