COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Forty-fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15TH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 11 February 1988, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SENE (Senegal)
later: Mr. MEZZALAMA (Italy)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.


THE ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF POLITICAL, MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO COLONIAL AND RACIST REGIMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (agenda item 7) (continued) (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1987/8/Rev.1 and Add.1 - Parts I and II)


STUDY IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES OF WAYS AND MEANS OF ENSURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS BEARING ON APARTHEID, RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (agenda item 17 (a)) (continued) (E/CN.4/1988/37, chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution IV)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (agenda item 17 (b)) (continued) (E/CN.4/1988/2, 33, 34, 35 and 37, chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution III; A/RES/42/47; A/42/492 and 493)

1. Mr. PIEDRA (United States of America) said, with respect to agenda item 6, that the human-rights situation in South Africa was not only a legitimate subject of discussion but one of particular concern. Given the composition of United States society, the pluralistic and open nature of its political system and its history of fighting slavery, segregation and discrimination, his compatriots were naturally concerned about the tragic situation in South Africa. They detested apartheid and wanted it dismantled, but in a way that did not cause additional long-term suffering to the people of South Africa.

2. It was agreed in his country that steady and careful international pressure on the Government of South Africa could make an important contribution to the peaceful replacement of apartheid by a multiracial democratic régime and, in fact, the United States arms boycott against South Africa pre-dated the United Nations one by several years. His Government had steadfastly refused to recognize the so-called independent homelands established by the Government of South Africa. United States corporations operating in South Africa had long applied a code of conduct that had worked to provide non-white employees equal employment and training opportunities. It was noteworthy that, despite the current Administration's opposition to the sanctions against South Africa required by the Anti-apartheid Act, passed by Congress in 1986, the United States Government had strictly implemented those sanctions.

3. In late 1987, the President of the United States had sent a report to Congress which had concluded that there had not been significant progress towards ending apartheid and that the South African Government's response to the Anti-apartheid Act gave little ground for hope that the trend would soon
be reversed or that additional measures would produce better results. Blacks in South Africa were facing increased repression, harassment and imprisonment. The report noted the considerable disinvestment undertaken by United States corporations which, unfortunately, had a negative impact upon social, housing, educational and job-training programmes for black South Africans.

4. The world community should not give up its search for peaceful solutions to the problem of apartheid, however, and should not encourage the resort to violence. Working with democratic persons and groups in South Africa, it must help that country find a democratic alternative without bloodshed.

5. The United States opposed the call for comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa and the withdrawal of all multinational corporations for several reasons: because global sanctions were ineffective in practice, because economic pressure of that magnitude would harm the people it ostensibly sought to help, and because such sanctions would also inflict grave damage on the economies of the southern African region.

6. Those who called for the total isolation of South Africa mistakenly lumped the people and the economy of that country together with the despised system of apartheid. Apartheid was not the sum total of South Africa, which was also the millions of people struggling to support their families and to nurture fragile elements of democratic development in a hostile environment.

7. On 29 September 1987, the United States Secretary of State had argued that true friends of the South African people should work for: equal rights for all, a political system based upon universal franchise and multiple political parties, constitutional guarantees of individual rights for all, rule of law backed by an independent judicial system, appropriate distribution of central and regional powers, and economic freedom.

8. Although the realities of life in South Africa were grim, there were a few elements of hope: the growing strength of black economic power, the realization by many white businessmen that apartheid was inimical to the functioning, growth and prosperity of a modern economy, the increased willingness of South African religious leaders to attack the moral underpinnings of apartheid with the simple but powerful message that all persons were children of the same God, and the talks between the African National Congress and Afrikaaners, sponsored by the Government of Senegal. United States policy towards South Africa had sought to build upon those elements, and accordingly to further educational opportunities for the non-white majority and to provide leadership and training to black labour unions, community centres and enterprises. His Government had also worked for the release of all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, and for an end to restrictions on political parties.

9. Having reiterated the strongly-held view of the United States that South African control of Namibia must end in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978), he said it was his delegation's hope that the current session of the Commission would send an unmistakable and unanimous message to the Government of South Africa to express its rejection of apartheid and its demand for a democratic Government and society in South Africa. The Commission should keep foremost in its deliberations the needs of the common people of South Africa, who daily suffered and resisted the massive and systematic brutalities and petty cruelties of the apartheid system.
10. Mr. RASHID (Bangladesh) said that it was most distressing that, instead of improving, the situation in South Africa and Namibia had deteriorated further since the Commission's previous session. The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts (E/CN.4/1988/8) provided a vivid account of the life of the oppressed people in South Africa and Namibia, where murder, detention, torture and denial of basic human rights to non-white people had surpassed all previous records.

