



Anti-Apartheid Movement

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OVERCOMING THE APARTHEID LEGACY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

AN ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT MEMORANDUM
TO THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
AND OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

January 1992

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1. Introduction

1.1 Around 80 million people, comprising more than two thirds of the population of Southern Africa, live in the ten countries that constitute SADCC (Southern African Development Coordination Conference) - namely, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Swaziland, Malawi, Lesotho.

1.2 Few of them can have been untouched by the effects, both direct and indirect, of South Africa's regional policies of aggression and destabilisation in the 1970s and 1980s.

1.3 For them, the progress now being made in South Africa towards the ending of apartheid and the emergence of a non-racial democratic South Africa holds out for the first time the prospects of peace, cooperation and development throughout Southern Africa, for the benefit of all its peoples.

1.4 The Anti-Apartheid Movement believes that Britain has a special responsibility, and is uniquely well placed, to help ensure that the process of change in South Africa does bring lasting benefit to the peoples of Southern Africa. This memorandum seeks to identify some of the key issues for British policy in relation to Southern Africa, and to suggest ways in which the British government could help the peoples of the region to maximise the potential benefits to them of the ending of apartheid in South Africa.

1.5 Our point of departure is the Declaration of the UN General Assembly on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, adopted by consensus on 14 December 1989, which recognised that -

'With regard to Southern Africa, the entire world is vitally interested that the processes in which that region is involved, leading to the genuine national independence of Namibia and peace in Angola and Mozambique, should succeed in the shortest possible time ...

'The world is deeply concerned that the destabilization by South Africa of the countries of the region, whether through direct aggression, sponsorship of surrogates, economic subversion or other means, is unacceptable in all its forms and must not occur ...'

2. The costs of apartheid and South Africa's regional policies

2.1 The enormity of the impact of apartheid and South Africa's regional policies on the countries of Southern Africa is still insufficiently recognised by public opinion - and inadequately reflected in the British government's regional policies and priorities.

2.2 The report published in October 1989 by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, on 'South African Destabilisation: The Economic Costs of Frontline Resistance to Apartheid,' assessed

the human and economic costs to the region, outside of South Africa, since 1980 : 1.5 million lives lost, and the loss of \$62,450 million to the Gross Domestic Product of SADCC in the period 1980-88 (at 1988 prices) - an amount equivalent to almost three times the total external public debt of the SADCC countries in 1989, or to more than twice the total output of goods and services of the SADCC countries in 1988.

2.3 Whilst numerous other factors have contributed to the problems of the region, none of them is of the same order of magnitude. The countries which have resisted apartheid and South Africa's attempts to dictate regional policies are therefore entitled to special consideration, and to levels of support both bilateral and multilateral which take due account of the fact that they have borne the brunt of the long struggle to end apartheid.

2.4 The future of these countries cannot be seen in isolation from that of South Africa itself. It remains as true now as it was when the UN Declaration was adopted, that -

'Permanent peace and stability in Southern Africa can only be achieved when the system of apartheid in South Africa has been eradicated and South Africa has been transformed into a united, democratic and non-racial country.'

2.5 It would be a cruel irony if South Africa, on the strength of starting to dismantle apartheid, and before democratic change had been effected, were to again become the principal beneficiary of available resources of development for the region - as it has been for most of this century - to the neglect of those countries whose own development has suffered so gravely from South Africa's regional role. Even after several years of stagnation because of apartheid policies and the international isolation which they brought about, the economy of South Africa is still predominant in Southern Africa. Indeed South Africa's Gross Domestic Product is almost three times that of the SADCC countries in total. Balanced regional development, to help the region overcome the appalling effects of apartheid, must therefore be the aim of international policy in the post-apartheid period.

3. The twin goals of regional policy

3.1 In this context, we believe it is imperative not only for Britain to play an active role in supporting the peace process in South Africa and contributing towards its realisation of the goals identified in the UN Declaration (an issue upon which the AAM has made numerous representations to government, and which will not be addressed here), but also for Britain to play its part in helping Southern Africa to overcome the disastrous effects of South African policies in the region.

