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Mr President,

Your Excellencies,

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Honourable

Distinguis' ed guests,

It is indeed a signal honour, to me personally and to the ANC, that I have been invited to address the 1986 conference of the I.L.O.

This occasion, which coincides with the second International conference on Sanctions Against Apartheid South Africa, can be explained only in terms of the mounting international concern with the situation in our country and its implications for our region and the world as a whole .

For the past two decades the ILO has been seized with the question of racial domination and exploitation in South Africa. It has already translated this concern into concrete actions which include numerous trailblazing resolutions on labour matters and a programme of assistance to the trade union movement in South Africa. The ANC is highly appreciative of this unprecedented opportunity to address this august gathering and is profoundly grateful for the support it signifies.

The ILO is one of several international institutions, created in the aftermath of one of the bloodiest conflicts in human history, whose purpose is to promote understanding amongst the peoples with a view to securing world peace. That this noble goal still eludes humanity owes not least to the sterling efforts that the ILO has made over seven decades.

The ILO was specifically charged with the responsibility of defending and protecting the rights of workers. It remains true, that in spite of the giant strides Humanity has taken during the course of this century, the overwhelming majority of the world's population earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. In addressing

the ILO therefore one is speaking indirectly to every continent. Our mastery of technology has greatly reduced the distances that separated nation from nation in the past. All recognise that ours is indeed a very small planet, whose capacity to sustain life in particular measure depends on a delicate balance between the need to continuously improve the quality of human life and respect for nature. Yet, despite these impressive achievements, it is equally true that there are still vast differences in life chances both within and amongst the various countries of our world.

The ILO is among the few international instruments that has consistently striven to narrow the gap that separates the haves from the have-nots; the rich from the poor; the powerful from the powerless.

South Africa, .. encapsulates the contrast?

we have referred to within the borders of one country. It is indeed a country characterised by extremes. On the one hand, immense power wielded by a handful of wealthy corporations; at the opposite end

the most debilitating powerlessness, imposed on the many, as a condition for the wealth and power of the former. Cheek by jowl with the magnificent skyscrapers of central Johannesburg one finds the miserable 'match-box houses' of Soweto, standing row upon row along unlit dusty streets. In the shadow of the glittering make-believe world called Sun City are the destitute dumping grounds of 'Venter's Id, where men, women and children are condemned to fend off the bitter cold of highveld winters with little more than a tent sail. A stone's throw from the overflowing grain silos of the maize triangle children die of malnutrition.

Such contrasts are of course not unique to South Africa. But it is < South Africa alone that this cleavage runs consistently along lines

of race and skin-colour; is entrenched in legislation and state-backed practice; and is underwritten by armed force. It is the tensions generated by this cleavage that are the crucial ingredient in the crisis that grips South Africa today. In its desperation to salvage this palpably inequitable and oppressive system, the -regim has resorted to a savage campaign of brutal repression, which each passing day claims scores of Black lives.

Not content with the bloodletting to which it has subjected our people, the Botha regime seeks to internationalise the conflict by launching raids across its borders and armed invasions into neighbouring states. Even as we speak racist troops are in occupation of vast tracts of territory in southern Angola; Pretoria's forces are poised to strike across the frontier into Zimbabwe; and the regime arrogates unto itself the right to attack any country, south of the Sahara*.

Two decades ago, my predecessor in this office, Chief Albert Luthe, launched an international appeal calling for the imposition of sanctions on apartheid South Africa. At that time we referred to policies of the racist regime as a threat to world peace. There are few today who call into question the veracity of that characterization because Pretoria has repeatedly demonstrated its incontrovertible truth with its deeds.

That the pernicious doctrines of racism still poison relations amongst the people of our country and that the upholders of that system threaten to plunge the entire southern cone of our continent into a regional conflagration is one of the greatest tragedies of our times. Yet this is a tragedy imposed upon us by cruel and uncaring fate. The racists act with impunity precisely because they

have received assurances, signalled in a number of diplomatic gestures and explicit statements, that they have nothing to fear by way of retribution from the most powerful states in the west. Placing faith in its superiority in military technology and

conventional-military force, Pretoria is engaged in the export of counter-revolution along a frontier that stretches from the Indian Ocean in the east, to the Atlantic in the west. It is a matter of record, which even its best friends no longer care to deny, that the Pretoria regime is the chief organising centre of regional

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tensions through its policy of destabilisation and surrogate warfare

Botha himself, his leading military commanders and other prominent

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figures in his administration have repeatedly announced their determination to continue along his course* Their commitment to the preservation of racist domination is backed by a resolve that shirks at no action - no matter how base or criminal - that will serve their objectives, There is, therefore, no realistic prospect of peace in our region as long as the apartheid regime remains in place.