11. His delegation shared the international community's concern at the increase in violence against the non-white population, which was the inevitable consequence of the strengthening of the apartheid policy in South Africa and the enactment and implementation of a series of repressive laws and regulations. The wave of civil disobedience, non-co-operation and heroic struggle for political, economic and social liberty of some 22 million oppressed people had to be taken seriously. The Commission would be failing its duty if it did not take prompt action.

12. His Government had already pledged its fullest support to the oppressed people of South Africa in their legitimate fight against apartheid. It had acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. Its total commitment to the liberation of southern Africa had repeatedly been demonstrated by its championing of the cause of the South African and Namibian peoples in all international forums.

13. The continued violation by the apartheid régime of the basic human rights of the non-white people of South Africa and Namibia had brought into focus the elements which had sustained the Pretoria régime and indirectly encouraged it to continue with its intransigence. The latest report of the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1987/8/Rev.1 and Add.1, Parts I and II) had arrived at some very valid and interesting conclusions with regard to the linkage between aid to the Pretoria régime and the resulting oppression of the non-white people. His delegation, which fully associated itself with the finding that more assistance to the apartheid régime meant more apartheid, appealed to all Governments to expedite accession to and ratification of, the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.

14. Mr. MUJYANAMA (Rwanda) said that the peoples of southern Africa were among the millions of people still frustrated in their legitimate hopes for the full enjoyment of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, victims of an anachronistic policy which defied international morality and legality. The South African régime arrogantly and stubbornly pursued its hateful apartheid policy and kept Namibia under its colonial yoke, while at the same time carrying out acts of aggression, destabilization and intimidation against the front-line States.

15. Although the international community had unanimously condemned South Africa, it had been unable to retain that unanimity where it came to going beyond statements of principle, although the overwhelming majority of States considered that comprehensive mandatory sanctions were the only peaceful means of bringing the South African Government to its senses. His delegation was thus most disappointed at the lack of enthusiasm for the implementation of the various United Nations resolutions and decisions calling
for collective sanctions against South Africa, particularly the lack of follow-up of the conclusions of the World Conference on Sanctions against South Africa held in Paris in June 1986. It also deplored the fact that the international meetings concerning Namibia held under United Nations auspices had not produced concrete results.

16. However, the African countries were more deeply committed than ever to achieving the political liberation of Africa, which would be achieved, at the cost of heavy sacrifices, with the help of international solidarity and co-operation. His delegation believed that the mobilization of the international community was the only way to prevail against South Africa's stubborn attempts to prevent the normalization of the situation in southern Africa and impede the process initiated by the Organization of African Unity to liberate Africa, and reaffirmed its solidarity with the front-line countries and with all the internationally-recognized liberation movements in their fight.

17. Mr. RENDOH (Botswana) said that his country was enmeshed in the political and military turmoil caused by the racist régime of South Africa and its predecessors. There could be no doubt that the policy of apartheid was the greatest single violation of human rights. The South African security forces wielded wide-ranging powers under the perpetual states of emergency; acts of terror and repression were waged against churchmen, trade unions, women and even children. South Africa had the largest army and the most sophisticated weapons in Africa.

18. The situation in the international Territory of Namibia was similar. The acts of repression, including ill-treatment, abduction, forced military conscription, arbitrary detention and murder were being stepped up. The puppets paraded as black leaders were in office only at the whim of their masters.

19. The South African racists had also turned Namibia into a huge military garrison from which to attack Angola and other front-line States. Such destabilization activities had exacted a heavy toll of the economies and infrastructures those countries had painstakingly built up under the SADCC programmes. Botswana had been raided three times in the past three years by Pretoria's forces, which regularly carried out military provocation on its territory, not to mention assassinations and the kidnapping of refugees.

20. The Commission must redouble its efforts to highlight the gross violations of human rights stemming from the abominable policy of apartheid and to mobilize international support for the region's oppressed peoples. In that connection, it was to be hoped that those powerful and influential Western members of the Commission which were also members of the Security Council would pay close attention to the interim report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on violations of human rights in southern Africa (E/CN.4/1988/8) and other relevant reports, since they had a moral responsibility to show more leadership in the fight against apartheid.

