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LETTER DATED 24 SEPTEMBER 1979 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In the view of the South African Government, the meeting of the Security Council on 21 September 1979 at the request of the African Group of States at the United Nations (S/13542) was totally unnecessary and uncalled for. The South African Government also rejects the statement made on behalf of the Security Council at that meeting (S/PV.2168, pp. 2-3, and S/13549), in particular, that the establishment of Venda "is designed to divide and dispossess the African people and establish client states under its domination in order to perpetuate apartheid".

The Security Council has no authority or jurisdiction in this matter. Whether members of the Security Council like it or not, the fact of the matter is that Venda is now an independent state. It is completely free to pursue whatever internal and external policies it chooses.

The statement in Security Council document S/13542, condemning the independence of Venda, is an insult to the people of Venda and represents an attempt to deny them their right to self-determination - an inalienable right guaranteed by the Charter and exercised by others who are less equipped than the people of Venda.

It is true that Venda is one of the smallest members of the southern African family of nations. But since when was size a criterion for membership of the international community? In this regard, the Secretary-General remarked at the raising of the flag of Saint Lucia on 19 September 1979 that that country might be small but sovereignty was not limited by size.

Venda certainly is much larger in area and has a much larger population than quite a number of States Members of the United Nations. In addition, Venda has considerable economic potential and already has a higher per capita income than some 25 members of the Group on whose behalf the Security Council met on 21 September 1979. Annual development aid to the new state from South Africa amounts to \$58 per capita, considerably more than is received by many developing countries from international sources.

The Chairman of the African Group also included disparaging references to "tribal fragmentation" in his statement. It is a pity that he should seek to

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scorn the cultural heritage and identity of another African people. On the contrary, the fact that Venda is culturally homogeneous is a great advantage in a continent where the promise of independence has all too often been destroyed by intertribal conflict within the artificial borders which were in many ways the cruelest legacy of the colonial era.

I would appreciate it if this letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) J. Adriaan EKSTEEN
Permanent Representative
