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STATES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-ninth year

Letter dated 11 April 1984 from the Permanent Representative
of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach herewith the text of the address which was delivered by the Prime Minister of South Africa, the Honourable P. W. Botha, on the occasion of the signing of the Accord of Nkomati between the Republic of South Africa and the People's Republic of Mozambique on 16 March 1984.

I should be grateful if this letter and its annexure could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 124 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kurt von SCHIRNDING
Permanent Representative

* A/39/50.

ANNEX

Address delivered by the Prime Minister of South Africa, Mr. P. W. Botha, on the occasion of the signing of the Accord of Nkomati between the Republic of South Africa and the People's Republic of Mozambique on 16 March 1984

"Our action today in signing this Treaty, the Accord of Nkomati, sets a new course in the history of southern Africa. We have signalled to the world our belief that states with different socio-economic and political systems can live together in peace and harmony, and work together in the pursuit of common interests. Our meeting today on the border between our two countries indicates our willingness, and our ability, to reach peaceful accords which enshrine our commitment to the principles of good neighbourliness.

Another principle that underlines the agreement we have signed today is that each country has the right to order its affairs as it sees fit, and that inter-state relations, particularly between neighbours, should not be disturbed by differences in internal policies. This is sensible and practical, as it recognises that each country has its own set of conditions for which it must seek its own solution in the interest of its citizens.

South Africa was one of the first countries of Africa to confront colonial occupation and foreign exploitation. The people I belong to know the feeling of powerlessness in the face of an external force far greater than ours. Our independence did not come easily. Countless numbers of our women and children died in concentration camps while their husbands, fathers and brothers fought the might of a great empire. Their sacrifice has kept the flame of freedom burning in the hearts of South Africans ever since.

Neither South Africa nor Mozambique had a hand in drawing the political map as we know it today. Our borders were arbitrarily drawn by others, by people who served the interests of colonial powers and who spared little thought, if any, for the inhabitants of the region.

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Having gained our political independence we have the duty to use it to free our peoples from the chains of poverty, ignorance and disease. The means we have chosen may point in opposite directions: they often conflict, but we cannot allow our divergent outlooks on life to distract us from the urgent need to create better opportunities for our peoples, to enable them to break out of the debilitating cycle of poverty, and to work for a future which offers realistic prospects for peace and a better standard of living.

This is the logic and purpose of the Accord of Nkomati. It is an act of faith on the part of our two governments - faith in the promise that given a climate of stability and mutual co-existence we will be able to focus our energies on the problems which really matter in our region, and get to work on the fundamental requirements of our peoples.

We face extremely complex social, political and economic problems in southern Africa: so complex that they can result in conflict and it is often difficult to avoid being drawn into the resultant spiral of confrontation and conflict. In these circumstances the real issues are avoided - uncomfortable facts and harsh realities are dusted under the carpet while nations wage an ideological war of words and act with hostility toward each other. But fact and realities are remarkably resilient companions of mankind. They will not simply disappear because we banish them from our sight. Indeed, unless we attend to them honestly and frankly the problems which they present will merely be compounded.

The Republic of South Africa, in voicing its concern several years ago at the increasing signs of confrontation and conflict in our region, came to the conclusion that the leaders of our sub-continent would have to face these realities and re-arrange their priorities accordingly. As governments we have a duty to view the welfare and prosperity of our peoples as our first priority. South Africa recognised that it had the stability,

the economic strength and the productive capacity to assist its neighbours in achieving the regional goal of progress and development, provided the countries concerned were prepared to seek healthier mutual relations. My country offered to sign non-aggression pacts with all its neighbours in pursuit of that objective, and today with the People's Republic of Mozambique we are taking an important step in that direction.

In signing this agreement today we have opted for the road of peace. I know that it is a difficult road, not without risks for either of us : nor can we escape the fact that peace, too, has its price. We start off with a burden of mutual suspicion and bitter memories which, as we progress, must be shed by the wayside.

There can be no question of this agreement being a temporary expedient from which one side or the other might desire to derive unilateral advantage. This is so because the factors which have brought us together are themselves immutable. It is the economic and geographic realities of our region which have brought us together and which will be the best guarantee of the success and permanence of this agreement.

We can explore numerous possibilities for expanding our relations for mutual benefit in the atmosphere of peace and trust that we are now creating. Such an atmosphere will lead to confidence and will encourage the private sectors of the South African economy and of other countries to play a constructive role if they can be assured that their investments will be secure and of mutual benefit to producers and consumers alike.

We are both African countries, inhabited by African peoples whose past and whose future are firmly entrenched in the southern part of the African continent. We are of Africa. We share a common

future in this part of the world, and a common responsibility to ensure that the generations which follow us will inherit a better world than we did. This agreement can contribute significantly towards such a better world. We have signed it before an assembled group of dignitaries and guests, civilians from many walks of life, as well as before representatives of our armed forces on whom we rely to defend our countries with their lives. By ensuring the successful implementation of this agreement we will create a situation in which, if our armed forces are called upon to do battle, it will not be between our respective countries.

By agreeing to the spirit and letter of this Accord my government looks forward to a new era of co-operation and peaceful co-existence between South African and Mozambique in the search for a better life for our peoples.

I see a sub-continent in which countries work together to rationalise and increase food production, develop regional trade, establish housing programmes, education and trading schemes, health services, employment opportunities, and many other mutually beneficial activities. We can exchange information on programmes to overcome the consequences of droughts, floods and other natural disasters. Together we can form an economic alliance to negotiate better prices on world markets for our minerals and raw materials.

Given the necessary stability and good neighbourliness, we have a vision of nations of southern Africa co-operating with each other in every field of human endeavour : a veritable constellation of states working together for the benefit of all on the basis of mutual respect.

It is most appropriate that leaders and representatives of states in southern Africa, as well as representatives of other states, are in attendance on this historic occasion.

I wish to thank them for their presence. Some I have met before : others I am meeting for the first time. All have, in one way or another, contributed to the process of communication and negotiation which has culminated in our proceedings today.

When, later this afternoon, we have to part, the structures which have been erected here, will be taken down and removed, and this beautiful valley will again be the domain of the hippopotamus and many other creatures of the animal kingdom. I would like us, together to build a memorial on this spot where the Accord of Nkomati was signed, so that long after we have gone, future generations will know that we met here today to charter a new and promising course in the history of our two countries.

Our task now is to return to work, to put our agreement into operation, and do all we can to ensure that historians of the future will mark today as a major turning point in the destiny of our sub-continent.

Once again something new has emerged from Africa. We believe that this agreement between our two countries can serve as a model for relationships throughout our region, and, indeed, throughout the world. We cannot allow southern Africa to wither away and die. Our responsibility as Africans is to give our sub-continent a chance to live. To grow, to develop, and to show that we can succeed without the interference of outsiders. As Africans we take pride in our identity and in our traditions in this part of the world. Instead of dividing our energies and resources let us pool them, for it is in our combined economic strength that the promise of a more prosperous region will best be realised.

By our meeting here today we are sending a message to the world that southern Africa will survive and her children will prosper. May God grant us the courage and strength to fulfil our mission."