21. Mr. STEEL (United Kingdom) said that the interim report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on violations of human rights in southern Africa (E/CN.4/1988/8) was the most significant of the documents before the Commission. South Africa was the only country where racial discrimination was
institutionalized at every level. The enforcement of apartheid necessarily led to further violations of human rights, such as detention without charge or trial, restrictions on freedom of expression and police brutality.

22. His Government, which had consistently condemned apartheid and the oppressive measures used to enforce it, had made a number of representations to the South African authorities, particularly concerning reports of routine torture of child detainees, both individually and with the other States members of the European Community.

23. None of the members of the Commission disagreed about the need to abolish apartheid in South Africa and establish a fully democratic society there with a non-racial, representative form of government. But violence was not the answer. It was essential to create the conditions for a dialogue to begin and, for that reason, his Government had repeatedly called on South Africa to release Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, lift the ban on political parties and restore press freedom.

24. In order to impress upon the South African Government the inescapable need for reform, his Government had for many years been applying a policy of both restrictive and positive measures. The restrictive measures included bans on new investment, the promotion of tourism and imports of South African gold and steel. The positive measures were designed to promote the economic advancement of black South Africans through bilateral and multilateral aid programmes. His Government had recently announced that a further amount of 21 million pounds sterling was to be made available over five years, mainly in the form of training awards. In its efforts to ensure the continued development and stability of South Africa's neighbours, his Government had made further pledges of aid to the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), Mozambique and Lesotho.

25. Changes were taking place in South Africa, albeit slowly and hesitantly. The meeting in 1987 between white South Africans and leaders of the African National Congress had shown that common ground might still be found. His Government was unable to share the view that punitive economic sanctions were the only way to end apartheid, since they would undermine economic development in South Africa and the stability of the whole region. The use of existing economic and political links was the most effective way of bringing about change and his Government would spare no effort to influence South Africa to that end. The best contribution which the Commission could make would be to send a strong and united signal to the South African Government that apartheid was doomed.

26. The South African Government also bore a heavy responsibility for the situation in Namibia. The unequal allocation of resources in Namibia and the legislation allowing detention without trial were wholly unacceptable. His Government supported efforts to secure the implementation of the United Nations settlement plan and the call of the Western Contact Group for the release of political prisoners as a pre-condition for the holding of free and fair elections. It considered that the principles which the Group had proposed for the future Namibian constitutional assembly contained important safeguards for human rights.
27. Turning to item 7, he regretted that, once again, his delegation had to take issue with the report on assistance to colonial and racist régimes in southern Africa (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1987/8/Rev.1 and Add.1 - Parts I and II). The list of companies given in that report was both inaccurate and selective; it referred to just over 30 countries, whereas it was well known that State corporations and other corporations from over 100 countries regularly traded with South Africa. The report could not be regarded as anything more than a propaganda document, and his delegation would oppose any resolutions connected with it.

28. The plan of activities for the second half of the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination evidenced the will of the international community to make a determined and co-ordinated effort to eliminate racism and racial discrimination throughout the world. His delegation particularly welcomed the emphasis on education and on meetings of experts, since racial discrimination often sprung from fear and was fuelled by ignorance.

29. Mr. da COSTA LOBO (Portugal), speaking on agenda items 6 and 17, said that sustained efforts on the part of the international community would be required to eliminate apartheid. His Government, which had always considered that dialogue was preferable to confrontation, had called upon South Africa, at the previous session of the General Assembly, to start a dialogue with all the social and political forces trying to abolish apartheid. The apartheid system could be maintained only by means of violence, and the brutality of the repression was particularly shocking in view of the vulnerability of the victims.

30. The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on violations of human rights in southern Africa (E/CN.4/1988/8) gave an impressive and well-documented description of the situation. One of the worst aspects was the ill-treatment of children, and particularly the conditions under which they were detained. The representative of South Africa had circulated a document on the subject at the previous session of the General Assembly, which showed, perhaps, that international pressure was having some effect. However, the section of the Working Group's report on children in detention, especially paragraphs 87 to 91, and the refusal of the Government of South Africa to allow the Ad Hoc Working Group to visit the country told the true story.

31. His delegation rejected all the pretexts invented by South Africa for the delay in granting the right to self-determination of the people of Namibia. The many other human-rights violations in the Territory stemmed from the denial of that right. The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group also mentioned various acts of aggression by South Africa against neighbouring States. The close ties between his country and some of the States concerned could not but increase the indignation of the Portuguese Government and people.

