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CONFIDENTIAL

**SUBSTANCE REPORT ON THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE NAM
COORDINATING BUREAU, CARTAGENA (COLOMBIA), 18 - 20 MAY 1998**

1. SUMMARY

1.1 A Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, in preparation of the XIIth Summit, was held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 18 to 20 May 1998. The Meeting was attended by a South African delegation of 18 officials, led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. This report outlines controversial issues that surfaced during the Cartagena meeting, issues that South Africa should take note of in its preparations for the XIIth Summit.

1.2 An overview of the Cartagena Meeting will reveal that the South African delegation made a number of successful interventions in the discussions and the debates on a number of important issues. Many of South Africa's inputs on issues such as disarmament, information technology, health and the right to development were accepted and integrated into the final communique.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 The Ministerial Meeting of the NAM Coordinating Bureau was held on 19 and 20 May 1998. It was preceded on 18 May 1998 by a meeting of senior officials, which negotiated the Final Cartagena Communique that resulted from the meeting. The main objective of the meeting was to finalise the preparations for the forthcoming Durban Summit. Ministerial meetings

traditionally issue a communique which includes positions on current affairs and, in the case of this meeting, partly sets the framework for the Final Document of the forthcoming Summit.

- 2.1.2 Senior officials in the Political and Economic Committees negotiated consensus text on a number of controversial issues. (Note that both the economic and social issues are discussed in the Economic Committee). South Africa as host of the next Summit and responsible for the compilation of a draft Summit document must take note of these.

2.2 POLITICAL ISSUES

2.2.1 REFORM OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

The issue of the restructuring of the Security Council was discussed in an informal break-away group of the Political Committee. The meeting was chaired by the Ambassador of Egypt, who is also the chairman of the NAM Working Group on the Reform of the Security Council. Egypt's ambitions for a Security Council seat is well known, and their initiatives in respect of Security Council reform must be carefully scrutinized.

The discussion was dominated by the issue of Article 108 and its implications for the expansion of the Security Council. A further complicating element in the discussions was the conflict between India and Pakistan. The NAM position on this matter was adopted during the New York NAM Ministerial Meeting in 1997. This was in response to the possibility of a "quick-fix" expansion of the Council with only Germany and Japan acceding to Permanent Membership status. The NAM then adopted a position which stated that member

states should "faithfully comply with the provisions of Article 108 of the Charter with respect to any resolution with Charter amendment implications". Article 108 of the Charter requires that amendments to the Charter will enter into force when they have been adopted by a vote of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly and ratified by them, including all the permanent members of the Security Council.

Some delegations, such as India, felt that the NAM position on Article 108 needed to be revisited in order to provide greater clarity on the intention of the position and its implications for expansion. India expressed a concern that an inflexible stance by the NAM on this matter would inevitably delay the process of the restructuring of the Council. They also alluded to the fact that Article 108 gives power to the current permanent members to veto any amendment permitting Council expansion. Furthermore, India stated that attempts at clarification of the NAM position need to make mention that expansion of the Council in accordance with article 108 will require a two stage approach, i.e. firstly, a voting procedure in the General Assembly and secondly, a legal process of ratification by member states.

Pakistan stated, that although it agreed with the observation that the position is not clear enough, it would not accept any watering down of the position. A number of delegations, such as Algeria and Senegal, reiterated that the current NAM position on this matter has been a source of unity in the NAM and that they would support unity of the Movement rather than force progress on the expansion of the Council.

Apart from the fact that the current position would prevent any "quick-fix" solution (suitable to Western countries who are permanent members of the Council) aimed at the expansion of the Council, it would appear that there is uncertainty among NAM member states as to real implications of its position on the expansion of the Council. As stated above, a further complicating element is the conflict between India and Pakistan, which is also clouded by the recent nuclear tests conducted by India. India is a self-declared candidate for a permanent seat on the Council and has announced its intentions to pursue progress on this matter within the NAM framework. Pakistan, on the other hand, is firmly opposed to expansion of the permanent membership category of the Council and has, with Egypt, been instrumental in the adoption of the Article 108 position by the NAM.

