

Mr. President,

As one of the five countries which endeavoured some eighteen months ago to find a practical, peaceful solution to the long-standing Namibia problem, Canada was naturally pleased to give its unequivocal support to the resolution which the Security Council has just adopted. As I have already made clear in my statement before the General Assembly three days ago, Canada firmly believes that the Secretary-General's report, together with the clarifications given to the Council today, is fully in line with the proposal tabled in this Council by the Five Western members. We further consider that the establishment of a United Nations Transition Assistance Group which is called for by the resolution just adopted, should allow for a truly peaceful and effective political process to take place in the territory and the attainment at as early a date as possible of full, internationally recognized independence.

I must congratulate the Secretary-General, and his Special Representative Mr. Ahtisaari, for their laudable efforts in producing a comprehensive, professionally sound plan of action for the implementation of Resolution 431. My gratitude also goes to the African States who have done so much to make it possible to adopt this momentous decision. I also note with the greatest appreciation the assurances of full co-operation given by SWAPO.

Mr. President, if we are not able today to rejoice more at our accomplishments -- and none can deny that they have been considerable when one recalls the situation that existed a year and a half ago -- it is, as everyone knows, because we are at this moment uncertain as to whether the co-operation of one major party will be forthcoming. The Government of South Africa has let it be known that it could not agree to the Secretary-General's report in the form in which it was communicated to Pretoria prior to its formal presentation here today. South Africa also indicated that it would unilaterally organize elections in the territory for the alleged purpose of ascertaining the views of the local inhabitants. As I made clear in my statement in the General Assembly, to follow such a course of action would be extremely short-sighted and the consequences of such disregard for the views of the international community could be very serious.

I therefore renew my call upon both the Government of South Africa and those in Namibia who are inclined to support this mistaken course of action to reconsider their decision. My Western colleagues and I have every intention to do our best to sort out the difficulties which must be overcome. What would be sheer folly would be to put aside the positive results of a long negotiating process and proceed blindly into a renewed period of confrontation. I am confident that there still exists sufficient good will on all sides to attain our objectives.