32. Turning to agenda item 17, he welcomed the emphasis in the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination to the children of migrant workers, who formed a particularly vulnerable group. The attention paid by Governments and non-governmental organizations to less obvious or less politically explosive forms of discrimination would give an added impetus and coherence to the fight against discrimination as a whole.
33. Mrs. DJORDJEVIC (Yugoslavia) said that, despite the great progress that had been made in the promotion and protection of human rights, the problems of racism, racial discrimination and apartheid remained unresolved. The interim report submitted by the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on violations of human rights in southern Africa (E/CN.4/1988/8) reflected once again the appalling situation in that area. It gave evidence of killings and abductions by the security forces, detention without trial and torture and death in detention. The Pretoria régime had continued its policy of Bantustanization and forced removal of blacks to the "homelands". Denials of the right to education and the right to work were also widespread. The most striking part of the report concerned the violations of the human rights of children, with testimonies of abductions, killings, detention and torture. Investigation and prosecution of such practices were virtually unknown.

34. The section of the report dealing with Namibia also described the violations of the fundamental rights to life and physical integrity, torture, detentions and political trials. The militarization of the territory continued unabated. The South African régime still refused to implement Security Council resolution 435 (1978), and continued to launch attacks on the neighbouring front-line States. There had been, for example, recent reports of kidnapping and murder of political activists in Angola.

35. Her delegation commended the Ad Hoc Working Group on its report and thanked the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities for his continuous efforts.

36. Since the population of South Africa had exhausted all the peaceful means of fighting apartheid available to it, it was up to the international community to find a solution to the problem. Her Government once again urged that increased pressure should be brought to bear upon South Africa and that all countries should refrain from any co-operation with that régime. The international community had hitherto failed to impose comprehensive sanctions, and the intransigence of Pretoria was also a consequence of the unwillingness of a large number of countries to take effective action. If the countries in question stopped buying South African gold, coal and steel, cut air links with South Africa and imposed comprehensive and mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the situation would inevitably change.

37. The only solution to the South African problem was the eradication of apartheid. In the meantime, it was necessary to increase assistance to the peoples of South Africa and Namibia in their legitimate liberation struggle under the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). Her Government would, for its part, continue to render moral, material and political support to the peoples of southern Africa in their courageous struggle against apartheid.

38. Mr. DELMI (Algeria) said that the Pretoria régime's refusal to heed the call of the international community to dismantle apartheid and restore the rule of law to the oppressed peoples of South Africa and Namibia was not only a challenge to the international community, but also highlighted the latter's inability to impose comprehensive and mandatory sanctions at a time when such measures were more justified than ever before.
39. The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on violations of human rights in southern Africa (E/CN.4/1988/8) attested to the seriousness of the situation in that area and the ferocious determination of the Namibian and South African peoples to fight until all their rights had been restored. The report confirmed that the racist régime of Pretoria was in no hurry to restore human rights in southern Africa, to dismantle the apartheid régime or to put an end to its illegal occupation of Namibia. Notwithstanding the views of certain Governments, his own considered that the Pretoria régime was incapable of reforming the apartheid system and was determined to continue its occupation of Namibia.

40. The report on the adverse consequences for the enjoyment of human rights of political, military, economic and other forms of assistance given to colonial and racist régimes in southern Africa (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1987/8/Rev.1 and Add.1, Parts I and II) illustrated the great diversity of co-operation between certain countries and the Pretoria régime. While the decision by a number of transnational corporations to cease their activities in South Africa gave cause for optimism, there were other corporations which unfortunately helped, through their presence and activities, to prolong the reign of apartheid and perpetuate the illegal occupation of Namibia. Such assistance would not have been possible without the complacency and complicity of certain Powers that persisted in believing in a "constructive engagement", or which maintained that sanctions would have adverse consequences for the black majority.

41. The report showed that such a contention was unfounded. On the contrary: the arguments in question only served to make apartheid more repressive, and the growth in economic relations and foreign capital transfers merely reinforced Pretoria's resistance to change, while enabling Governments and transnational corporations to reap enormous profits through the pillage of southern Africa's natural resources.

42. The report's conclusions further confirmed the need to: put an end to the illegal occupation of Namibia and to reject delaying tactics aimed at linking the independence of Namibia to other questions pertaining to the sovereignty of one of the front-line States, strengthen measures against apartheid and support the legitimate demands of South Africa's black majority, strengthen solidarity with the front-line States, and implement comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against the Pretoria régime.

