

Southern Africa

The ritualistic aspect of debate on South Africa's apartheid policies was again evident in the 1978 General Assembly session, which adopted 15 resolutions under this item. Canada supported seven of these, and opposed or abstained on eight.

The Security Council did not specifically consider the question of apartheid during 1978, partly because the focus of attention was on Namibia, where progress towards a peaceful solution seemed possible.

The "Western Five" (Canada, the FRG, France, Britain and the U.S.A.) initiative to bring about a negotiated settlement in Namibia on the basis of Security Council Resolution 385 was intensified in 1978, frequently with the personal involvement of the Secretary of State for External Affairs and his counterparts. Their efforts resulted in a settlement proposal that was presented to the Security Council on April 10. After the acceptance of the proposal by South Africa and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the Council, in a series of resolutions, requested the Secretary-General's report for the implementation of the Western proposal, and authorized the establishment of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG).

At year's end, questions remaining concerned the composition of UNTAG, the date for UN-supervised elections, and the proclamation of a cease-fire.

The ninth special session of the General Assembly on Namibia (April 24 - May 3), adopted a resolution (with 21 abstentions) reasserting the UN's responsibility for the territory, expressing support for SWAPO and its armed struggle and calling for South Africa's complete and unconditional withdrawal from the territory. The Western Five abstained on the ground that they did not wish to take a substantive position on the resolution while their initiative for a negotiated settlement was at a sensitive juncture. During the thirty-third regular session, the Five abstained for the same reason (along with a number of other states) on three resolutions on Namibia.

The General Assembly customarily adopts two resolutions (A and B) on Rhodesia. Resolution A, an omnibus resolution, had been adopted by consensus in 1975, 1976 and 1977, but this year Canada, along with nine other states, abstained. Thirteen countries, including Canada, abstained on Resolution B, which called for the expansion of mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia to include measures, particularly an oil embargo against South Africa, that would be the responsibility of the Security Council.

Following the "internal settlement" announced by Prime Minister Ian Smith on March 3, the Security Council met to consider the situation. The debate revealed a wide area of agreement among the