3.2 These processes are complementary. Assisting the Front Line and neighbouring states to rebuild their economies, avert the dangers of famine, resettle displaced communities and resume the

provision of social and welfare programmes will promote the revival and consolidation of stable non-racial countries around South Africa - and thereby encourage South Africans of all races in their own efforts to reconstruct their society.

3.3 At the same time the establishment of a transitional order in South Africa, and its rapid evolution into a non-racial democracy, will facilitate the process of normalising relations between South Africa and the region. This will in turn help to resolve the numerous problems still affecting the countries of the region which result from South Africa's past attempts to achieve regional dominance, and to coerce its neighbours into accepting white minority rule in South Africa.

3.4 It is important to recognise that the recent change of direction in domestic policy by the ruling National Party in South Africa does not by itself signify that a complete transformation in South Africa's regional role has already occurred. In a number of respects, as shown below, the South African authorities are still pursuing regional policies which are rooted in the past and are incompatible with a new regional order based on equality, mutual respect & voluntary cooperation.

3.5 It was to these policies that Namibia's Foreign Minister was alluding when he said on 14 March 1991 at the start of negotiations on Walvis Bay, that :

'For us, the expectations for a brighter and peaceful future for our region mean the pursuit of new initiatives by governments and peoples in Southern Africa to remove distrust and enmity in inter-state relations. The reality of the present situation demands that remnants of regional hegemonistic policies and confrontations be replaced by regional cooperation. Such a reality would permit governments and peoples in this region to confidently devote their scarce resources towards the objective of uplifting the quality of life of their peoples.'

4. Namibia - Walvis Bay

4.1 Namibia's independence on 21 March 1990 was a historic turning point. The birth of Southern Africa's newest independent state provided new opportunities for South Africa to play a more constructive role in the region. But these opportunities have yet to be taken. Neither then, at the independence celebrations, nor later in his speech opening the South African parliament on 1 February 1991, nor on any subsequent occasion, has President De Klerk offered any prospect of South African compliance with UN Security Council Res. 432 of 1978.

4.2 It is generally recognised, including by the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Minister for Overseas Development (Hansard 5.2.91 col.254), that Namibia's independence cannot be regarded as complete until the problem of Walvis Bay has been resolved. Moreover it is evident that South Africa's continuing control of the port, harbour and enclave has a number of deleterious effects :

- a) The continuing, albeit reduced, presence of South African military personnel in the area poses a challenge to Namibia's sovereignty and a potential threat to its security.
- b) The use of the enclave by South African ultra-right extremists as a safe haven is also a threat to Namibia's security.
- c) The prospects for Namibia to reduce its general economic dependence on South Africa, and specifically to develop its indigenous fishing and fish processing industry, are seriously restricted by South Africa's illegitimate control over Walvis Bay and its claims to the off-shore islands. This makes Namibia's policing of its Economic Exclusion Zone and its other attempts to protect its waters from illicit fishing a logistic nightmare - as the Minister of State herself acknowledged on 5 February 1991 (without referring to the cause of the problem) when she told the House of Commons that : 'Devising the fisheries protection area for the Namibian coast will be complicated' (Hansard col. 256).
- d) Namibia's international trade is similarly prejudiced by the South African occupation. As South Africa's representative admitted to the League of Nations as long ago as 1928 -

'The trade of South West Africa would be seriously injured were it not to control Walvis Bay.'

e) The basic human rights of the population of the enclave are denied by South African domination. They understandably can see no good reason why they should wait indefinitely for the freedom and independence enjoyed by their compatriots, and their mounting dissatisfaction is a potential source of tension in the area. We particularly deplore the recent imposition of 'border' controls by the South African authorities in the enclave, and their refusal to allow Namibian enumerators to collect data in the area as part of Namibia's first national census since independence.

4.3 Thus South Africa's reluctance to hand back Walvis Bay and the islands represents a very concrete and wholly unnecessary form of destabilisation of independent Namibia which augurs ill for the South African authorities' intentions towards their new neighbour, and will not inspire confidence in their intentions towards the black majority in their own country.

4.4 The Namibian government's approach to the resolution of the issue envisages not an immediate hand-over, but the establishment of a transitional administration, and the second round of talks between the two governments on 17 May 1991 has created the possibility of an interim agreement on a joint administration. However, progress towards establishing this dual control is painfully slow. It is evident that the eminently reasonable approach by the Namibian government to a resolution of the issue has, regrettably, not been matched by the De Klerk government on interim arrangements, still less on the outstanding, and indeed fundamental issue of sovereignty.

