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SANAM association / Standing Committee of NGOs

10, Av.J.Volders 1060 Bruxelles Belgium
Tél: 02/537 98 42 Telex (0402) 610 59 09
Fax 538 40 85

Ref: 02-370/91/CO

to: Members Standing Committee of NGOs network
fr: secretariat
dd: June 3rd, 1991
re: follow up visit of South African partners;

urgent matters

Dear Friends,

Following the visit of the delegation of our South African partners to Brussels last week, a number of issues require your urgent attention:

- 1) Concern about the political situation in South Africa. The partners presented a gloomy picture to the European NGOs in their briefing about the situation in South Africa. The situation is quite different from what the situation is perceived to be in Europe. Hence the appeal on the European partners to step up their campaigning and lobbying activities in the coming weeks. The attached statement: SOUTH AFRICA: "Myth and Reality" resulted from the meetings and could provide the guidance for your activities.
(For further information I like to refer to the recent SARDC update no 2. of "Apartheid after Apartheid", and the attached 3 page briefing on mounting evidence of 'third force' destabilization.)
- 2) Changes in the Special Programme. In the Friday meeting with the European Commission, the Commission emphasized the need to review the arrangements of the Special Programme. The exclusivity of the channels will need to be lifted and the administrative procedures and margin will have to be reviewed. The Commission has invited the SA partners and the Standing Committee for meetings at June 27 and 28, 1991, in Brussels to reach an agreement on these issues. The secretariat is preparing a full report on this meeting, and will make it available later this week. The negotiations at the end of the month require us to consider the dates of our meetings for this month, and we hope to be able to advise you on this issue shortly.
- 3) Next EC project round. The next project-round has been scheduled for first week of July 1991. For consideration at this project-round, applications with all the information required will need to be at the Commission this week. (It is advisable to contact either Lindsay Jones or Roque Barboza to ensure that all the information needed is available at Commission to allow the processing of the application.)
- 4) SANAM workshop on development programming. For your information, please find attached the statement resulting from the workshop. The secretariat is preparing the report of the workshop, which we hope to be able to circulate next week to the network.

Sending you my very best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Donna von Meienfeldt
Secretary Standing Committee of NGOs

Encl. 6 pages;

Ref: 02-368/91/ME

(Statement of joint meeting of the SACBC, SACC, Kagiso Trust and the Standing Committee of European NGOs in Brussels on May 29th, 1991)

SOUTH AFRICA: "Myth and Reality"

Mention the name South Africa to many people in Europe today, and invariably two images come to mind. The first is that of a new South Africa created by the initiative of President De Klerk, in which apartheid and discrimination are things of the past. The second is that of black people senselessly killing each other.

Despite all rhetoric to date, little legislation has actually changed as yet. Agreements aimed at removing the obstacles for a negotiated settlement entered into between De Klerk and the ANC have not been fully honored. With the announcements of February 2nd, 1990, expectations were raised that South Africans would return in their thousands within a space of months. The reality today is, that the vast majority of exiles still languish outside the country. The South African government's insistence on a bureaucratic process, which has been condemned by leading legal experts, has resulted in this tragic situation.

The same indemnity process is the cause of the UNHCR's refusal to be involved in the repatriation of the South African exiles. Nothing less than amnesty can satisfactorily resolve this issue.

De Klerk promised to release all political prisoners by April 30th, 1991. That day has come and gone. Up to 2000 political prisoners are kept in jail today. In desperation, prisoners have gone on hunger strike to draw attention to their plight. Some are entering their fifth week, but their desperate cry continues to go unheard.

In excess of 250 political trials are in process today in South Africa, involving another 1500 persons.

Quite clearly, De Klerk has failed to satisfy the basic conditions for the negotiations to begin.

Violence and death have become a daily reality in the lives of many black communities in South Africa. To quote but one statistic: since the beginning of this year over 750 persons have been killed in political motivated violence.

The propagated explanation of black on black violence falls far short of the truth. The pattern and level of sophistication with which the violence continues to be perpetuated points to but one conclusion, namely that of a deliberate policy of destabilization. It is extremely difficult not to relate this policy to the South African security establishment, for which De Klerk carries responsibility.

It is evident that the purpose of this destabilization is the weakening of the opposition to the minority government in the short term and the prevention of the transference of power to the majority in the long term.

The violence not only undermines the process towards negotiations, but also retards a process of development geared to meet the legitimate aspirations of those who have been the victims of apartheid for decades.

The present situation gives cause for alarm on the part of all who are working for justice and peace in South Africa.

As people and organizations committed towards eradication of apartheid in all its forms and the promotion of a non-racial and democratic South Africa, we urgently appeal to the European NGOs to take up the following issues with their governments:

- 1) the immediate fulfillment of the promise to release all political prisoners and to allow exiles to return home through the granting of amnesty, and the repeal of the Internal Security Act;
- 2) the failure of President De Klerk to stop the continuing and spreading violence in South Africa, which requires the acceptance of independent monitoring and security mechanisms, as well as support for the initiatives taken by the South African churches;
- 3) the urgent need for an interim government to ensure that the process towards democracy is genuine. The achievement of the principles laid down in the UN consensus Resolution on South Africa of December 1989, is only possible if the De Klerk government, which represents only one party in the process, is replaced by an interim government representative of the people of South Africa;
- 4) continuation of the full objectives of the EC Special Programme, recognizing that without the achievement of the political objectives no true development can take place in South Africa. Even when the legal aspects of apartheid are removed, the majority of the people will still not have a right to vote for a democratic government, while apartheid practice and legacy will remain for years to come.

To this end, the international community should exercise all available pressures on the South African government.

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