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REPORT TO WOMEN SECTION - EAST AFRICA
ON WOMEN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN NAIROBI - KENYA

JULY 15-25

1. AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE REPORT

Is to give those who could not attend the true reflection of the Conference and to account on what we as representatives of the East African region did together with the rest of the A.N.C. Women Delegation.

2. CONSTRAINTS

Some of our delegates due to sponsors shortage the A.N.C. found Treasury had to pay thus draining our resources but nevertheless the A.N.C. found it necessary that a big and strong delegation will have to go.

3. RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that from time to time the secretariat should always remember sending some of our women here to conferences or any meetings of this nature as this helps to develop us.

1. INTRODUCTION

I HART NGOMI and PEARL SERVEI were appointed by the A.N.C. Women Secretariat to join a big delegation of about 30 from all over where the A.N.C. have its women membership. We left Maseru to Dar on the 10 of July 1985 and flew to Nairobi the same evening.

On our arrival at the airport we were made to wait for an hour whilst our passports were being checked by the Security. It was ANC, VIETNAM, P.L.O. AFGHANISTAN and NICARAGUA who were made to wait whilst a big crowd of American Women were left to pass with no problems what so ever.

Finally we were taken out of the Airport by airport buses and drove to Kenyatta University campus where because of time spent at the airport the registration team had left and we had to go and sleep so as to register the following morning.

We were then taken to one of the faculties of the university where the WIDF had housed all its member countries and the following we met Cde NITTA BEPEREPERE whilst buses were waiting to take all delegates to the main campus for different activities mainly registration.

Fortunately for us A.N.C. members who reached the capital first had already registered for some of us so that we had no problem.

We then mingled among different nationalities trying to catch up with

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We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause, but would like to stress that FOCUS itself will continue to contain relevant and up-to-date information on South Africa and Namibia, and the irregular Briefing Papers will concentrate on issues of special concern that require a more detailed presentation.

21 April 1985

information and different manoeuvres and also to talk about A.N.C. Zin general as well as the situation at home.

Meals were all catered for by WIDF as well as transport for work.

There A.N.C. delegation was almost housed together only a few were outside the faculty mainly because of sponsors. There were women from H.Q. - LUSAKA, BRITAIN, IRELAND, SWAZILAND, LESOTHO, BOTSWANA, ZIMBABWE, EAST AFRICA, MAPUTO, ANGOLA, and from home.

2. ORGANISATION

On the 2nd day most of us were there and a meeting was called by the Head of delegation Cde GETRUDE SHOPE to plan our system of working and how to report back.

It was then agreed that there should be a starring committee which from time to time will be able to meet and take decisions in the interim whilst the membership is busy with other tasks.

Its Composition - Cde GETRUDE SHOPE chairman

- Treasurer
- Transport Officer
- D.I.P.
- Immigration

We were meeting every evening to review the achievements and problems of the day and get developments from the Head of delegation about Conference. This proved to be very usefull whilst different units with its head were set up to respond to meetings and initiate meetings amongst different delegations.

Workshops according to the programme were distributed to each individual according to her capabilities. Most of us were mastering different things e.g. Education, Administration, Church matters, Student affairs, Women affairs, Health affairs, Leadership roles, Children affairs and many other @ questions which we had to tackle. We were then every morning distributed accordingly. Each would cover 4 workshops a day or even more including meetings of own in the evening as well as meeting different delegates for lobby and consultational. Every morning we would pull one another's arm to respond to time set for 1 workshop. There were about 250 workshops.

NGO CONFERENCE AND UN

There were 2 conferences held. One by Non Governmental Organisations and the 2 by United Nations Governmental Organisation.

THE NGO CONFERENCE

Started on the 11 - 19. People who attended this one are different individual, collective organisation with different aims and objectives. Some individuals who could manage to attend the conference came. These lots of progressive organisations that support our struggle and follow with great interest the situation at home. It was termed the "grass root conference" by lots of delegates because that's where you could talk all your thoughts and come with solutions to different problems. That is where some thought they could organise themselves powerful organisations and earn themselves money but did not manage because women were very sharp when used.