43. His Government welcomed the fact that many States parties to the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid had submitted reports in 1988 in accordance with the provisions of article VII of that Convention. In 1988, Algeria had submitted its second report to the Group of Three, thereby demonstrating the importance it attached to the Convention.

44. The information contained in document E/CN.4/1988/33 showed how little progress, if any, had been made in implementing during the first half of the decade the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. If that trend continued, it would inevitably lead to a decline in activities in the second half of the decade. To overcome the obstacles to achieving the objectives of the second half of the decade, it was essential that voluntary contributions be made to the Trust Fund for the
Programme. Without active participation by the entire international community, the goals of the first half of the decade might prove unattainable and those of the second half be seriously compromised.

45. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the General Assembly had approved a plan of activities for implementation during the second half of the Second Decade; had decided to give the highest priority to programmes for combating racism, especially in South Africa, Namibia and occupied territories; and had requested the Secretary-General to continue the study on the effects of racial discrimination in the field of education, training and employment on the children of minorities, particularly those of migrant workers.

46. Mr. FAIRWEATHER (Observer for Canada) said that, in South Africa, a minority continued to pretend to operate a democratic political system while denying political rights to the overwhelming majority of the population. That was a double standard based entirely on race and one that most South Africans and the world community found totally repugnant. While the Government of South Africa tried to pretend that apartheid no longer existed, large numbers of South Africans were still being denied citizenship in their own land, controls were still placed on where people could live, and gross social and economic inequities remained apartheid's enduring legacy.

47. The citizens of the neighbouring States of Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe continued to suffer from South Africa's policy of destabilization aimed at coercing the front-line States into abandoning support for the black majority in South Africa and forcing them into co-existence with apartheid. South African troops had again engaged in combat in Angola, in flagrant violation of that country's territorial integrity. In Namibia, South Africa's illegal occupation continued, a decade after the adoption of the United Nations settlement plan.

48. Directly and through involvement in the United Nations, La Francophonie and the Commonwealth, Canada had been active in efforts to find peaceful and practical means to fight apartheid and induce South Africa to grant Namibia its independence. His Government had joined the majority of Commonwealth members in agreeing that sanctions had had a significant effect on South Africa and that their application should be intensified. Economic sanctions increased the cost of maintaining apartheid and demonstrated to its victims that the world shared their determination to bring about fundamental change.

49. His Government helped the victims of apartheid directly. In addition to contributing to the United Nations and Commonwealth programmes designed to assist South Africans and Namibians, it had substantially increased aid to victims of apartheid in the areas of education, community development and labour education. Legal and humanitarian aid to political detainees and their families was being increased by $Can 500,000 to $Can 2.5 million per year. Canada and all other Commonwealth countries had also agreed to give particular attention to the growing needs of the front-line States and his Government had pledged $Can 20 million towards rebuilding the vital Limpopo railway line.

50. The Commonwealth Heads of Government had established a Committee of Foreign Ministers to give an impetus to decisions reached on measures to fight apartheid, which had met for the first time in February 1988 at Lusaka,
Zambia, under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada. The Committee had looked at means to make existing sanctions more effective and ways in which they had been frustrated; to that end, it had set in train two major studies to bring to light new patterns of trade, new practices of accounting and new routings of shipments. It would also be seeking hard evidence and considering specific actions to ensure that the mandatory United Nations embargo on arms exports to South Africa was respected. It had also discussed the compelling need to combat South Africa's powerful weapons of censorship and propaganda and his Government would soon be proposing a detailed strategy to that end.

51. The Government of South Africa jailed those who sought change peacefully rather than negotiate with them. The sickening fact that 40 per cent of the 30,000 persons detained since June 1986 had been children under the age of 18 made even more urgent the early adoption of a convention on the rights of the child. No words were adequate to describe his delegation's disgust at a State that engaged in the torture of children. Such actions clearly demonstrated the moral bankruptcy of the apartheid system. His Government would continue to work with the Commission to bring pressure on South Africa to dismantle the apartheid system and make fundamental changes.

52. Mr. Mezzalama (Italy) took the Chair.

53. Mr. DEMIRALP (Observer for Turkey) said that policies based on racial discrimination, such as apartheid, still prevailed in contravention of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The situation stemming from the Pretoria régime's policy in southern Africa continued to burden international relations. The interim report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts (E/CN.4/1988/8) showed that the situation in southern Africa had worsened alarmingly. The arrests, summary executions, torture and ill-treatment continued; the imposition of states of emergency had further eroded the rights of individuals, and the apartheid system was being strengthened.

