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Statement by Mr. Johan Nordenfelt
Representative of the Secretary-General and Director,
Centre against Apartheid
at the Seminar on "South Africa's Socio-Economic Problems:
Future Role of the United Nations System, in Addressing Them"
. Windhoek, 22-24 May 1992

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my honour, and privilege to have been asked to make a
brief remark on behalf of the Secretary-General, and to bring to
. you all and the Government and people of Namibia his greetings
and best wishes. I also bring you the greetings of Mr. James
Jonah, the Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs, who
unfortunately is unable to join us here as initially planned.
This seminar takes place at a time when positive
developments in South Africa hold out a hope that the apartheid
system will come to an end in the relatively near future. The
prospects of an agreed transitional arrangement being put in

place in the next couple of months makes holding this seminar now not only timely but necessary.

As the theme of the seminar suggests, the United Nations system recognizes that it will have an important role to play. I think, too, there is a recognition that in South Africa a democracy movement has been developing from which an institutional frame-work has emerged for popular participation in the process of economic restructuring. This is a feature that may have important implications both for development policy and for international assistance. The United Nations system recognizes that assistance to South Africa need to be well thought through, against the background of those and other features that may be specific to South Africa, and that assistance will have to be well prepared and well coordinated.

South Africa's specific priorities after Apartheid will have to be determined by South Africans. It seems clear, though, that key areas that have to be addressed with urgency, concern redressing the socio-economic disadvantages that are a legacy of Apartheid, restoring peace and stability in a country so long torn by violence, and ensuring a sustained economic growth process in which all South Africans can take part. In other words, a new Government will be called upon to meet the pressing needs of the population as a matter of priority while it strives to identify new sources of growth, and put into place those

policies that could capture opportunities for the benefit of the whole population.

This seminar is basically technical in nature. It intends to bring South African experts involved in the study, planning or execution of future socio-economic development, together with representatives of various United Nations offices and agencies, and also of some other inter-governmental organizations, with well established competence and experience in technical cooperation and assistance in their respective areas. We hope that a future coordinated and expanded United Nations role in South Africa, as envisaged in resolution 46/79A, will derive some impetus from this seminar. Your collective efforts here will constitute a guide of sorts in determining the parameters of United Nations participation in building a new South Africa. I trust, therefore, that the next three days will be marked by frank and insightful contributions from all.

Finally, I wish to join Ambassador Gambari in expressing our appreciation to the government and people of Namibia for hosting this seminar and for their hospitality. I thank you, and wish you all a fruitful deliberations.