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SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRUGGLE
OF WOMEN OF SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA

Messages

(Issued in accordance with the decision taken by the Special
Committee at its 479th meeting, held on 11 August 1981)

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I. MESSAGES FROM MEMBER STATES

CUBA

His Excellency Mr. Isidoro Malmierca,
Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa and Namibia, the Government of Cuba wishes, in accordance with the principles of its foreign policy, to express its admiration and deep respect for the heroic efforts made each day by the women on the African continent who are struggling alongside their male comrades, sons and brothers to achieve the total, absolute and unconditional freedom, independence and territorial integrity of Namibia and South Africa.

The ignominious, inhuman régime of apartheid imposed by a white racist minority - which, with the consent, support and compliance of imperialism, has established an apparatus of repression and oppression - represents a threat not only to the South African people but also to mankind as a whole.

Just as Cuban women, fighting bravely and tenaciously alongside men, ensured the Revolution's triumph and thus achieved their own complete vindication and active incorporation as an essential element of national development and progress, so the women of Namibia and South Africa will succeed in creating an Africa without exploitation or oppression, with freedom, peace and security for all Africans.

INDIA

H.E. Mrs. Indira Ghandi, Prime Minister

[Original: English]

On the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa and Namibia, I salute those valiant women of all races who gathered in Pretoria 25 years ago on this day to protest against the extension of the inhuman pass laws for African women. For us in India, August 9 is significant for another reason: it was on that day in 1942 that we launched the historic "Quit India" Movement against colonialism.

India was the first country to raise its voice in the United Nations General Assembly against the abhorrent policies of racial discrimination and apartheid practised by the South African régime. Ours was also the first country to boycott South Africa diplomatically, politically and economically.

We whole-heartedly support the brave people of South Africa and Namibia in their just and legitimate struggle to achieve their rights. We reaffirm our solidarity with the suffering peoples of South Africa and Namibia, and reiterate our unflinching support to them.

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II. MESSAGES FROM SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

Mr. Francis Blanchard, Director-General

[Original: English]

On the occasion of the celebration of this historic event the International Labour Organisation wishes to reaffirm its strong commitment to the elimination of apartheid in South Africa and Namibia with special attention to the double oppression that apartheid imposes on women. This commitment is manifest in the activities which the International Labour Organisation has undertaken in favour of the peoples of southern Africa and their liberation movements, including programmes specially designed to assist women victims of apartheid.

The adoption this year by the International Labour Conference of an updated declaration concerning the policy of apartheid in South Africa gives renewed emphasis to the International Labour Organisation's firm commitment to eliminate apartheid and to promote social justice and equality of opportunity for women in South Africa. It strengthens the basis for International Labour Organisation action to accomplish this goal through an intensified programme of assistance to the peoples of southern Africa and their liberation movements.

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General

[Original: French]

The present South African régime has elevated apartheid to the rank of official doctrine, and discrimination based on racial prejudices has thus made Africans, particularly women, pariahs in their own countries. Such prejudices have darkened contemporary history and continue to challenge the human conscience. Forty years ago, racist doctrines drew the world into a generalized war. Today, while their impact on men's minds has of course receded, the time must come for them to be totally eradicated in South Africa.

In the great struggle against racism and for human dignity, to which so many peoples have contributed in their turn, it is the peoples of southern Africa who today bear the heaviest burden. However, responsibility for storming the last bastion of institutionalized racism lies with all peoples committed to justice and to peace, and in this struggle African women have a decisive role to play.

They have taken part in all forms of popular resistance in the same way as men, and the date of 9 August will remain engraved in Africa's collective memory as one of the brightest moments of this resistance. UNESCO, whose mission is to defend respect for the individual against intolerance and injustice everywhere, was one of the first international organizations systematically to denounce the policy

of apartheid and to support, from the outset, all the means which the people of the continent used to combat it. To the women, and to the men, who continue to map out the path of African emancipation, UNESCO wishes to reiterate its admiration, gratitude and unfailing solidarity.

