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Dear Colleague

LUSAKA CONFERENCE BETWEEN MPC, SWAPO AND
ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL : 11-13 MAY 1984

Documentation:

- A. The Conference Programme.
- B. Opening Statement of Dr Kenneth Kaunda on 11 May 1984.
- C. Opening Statement of the Administrator-General on 11 May 1984.
- D. Opening remarks by Moses Katjioungua of the MPC.
- E. SWAPO statement to the Conference.
- F. Zambian and SWAPO draft versions of the Lusaka Declaration.
- G. Final draft of the Lusaka Declaration.
- H. Official press statement on the Conference, on 12 May 1984.
- I. Report of the Administrator-General on the Conference.
- J. Article from the Cape Argus of 15 May 1984.
- K. Statement by the Prime Minister of 15 May 1984.
- L. My statements of 15 and 16 May 1984.

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The Conference in Lusaka from 11 - 13 May 1984 took place against the background of statements by the South African Government that it would not stand in the way of a meeting between the Multi-Party Conference (MPC), SWAPO and the Administrator-General of South West Africa.

During the Lusaka Meetings of 16 February 1984 and 25 April 1984, President Kaunda took the initiative in raising the possibility of talks between the MPC, SWAPO and the Administrator-General. This proposal was pursued in discussions between the Office of the Administrator-General and the Zambian Government on 3 and 4 May 1984. The subsequent arrangements in this regard were confirmed during the visit of Minister Phiri of Zambia, to Cape Town on 8 May 1984. In terms of these arrangements, the Administrator-General and President Kaunda would co-chair the proposed meeting, and the delegations of the MPC and SWAPO would be restricted to 25 members each. The agenda would include the following:

- a) The achievement of independence for South West Africa - i.e. the question of implementation of Resolution 435 and other related matters.
- b) The date of the next meeting.

It was agreed, moreover, that the shape of the table would be square or oblong, with President Kaunda, the Administrator-General, SWAPO and the MPC delegations along the sides. (SWAPO and the MPC would, however, not be on opposite sides.) There would also be representatives of the U.N. and the Frontline States present in Lusaka at the time of the Conference, though it was not contemplated that either would gain admission to the Conference itself.

Since the Administrator-General was not going to Lusaka as the representative of the South African Government, but as the Administrator-General of the Territory, the meeting could not be construed as one between SWAPO and South Africa.

The meeting was held in Lusaka from 11 - 13 May 1984, and began with the MPC delegation raising objections concerning:

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- a) The size of the SWAPO delegation (which comprised 36 rather than 29 delegates), and
- b) the presence of 4 SWANU "Progressives" in the SWAPO delegation.

In response to the former objection, SWAPO agreed to excuse 7 of its own delegates, but with the MPC continuing to protest the presence of the 4 SWANU "progressives", the latter proceeded, voluntarily, to excuse themselves. The SWAPO delegation was, accordingly, reduced to 26 - 19 SWAPO members, and 7 members from splinter organizations that had aligned themselves with SWAPO, viz. NCDP, Damara Council, Mbanderu Council, the ELKSWA and NPPN.

President Kaunda and the Administrator-General, as well as the leaders of the delegations, Sam Nujoma of SWAPO and Moses Katjiuongua of the MPC, delivered introductory speeches, all of which seemingly augured well for the outcome of the talks. Nujoma, in particular, assumed an unusually conciliatory position, and appealed to all to use the unique opportunity the meeting afforded, to put an end to the bloodshed and destruction that had ravaged the country. He took time, also, to address the white community, assuring them that SWAPO's doors were open to all, and that it was not them that SWAPO had been fighting, but rather "the colonial system and apartheid policies in Namibia".

After approximately thirty hours of talks a declaration emerged known as "the Lusaka Declaration on the Independence of Namibia", and was presented to the Conference in draft form for signature. In terms of this Declaration, the parties would agree, inter alia, to:

- the independence of Namibia without delay and without the introduction of "extraneous matters";
- an immediate ceasefire and cessation of hostilities between SWAPO and South Africa;
- the promotion of reconciliation, unity and peace for the benefit of all the people of Namibia;

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- Security Council Resolution 435 (1978) as "the only basis for the peaceful achievement of independence of Namibia"; and
- a policy of non-alignment in terms of which an independent Namibia would endeavour to maintain and promote peaceful relations with all its neighbours, including South Africa.

There were only two major points of disagreement:

- SWAPO's insistence that the presence of Cuban forces in Angola should be specifically recorded as extraneous to the question of Namibian independence; and
- the MPC's dissatisfaction with the U.N.'s continuing lack of impartiality.

A formula was however devised in terms of which both parties would "agree to disagree" on these points.

Nevertheless, much to the surprise of the Conference, including its co-Chairman, President Kaunda, Nujoma, at the last moment, refused to sign the Declaration. Instead, he launched a vitriolic attack on the MPC during the course of which he claimed that two of its members, Messrs D Mudge and D van Zijl, were South Africans even though they were born in South West Africa. He added:

"You came to Namibia barefoot, and now you are millionaires because you exploited cheap black labour. You have blood on your hands and on your hair, and for this you will pay with your own blood."

According to the Zambians, Nujoma's volte face occurred immediately after SWAPO delegates consulted with a "certain diplomat", who, it is suspected, was a special emissary sent to Lusaka by the Soviet Union, to "advise" SWAPO during the talks.

However, notwithstanding this failure to reach agreement, the meeting cannot, for the following reasons, be regarded as unsuccessful:

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- Despite the rhetorical position SWAPO had adopted, it sat down, at the same conference table with a visibly independent MPC delegation, which was clearly not part of the Administrator-General's delegation. For the first time, the leaders of South West Africa held genuine discussions concerning the future of the Territory, and, as indicated above, came close to issuing a joint declaration on its independence.
- Neither the MPC nor the Administrator-General is being blamed by the Zambians for the fact that the Conference did not conclude with an agreement. On the contrary SWAPO was clearly responsible for the lack of progress.
- The Zambians envisaged the possibility of a further round of talks. According to President Kaunda, the meeting came within a day "of reaching something worthwhile". It also represented a "neutral non-aligned" approach to the problems of the territory, and had, in the process drawn the various factions closer to one another.
- The claim of SWAPO to be the "sole representative" of the people of South West Africa was significantly undermined. The arrangements for the Conference, including the official programme, made it clear that the MPC delegation enjoyed an equal and independent status.

At the same time, however, it was evident that Zambia still identified closely with SWAPO and saw the Conference as a means of installing it in power through a peaceful process. Together with Angola, it was also hoping to confront South Africa with a unanimous appeal from the leaders of the Territory for early independence, preferably on the basis of Security Council Resolution 435 and without Cuban withdrawal.

SWAPO's objective, on the other hand, was to try to isolate the MPC and split it over the question of Cuban withdrawal from Angola. This it hoped to do by including other elements in its delegation (inter alia the Damara Council and rebel members of SWANU) and by inviting a cross-section of radical parties and individuals to be present in Lusaka.