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QUESTION OF NAMIBIA

Letter dated 25 September 1989 from the Permanent Representative of  
Norway to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of Norway, in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme, held an informal meeting of donors at Oslo on 20 and 21 September 1989, in order to discuss assistance to a future independent Namibia.

A copy of the text of the Chairman's summary at the conclusion of the meeting is annexed to the present letter.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 36.

(Signed) Tom VRAALSEN  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Norway  
to the United Nations

ANNEX

Chairman's summary

The informal donors consultation hosted by the Norwegian Government in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had three major goals: first, to facilitate an exchange of information among interested donors and the United Nations system; second, to ensure co-operation and co-ordination of the research and planning activities currently being carried out for the benefit of Namibia; and third, to sensitize donors and international agencies to the needs of an independent Namibia.

It was generally recognized that assistance to independent Namibia must be based on the policies and priorities of that government. It was also emphasized that assistance during the transition period should in no way reduce the freedom of the future government to make decisions according to its own priorities. However, there was broad agreement that there was a need for an exchange of information among donors at this time in order to identify the most pressing needs facing Namibia. The broad participation in the conference, with a total of 121 participants, representing 27 countries and 28 agencies, bears testimony to this.

Appreciation was expressed with regard to the role played by the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) and with respect to the successful repatriation exercise under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, executed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme. Attention was focused on the need for assistance in connection with the reintegration of the repatriated refugees. The recommendations contained in the report of the Inter-Agency Mission and the need for additional financing to complete the repatriation programme and implement the emergency rehabilitation programme were duly noted.

The meeting expressed satisfaction with the documentation prepared by UNDP in co-operation with the other United Nations agencies on the basis of several in-depth studies and recognized the linkage with work done by the United Nations Institute for Namibia. Other related studies by individual countries and international bodies were noted. Special note was taken of the role foreseen for the Economic Commission for Africa.

There was broad recognition that there would be a need for budgetary support in the period immediately following independence.

Donors expressed readiness to support the new government in a broad range of sectors. The meeting agreed that one important area of concern for the independent government will be in human resources capacity building. The important role of women in development was underlined.

Readiness was expressed to assist independent Namibia to reduce its economic dependence on South Africa. In this regard, the Programme of Action of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference was recognized as a basis for reducing such dependence. The potential of technical co-operation among developing countries was stressed.

Non-governmental organizations were perceived to be an important channel for assistance to Namibia, especially in the transition phase.

Interest was expressed in the idea of establishing a donors' working group to address the issue related to South Africa's reduction of budgetary support to Namibia during the transition period.

The responsibility of co-ordinating development co-operation rests with the new government. However, it is also the responsibility of the donor community to avoid duplication in their individual proposals. The role of UNDP as co-ordinator of United Nations assistance was reconfirmed. In this connection, the establishment of a UNDP Trust Fund for Namibia was welcomed.

The need for convening a donors conference after independence was generally accepted, subject to the formal request by the government.

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