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15/03/89

STATEMENT OF THE GRAN CONFERENCE

OF ANC CHIEF REPRESENTATIVES AND REGIONAL TREASUREHS

15th to 21st MARCH 1989

A conference of ANC chief representatives and regional treasurers was held in Gran, Norway From the 15th to the 21st March, 1989.

It was also attended by the Secretary General of the ANC, Altred Nzo, the Treasurer General, Thomas Nkobi and other members of the National Executive Committee of the ANC. The total number of delegates participating was 88.

The conference was held in Norway at the invitation and with the support of the International Department of the Norwegian Labour Movement as well as the Norwegian Government.

The Conference was convened to review the situation in South Africa and the rest of Southern Africa. It assessed the implications of this situation for the international diplomatic and political work of the ANC. It also discussed ways and means of obtaining increased political, financial and humanitarian assistance to meet the additional demands arising out of this situation.

The conference was opened by His Excellency, the Foreign Minister of Norway, Mr. Thorvald Stoltenberg who pledged the continued support of the Government of Norway for the ANC, and the struggle to end apartheid, and for the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country.

The conference was also addressed by Mrs Vesla Vetlesan, Secretary of the Solidarity Fund of the Labour Movement (A.I.S) and Mr. Ruse, Chairman of the Norwegian Council on Southern Africa (F.S.A.) who conveyed greetings and messages of solidarity from their organisations and the Norwegian public. The participants also attended a service of solidarity at the Church of St. Nicholas conducted by Rev. Trond Bakkevig, General Secretary of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Norwegian Church Council.

The Conference noted that the people of South Africa continue to suffer under the racist system of apartheid. This system is facing a permanent and deepening political and economic crisis which has been brought about by the struggle inside and outside South Africa.

The conference noted that the recent election of F.W. de Klerk as leader of the ruling Nationalist Party will not result in any significant change in policy. His recent utterances in which he spoke about dialogue can have no substance without the creation of a climate conducive to such dialogue.

The reality is that Nelson Mandela and others continue to be incarcerated, and indeed the number of political prisoners and detainees is increasing. The ANC remains banned and the list of proscribed organisations grew by more than 34 during the past year. To ensure the entrenchment of the system as well as its own survival, the apartheid regime continues to resort to brutal repression as exemplified by the national state of emergency which has been in operation since 1986.

The conference concluded that the situation in South Africa

remains unchanged in its main elements. This imposes a continuing obligation on the AND, the democratic movement and our people as a whole to continue and intensify the struggle. Accordingly we must escalate both the mass political offensive and our armed actions.

Our success in achieving these objectives is guaranteed by the firm determination of the majority of our people to resist repression and advance towards the goal of liberation, regardless of the sacrifices they have to make. The ongoing hunger strike of political detainees is a demonstration of this mood of militant defiance. The workers summit convened in Johannesburg on the 4th and 5th of March not only reflected this mood but also added enormously to the growing unity of the anti-apartheid forces within the country.

The conference noted the strategic importance to the whole region of Southern Africa of the agreements concerning Angola and Namibia. It welcomed the prospect of peace for the people of Angola and independence for Namibia. However conference reiterated that there is a continuing danger that the regime and its surrogates will attempt to undermine and sabotage these processes. An important objective of the regime's strategy is to marginalise or destroy SNAPO, the recognised leader of the Namibian people. All this calls for maximum vigilance and unity by the international community to compel Pretoria to honour its commitments.

The conference noted that the regime has not abandoned its efforts to impose itself on the countries of Southern Africa as a regional power, through economic and military destabilisation. In this regard the conference condemned Pretoria's continuing support for the MNR and Unita and its persistent attacks and sabotage against Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

The conference noted that despite the absence of any change in its policies within South Africa and in the region, the Pretoria regime has launched an offensive to gain legitimacy and break out of its isolation. It therefore condemned the visit of Pretoria's Foreign Minister, Roelof Botha, to the United Kingdom which was part of this process. It further concluded that the reports inspired by the regime about the imminent release of Nelson Mandela are designed to undermine the campaign for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and to improve the image of the regime so that it can gain greater international acceptability.

The conference noted that as the crisis of the apartheid system deepens, the Pretoria regime is heightening its offensive against the ANC. This takes many forms, including the physical elimination of our members and representatives, the spreading of disinformation about our organisation and attempts to foment divisions and conflict in our ranks.

The conference noted that the Frontline States, the OAU, the Non-Aligned Movement and the majority of the member states of the United Nations continue to stand firm in their opposition to apartheid and their support for our struggle. In this context conference rejected recent reports that the Soviet Union had changed its policy towards apartheid, the ANC and our struggle as a whole.

The varied attempts of Pretoria to regain the strategic

initiative have Failed. The balance of forces continues to Favour Further advances towards the elimination of the apartheid system. Within the country, the AND, the democratic movement and the millions of our struggling people remain the decisive force for meaningful change. Together they have an urgent responsibility to step up the struggle For the earliest realisation of the objective of a democratic South Africa.

This requires among other things, Further strengthening of the structures of the ANC inside the country, greater mobilisation of the people and the unity of all anti-apartheid forces, the intensification of the armed struggle and the total isolation of the apartheid regime.

These and other urgent tasks call For the generation of significantly larger resources. we need to extend more assistance to the victims of apartheid repression inside the country, as well as those who have been Forced to Flee the country.

To expand our international work, we have to increase the number of our diplomatic missions and provide them with the human and material requirements. This will improve our capacity to keep the world community informed about the situation under apartheid, to counter the information black-out and to familiarise the international community with the aims, objectives, programmes and policies of the ANC and the democratic movement of our country. The conference noted that all world Forces opposed to apartheid have an obligation to assist us to meet the demand For increased Financial and material resources. This is a necessary condition For the successful advance of the world community towards the goal of the Final elimination of the apartheid crime against humanity.

Accordingly the conference elaborated new programmes aimed at obtaining these resources and improving our organisational capacity to carry out our manifold tasks. Conference also agreed on the need to intensify the campaign For sanctions and paid special attention to such specific issues as the arms embargo, financial sanctions and the possibility For further action in such areas as Japan, the USA, and the European Community.

The conference paid tribute to our late colleague and Former head of our Department of International Affairs, Johnny Makatini, For his outstanding contribution to the struggle. It warmly welcomed the appointment of Thabo Mbeki as the new head of the Department of International Affairs.

Conference was also informed of Further decisions of the National Executive Committee to strengthen the existing missions and to open new ones. New offices will be opened in, among other capitals, Washington, Madrid, Tunis, Tripoli, Kampala, Buenos Aires, Accra and Managua.

Conference expressed its profound appreciation For the assistance extended to the ANC by the Government of Norway, the Solidarity Fund of the Labour Movement and the people of Norway which enabled us to meet to consider some urgent issues confronting us. Conference also expressed its thanks to Inger Helene, Ole Anton Klothus and the rest of the staff of the Granavold Guest House For their warm hospitality which contributed to making our conference a success.

On the occasion of March 21st, the 29th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre now observed as the International Day of Solidarity with the People of South Africa, we reiterate our call to the people of the world to isolate the murderous apartheid system, extend all round support to the ANC and the struggling people of our country and in other ways to contribute to the creation of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.
FORWARD TO MASS ACTION FOR PEOPLE'S POWER.

GRAN, NORWAY.

MARCH 21, 1989.