Nevertheless, consensus was reached that the language of the current NAM position should be improved in order to provide greater clarity. Egypt submitted language to this effect which was adopted in the final communique.

South Africa, as incoming Chair and host of the XIIth Summit, has to take note of the dynamics involved regarding Security Council expansion. It will be expected of the incoming Chair to deal with this matter in a sensitive manner, taking into account the necessity of attaining consensus. This is especially true against the backdrop of member states' perceptions that South Africa is itself a potential candidate for a permanent seat on the Security Council.

2.2.2 DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

The nuclear tests conducted by India cast a shadow over the meeting but the political mood to address the issue head on was not prevalent. Factors for this included the very likely prospect that Pakistan was preparing to also test, as well as the aggressive defensive lobbying by India itself. The language in the Cartagena Communique on the Review of the International Situation component is thus totally inconsistent with the international reality.

Traditionally the disarmament and international security component of NAM Ministerial meetings proved problematic as some of the States with the greatest perceived national security concerns (e.g. India, Pakistan, Iran, Egypt, Syria, etc.) rival each other to obtain language agreeable to their own interests. South Africa has since 1997 New Delhi Ministerial Meeting been forced to enter reservations on NAM documents as some of the language that had become regarded as "established" was contrary to South African domestic legislation and our foreign policy on the issue. This was particularly so regarding our membership of the various control regimes and our view on how best to engage nuclear weapon States on nuclear disarmament.

Much work was done since the New Delhi Ministerial Meeting in engaging those States where the biggest problems arose and actively seeking solutions prior to the Cartagena meeting. However, the Indian nuclear tests threw much of pre-agreed arrangements into disarray as both India and Pakistan arrived in a very belligerent mood. While the Indian tests did not become an issue in the negotiations, it shadowed the proceedings. From the beginning South Africa took a tough line stating that it was not prepared, as

incoming NAM Chair, to entertain reservations on the document and would therefore work optimally at seeking consensus and failing that, to delete language which was unable to garner consensus.

A number of bi-laterals arranged at higher levels between South African officials and their Indian and Pakistani counterparts on the most difficult issues finally contributed to a consensus document in Cartagena. From this point of view South Africa has managed to reverse the process that had led to entering reservations and can now look forward to the Durban Summit with greater confidence in this area.

2.2.3 COUNTRY SPECIFIC ISSUES

Palestine

At the Cartagena Ministerial, the discussions on the situation in Palestine have been marked by controversy around language proposed by the Syrian and Palestinian delegations. They submitted a proposal calling for the freezing of all relations with Israel until such a time the latter complied with the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference. A number of African countries, some of them SADC members, objected strongly to the inclusion of such language, as this would prejudice their good relations with Israel.

After several informal negotiations with the Palestinians, their proposals were toned down to include language calling for NAM countries to increase pressure and use all available measures to ensure Israel's compliance. This language was adopted in the final document. However, a number of countries, many

of them African countries, still expressed strong reservations on this.

South Africa will need to be sensitive on how it manages this issue in the preparation of the draft Durban Final Document since it is to be expected that this matter will become prominent in the run-up to the Durban Summit, especially against the background of the present impasse facing the Middle East Peace Process.

2.3 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES

2.3.1 The socio-economic-related areas where South Africa made important contributions included the paragraphs in the Communique concerning the importance of access to information technology, as well as the issue of access to essential drugs and the prices of pharmaceutical products. In both of these instances, more extensive text will have to be added in the Durban Summit document, based on the recent Africa Telecom '98 meeting and the forthcoming meeting of NAM Ministers of Health in Cuba.

