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African National Congress Of South Africa

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**8TH JANUARY, 1987 ADDRESS TO THE SOLEMN MEETING OF THE
UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID
AND THE AFRICA GROUP, COMMEMORATING THE**

**75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
OF SOUTH AFRICA**

DELIVERED BY GERTRUDE SHOPE

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

AND HEAD OF THE ANC WOMEN SECTION.

AMANDLA! — Power To The People

The fighting people of South Africa and their national liberation movement - the African National Congress, its National Executive Committee as well as its militants and combatants, welcome you all and extend the warmest fraternal and revolutionary greetings to all of you.

We would like to heartily thank the 41st Session of the General Assembly for having taken the historic decision to invite and urge member-states of the United Nations to promote and observe the 75th Anniversary of the African National Congress. Our gratitude goes out, equally to His Excellency Mr. Jose Luis Jesus, Charge de Affaires of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cape Verde, His Excellency Mr. Tesfaye Tadesse, the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations, respectively Chairman of the Africa Group for (December) December 1986 and January 1987, the Executive Secretariat of the Organisation of African Unity, the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid and its Secretariat, as well as the Center Against Apartheid, for the major role they played in convening this solemn meeting at a most inconvenient time in the calendar of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

As we mark the 75th Anniversary of the African National Congress, a new spirit is abroad in South Africa. We are conscious of the fact that 75 years of organised political struggle and racist oppression in our country, have brought the oppressed and the oppressor alike, very close to the moment of decision. The past cannot be remade; the future can no longer be denied. That conflict imposes, as never before, an obligation to the international community to decide whether we act in the present in support of an inhuman, terrible and indefensible past for which a handful of white racist and fascist usurpers are responsible or we engage alongside the South African people in struggle for a free, united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

In early 1984 we reported to the international community, what at that time was a new reality brought to birth by the escalating mass-united actions of our people as well as the intensification of the armed struggle waged by Umkhonto We Sizwe, our revolutionary army, in an all-round offensive against apartheid. The ideology of apartheid had begun to collapse, the political program of the Pretoria racist regime had started falling into disarray, while the racist and militaristic

economy was sinking deeper and deeper into crisis. As a result of the foregoing, the regime had started visibly losing control of the situation. Every inch of control that the Pretoria racist regime was forced to relinquish was converted by the people into enhanced revolutionary initiative. Building on their irreverdible successes in their campaign to make apartheid unworkable and the country itself ungovernable, they began to create embryonic structures of people's power, such as street and township committees, popular tribunals and people's defence committees which continue to spread across the country. It was the emergence of such a mass revolutionary base which equipped people's mass-democratic organisations such as the United Democratic Front to survive the Pretoria regime's most intense reign of state terror. It also made possible the creation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions - the largest labour formation in history of our country, in the midst of apartheid's most unprecedented violent repression. It also ensured that the campaigns of our youth and students against Bantu Education and Apartheid would survive the banning of the Congress of South African Students. Through mass-united actions against apartheid the people continue to advance along the path of unity in struggle, fragmenting the traditional lily-white constituency of apartheid into ever-contradictory factions, attracting white progressives and democrats in ever-increasing numbers to the ranks of the struggle, and driving the Pretoria racist regime ever deeper into isolation, mounting desperation, blind and savage fury. In less than two years the Pretoria racist regime has imposed two states of emergency, the second more vicious than the first and both placing the black townships under virtual military rule. In that period well over 2 000 men, women and children have lost their lives at the hands of apartheid's security forces. Under the current state of emergency more than 23 000 people, forty per cent of whom are children, have been detained without trial. The regime has started using so-called reorientation centers designed to brainwash ex-detainees into submission. None of its efforts is paying off. As the determination of our people to liberate themselves continues to outlast every measure of repression introduced by the Pretoria racist regime, the regime has been forced to abandon its pretense to democracy and to resort, in increasing measure, to brute force in a futile attempt to perpetuate itself. It has almost abandoned its ill-conceived, ill-fated, unilaterally designed and universally rejected " reforms " and seems determined today, if it cannot survive, to ensure the destruction of South Africa and its people. It is also matching its blind domestic reign of terror with an escalation of external aggression and destabilisation

of independent African neighbouring states through cross-border raids and invasions. It has stepped up its campaign of abductions and assassinations, support of bandit groups, the use of mercenaries, political destabilisation as well as economic blackmail and sabotage. It continues its illegal and ever more militaristic occupation of Namibia in flagrant violation of Security Council Resolution 435 and in blatant defiance of international opinion. In this climate of strife, war and insecurity that the Pretoria racist regime has created and fuels, it continues to serve notice of its intention to dispense more terror. Following the mysterious and tragic aircraft crash that took ^{down} that great revolutionary leader, visionary man of action and illustrious son of Africa, President Samora Moises Machel from our midst, the Pretoria racist regime openly issued terroristic threats against Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and current Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement and against President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and current Chairman of the Frontline States. We also have ^{every} ^{suspect} reason to ~~fear~~ that the Pretoria racist regime, through its recent military manoeuvres, may be preparing to launch new attacks on independent African neighbouring states.

Apartheid's increasingly war-mongering and militaristic disposition and conduct cannot be reconciled to its "reformist" pretensions. The latter must be rejected, the former be eradicated.

Those countries - the western democracies, which in the face of the ever more universal demand for the total isolation of apartheid, have resisted comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against Pretoria on the grounds that an as yet unspecified restraint will be more productive, they must realise that their positions render them accomplices to the violently criminal career of apartheid against the people of Southern Africa. They must realise that their direct or indirect support for apartheid undermines the very freedom and democracy they claim to cherish.

