

# *Information*

COOPERATION-DEVELOPMENT

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

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The Nine coordinate their views on Southern Africa.

*The Member States of the European Community, as the largest trading partners of South Africa, undoubtedly have a major role to play in bringing about change in the Republic. Although South Africa has developed a degree of self sufficiency in a number of areas, it is still heavily dependent on the Western countries for its economic survival. South Africa needs to trade and so is vulnerable to pressure from its major trading partners. This fact is clearly in the minds of the Nine Member States of the European Community whose attention has over the past few years been focused on ways of helping solve the problems in Southern Africa.*

*International pressure on the Republic of South Africa is building up. The first World Conference for Action Against Apartheid was held in August 1977 in Lagos, to specifically deal with ways of bringing to an end the apartheid system. This Conference, organised by the United Nations was attended by 102 governments and 18 non governmental organisations. Mr Simonet, the Belgian foreign minister and current president of the EEC Council of Ministers spoke on behalf of the Nine Member States of the Community when he said at that meeting that " apartheid is an insult to the dignity of man. In contradiction with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations, it constitutes a form of institutionalised racism and deprives the majority of the inhabitants of the full exercise of civil and political rights". The Nine, he said, " condemn and reject the concept of separate communities by different races and deplore the refusal of the South African Government to embark on the road to a really non racial society in which the whole population have equal rights."*

*In September 1977, Mr Simonet reiterated Community positions on Southern Africa at the UN General Assembly and on October 12 said, " On this day of solidarity with the political prisoners in South Africa, the Nine reaffirm that the liberation of political detainees is, in their view, essential for the building up of a more just and peaceful society. The Governments of the Nine countries of the European Community once again adjure the authorities of South Africa to abandon coercion which can only foster hatred and stir up violence, as the tragic events in that country prove. I recall the tragic fate of Mr Steven Biko, partisan of non violence who recently died in a South African prison."*

*From February 1976 onwards, the foreign ministers of the Nine have given a great deal of thought to Southern Africa and have coordinated their views on many issues, such as the independence of Zimbabwe and Namibia and the non recognition of the Bantustans. The EEC has made it clear that on independence both Namibia and Zimbabwe would be welcome to apply for membership of the ACP/EEC Convention of Lomé.*

Particularly with regard to Namibia, the Nine stated in their message to the UN Secretary General on Namibia Day in August 1976 that, " negotiations should take place with representatives of all political groups in that territory, including the SWAPO, in order to pave the way for Namibia's independence in the near future."

In September 1976, Mr Van der Stoel, the Dutch foreign minister, at that time president of the EEC Council of Ministers, made a statement before the United Nations General Assembly in which he reaffirmed a declaration agreed earlier that year by the Nine. Mr Van der Stoel said " we condemn South Africa's policy of apartheid and we advocate the right to self determination and independence of the peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia. We respect the independence of all African States and their right to define their national policies in complete sovereignty and without foreign interference."... "Our Governments do not intend to recognize the Transkei on the occasion of its purported independence. False solutions to the problems of apartheid in the Republic of South Africa, such as the establishment of homelands and bantustans as presently pursued by the South African Government, promote rather than diminish racial discrimination. The popular upheaval and resistance to apartheid should have convinced the South African Government that apartheid has no future and constitutes an insupportable violation of human dignity. South Africa is a multi-racial society in which all people irrespective of their race or colour should have the right to live peacefully together on the basis of equality. Apartheid is in flagrant contradiction with this fundamental right and should be eliminated. As long as it is practised, it will be resisted by those whose basic human rights are denied. The Nine are unequivocal in their firm belief that justice and freedom for all people should prevail in South Africa."

Code of conduct for EEC firms in South Africa.

On 20 September 1977, the foreign ministers of the European Community adopted a code of conduct for EEC firms in South Africa. This document is certainly more comprehensive than either the British 1974 Code of Practise or the 1977 Charter drawn up by eleven American multinationals.

It takes a substantial step forward by stating that " should black African employees decide that their representative body should be in the form of a trade union, the company should accept this decision." The code points out that " trade unions for black Africans are not illegal and companies are free to recognize them and to negotiate and conclude agreements with them."