For instance the American delegation which was the biggest of them all was very progressive especially the black Americans who are outright condemning apartheid and Reagan's Administration and supporting liberation movements A.N.C. and SWAPO as well as other progressive forces the world over.

We had to do a lot of work intense of making different individuals in workshops to understand our struggle and most workshops were successful.

There were also forces of ~~the~~ reaction who tried by all means to reduce the NGO conference to discuss petty issues like the right of lesbianism, developments and equality questions only as well as peace leaving out political issues which belong to the UN conference as far as they were concerned. The NGO conference was to talk about modelling and power of women in general and feminist tendencies whilst fighting for the same equality and rights with men. But the power of progressive forces was too much and this spirit was destroyed. In all workshops nevertheless forces of progress had to work hard to convince passive participants of the role of peace, equality development and importance of women in politics the world over. There were in some situations very serious different political views from those who colonise or the colonised/dispossessed whereby police had to intervene.

The NGO conference did not have a closing ceremony where women could make their own declaration since it was their views will end the workshops. Different press conference meetings were organised as part of closing ceremony pledging continuity and support of A.N.C. and SWAPO as well support the armed struggle of the latter.

The UN conference commenced 3 days before the NGO conference ended.

As it started different messages were given one of the very first ones was A.N.C's message to conference pledging for support and calling for mandatory sanctions against South Africa.

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One of the key notes in the opening address of President Arab Moi of Kenya was that women came to discuss Development, Peace, and Equality and should not allow themselves to be absorbed by political issues which will hinder development of their different countries.

As conference delegates gave their messages the delegation from New Zealand led by the Minister of police who is a woman gave a very powerful speech and showing the New Zealand unwavering support for the South African struggle led by A.N.C. All progressive forces were overwhelmed and clapped hands for this delegation infinitively. Our delegation led by Cde GETHURU went over to them to show them our appreciation and happiness on the support they're giving A.N.C.

A group of A.N.C. delegates was organised and went to meet them thanking them of their unwavering support and solidarity. We sang and hugged one another. Others even wept of joy. For a few minutes there was a bond between us and them. We exchanged addresses thereafter we left the Kenyatta Conference Centre back to Kenyatta University campus with high morale.

The A.N.C. registered great support from Conference where even Maureen Reagan herself had to condemn Apartheid as she had no choice. The political climax had reached the highest peak where the forces of reaction felt seriously threatened and had to fasten their seatbelts. They worked very hard against progress but were defeated. Not a single country praised Apartheid as it would just be engulfed with shame.

The A.N.C. delegation finalised the conference atmosphere by occupying those seats reserved for South African white women who were to be led by Botha's wife who never came fearing the anger of boycott spirit that was ready. It is a timely act that was reported by Rand Daily Mail with no alterations and GETHURU SHOPS quoted as she spoke. We were all amazed. This act was supported by all progressive forces when A.N.C. consider its friends and allies. Our delegation finally moved back to A.N.C. observers status seats.

There was increasing support for A.N.C. even among African countries who had to come together and agree on a common strategy of how to approach questions and the question of not discussing politics as well as Apartheid and Zionism.

There was general consensus that there was no way of not discussing politics let alone not talking / discussing the 2 abominable systems - Apartheid and Zionism. There was also problems in terms of agreeing with the Secretariat Declaration of conference and that dragged for 2 days or so which finally some delegates had to compromise their positions.

All in all the forces of progress took over the conference though though thick and thin they went. The atmosphere and campaigning against Soviet Union need not mentioning but the truth and the Socialist ideals they stand for could not not be charged.

Our delegates to UN Conference were led by Cde ~~CHUMBA~~ ~~SHOBE~~ other members were RUTH KUMAKI, RUTHA SIO. + 2 others

Finally Cde C.E. TANDU and SAN NUNDA gave a joint press conference in Nairobi as part of further mobilization of our struggle. People from all over were being made aware of our struggle, of its aims and objectives.

PREPARED BY : MARY NUNDA