At their Bahamas Summit in 1985, the Commonwealth Heads of State and Government launched the Eminent Persons Group Initiative to step up the search for a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the problem of apartheid. After the most exhaustive fact-finding missions to South Africa, this non-partisan group of distinguished world leaders, guided by its objective findings sought to broker a negotiated settlement between Pretoria and the people of South Africa represented by the African National Congress and its allies. They had concluded that

this represented the best chance for initiating a peaceful process toward the eradication of apartheid. To this end, the group presented the Pretoria regime with a set of demands which if met, would create the necessary conditions for forward movement. These conditions included the following:

- (i) the dismantling of apartheid,
- (ii) the termination of the existing state of emergency,
- (iii) the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners,
- (iv) the lifting of the ban on the ANC and other political organisations.

Once more the Pretoria racist regime betrayed its intrinsic intransigence. A few days before its meeting with representatives of the EPG who had met the ANC in Lusaka two days earlier, and had just arrived in Cape Town, it launched unprovoked military raids against Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It claimed that the target of these raids were military installations of the ANC in those countries. The real targets as it turned out, were an office complex, civilian residences and UNHCR refugee camp. Even as the world resoundingly condemned this dastardly act, P.W. Botha boasted that this was only the first instalment and that hitherto the regime had used a tiny fraction of its much vaunted military might. He also declared his regime's objective which was to destroy the ANC even if this entailed cross-border raids. The international community correctly viewed this as a clear-cut rejection by Pretoria of any initiative aimed at a negotiated settlement toward meaningful change in South Africa. The EGP logically concluded that the only way to avert the looming interracial bloodbath in South Africa and the region as a whole was to impose sanctions against South Africa without delay. The short thrift given to Sir Geoffrey Howe's ill-conceived initiative by the racist regime ought to have dispelled any doubts about the unrepentant nature of apartheid and reinforced the EPG conclusions that sanctions represented the last hope. In this regard, if there is any truth in the unconfirmed reports that the Kohl Government is contemplating yet another attempt to persuade the Pretoria racist regime to cooperate in the eradication of Apartheid, we call for the abandonment of the very thought of such an initiative. For to proceed with such an initiative is simply to purchase a further lease of time for apartheid and to perpetuate neo-Nazi Apartheid crimes, thereby endorsing the Pretoria racist regime's prescription of a Southern Africa holocaust.

The racist regime has conspicuously failed to suppress the emergence and growth of manifestations of people's power such as street committees, people's defense committees as well as people's tribunals across the country, created by the people in response to ANC directives. It has instead responded to the failure of its repressive measures by further tightening the screws of repression, ^{and} by further intensifying the reign of terror. To this end, the regime is currently maintaining a virtual state of seige or encirclement over numerous black townships. It has declared the largest non-violent and hitherto unbanned anti-apartheid front - the United Democratic Front, a "affected organisation", a sure sign that the UDF, like the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) before it, will soon be banned. This is of course ^{is} part of the regime's campaign to muzzle the voices of those who would otherwise speak for the people. It points once more to the fact that the regime is not interested in negotiations except on its own conditions and with its puppets.

Mr. Chairman,

The whole world, if it sincerely wants to help avert disaster in Southern Africa, can no longer afford to procrastinate. To Pretoria's militaristic domestic repression and external aggression, it must respond with comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against apartheid without further delay.

Any peacemeal and limited sanctions can only facilitate the regime's plans to circumvent sanctions and to impose counter-sanctions against its neighbouring states.

There are already several packages of limited sanctions, such as the Commonwealth, Scandanavian, EEC, and US packages at hand. These must be rendered uniform and expanded toward comprehensiveness, and made mandatory in order to ensure their application simulteneously therefore more effective.

We seize this opportunity to commend the anti-apartheid movement all over the world, especially in the Western countries for its relentless campaign for sanctions. The important advances in this direction, such as is best exemplified by Denmark's decision to impose total trade boycott of racist South African goods and moves taken by Nordic countries in the same direction, mark the beginning of what must lead to the total isolation of the apartheid regime.

We also commend the people of the United States for their efforts against "constructive engagement" which have culminated in the adoption by Congress of Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. We urge them to intensify their campaign to expunge those clauses in that Act which constitute a campaign to isolate the **ANC** and the South African liberation struggle. Despite the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act and the announcement of withdrawals from South Africa by the likes of General Motors, I.B.M., Honeywell, Coca-Cola and others, we urge the American people to exercise vigilance against limited victories and to continue their disinvestment campaign until it results in the total United States boycott of apartheid South Africa.

In the Year of the **75th Anniversary of the African National Congress**, as the struggling people of South Africa advance toward **People's Power**, let this also be the year in which the international community moves toward the total isolation of apartheid. The campaign to totally isolate apartheid must of necessity be accompanied by a very substantial increase in comprehensive assistance to the Frontline States as well as other African States in Southern Africa. It should also go hand in hand with a further intensification of all-round political, diplomatic, financial and material assistance to our liberation struggle led by the **AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS** and our heroic sister-people of Namibia led by the **SOUTH WEST AFRICA PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION (SWAPO)**.

We wish to reaffirm our unflinching solidarity with the Frontline States, the heroic people of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic under the leadership of POLISARIO, the people of Palestine led by the PLO, as well as the people of Nicaragua led by the FSLN; the people of El Salvador led by the FDR/F.M.L.N. and all other peoples struggling against man's inhumanity to man and for a free, humane, prosperous and peaceful future for all mankind.

Finally, we want to thank all our allies, supporters and friends especially the Socialist countries and the USSR, the Nordic Countries, the members of the OAU and Non-Aligned Movement and non-governmental organisations around the world.

FORWARD TO PEOPLE'S POWER !