

1993/13. Women and children under apartheid

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 1992/15 of 30 July 1992,

Reaffirming the provisions of the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution S-16/1 of 14 December 1989,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 47/95 of 16 December 1992,

Alarmed by the grave socio-economic deprivation to which the majority of the people, especially the women and children, are subjected as a direct consequence of apartheid,

Deeply concerned about the politically motivated violence that has to date claimed thousands of lives and left hundreds of thousands of people homeless, the majority of whom are women and children, especially in Natal and Transvaal provinces,

Noting the positive changes initiated by the South African authorities aimed at dismantling apartheid, which were the result of the relentless struggle waged by the people of South Africa as well as of the pressure exerted by the international community,

Welcoming the progress made by the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, and encouraging the multi-party forum to discuss and debate the political dispensation and future of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa,

Concerned at the fact that women are not integrated in the ongoing attempts to resolve the problems of South Africa by peaceful means, as envisaged in the Declaration on Apartheid, and stressing the need to ensure their full participation in that process by, *inter alia*, directly involv-

ing the gender advisory committee in the multi-party forum,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on women and children living under apartheid,³⁶ in which it is mentioned that the Government of South Africa signed on 29 January 1993 a number of conventions aimed at promoting and implementing fundamental rights and freedoms without distinction as to sex, namely, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women,³⁷ the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women,³⁸ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,³⁹ the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment⁴⁰ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁴¹

Noting the subsequent release by the Government of South Africa of the draft bill on the promotion of equal opportunities and concerned that it failed to deal with questions of substantive sexism that are integral to the problems of poverty, ignorance and disempowerment,

Convinced that the present legal system requires structural changes to be relevant to a new and just South Africa and that the draft bill should represent the views and experiences of those most affected by it,

Recognizing that the equality of women and men cannot be achieved without the success of the struggle towards a united, non-racist, non-sexist and democratic South Africa,

Commending the role played by the United Nations, particularly the Centre against Apartheid and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, in helping South African women to participate fully in the process of establishing a non-racist, non-sexist democracy in South Africa,

1. *Commends* those women both inside and outside South Africa who have resisted oppression and have remained steadfast in their opposition to apartheid;

2. *Demands* the immediate and unconditional release of any political prisoners and detainees, among whom are women and children, in accordance with the undertaking of the South African authorities;

3. *Urges* those involved in the multi-party forum to place high on their agenda issues concerning women, such as freedom, justice and equality, development and the environment;

4. *Appeals to* all countries and United Nations bodies, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 46/79 A of 13 December 1991 and in consultation with liberation movements, to increase their support for educational, health, vocational training and employment opportunities for women and children living under apartheid;

5. *Requests* the Centre against Apartheid to widen and strengthen its cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, with a view to creating specific programmes of assistance to South African women to enable them to participate fully in the process of transition of their country towards a non-racist democracy;

6. *Appeals to* the international community to give its full and concerted support to the vulnerable and critical process now under way in South Africa through a phased application of appropriate pressures on the South African authorities, as warranted by developments, and to provide

assistance to the opponents of apartheid and the disadvantaged sectors of society in order to ensure the rapid and peaceful attainment of the objectives of the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa;

7. *Requests* the international community to provide financial, material and human resources to South African women towards the establishment of special programmes and projects geared to women's integration and advancement at the present time and in post-apartheid South Africa;

8. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to consolidate the United Nations observer mission already deployed in South Africa to monitor and report on the unprecedented proportion of incidents of political and domestic violence directed against women and children from a variety of sources;

9. *Decides* that the Commission on the Status of Women should remain seized of the question of women and children living under apartheid;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its thirty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

*43rd plenary meeting
27 July 1993*