4.5 Britain has a special responsibility in relation to Walvis Bay, going back to the British government's purported incorporation of the enclave into the Cape Colony in 1884. Yet, since

Namibia became independent, the British government has failed to bring effective public pressure to bear upon the South African authorities to comply with UN Security Council Res 432. We do not believe that because bilateral discussions between the two parties are taking place, Britain is thereby absolved of all responsibility to help ensure the restoration of the enclave and islands to Namibia in terms of UNSCR 432.

4.6 Whatever agreement about Walvis Bay is reached between South Africa and Namibia, South Africa's poor record of failing to implement its solemn undertakings - from the Nkomati Accord with Mozambique in 1984 to the Pretoria Minute in 1990 - and its ten-year long obstruction of the UN plan for Namibia's independence, suggest that implementation of the agreement may not happen without pressure from the international community.

4.7 We suggest that it would be appropriate for the British government to join with other members of the former Contact Group, or with the other Permanent Members of the Security Council, in calling upon South Africa - without prejudice to any agreements it reaches with Namibia about interim arrangements - to make a public declaration that it recognises and accepts that sovereignty over the enclave of Walvis Bay and the off-shore islands vests in the Namibian government.

4.8 Without such recognition by South Africa, the 'eventual settlement' of the issue, envisaged by the parties in their joint statement of 17 May 1991, will be deferred indefinitely. The consequential uncertainties will be detrimental not only for the inhabitants of the enclave, but also to Namibia's national interests.

5. Namibia - development, debt and aid

5.1 The negotiation of an equitable fishing agreement between the European Community and the Namibian government is a matter of great concern. The announcement on 15 May by the European Commissioner for Development and Fisheries Policy Manuel Marin of the resumption of negotiations is welcome, but the underlying problems remain. We would urge the British government to -

- a) encourage our EC partners to adopt a positive and supportive attitude towards the Namibia government's efforts to protect and replenish its fish stocks;
- b) respect and support Namibia's right to set its own quotas and secure whatever multi- and bi-lateral agreements in relation to fishing rights that it judges to be in its national interests;
- c) oppose and condemn illegal fishing in Namibian waters.

Whilst the European Community and its member states also have their legitimate interests, it is our contention that Namibia, as a new member of the international community, battling to overcome the effects of decades of apartheid rule, is for that reason entitled to special consideration which transcends the normal limits of market forces and their mediation by governments.

5.2.1 It is in the same spirit that we would urge the British government to approach the issue of Namibia's external debt inherited from the previous South African-controlled administration. The Namibian government has continued to service the debt, but has not formally accepted that it has a legal obligation to repay the debt. Provision for servicing debt accounted for 12% of budgetted expenditure in Namibia's first year of independence.

5.2.2 We concur with the Minister of State when she said in the House : 'We must work on tackling that problem.' We believe that it would impose an unjust burden on the new state's finances to have to repay whatever elements of the debt relate either to the past implementation of apartheid policies or to the prosecution of military aggression by the former illegal administration against independent Angola or against the Namibian liberation forces headed by SWAPO. If the British government were to adopt this position, and use its influence with the South African authorities to persuade them to accept the historical responsibility for the costs of their policies - something which has been conspicuously absent from most pronouncements by President De Klerk and his colleagues - this would surely be helpful to Namibia's efforts to resolve the debt issue.

5.3.1 We welcome the positive evolution thus far of bilateral relations between the British and Namibian governments. The practical contribution made by the British government to the process of transition in Namibia during 1989 and now the aid being given by Britain for purposes of military and police training, in education, health and other areas have doubtless laid a sound foundation for future relations. We would however urge the British government to provide direct bilateral support to Namibia's budget in addition to whatever multilateral support is offered through the EEC, which in 1990/91 provided less than 15% of external support to Namibia's budget. We further recommend direct British government support to Namibia's Development Brigades which seek to train and deploy ex-combatants in ways of direct benefit to the community.