I would like to express the hope that all the women of the world will closely associate themselves with their African sisters in more actively denouncing and more forcefully combating the régime of apartheid and all forms of racism. I am sure that they can make an effective contribution to the total elimination of racism and apartheid.

III. MESSAGES FROM INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

AFRO-ASIAN PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY ORGANIZATION

Mr. Abdel Rahman Sharkawi, President

[Original: English]

On 25th anniversary South African Women's Day Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization sends fraternal greetings to heroic women struggling against racial tyranny and oppression. August 9 important landmark in South African freedom struggle. Reiterate commitment to freedom struggle and support all efforts by Special Committee to mobilize international opinion against inhuman racist régime.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS

Mr. Amar Bentoumi, Secretary-General

[Original: English]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa and Namibia and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the historical march by the women of South Africa to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest the pass laws, we proclaim our solidarity with the oppressed women of South Africa and Namibia as well as with those fighting to destroy the inhuman system of apartheid.

Women of South Africa and Namibia, as well as their national liberation movements, the African National Congress (ANC) and the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), can be assured of the support of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers in their just and heroic struggle so as to promote its speedy triumph.

SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN

[Original: English]

In its Declaration of basic principles of Democratic Socialism, endorsed at its Conference in Oslo 1962, the Socialist International stated:

"We, democratic Socialists proclaim our conviction that the ultimate aim of political activity is the fullest development of every human personality, that liberty and democratic self-government are precious rights which must not be surrendered; that every individual is entitled to equal status, consideration and opportunity; that discrimination on grounds of race, colour, nationality, creed or sex must be opposed; that the community must ensure that material resources are used for the common good rather than the enrichment of the few; above all, that freedom and equality and prosperity are not alternatives between which the people must choose but ideals which can be achieved and enjoyed together."

Socialist International Women, as part of the Socialist International firmly supports this Declaration and in pursuance of its aims, declare their solidarity with the South African women's struggle against apartheid and discrimination. The women of South Africa have not only been the worst sufferers under apartheid, but have always played an important role in the liberation struggle, as well as in the trade union and other movements, for their inalienable rights. They continue to play a significant role at the present stage when the struggle for liberation is stepped up in the face of increasing savagery of the apartheid régime. Many women have been imprisoned, restricted and forced into exile for their participation in the struggle.

Let us all stand together to end their suffering and to bring equality and human rights to the Women of South Africa.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION

Ms. Freda Brown, President and
Ms. Mirjam Vire-Tuominen, General Secretary

[Original: English]

The members of the Bureau of the Women's International Democratic Federation attach great significance to the work of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid and welcome the holding of the special meeting observing 9 August—twenty-fifth anniversary of the historic women's demonstration as International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa and Namibia.

The WIDF Bureau sharply condemns the escalation of the vicious crimes of the apartheid régime, the arrest of more than a thousand Africans in the Crossroads Ghetto, the continued torture and murder of imprisoned patriots, and the continuation of the illegal occupation of Namibia. It charges the apartheid régime with crimes against humanity, claiming countless women and children as their victims and threatening peace on the African continent and in the world.

On behalf of millions of women of all continents united in the ranks of the WIDF, the Bureau members express the hope that the work of your Committee will be a major contribution to the convening of a special session of the United Nations to apply universally effective sanctions against the apartheid régime and the implementation of the United Nations resolutions, especially the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.

WORLD PEACE COUNCIL

[Original: English]

The World Peace Council, and the millions of people from all the continents supporting it, join and extend fraternal greetings to the African National Congress, the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) and the heroic peoples of South Africa and Namibia on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of 9 August - the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa and Namibia. On this day, 25 years ago, women of all races in South Africa marched to the Union Buildings of the apartheid régime to protest against the pass laws. Twenty thousand women who stormed the Union Buildings were led by Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Lily Diedricks, Rahima Noosa and others.