54. His Government had always firmly opposed all forms of racial discrimination. It had spoken out on all occasions against the South African Government's inhuman and degrading policies. It had no diplomatic relations with South Africa nor any military, cultural or sporting contacts with that country. It did not recognize the "Bantustans" and supported the people's movements for the establishment of human rights in South Africa, where the black majority should be enabled to play a full part in the country's political life and all citizens should enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms without restriction.

55. One of the international community's most urgent tasks was to exercise the utmost pressure on the Pretoria Government until the policy of apartheid had been utterly abolished. His Government would support all United Nations action to that end and continue to contribute to the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa.

56. Turkey, which had been a member of the United Nations Council for Namibia since its foundation in 1967, affirmed its solidarity with the Namibian people and its support for the legitimate struggle, under the direction of SWAPO, for independence; it also endorsed the Secretary-General's efforts to secure implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.
57. Mr. BAISSA (Observer for Democratic Yemen) said that the Commission continued to receive evidence of the unbridled power exercised by the Zionist and racist rulers in the occupied Arab territories and southern Africa. The apartheid system against which the majority population had been struggling for so many years was based on an arbitrary colonial régime of oppression and pillage. The persistence of such a situation, on the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in defiance of repeated world condemnation, meant that it was time for the international community to reappraise its methods; only radical measures could bring the South African people's suffering to an end.

58. Everyone should be aware that Pretoria's cosmetic changes were merely meant to mask that régime's growing intransigence; all progressive forces, including OAU, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the non-aligned movement, should bring their concerted efforts to bear in order to isolate it utterly.

59. The interim report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts (E/CN.4/1988/8) provided ample testimony of the Pretoria régime's flagrant violations of human rights, including the murder of children. As Nelson Mandela had said during his trial, blacks had had to defy a law which denied them equality; not until their protests had been suppressed by force had they decided to use violence in return. As the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group had stated, the strength of black convictions had become matched by a readiness to die for them, and blacks would sustain their struggle whatever the cost.

60. The updated report by the Special Rapporteur to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1987/8/Rev.1 and Add.1 - Parts I and II) gave details of the assistance of all types rendered to South Africa from various quarters; such assistance only served to worsen the situation. There were, indeed, growing signs of international solidarity with the South African majority's struggle, and more and more countries, even in the developed world, were dissociating themselves from Pretoria's policies; but there was no sign of the political change essential for a genuine solution.

61. The peoples of South Africa, Namibia and the front-line States needed tangible assistance more than ever, and efforts for that purpose must be stepped up. The current chairman of the non-aligned movement, had said, as reported in the periodical Foreign Affairs, that time had run out and the necessary choices must be made promptly in the interest of the peace and security of the region and of the world.

62. Mrs. BEREZHNAVA (Women's International Democratic Federation) said that, since the Commission's previous session, the situation in southern Africa had again deteriorated sharply as a result of the régime's persistent efforts to maintain the abominable system of institutionalized racism, contrary to the letter and spirit of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

63. Most abominable of all was the open war declared on the young. Every day black mothers endured the agony of burying their children or seeking help in searching for missing sons and daughters, many of whom were untraceable. Her organization demanded the immediate release of all children. The state of emergency declared in South Africa was adding further burdens to family life.
The unemployed - mainly women, children and the old and infirm - were being expelled to the "Bantustans", and the family planning methods imposed by the régime bordered on genocide.

64. The Pretoria régime continued to occupy Namibia illegally in defiance of numerous United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 435 (1978), the only surety for the Namibian people's inalienable right to self-determination. South Africa's militarization of Namibia, and its aggression against neighbouring States, using regular army units and the services of UNITA and RENAMO mercenaries, threatened the peace and security of the region and of the world.

65. The WIDF strongly condemned South Africa's attacks on the peoples of Mozambique and Angola; it was disturbed at the disruption of family life and the dramatic increase in refugees, mostly women and children, throughout the region as a result of South Africa's aggression. The WIDF had always appreciated the solidarity shown by the front-line States in coping with the refugee problem despite their meagre resources and South Africa's inhuman harassment, including the bombardment of refugee camps in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana in May 1986.

66. The WIDF contributed to implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions and in activities to implement the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. Its numerous activities included a conference in 1987 on solidarity with the women and peoples of southern Africa. It appealed to the Commission to exercise its authority with a view to urgent action aimed at completely eradicating the apartheid system and securing Namibia's independence in compliance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.