

In 1982, after intensive consultations among the parties, involving both the Front Line States and the Contact Group, the participants were able to report to the Secretary-General that agreement had been reached on virtually all of the outstanding issues which had apparently stood in the way of the implementation of Resolution 435. The parties accepted a set of principles concerning the constituent assembly and the constitution for an independent Namibia. Understandings were reached on the question of impartiality, and on the size, composition and deployment of UNTAG [UN Transition Assistance Group].

The Secretary-General himself then resolved certain points, still outstanding, during his visit to the region in 1983. South Africa gave assurances that the choice of electoral system, whether proportional representation or constituency-based, would be made and communicated at an early stage.

So what remains? South Africa's concerns regarding the transition process having been accommodated, we should now, in theory, look to Resolution 435 not as an obstacle to be overcome, but as an opportunity to be seized; in theory, South Africa, SWAPO, [the South West African People's Organization], the internal parties, as well as the Contact Group and the Front Line States, should now be joining hands to bring Namibia to independence through the UN plan. But the theory, alas, is shredded by the practice. All the requisite understandings are in place, but nothing happens. When is 435 to be applied?

Some have implied that part of the responsibility for the current impasse lies at the feet of the Contact Group. That suggestion is unwarranted. The members of this Council know full well that Canada's reason for belonging to the Contact Group has been to facilitate Namibia's independence in accordance with the UN Plan. That's the way it began. That is the basis on which some excellent work was done.

That does not mean, however, that we're blind to the delays of the last two years. We're not. The Contact Group, with the best will in the world, has not succeeded, any more than others, in bringing independence to Namibia. It is necessary to admit that, openly, and with candour. Nonetheless, the Contact Group should not disband, because it still has a role to play, one day, under Resolution 435.

Having said that, Canada admits that it's very difficult to know how to proceed. We shall have to look to other steps that member states might take — steps which demonstrate that patience is long-gone, and that the time to move strongly is now.

We should perhaps consider reaffirming and re-endorsing the voluntary measures as set out in Security Council Resolution 283 of 1970. Member states may wish to examine what they have done to conform with its provisions. The provisions were strong. Such measures merit further response as we await the setting of a date for the implementation of Resolution 435.

We will, of course, want to confirm again our readiness to lend assistance — both human and financial — to an independent Namibia. Perhaps the Council will want to address that point.

Above all, we should encourage, yet again, the vigorous participation of the Secretary-General in seeking

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