2.3.2 The draft communique included several references to social, labour and environmental standards as potential instruments used by developed countries to introduce new trade barriers. South Africa supports the positions taken against such use of these standards and made its position clear as far as this is concerned. The question is (i) where international standards should be set and (ii) what the level of those standards should be. Any developing country which seeks to play a pro-active role in this debate may easily be criticised for advancing a Northern agenda. The South African delegation therefore had to

be mindful of these considerations in dealing with positions such as those included in the relevant Communique paragraphs.

2.3.3 Paragraphs in the Communique on this topic make it clear that "while developing countries are committed to promoting all relevant labour standards, they reject their use for protectionist purposes". South Africa emphasised its support of this type of statement. Whilst a paragraph to this effect did not reflect the core agreement reached at the WTO Ministerial held in Singapore in 1996, the South African delegation accepted it for the sake of focussing attention on the next paragraph, which was more unacceptable.

2.3.4 The subsequent paragraph in the Cartagena Communique went further stating that "there is no linkage between trade and labour standards" and that Ministers "reaffirmed that efforts to link trade with labour standards obstructed the attainment of the objectives for which the ILO was created and rendered the implementation of values and principles of the ILO more difficult". Our labour and trade representatives in Geneva warned that this paragraph reflects the views of NAM members greatly opposed to work by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) or any other body on the effective promotion of labour standards.

2.3.5 The South African delegation pointed out that empirical studies indicate that a positive linkage between trade and labour standards may very well exist, in other words that increased international trade promotes labour standards. South Africa therefore orally proposed alternative language, according to which Ministers "reiterated their belief

that economic growth and development fostered by increased trade and further trade liberalisation contribute to the promotion of these standards...". However, a decision by the Chair ruled that the paragraph was accepted as it was.

2.3.6 Subsequent attempts by the delegation to have the paragraph reopened failed in the face of opposition on the part of India, Egypt and Pakistan. Before a final attempt the delegation succeeded in obtaining agreement on the part of India and Egypt on a watered down revision of the paragraph. Yet Pakistan bluntly refused, arguing - on the basis of a point of procedure - that revisiting the agreed paragraph will set a precedent, tempting other countries to re-open further paragraphs that have already been agreed to. Pakistan also argued that the NAM has already agreed on and submitted the relevant language earlier at the recent ILO meeting in Geneva.

2.3.7 As far as global economic issues are concerned, two aspects that caused considerable discussion were that of (i) the work of the NAM Ad Hoc Panel of Economists and (ii) a meeting of the NAM Ministerial Committee for Economic Cooperation. The final communique includes a paragraph in terms of which Ministers expressed their "wish" that the work of the Panel of Economists should be continued after the Durban Summit "in order to further the economic priorities of the Movement". South Africa's current position is that the continuation of the panel beyond the Durban Summit should not be seen as a given, because (i) South Africa has not been invited to be a member of the Panel at the time of its creation by Colombia and India, and (ii) the findings of the Panel has as yet not been made available, which means that

the quality and/or acceptability of its conclusions still remain(s) an open question. Attempts by the South African delegation to water down the above statement failed with resistance mainly from Indonesia and Cameroon. Still, the delegation felt that this "wish" should not be seen as presenting the incoming Chair with a given or absolute directive.

2.3.8 As far as the second of the above is concerned, Indonesia made a proposal in terms of which Ministers decided to convene the Standing Ministerial Committee for Economic Cooperation "prior to the 12th Summit", with a view to developing suggestions and recommendations concerning challenges of the next century that faces the Movement. The proposed paragraph - as finally agreed - started by saying that Ministers were of the view "that challenges facing the Movement in the area of international economic cooperation would become more complex in the era of globalisation and interdependence". With assistance from the Colombian Chair, South African delegation managed to have the "prior to the 12th Summit" removed and replaced by "in 1999". This call adds to the immediate workload of the incoming Chair, yet offers an important opportunity. Should no member country offer to host such a meeting, South Africa would have to take on the responsibility. In this instance, financial assistance for Chair responsibilities surrounding post-Summit implementation would be of prime importance to South Africa. In addition, it remains to be seen how such a meeting (of Foreign Ministers) will follow up on recommendations by the Panel of Economists, which has a similar mandate.

