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CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE THIRTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Second report of the Credentials Committee

Chairman: Mr. Henricus A. F. HEIDWEILLER (Suriname)

1. At the 98th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, on 23 May 1979, the presence of the representative of South Africa in the Assembly was challenged and the matter was referred to the Credentials Committee for report. Accordingly, the Credentials Committee held its 2nd meeting of the current session on 23 May 1979. As decided by the Assembly at its 1st plenary meeting, on 19 September 1978, the Committee consists of the following Member States: China, Denmark, India, Sierra Leone, Suriname, Thailand, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America and Zaire (decision 33/301).
2. The Committee had before it a memorandum by the Secretary-General, dated 23 May 1979, to which was attached a copy of a communication, dated 7 March 1977, received by the Secretary-General from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa pertaining to the representation of that country in all organs of the United Nations.
3. At the outset of the meeting, the Chairman reminded the members of the Committee that, at its 1st meeting, on 25 October 1978, the Committee had considered the credentials of representatives of the 149 Member States participating in the session and had decided to accept the credentials of all those representatives. The report of the Committee containing this decision (A/33/350) was subsequently approved by the General Assembly in resolution 33/9 on 3 November 1978. One Member State, South Africa, did not participate in the thirty-third session of the General Assembly at the time these decisions were taken. The Chairman further informed the Committee that the representative of South Africa had indicated orally to him before the meeting that within 15 minutes he would transmit a communication requesting that he be permitted to present his delegation's position on its credentials to the Chairman personally or to the Committee. The Chairman noted that more than 30 minutes had elapsed and that the communication had not yet been received. He stated that in any event it was not the practice of the

Committee to give the floor to States not members of the Committee. The Chairman thereupon invited members of the Committee to take the floor.

4. The representative of India stated that his Government did not recognize the Government which had issued the credentials for the representative of South Africa as the legitimate Government of South Africa and that his delegation therefore could not recognize the validity of the credentials in question. If a vote were to be taken on the validity of the credentials, India would vote against acceptance of those credentials.

5. The representative of Sierra Leone said that he was expressing the views of the African Group as a whole in that his delegation and the Group did not recognize the authority that issued the credentials under consideration and that, consequently, if the matter were put to the vote, he would have to vote against acceptance of those credentials.

6. The representative of the United States of America stated that his Government had repeatedly expressed its abhorrence of the policy of apartheid and its objections to South Africa's continued occupation of Namibia. Nevertheless that was not the issue before the Committee, which was purely a matter of credentials. His delegation upheld the right of every Member State to be heard and to have an opportunity to present its position to the United Nations. If the validity of the credentials were put to a vote, his delegation would vote to uphold them.

7. The representative of China stated that the credentials had been issued by a minority racist régime imposed on the people of South Africa and that his delegation could not accept the right of such a régime to represent the people of South Africa. Consequently, the credentials were not acceptable and he urged the Committee to decide accordingly.

8. The representative of Zaire stated that, in keeping with the position of the Organization of African Unity, his delegation could not accept the credentials under consideration, since it did not recognize the authority issuing them.

9. The representative of Denmark stated that his Government had repeatedly expressed its condemnation of the policy of apartheid and of South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia. The question before the Committee, however, was whether the credentials under consideration fulfilled the requirements of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. In the view of his delegation this was the case and to decide otherwise would be tantamount to suspension of membership which, under Articles 5 and 6 of the Charter, requires a recommendation of the Security Council and a decision of the Assembly. His delegation strongly supported the principle of universality in the United Nations and, since the requirements of Articles 5 and 6 of the Charter had not been met, the credentials should therefore be accepted.

10. The representative of Suriname outlined the previous proceedings of the Committee at the thirty-third session and stated that the Committee had considered credentials for 149 Member States then participating in the session. As indicated in the first report of the Committee, no communication had been received from South Africa relating specifically to its participation in the current session. In the

view of his delegation, the communication attached to the memorandum of the Secretary-General did not constitute valid credentials for South Africa's participation in the current session of the General Assembly.

11. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that his country firmly and consistently opposed the policy of apartheid pursued by the South African régime, which had been condemned by the United Nations and termed a crime against humanity. His delegation had repeatedly urged an immediate end to South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia and the adoption of decisive measures against South Africa, in accordance with the Charter. It supported the demand of the African States that the credentials of the representative of the Pretoria régime should not be recognized and, if the matter were put to the vote, it would vote against acceptance of the credentials in question.

12. The representative of Thailand stated that his delegation also did not recognize the authorities which had issued the credentials of South Africa. If the question were put to the vote, it would vote against acceptance of those credentials.

13. The representative of Sierra Leone requested that the matter immediately be put to the vote.

14. The Chairman said that it was clear from the discussion that there was no consensus on the question before the Committee and that a vote was therefore necessary on whether the communication before the Committee constituted valid credentials for South Africa for the thirty-third session of the General Assembly.

15. The Committee, by 7 votes to 2, decided that the communication before it did not constitute valid credentials for South Africa for the thirty-third session of the General Assembly.

16. The Credentials Committee recommends that the General Assembly should approve the second report of the Credentials Committee.

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RECOMMENDATION OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Credentials of representatives to the thirty-third session of the General Assembly

The General Assembly

Approves the second report of the Credentials Committee.
