

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OLIVER TAMBO, GIVEN ON BEHALF OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, AT THE SUMMIT MEETING OF THE PREFERENTIAL TRADE AREA FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN STATES, ARUSHA - DECEMBER, 1988.

Mr. Chairman,

Your excellencies, distinguished heads of states and governments, Honourable Ministers, Esteemed Heads of Delegations,

Comrades and Friends,

Patriots all of our mother continent;

It is indeed an honour and a privilege to greet this important gathering of the PTA states for Eastern and Southern Africa on behalf of the liberation movements of Namibia and South Africa.

On behalf of the struggling people of the yet to be liberated countries of Namibia and South Africa, we wish to record our heartfelt appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded our respective delegations in this beautiful and historic meeting place, Arusha, which ranks as one of the leading seats in the world for significant occasions such as this.

Mr. Chairman, Fellow Delegates, it is with special pleasure that I find myself responding to a request to pass a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chairman, and to welcome the incoming Chairman.

Your excellency, comrade Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda: on behalf of all present we thank you for the

dynamic leadership and effort which has marked your year in office as Chairman of the PTA. We know your interest in the work of this body has not been exhausted, and we know that the proud and rejuvenated Uganda

a which you lead will play an increasingly significant role, not only in the PTA, but indeed in the liberation of Southern Africa.

Your excellency, comrade Hassan Mwinyi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tanzania, allow me to congratulate you on behalf of all those present on succeeding comrade Museveni as Chairman of our PTA.

We are sure you will carry on where he has left off, and we are assured that Tanzania will continue to be a lodestar for the liberation of our continent and the destruction of apartheid.

And last, but not least, on this score^ fellow delegates, allow me to take the opportunity of recording our sincerest gratitude to the Secretary General of the PTA for his tireless services to the Authority

- Good health to him, more strength to his elbow, and long may he continue to serve!

Our meeting is taking place against the background of an extremely difficult world economic situation for the developing countries.' Although our energies in the liberation movements are concentrated on the escalating liberation struggle, the problems afflicting the economies of the independent countries of the region are, indeed, not

unconnected to our own principle concern. The struggle for an integrated and all-round economic development and the struggle to eradicate the last bastion of colonialism are deeply interwoven.

We believe that a speedy economic integration among the 20 countries of Eastern and Southern Africa in the sectors of trade and agriculture, industry and transport, communications and energy will enable them to achieve self-sustaining economic development. Their collective self-reliance in all these sectors will make it possible for them to participate in international transactions as equal partners with other countries of the world. We are proud that the PTA Authority has recorded progress in realising its objectives.

However, peace and stability, and a climate that is really conducive to all-round development in our sub-region will remain unattainable without the victory of the liberation struggle in South Africa and Namibia. The apartheid regime remains wedded to a policy of deliberate destabilisation of the front line states. It seeks to prevent the economic independence of the countries of our sub-region, hoping to keep them in perpetual dependency. In seeking to fulfill its objectives, the PTA Authority is, therefore, actively pitted against apartheid's sub-imperialist aspirations.

Freed from the shackles of apartheid, the South African economy has the basic economic infrastructure and capacity to act as the engine room for the development of the entire Southern and Central African region. It is an economy that is a collective product, built over some nine decades by millions of South African workers, and indeed by workers from throughout our region.

But today it is not even able to meet the most basic needs of our own people. It is, in fact, an economy in deep crisis. The slight, consumer-

led recovery of the last three months of 1987 and the first three months of 1988 proved to be a soap bubble, and merely served to underline the fundamental impasse of the apartheid economy.

Among the most notable symptoms of this impasse are

- * the extremely high rate of unemployment,
- * a continued dependence on the uncertain (and currently low) foreign exchange receipts from mineral exports,
- * a continued negative growth rate,
- * and the negative rates of investment in new capital.

This last symptom is worth underlining. Those within our country, I am thinking of the big national monopolies, who scream the loudest about the supposedly dire consequences of sanctions and disinvestment, are often themselves the most active disinvestors - not out of political principle but out of economic self-interest. The major South African monopolies, those who have so long reaped the benefits of apartheid's cheap labour structures, are now no longer so certain of the medium term

future. They are increasingly unwilling to commit themselves heavily to long-term investment in fixed capital. As a result, the stock of fixed capital has been declining in our country since 1985. The amount of resources directed to new gross investment in real, physical terms declined by 33 percent between the end of 1981 and 1987.

The political and economic crises of apartheid are at once distinct and deeply interrelated. It is apartheid colonialism that has, through its oppression of the overwhelming majority of South Africans, left a deeply skewed and uniquely underdeveloped national market. It is this underdevelopment that accounts for South Africa's continued over-

reliance on both mineral exports to and on imports of capital goods from the developed countries. South Africa is no longer such a favoured haven for foreign investment.

It is clear that even from a strictly economic, let alone a moral or political perspective, apartheid must be destroyed. It is a scourge on our country, on our region, on our continent, and indeed on humanity at large. It must be removed.

In this regard, may I underline that, despite their still limited scope, sanctions against apartheid South Africa are working. We commend the efforts of independent African states on this front, and call for greater collective action by all PTA states to strengthen economic sanctions against the Pretoria regime, as decided by the Second Extraordinary Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in May 1987.

Collapsing foreign and domestic investor confidence, and the imposition of sanctions, however limited, have contributed to making Pretoria's regional military adventures more difficult to sustain. We should not underestimate Pretoria's growing international isolation as a factor in compelling it to retreat from Angola and sit down at the negotiating table to discuss Namibian independence.