2.3.9 Two further issues caused extensive debate and were prominent, not so much because of their intrinsic

merit but rather as a result of tension between Pakistan and India as a result of the recent nuclear tests by the latter. These were (i) a paragraph which referred to the recent Summit of the Group of 15 (G-15) and (ii) a paragraph on the position of women and girls in situations of armed conflict.

2.3.10 The first of the above issues was based upon a proposal by Egypt, which "noted" (not "welcomed") "decisions adopted at the G-15 Summit which took place in Cairo from 12 - 15 May 1998". The inclusion of the paragraph was opposed strongly by Pakistan and Zambia, who believed that it is inappropriate for a NAM document to refer to decisions by a particular alliance of developing countries, an "exclusive club" that sees itself as the "vanguard" of the "proletariat of the South". G-15 members - notably India, Egypt, Zimbabwe and Peru - argued for the inclusion of the paragraph. The Chair finally interpreted the feeling of the Committee to be a consensus (albeit not unanimity) in favour of including the paragraph (para 288 in the final document). In return, Pakistan was satisfied with the inclusion of a subsequent paragraph which noted a recent "Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organisation held in Almaty from 9 to 11 May 1998".

2.3.11 Concerning the second of the two issues mentioned above, Pakistan argued strongly for the inclusion of a paragraph taken from Section E of the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action. The paragraph deals with the suffering of women and girls as a result of armed conflict and terrorism, the use of systemic rape as a tactic of war and terrorism, and mentions foreign occupation and alien domination. India wanted to know

why specifically this paragraph was selected from the whole Section E of the Beijing document. The extensive debate between the two delegations reflected tension because of the border conflict between India and Pakistan. Zimbabwe warned the two countries, that it is inappropriate for them to allow their bilateral tensions to endanger constructive debate in the multilateral forum of the NAM. The compromise finally agreed to by the two countries was the inclusion of all paragraphs of Section E of the Beijing Platform of Action. Yet again, the need for "cohesion" and "inclusiveness" in the Movement resulted in text that is more lengthy.

3. COMMENT

- 3.1 Related to the issue of Palestine and the Middle East Peace Process is the question of invitations to guests of the host country. The Colombians faced an embarrassing situation when it transpired that, in its report of the meeting, it indicated that Israel attended as guest of the Movement. Some member states, especially Arab countries, objected strongly to this fact. The Colombians admitted that it was an error on their part and attempted to clarify the situation by explaining that Israel was invited as guest of the host country. In the end the compromise was to refer to Colombian guests as "diplomatic representatives in Colombia".
- 3.2 Based on South Africa's interest in becoming a member of what Zimbabwe called "a G8 of the South", the South African delegation largely remained quiet during this (at times emotional) debate and took care not to take side openly. Whilst previous NAM statements have referred to regional groupings (regional economic

integration organisations), reference to smaller political alliances of various developing countries appears to be a new development. Ambassador Selebi warned privately, that G15 members would wish South Africa to join them before the Summit, thus creating a special group that could steer the direction of decision-making at the Summit.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 South Africa needs to be aware of calls for special meetings, initiatives or programmes to be held during the three year Chair period. Such calls could add to the financial obligations of the incoming Chair.
- 4.2 Sufficient attention to all issues addressed by the NAM requires representation by not only the DFA, but also the relevant technical departments on the national delegation to the XIIth Summit. A decision on the composition of the South African delegation is urgently required in order to allow for timeous preparation of the delegation.
- 4.3 The issue of India's recent nuclear tests and the likelihood that Pakistan may test before the Durban Summit must be taken into account and will have to be addressed. The language in the Cartagena Communique on the Review of the International Situation component is inconsistent with the international reality and will have to be modified or new language inserted to accurately convey the changed reality. Such new language will also need to take account the actual situation vis-a-vis India/Pakistan and the political mood within the NAM to deal with the issue by the end of August.