In subsequent years the women in South Africa and Namibia have staged demonstrations and protests against the pass laws and waged consistent struggle against the entire system of apartheid. Many outstanding women like Dorothy Nyembe, Florence Matomela, Mary Moodley, Gertrude Kandanga, Ida Jimmy and others have given their lives, are either in exile or imprisoned for their role in the liberation struggle of their peoples.

As we commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the historic march to the Union Buildings by women of all races from all parts of South Africa, our thoughts go to those gallant women fighters of Winburg, Sharpeville, Soweto, Windhoek, Oshakati and many other parts of South Africa and Namibia. Black women are daily forced to join the ranks of the unemployed through the pass laws, many are imprisoned every year, some with their babies, for failure to produce the hated pass-book, and thousands have been forcibly removed from the urban areas to the Bantustans. Their sacrifice, heroism and courage serve as an inspiration to others and to all peace-loving people everywhere.

The open declaration by the administration of the United States to support the South African racist régime, makes it an accomplice in the crime of apartheid. In the apartheid system, which oppresses and discriminates against the Black people, Black women are oppressed more on account of race, sex and class and are denied the basic human right - the right to live a decent family life. The terrorist and repressive régime does not spare even children, who are killed and maimed. Many people including women are arrested and held in detention without trial. But the struggle against the Pretoria régime continues. The repression by the racists has not dampened the spirit to resist apartheid.

III. MESSAGES FROM NATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

ASSOCIATION OF NICARAGUAN WOMEN "LUISA AMANDA ESPINOZA"

Mrs. Magda Enríquez, Secretary for International Relations

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa and Namibia on 9 August 1981, AMNLAE sends its most determined revolutionary support and solidarity to all women struggling today against the abominable apartheid régime, against imperialism and against all forms of oppression which keep women under the most denigrating, subhuman conditions. Confident that only through a united struggle we shall defeat the common enemy, we reaffirm the principle that your struggle is ours.

Victory will be ours!

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S FEDERATION OF GERMANY (GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC)

Ms. Ilse Thiele, President

[Original: English]

On behalf of the Federal Committee of the Democratic Women's Federation of Germany, I would like to take the occasion of the Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of the Women of South Africa and Namibia, August 9, 1981, to convey a most cordial message of friendship and solidarity to the women of South Africa and Namibia. The historic demonstration of protest organized by South African women on August 9, 1956 against the inhuman laws of apartheid was a continuation of the militant role that South African women have always played in the national liberation movement of their people.

The socialist women's organization of the German Democratic Republic pays high respect to the women of South Africa and reaffirms its sincere solidarity with them. Led by the ANC, they wage a heroic struggle against the racist régime of South Africa and its evil systems of apartheid.

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We stand firmly at the side of the women of Namibia. Together with their husbands and led by the SWAPO, the sole legitimate representative of their people, they fight for their independence and freedom.

We strictly demand that effective sanctions be taken against South Africa as well as the implementation of all United Nations resolutions on Namibia.

The Democratic Women's Federation of Germany will continue to support the just struggle of all patriotic women in Africa.

With best wishes for further success of all women in South Africa and Namibia in their just struggle for the benefit of their people and for the benefit of their women and children.

NICARAGUAN COMMITTEE IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

Mr. Luis Caldera, Secretary-General

[Original: Spanish]

On behalf of the Nicaraguan people, we express solidarity with the struggle of women in South Africa and Namibia. We condemn repression against these fraternal peoples.

OTTAWA CITIZENS CONCERNED ABOUT SOUTHERN AFRICA

[Original: English]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa and Namibia and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the historical march by the women of South Africa on the Union Buildings, Pretoria, against the pass laws, we declare our solidarity with the oppressed women of South Africa and Namibia and all those struggling to destroy the inhuman system of apartheid. We assure you and your national liberation movement of our support in your righteous and heroic struggle so as to promote its speedy triumph.

SOVIET WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Ms. Valentina Tereshkova, President

[Original: English]

Soviet women widely celebrate Day of Solidarity with Struggle of Women of South Africa and Namibia and support their heroic struggle. I wish participants of meeting great success.
