

## 39. NAMIBIA

### Background

Following the defeat of Germany in World War I, the League of Nations granted South Africa a mandate to administer the territory known as South West Africa. In 1966 the United Nations General Assembly terminated this mandate and declared that the territory would henceforth come under the authority of the United Nations. In 1967 the General Assembly established the UN Council for South West Africa to administer the territory until it became independent.

In 1968 the UN Security Council condemned the Republic of South Africa's refusal to comply with the General Assembly's 1967 decision. That year the General Assembly, acting at the behest of representatives of the Namibian people, proclaimed that the territory would henceforth be known as Namibia. In 1971 the International Court of Justice ruled that the continued presence of South Africa in Namibia was illegal. The ICJ ruling also obliged member states to refrain from fostering relations (diplomatic, consular or commercial) that might imply recognition of South Africa's rule in Namibia. In 1974 the UN Council for Namibia enacted a Decree for the Protection of the Natural Resources of Namibia, making the exploitation of natural resources in the occupied territory without the Council's authorization an act for which entities could be held liable by future Namibian governments.

The presence of the South African Government in Namibia has been resisted by the South West African Peoples' Organization (SWAPO), which was recognized by the General Assembly as the authentic representative of the Namibian people in 1973. While the international community endeavoured to create a framework for Namibian independence, South Africa proceeded to establish "bantustans" and other structures to strengthen its control over Namibia. In 1975 it sponsored the Turnhalle Conference, a process

18 *General Debates*, 17 April 1966, p. 12493.

19 *General Debates*, 18 April 1966, p. 12493.

20 *General Debates*, 22 April 1966, p. 12350; 24 April 1966, p. 12607.