5.3.2 We would also ask whether the allocation of £10 million over a three year period is a sufficiently generous response to Namibia's needs, and whether it goes far enough at this critical early stage to underpin at the level of development the 'good governance' which the British government is now anxious to promote in Africa. We do not wish to comment on this policy as such, nor how it is applied to various countries in Africa. But we would point out that Namibia, after suffering decades of apartheid rule - the opposite of 'good governance' - has adopted all the features of 'good governance' identified by the Foreign Secretary in his ODI speech of 6 June 1990 (namely, pluralism, public accountability, respect for the rule of law, human rights, market principles). In terms of British government criteria, Namibia is clearly entitled to be given unstinting support. It is vital that Britain recognises that Namibian success in consolidating a non-racial democracy will have a positive influence in South Africa itself.

6. Angola and Mozambique

6.1 The British government, by virtue of its participation in the consensus supporting the United Nations Declaration on South Africa of 14 December 1989, is committed, inter alia, to the Programme of Action set out there, of which part (f) of Section 9 refers specifically to Angola and Mozambique :

'(We hereby decide) to extend such assistance to the Governments of Angola and Mozambique as they may request in order to secure peace for their peoples, and to encourage and support peace initiatives undertaken by the Governments of Angola and Mozambique aimed at bringing about peace and normalization of life in their countries.'

6.2 The agreement signed in Lisbon on 30 May 1991 aimed at ending the war in Angola, and the progress (albeit still slow) towards a political settlement in Mozambique, hold out better prospects than hitherto for the creation of a lasting peace in these two countries, and we welcome these developments. However, given the fact that these are the countries which have suffered most from South Africa's attempts to dominate the region throughout the 1970s and 1980s, we have three pressing concerns which we believe could be addressed by British government action.

6.3 The first relates to emergency aid. The needs of both countries for food aid and other emergency supplies have not yet met with an adequate international response. In both countries total pledged food aid this year has fallen short of their needs - by around 300,000 million tonnes in the case of Mozambique. We would therefore urge the British government to explore with the governments of Angola and Mozambique the possibilities of additional humanitarian assistance being provided by Britain, and by the EC at Britain's initiative. The prospects for political democracy in both countries will not be enhanced if there is widespread famine and further dislocation of the civilian populations.

6.4.1 Secondly there is the need to put an end to all forms of intervention in the internal affairs of Angola and Mozambique emanating from South Africa. In the case of Mozambique, it is well-known that armed incursions into the country from South African territory (mainly the north-eastern Transvaal) are continuing, and that the South African authorities are either unwilling or unable to put a stop to them. We would wish to see Britain using its influence with President De Klerk to encourage the adoption of a proposal made by Mr Nelson Mandela, the ANC President, and others, namely that all forms of military and other interference in Mozambique's internal affairs be outlawed by statute.

6.4.2 In relation to Angola, there is considerable evidence that South Africa has not given up its efforts to supplant the legitimate government of Angola and to seek to replace it with its long-standing ally Unita. The Angolan government's frequent expressions of concern over South African military and logistic support for Unita, together with the detailed exposure of South African secret plans for intervention in Angola by former SADF

officer Nico Basson, provide a basis for South Africa to be called to account, and warned against continuing interference.

6.4.3 Secondly, in order to demonstrate British support for the recent cease-fire, and for the efforts of the Angolan people to determine their future by political means, we would urge that Britain uses its special relationship with the US Administration to -

- (a) call for an end to US covert support for Unita, since its continuation could fatally undermine the agreements recently reached after long and difficult diplomatic efforts; and
- (b) encourage the US to respect Angola's law prohibiting the provision of funds from external sources for purposes of election campaigns.

6.5 Thirdly, now that democratic processes are being introduced in Angola and Mozambique, we believe that they should be supported by appropriate aid for rehabilitation, and this should be adopted as a specific aim of British policy towards the region. As the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons has pointed out in its report on "UK policy towards South Africa and the other states of the region" (para. 6.24) :

'The brutal wars in the region have led to particular suffering throughout it, and to needs which for the time being can only be met by foreign aid... (In) comparison with many other areas, aid in Southern Africa has been effectively used. We believe that the UK should intensify its aid efforts within the region. In particular, as the possibility of a settlement of the long-standing conflicts in Angola and Mozambique grows ... both the necessity and opportunity of rebuilding the shattered economies and infrastructure of the war-torn states, and the possibilities for successful sustainable economic development will increase.'

