



## The American Committee on Africa

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United Nations  
Special Political and Decolonization Committee  
"Elimination of apartheid and establishment of a united, democratic and  
non-racial South Africa"  
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Associate Director

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great pleasure to be heard by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee today. The American Committee on Africa applauds the progress that has been achieved thus far to deconstruct apartheid and move toward free and fair elections in South Africa. The date of April 27, 1994 brings hope but we must proceed with caution. The roadblocks to democracy have to be exposed and eliminated.

It then becomes important for the allies of the anti-apartheid movement to support the democratic movement in South Africa and continue to pressure the U.S. government to support democracy in South Africa.

The American Committee on Africa has taken on the challenge to keep the broad constituency which played a key role in supporting liberation by enforcing sanctions aware and engaged in the next phase of the struggle to insure the establishment of democracy in South Africa. We have several ongoing programs that work toward this end. These include The Religious Action Network; Socially Responsible Investment; Election Watching and longer term education;



The Religious Action Network brings together congregations from many denominations across the U.S. and involves prominent leaders in the religious community. Their commitment to the elimination of apartheid has lead them to travel to South Africa, forging links with South African religious leaders involved in the grassroots level there. Our RAN coordinator has been seconded to the South African Council of Churches for a year. Her work there has been instrumental in providing accurate accounts of the process toward democracy and the enormous danger posed by the prevailing violence. She writes from Johannesburg, "Everywhere I go people ask me if Americans still care about South Africa. They hope we will help them to stop the killing and after the election to rebuild their country". This sort of engagement South Africans request is exactly what the Religious Action network is providing by pressuring the U.S. government to make sure the elections are free and fair. The network is also willing to stay engaged after elections, to support reconstruction in a New South Africa.

As an organization that was instrumental in the sanctions movement during the 1980's, the American Committee on Africa welcomed Nelson Mandela's call for the lifting of sanctions at the United Nations as a marker of important progress. But it is important to emphasize that there is still a long and uncertain road ahead, both to ensure that the elections are free and fair and in overcoming the terrible legacy of apartheid. In this effort, we are engaging our network of state and local government officials, who in the 1980's implemented the sanctions, to lift sanctions as soon as possible while pledging to engage in

addressing the enormous task of reconstruction. We released a statement signed by 40 leaders in the sanctions movement calling for socially responsible investment and Black empowerment as sanctions are lifted. The statement declared, "This will not bring an end to our concern for the people of South Africa. Apartheid will leave a terrible and bitter legacy of inequality, injustice and poverty. We believe that Americans can contribute to overcoming that legacy. As sanctions are lifted we will urge corporations to uphold the standards set by the democratic forces in South Africa for socially responsible investment that will promote equal opportunity, worker's rights, environmental protection and community development."

We currently are monitoring the progress being made by cities and states in lifting sanctions, and are working closely with several legislators. Most recently our Projects Director traveled to meet with about 50 treasurers of cities in Southern California. They were concerned about reinvesting in South Africa and how to engage Black South Africans and African-Americans in this process. This constituency sees its role in supporting the democratic movement in South Africa as strengthening its partnerships with the people of South Africa.

Our effort to educate the U.S. about the problems and promise of the democratic movement in South Africa is being further developed by our sister organization, the Africa Fund. Our recent publications, "The Struggle Continues: South African Women and the Vote" and "Voting in the Shadow of Apartheid: Questions and Answers on the South African Election" intend to educate Americans about the election process and its complexities. The importance of voting by women is an issue that

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many might take for granted. But in reality, the apartheid regime is steeped not only in racism but also sexism. Through our network of organization dedicated to issues affecting women in the U.S. and South Africa, we are trying to provide a link and foster solidarity between the two groups. The goal again is to smooth the road to a non-racial, non-sexist South Africa.

The second literature piece we produced this year strives to alert the U.S. public about the unresolved issues and obstacles surrounding the elections in South Africa. It answers questions election watchers have, thus engaging them in support to make sure the elections are free and fair. It also examines the Namibian experience and what South Africa can learn from Namibia.

We are providing accurate information about the democratic movement in South Africa to a constituency in the United States that has strength and commitment which can be channeled to help all South Africans participate in free and fair elections. This network will not be disengaged after April 27, 1994. Though apartheid will be eliminated, the legacy survives. Our network is committed to assist in the rebuilding of South African society which will include all its citizens. The fundamentals of a democratic South Africa are the same fundamentals of our broad based constituency in the United States. They are peace, democracy and development. The American Committee on Africa and its constituency intend to see these fundamentals set in place and set in practice.

Thank You.