On the question of pay, the code states that companies have a special responsibility " pay based on the absolute minimum necessary for a family to survive cannot be considered as being sufficient." The code also advocates that companies give the African employees fringe benefits such as pension schemes, unemployment benefit, medical insurance and so forth.

*The EEC code calls upon firms to do everything possible to abolish the practise of segregation in canteens, work places etc. In addition it points out the need to provide training facilities for African employees which would not only help their advancement in the firm, but would also reduce the company's dependence on immigrant white labour.*

*Finally firms will be required to publish every year reports on how they are implementing the code and provide detailed information on the number of Africans employed in the company. These reports will then be reviewed by the governments of the Nine. (For text of code of conduct see annex).*

*The EEC has also asked the member states of the OECD to support the code. In the meantime the EEC is looking into the possibility of adopting other measures to increase pressure on South Africa to abolish apartheid.*

Pressure can be applied through the framework of the ACP/EEC Convention of Lomé.

There are three levels of responsibility for possible action by the EEC to bring about change in Southern Africa - Member State, Community and international. While many areas of activity still clearly remain within the competence of the Member States of the European Community, the EEC as such can provide and does provide a great deal of assistance to Southern African States.

Under the Lomé Convention, the European Community has direct links with a number of countries in the Southern African region, and can through this agreement do a great deal to alleviate the difficulties in that area.

Apart from direct assistance through the provisions of the Lomé Convention, a great deal of pressure can also be applied through the institutional framework of the agreement.

In June 1977, the ACP/EEC Consultative Assembly, the institution of the Lomé agreement where European Parliamentarians meet with representatives of 52 African, Caribbean and Pacific States, adopted a resolution on Southern Africa. The resolution stressed that the "economic situation of the member countries of the Convention of Lomé engaged in Southern Africa in the joint struggle of the African peoples for independence and against racialism, is part of a political crisis in which the EEC must concern itself, necessitating the use of special measures within the framework of the Convention; welcomes in this connection, the use made of the provisions of the Convention relating to exceptional aid and recognizes that in view of the worsening of the crisis further and more urgent help will be needed."

Mr Claude Cheysson, the European Commissioner responsible for development spoke to the Consultative Assembly on June 6 and thanked them for having adopted this paragraph which he said " will facilitate the action of the Commission." Mr Cheysson said " the events in Southern Africa involve economic difficulties and suffering which must lead us to increase the means that we put at the disposal of the governments and the populations." On the decision of the United Nations " the Nine have expressed through the appropriate channels their complete commitment. The occupation in Namibia must cease. Freely controlled elections must take place in Namibia so that an elected parliament can provide solutions which suit the Namibian people. The law of the majority must be respected. I have said with very great firmness in the name of the Community .... that Europe will never accept that racism should be the basis of a system of government, that Europe will not accept that the law of the majority is ignored. We have lost tens of millions of lives because these principles were brought to the ground. Can we now accept the same in Southern Africa?"

The benefits offered to Southern African States under the provisions of the ACP/EEC Convention of Lomé .

The European Community is already providing considerable assistance to the countries of Southern Africa through the provisions of the ACP/EEC Convention of Lomé . Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zaire and Zambia are all members of this agreement. Under the Lomé Convention these ACP States enjoy significant commercial and financial benefits.

In the trade field the Southern African ACP States have free and unrestricted access to the European markets for nearly all their exports. For products covered by the EEC's common agricultural policy, special arrangements have been worked out so that these countries have better terms of access than other third countries. Botswana and Swaziland are able to export their beef to the Community under special preferential arrangements, involving duty free access and a 90% reduction in the import levy. Swaziland and Malawi also have special arrangements for their exports of sugar. The stabilisation of export earnings scheme, another integral part of the Lomé agreement, compensates the ACP for losses in export earnings for certain groups of products, if these losses have arisen through no fault of their own, such as a fall in world prices or natural catastrophies. To date Tanzania has been the main beneficiary in the Southern African region of aid of this type.

It is interesting to note that at the ACP/EEC Council of Ministers meeting in Fiji in April 1977, it was agreed to add wool and mohair to the Stabex list, which will be of particular benefit to Lesotho.