This new situation requires a new approach. The level of British aid to Angola in particular has in the past been derisory. Now is the time for a fresh initiative, based on support for multi-party democracy and non-intervention in the internal affairs of independent countries, especially those that have suffered so long from South African aggression and destabilisation.

7. The Front Line States

7.1 All the Front Line States have played a key role in opposing apartheid and supporting the aspirations for freedom of the people of South Africa. For this their peoples have paid a heavy price - not just in Angola and Mozambique as discussed above, but also in Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania. These countries have all borne the burden of playing host for many years to political exiles from South Africa, as well as to refugees from South African-backed aggression against independent countries in the region. Their historic contribution to the ending of apartheid deserves recognition and reward, and their interests must be protected during the transition to democracy in South Africa.

7.2 In this connection, the maintenance of the UN mandatory arms embargo until a democratically government is in place in South Africa is of paramount importance. We would urge the British government to unequivocally support this position, and to desist from any attempt to promote a review of the measures imposed against South Africa in the nuclear field.

8. The SADCC

8.1 There is already much speculation about South Africa's possible admission into SADCC and other regional economic cooperation structures. However, it is unlikely that South Africa's membership of these institutions will be welcomed by the independent states of the region before a democratic constitution is in place in South Africa. Meanwhile, the touchstone of international policy towards the region is again to be found in the Programme of Action of the UN Declaration on South Africa (Section 9, part (e)) :-

'To render all possible assistance to the front-line and neighbouring states to enable them to rebuild their economies, which have been adversely affected by South Africa's action of aggression and destabilisation, to withstand any further such acts and to continue to support the peoples of Namibia and South Africa.'

8.2.1 Despite this commendable statement of intent, we are already seeing a decline in aid to Southern Africa. European Community aid to Eastern Europe per head of population (\$28 per capita) is now greater than to Southern Africa (\$16 per capita). The EC's regional allocation to Southern Africa under Lome IV in 1990 is substantially lower in real terms than that made under Lome III.

8.2.2 We note with concern that the planned level of ODA expenditure as provided for in the autumn statement will rise in relation to developing countries only marginally from £1,721 million in 1991-92 to £1,770 million in 1994-95, whereas assistance to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is planned to increase from £65 million in 1991-92 to £200 million in 1994-95. This budgetary framework virtually assures a decline in real terms in British aid to the SADCC and its member states over the next three years.

8.2.3 This is a very worrying trend. Its emergence appears to co-incide with the period since De Klerk's accession to power, which has also seen repeated efforts by the British and certain other governments to 'reward' De Klerk's regime by relaxing sanctions measures and encouraging the resumption of investment in South Africa. It would be profoundly damaging to Southern Africa's efforts to overcome the legacy of apartheid if the governments of the EC were now to assist South Africa - even before it has undergone a democratic transformation - to try to assume through economic means the role of regional dominance which in past decades it sought to establish by force.

8.3 Increased British support to SADCC, both bilaterally and

through the EC, is essential if SADCC is not to slip further down the aid agenda. In this context we believe there is a need for a new initiative to remove the burden of debt on the region - not just in relation to bilateral debt (especially export-credit debt), which the 1991 G7 meeting disappointingly failed to tackle, but also in relation to commercial and multilateral debt. We welcome the Prime Minister's announcement in Harare, on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, of further reductions in the official debts of the poorest countries, but this falls some way short of the help we believe Britain can and should give in this area to the SADCC member states.

9. Conclusions

British policy towards Southern Africa should be guided by -

- * the need to help the region overcome the effects of apartheid;
- * the importance to the whole region of balanced development which will provide growth, stability, and peace without aggravating the historic tendency of South Africa to dominate the rest of the region.; and
- * recognition of the reality that a non-racial and democratic South Africa can only emerge and flourish if it enjoys equitable and harmonious relations with the other states of Southern Africa.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement is committed to these goals, and our various recommendations are all designed to contribute towards their achievement. We urge the British government to give them serious and sympathetic consideration, and take appropriate action.