

Mr. President,

I have the honour to address this Ninth Session of the General Assembly on behalf of the Governments of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Canada. Our five countries, members of the Security Council, have, over the last year, devoted much attention and effort towards the resolution of the serious issue which is the very reason for our gathering here today, that is the question of the independence of Namibia. We would, therefore, like to present to you our common view of the situation at this juncture and to make known our common belief that an internationally acceptable solution of this problem may well be within our grasp, if all concerned will manifest the necessary determination and political will to put an end to years of injustice in that territory.

With all of you, we have shared the conviction that the international territory of Namibia is illegally occupied by South Africa and that this occupation must come to an end. With all of you, we have shared an intense concern at the extension into Namibia of apartheid and racial discrimination and at the continuing repression of Namibians under that system. Like many of you, we have been concerned that the perpetuation of this deplorable situation would sooner or later affect the political stability of the entire Southern African area. It is, therefore, in full accord with the aspirations and objectives of the international community that we undertook, as the members of this international community in the best position to do so, to seek out practical ways and means to end this 30-year old stalemate.

In the spring of 1977, it became apparent to all of us that the installation of the Turnhalle Constitution, as it was called, was imminent. The adoption of legislation to bring it into effect, forecast for June 1977, would have resulted in the unilateral establishment of a government based on ethnic groups and excluding participation by any political party, and most importantly by one of the major political movements in the territory, SWAPO. Such an action, it was clear, would not result in an internationally acceptable solution to the Namibian question and would, furthermore, by dividing the population of Namibia among itself on an ethnic basis, and by ignoring the aspirations of its people for true independence and unity, lead to increased violence. It would have perpetuated the unsatisfactory situation which has prevailed in that territory. In the face of this dismal prospect, our five countries decided to make a concerted effort to investigate whether by means of the existing relations between themselves and South Africa, it might not be possible to find a practical way of implementing Security Council Resolution 385 which was adopted unanimously. That resolution comprises the most comprehensive approach ever adopted by the council to the desired resolution of the Namibian problem.