

UNITED NATIONS
Department of Public Information
Press Section

(FOR USE OF INFORMATION MEDIA -- NOT AN OFFICIAL RECORD)

22 May 1981

ANTI-APARTHEID COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN APPEALS FOR SUPPORT FOR SOLIDARITY DAY
WITH STRUGGLING SOUTHERN AFRICAN WOMEN, 9 AUGUST

The following statement was issued today by the Chairman of the United Nations Committee against Apartheid, B. Akporode Clark (Nigeria):

The Special Committee against Apartheid has endorsed the proposal by a number of non-governmental organizations to observe 9 August, 1981, as the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of the Women of Southern Africa.

That day is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the historic demonstration of South African women of all races in their struggle for freedom and human rights. Twenty thousand women from all over South Africa gathered at the seat of Government in Pretoria on 9 August 1956 to protest the extension of humiliating pass laws to African women. It is an appropriate occasion to express the solidarity of the international community with the righteous struggle of the South African women against racism, apartheid and oppression, and to pay tribute to their heroic contribution to the struggle for national liberation.

The women of South Africa and Namibia 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.

The women of South Africa have also courageously supported their children in their momentous struggle for equality in education and against the humiliation of apartheid, especially since the gruesome massacre of African schoolchildren in Soweto on 16 June 1976. They deserve the solidarity and support the international community.

(more)

22 May 1981

On behalf of the Special Committee therefore, I appeal to Governments and intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations, including trade unions, religious bodies, solidarity committees and women's organizations, as well as individuals, to observe the International Day so as to promote the widest mobilization of world public opinion in support of the oppressed women of South Africa in accordance with the recommendations of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women held in Copenhagen last year.

I would urge all Governments, organizations and individuals to observe the International Day:

- (a) by protesting by every appropriate means, including petitions, demonstrations and boycotts, the violence and repression being employed against women of South Africa;
- (b) by publicizing the plight of women and children under apartheid, and their struggle for liberation;
- (c) by sending messages of solidarity to women in prison, under restriction and in exile;
- (d) by providing material and other assistance to refugee women and to women's section of liberation movements; and
- (e) above all, by lending full support to the national liberation movement in South Africa and Namibia.

+ +++ +