

Vancouver, Canada
June 8th, 1976

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates:

The African National Congress feels honoured to be given this opportunity to address the representatives of the entire world who are agreed that the "quality of life is largely determined by the conditions of human settlements, which are the habitat of mankind".

As representatives of the oppressed people of South Africa, we are particularly grateful to address this gathering of people who have the power and will to determine and plan the quality of life of their respective peoples. For they will be able to understand what we mean when we say that the Black 21 million people of South Africa are completely cut off from the decision-making bodies in the South Africa of today, which is ruled by 4 million White people of European descent.

The question of a minority ruling over a majority is not unknown to the world, but South Africa is the only country where your pigmentation, the colour of your skin, has been legally made the decisive factor which determines your way of life.

From the time you are born, in fact, even before you are born, you are already predestined to serve the interests of a white master. Whatever human feelings, desires or capabilities you may possess are legally supposed to be channelled towards making the white man rich, happy, and if possible, secure. You are simply a necessary accident which needs thousands of laws to mould you into a useful instrument to make your white master live in heavenly conditions on earth.

In short, the white people in South Africa have consistently opted for an all-white regime, backed by an army, which is willing and ready to pursue policies of dehumanising the Black South African.

We are addressing ourselves to people who have been instrumental in passing a resolution which condemned apartheid as a "crime against humanity".

The majority of the distinguished delegates present here have attested to the fact that the policies pursued by the white minority regime in South Africa is not only genocidal in terms of the Black South African, but is a serious threat to human lives in the African Continent and beyond.

This conference has correctly singled out the question of land ownership as *prima facie* to human habitat. Land is what every human being lives on. A people dispossessed of land is a people being denied the right to livelihood, to their very existence.

Therefore, when four million Whites, by force of arms, arbitrarily allot themselves 87% of the South African land, and dictate that 21 million Black people should live in the remaining 13% what they are doing is simply to deny the Black South African his God-given right to live.

The present generation of the African people in South Africa has to bear with a situation where, throughout the whole country, practically everywhere you go, you are reminded that your grandfather and grandmother used to live here as free people but you, yourself, have to ask permission to move in your own motherland.

This 13% of the land, The Bantustans, is being offered by the South African regime, in the guise of giving the indigenous people independence. These Bantustans are ten amorphous and artificially created areas for ten supposed African tribes into which any African who can no longer be adequately exploited is forced to move.

The first Bantustan, the "Transkei", will be granted its dubious independence in October of this year. The governing puppets of the Transkei are already lobbying for international recognition and approval as an independent state.

Many delegates have raised the question of the dangers of population explosion. They have talked about the real or exaggerated threat of there being too many people on our planet. For us this question is overshadowed by the fact that we see other human beings in our country consuming more than 12 to 20 times more than us simply because their skin is white.

The Black working people have been engaged in strikes demanding higher wages, especially during the last three years. All we ask is to be given an equitable share in the wealth we create, in the gold, diamond, copper and other mines. All we ask is to be given equal pay for equal work. We say that the wealth we have created to make South Africa one of Africa's richest countries should be shared by all the inhabitants of South Africa. But all they have offered is the 13% of the land and a minute portion of the wealth.

To us, therefore, it is not simply a question of population explosion which accounts for the human misery. It is the blatant conscious policy of racial discrimination, exploitation, oppression and dehumanization practised by the South African white regime against our people which accounts for the misery of our people.

The nucleus of any human society is the family. Yet in South Africa, the very core of Black human society is deliberately being eroded and destroyed. Men are not being allowed to live with their wives and children by law. Since 1964, no African woman can move from a village area and go to join her husband working in an urban area unless she herself was born in that urban area. Black women and children are regarded as superfluous appendages to the Black working man.

As if that was not sufficient, whole communities are uprooted every year in order to give space to the white masters to scratch themselves in comfort. All this, the White South Africans can do because they have the military power behind them. To the Black man in South Africa, the country is a police state with a daily average prison population of 99,000, overwhelmingly Black people.

Of the 68 legal executions carried out in 1975, there were no whites: 50 were Africans and 18 were coloured or what are sometimes referred to as mulattos - and what we refer to as part of the Black South African population.

The Whites in South Africa would be unable to survive with this inhuman policy if it were not for the moral and material support they receive from outside interests. The role which the multinational corporations with investments in South Africa have played in supporting the Apartheid regime in South Africa can only be explained if one understands that they get returns of up to 27% on their investments. And this is possible because of the super-exploitation of Black labour.

The South African regime has shown itself not only to be oppressive to the Black people of South Africa, but is a willing instrument to recolonize independent Africa. The aggression of the South African army into nascent Angola is known to all. The expansionist designs of the disciples of Hitler, now ruling South Africa, is no secret.

It is at this moment that the French Government finds it profitable to supply nuclear reactors to South Africa - a South Africa which not only has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but has over the years, consistently flouted all United Nations Resolutions on Human Rights and has frequently boasted of her capacity to build nuclear weapons.

We are here talking of the ways and means of improving human settlements. But, unless this conference takes decisions to actively counter policies and practices of wanton genocide as is being practised by the Vorster regime in South Africa, the people of South Africa, of Namibia and Zimbabwe, indeed, of the African Continent, might not be there to discuss any future plans for improving Human Settlement.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
