

Mr. President,

I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the five member governments of the Contact Group -- Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America -- which have been working together during the past four years in an attempt to negotiate an internationally recognized settlement to the Namibian problem.

Mr. President, the independence of Namibia is one of the objectives that every government represented in this Assembly supports. Not one of our number would attempt to defend the legitimacy of South Africa's occupation of Namibia, and all of us subscribe to the proposition that Namibia should, at the earliest possible moment, join the ranks of the independent nations of the world. There are, however, differences of opinion as to how this goal should be reached. The five governments of the Contact Group are convinced that only a negotiated settlement accepted by the people of Namibia, the government of South Africa, the governments of the front-line states and, ultimately, the United Nations can bring the independence for Namibia that we all so ardently desire. As an alternative to a negotiated settlement, the Five see only an open-ended continuation of a war with all of the suffering this would entail.

Mr. President, as I am sure you and the representatives here assembled know, the foreign ministers of the Five met in New York on the 24th of September this year and decided to relaunch their negotiations on Namibia, which had been in suspense since the break-up of the Geneva Conference last January. Our ministers made this decision on the basis of extensive discussions that had been under way for six months between the Five, the front-line states, SWAPO, and the OAU mission led by Foreign Minister Ouko of Kenya. The present proposal of the Contact Group calls for the completion of three phases of negotiation which we hope will lead to the beginning of the implementation of Security Council Resolution 435 in 1982.

The first phase of this effort will be for the parties concerned to commit themselves to a set of constitutional principles designed to build the confidence of the parties concerned in the election process and in the future of an independent Namibia. Representatives of the Contact Group have just completed a mission made for the purpose of presenting these constitutional principles and discussing them with the parties concerned. The group visited Nigeria; Angola, where they met with both the Angolan government and SWAPO; South Africa; Windhoek, where they met with the internal Namibian parties; and then the capitals of Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania. The delegation of the Five then travelled to Kenya to brief President Moi, the current