But of course, these developments are even more immediately related to the historic defeat of the apartheid war machine in Southern Angola. Those so-called experts in the West, who specialise in extolling South Africa's economic and military strength, have had a rude awakening following the dramatic turn of events this past year. Pretoria's attempt to inflict a decisive defeat on the Angolan government forces at Cuito Cuanavale has ended in the humiliation of the SADF, its ignominious retreat from Angola, and the collapse of Botha and Malan's dreams in that area. The myth of the SADF's invincibility has been exposed and

glaring weaknesses made visible. The defence of Cuito Cuanavale will go down as an historic turning point in Southern Africa and quite conceivably as Pretoria's Waterloo. We pay tribute to the heroism, fighting skills and determination of the joint Angolan-Cuban-SWAPO forces that have driven the racist aggressors from the soil of the People's Republic of Angola; changing the face of Southern Africa.

The arms embargo too has contributed to South Africa's defeat, for despite strenuous efforts by the South African arms industry, with no little assistance from Israel and other Western countries, the SADF's newly modified Mirage aircraft, tanks and artillery weapons were no match for those of their adversary. Many commentators in South Africa conceded the chilling reality that "the SADF had lost the vital air supremacy." We cannot underestimate the significance of this for our frontline states and our continent. From now on the struggling masses of Africa on the one hand, and the white racists of South Africa on the other will live with this reality: the apartheid war machine is

vulnerable and can be defeated.

The trouncing of the SADF in Southern Angola forced Pretoria to the negotiating table and brought tremendous international pressure to bear for the implementation of UN Resolution 435, paving the way for Namibian independence. But there is still a considerable distance to go before we can rest assured of the installation of genuine independence, and a SWAPO led government, in Namibia. Every step of the process must be carefully monitored, with the maximum unity and vigilance of the African states and progressive forces, giving the fullest possible support to our SWAPO brothers and sisters. Pretoria can never be trusted to carry out its end of the bargain, unless it is forced to do so. Pretoria does not respond to the sweet voice of reason. We must never lower our guard.

We cannot achieve regional peace in Southern Africa unless we have the force to back-up a peace process. The dramatic turning point in Angola and Namibia bears that out.

International sanctions and the historic military defeat of Pretoria's armies in Southern Angola have forced Botha to the negotiating table. No less an impact on this developing situation has been made by the struggling masses of Namibia and South Africa, who throughout 1988 have given Botha no breathing space.

In Namibia, 1988 has seen an unprecedented upsurge of mass struggle spearheaded by students and workers under the leadership of SWAPO. Showing tremendous courage, the Namibian people including school students demanded the withdrawal of South African army bases from their country. The rapid growth of trade union and student organisation in Namibia is vital in the new phase of struggle and will help SWAPO lay the foundations of a future democratic and liberated country. Together with the heroic combatants of PLAN and SWAPO activists they will form the bulwark against racist manoeuvres to subvert the legitimate transfer of power to the people.

Within South Africa, the racists in their latest attempt to legitimise apartheid administrative structures, held nation-wide local elections on October 26. Despite three years of martial law, the detention of tens of thousands of activists, the banning of the major mass democratic organisations, and despite a prior votes system that allowed voting to occur up to 2 weeks before the actual election day, the people of South Africa, in their millions, responded to the call for a mass boycott of these ghetto elections.

On election day itself less than 2 percent of those blacks eligible by age to vote, and 3.5 percent of those put on the voting register by the regime, went to the polls. Even if we believe the government's claims for prior votes, the total of those eligible by age to vote was under 9 percent. As one example of the sham of these elections, in Soweto 25 000 votes were recorded in a city of 2 million inhabitants. Countrywide, in

nearly half of the black wards there was no voting at all because there were no candidates, or only one could be found.

The overwhelming majority our people understand perfectly well that the apartheid regime has not changed its heart, that it must be resisted and

destroyed. We must take our lead from this fundamental point of

departure'. Just as the racists seek to present their retreat from Angola as an act of peace, so in regard to the release of political prisoners it attempts to make a virtue out of an enforced necessity. Facing mounting international and domestic pressure to release Nelson Mandela

and all political prisoners, the apartheid regime is manoeuvring

desperately. It has presented the recent release of Harry Gwala of the ANC and Zeph Motopheng of the PAC as an humanitarian act. This is

nothing more than rank and disgusting opportunism, Harry Gwala and Zeph

Motopheng are both advanced in age and have been seriously ill for many years. No belated release can cover up the inhumanity of their incarceration.

In regard to the release of Nelson Mandela, we must not allow the regime's hints about conditional release to confine us to the side-lines as expectant spectators. Let us maintain our world-wide offensive, increase the pressure with our clear and unequivocal demand - comrade Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners must be freed unconditionally and without delay!

The apartheid regime, our common enemy, is not 'in the process of changing into a force for peace and reform. It continues to hang dozens of patriots. It continues to maintain its state of emergency. It continues to detain, torture and murder children.

In the year ahead, we assure you that the liberation forces and the peoples of South Africa and Namibia will press forward with their all-round offensive against apartheid colonialism. In this task we are greatly strengthened by the boundless solidarity of the peoples of Eastern and Southern Africa.

LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA!

FORWARD TO A LIBERATED NAMIBIA!

DOWN WITH APARTHEID, THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES, VICTORY IS CERTAIN!