

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON OIL EMBARGO AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA
AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND
14-16 MARCH 1980

Message by the President of the General Assembly .
His Excellency, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim

The holding in Amsterdam of an International Seminar on Oil Embargo against South Africa provides a unique opportunity for the mobilization of international efforts against the supply to apartheid South Africa of this vital and strategic commodity. The Holland Committee on Southern Africa, the Work Group Kairos and the Special Committee against Apartheid deserve our appreciation for this timely and important initiative.

The importance of oil sanctions against the apartheid regime can not be over-emphasized as it is clearly evident that oil is pivotal to the apartheid machinery. Recognizing this, the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session requested the Security Council to consider urgently the adoption of a mandatory oil embargo against South Africa.

The International Seminar is taking place at a very crucial period in the struggle for freedom and human dignity in Southern Africa. The recent victory of the Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe has brought into sharp focus the need to intensify the efforts of the international community to bring to

an end the scourge of racism and apartheid in South Africa. Equally urgent is the need to adhere scrupulously to the existing sanctions against the apartheid régime, as well as to expand those sanctions to incorporate measures in other vital areas so as to bring increased pressure to bear on the apartheid régime. Among these vital areas is, of course, the question of the supply of petroleum and petroleum products to South Africa.

The adoption of an arms embargo against South Africa represents an important contribution to the continuing struggle against the apartheid system. But oil continues to flow to South Africa. And no one can deny the importance of oil in the maintenance by South Africa of its military and police machinery.

The Rhodesian experience has clearly demonstrated how crucial oil was to the sustenance of the illegal minority régime and how the United Nations' sanctions were violated in one form or another, thus protracting the struggle and suffering of the people of Zimbabwe - both black and white.

Learning from the experience of Zimbabwe and making effective use of the commitment of most of the oil-producing countries to deny oil to South Africa, it is, I believe, imperative to intensify the efforts against the supply of oil to South Africa.

This International Seminar should help to throw light on the central role of oil in maintaining the apartheid system. Thus, it should in the first instance aim at ensuring the reinforced implementation of the oil embargo against South Africa by those countries which are already committed to that embargo; and, secondly, it should strive to achieve universalization of that commitment, including the adoption by the United Nations of a mandatory oil embargo against South Africa.

The Seminar should above all aim at the adoption of concrete action while taking fully into account past experiences so as to mobilize effectively world public opinion against the abhorrent system of apartheid. Indeed the time is overdue for the world to stop oiling the apartheid system. For to do so is to prolong the agony and suffering of the people of South Africa and to encourage the aggressive policies pursued by the apartheid régime, thus further endangering international peace and security.

I deeply regret that due to previous commitments, it has not been possible for me to attend the Seminar in response to your kind invitation. I do however send you my best wishes and affirm my confidence that your Seminar will be crowned with success in our common struggle against the evil system of apartheid.