We have chosen as our theme for today; "Democracy as the Road to a Lasting Peace in Southern Africa". Ours is a message of hope. But it is our belief that hope too is not ordained from on high. It springs from the confidence we invest in human action and its capacity to make and remake our world. Tyranny can and shall be conquered as long as there are men and women with the courage to enter the lists against it. The urgency of the present and potential dangers in South Africa and the region require that we boldly grasp the nettle of the necessity to destroy the apartheid system.

Mr President,

We can begin to discern the features of the new South Africa that will surely be born at the close of this phase of our struggle in rudimentary institutions of popular power that are being forged in the crucible of actual struggle. While the mass upsurge that has swept through our country has laid waste many of the institutions of domination and oppression, it has also been a creative process giving expression to the resourcefulness of the people. In practice at the grass roots, ordinary men and women have begun to infuse meaning into the big words "self-determination", "freedom" and "justice" by rediscovering the simple virtues of democratic discussion. As the people re-appropriate the power to shape and determine their own lives, so have the machineries of apartheid been rendered dysfunctional. Popularly created courts, whose primary task is to rehabilitate and correct the wrong-doer, have begun to administer justice in more than a score of cities, spread across the face of South Africa. A National Education Crisis Committee is seized with the problem of devising a "people's education" based on the participation and cooperation between parents, teachers and students. At the centre of this burgeoning democratic process stands the black working class - the oppressed millions of town and country, who refuse to be consigned to the footnotes of history

It is the tragic irony of our situation that we have been forced to wage war in order to bring about the preconditions for peace.

The oppressor regime has not stood by idly to watch its state apparatus being dismantled. It has resisted change with all the force and guile it can muster. In addition to the SADF and the Police force, the regime has enlisted into its ranks gangs of assassins, vigilantes and has called into existence private armies trained, equipped and often led by its own officers working undercover.

These latter-day storm-troopers have been given carte blanc

to murder, maim and burn out members and supporters of the democratic movement. They have to bear responsibility for the reign of terror that prevails in many parts of Natal, in parts of the Transvaal and more recently in Croosroads. The existence of these and the repressive violence of the regular forces of the racist state has imposed upon our people the duty of creating organs of self-defence and mass resistance. There is nothing new in the violence that pervades the Black townships. What has significantly changed is that it is no longer one-sided. As modern weapons replace the stone as the principal weapon of self-defence, we can expect to witness more and more racist troops losing their lives in armed clashes with the people.

Those who find this turn of events particularly disturbing have a moral obligation to act speedily to contain the levels of violence that will be found necessary to dismantle the system of apartheid,

It is abundantly clear that so long as the regime's capacity to resist change remains undiminished, so much greater will be the level of violence.

Apartheid necessarily entails a large measure of violence against the vast majority of South Africans. The physical and psychic wounds it inflicts daily on its victims far exceeds the violence which may be required to destroy it. In its effort to demonstrate the unassailability of its power, the Pretoria regime has piled up a grisly record of massacres. In the teeth of the murderous precision of the enemy's arsenal our people remain uncontrolled. Those who sincerely wish to break the continuum of violence must of necessity, address its primary source, the system of apartheid.

Mr President,

Distinguished delegates and guests,

V/e feel that it is incumbent upon us to reiterate once again that the ANC has never been an obstacle in the search for a peaceful resolution of South Africa's problems. Quite the contrary! We turned to armed struggle after we had satisfied ourselves that we had exhausted every avenue and means of peaceful change. As recently as the past six months the ANC against its own better

judgement, participated in the Commonwealth Initiative presided over by the nine eminent persons, in the belief that

as long as one feeble flame of hope remained v/e should not allow it

to be

extinguished. Botha and his colleagues in the racist parliament stamped out that last remaining spark in an orgy of bombings and airborne attacks on the morning of May 19th. Good intentions are no longer sufficient in the face of such intransigence. Those who seriously seek peace must now indict the

wreckers of peace. The other honourable course remains open.

In the last instance it is the people of South Africa themselves who will define and build the institutions of freedom in our country; The ANC has never conceived of international support as a means of bringing down the apartheid system; we have always recognised that the principal theatre of struggle is South Africa itself and the pre-eminent agent of change is ourselves. International action can however complement the actions of our people and thus hasten the day of our liberation. V/e have been compelled to employ the instruments of war as a means of suppressing violence. The search for peace can only be successful if it is pursued in association with and in support of the national liberation movement.

The complete overthrow of the apartheid system is the precondition for the construction of a genuinely free society based on the

institutions of national sovereignty and popular power envisaged in the Freedom Charter. The seizure of power by the people of South Africa will transform our country from a feared and despised region into a good neighbour, at peace with itself and with others, making a valuable contribution to our common problems.

Hr President,

The oppressed people of South Africa have embarked on the last phase of a trying but uplifting march to the freedom. We have boldly staked out our claim to a fuller and freer life and nothing will deter us from reaching our goal. This period in the history of South Africa must come to a close with the total destruction of the apartheid system. Peace in our region is attainable only through our freedom; and our freedom is the sole guarantee of peace in our region.

The Struggle Continues!

Victory is Certain!