
From New Delhi

Non-Aligned leaders launch AFRICA Fund

by Susan Maitra

At a two-day summit in New Delhi Jan. 24-25, the leaders of nine Non-Aligned nations formally launched the AFRICA Fund, an initiative mandated by the eighth Non-Aligned Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe, last September and given priority emphasis by former Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) chairman, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The fund, whose acronym stands for Action for Resistance to Invasion, Colonialism, and Apartheid, was conceived as urgently needed to preempt a region-wide conflagration and probable superpower collision in southern Africa.

To make good on the aim to head off a military escalation and facilitate a peaceful end to apartheid, however, the fund's leaders will have to chart a genuinely constructive and non-sectarian path, one that goes beyond the confrontational rhetoric of "sanctions" and transcends the crippling bias introduced in the fund's mandate implying support for the so-called liberation movement, to the exclusion of other critical forces in the South African equation.

The membership of the fund is a balanced lot, led by some of the heavyweights in the Non-Aligned Movement. The strong representation of Ibero-America—in particular, the presence of Peru's President Alan García—is a potentially critical factor—as García's intervention in the recent summit indicates.

President García stayed on in India after the summit on a week-long official visit as the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebration, an occasion for detailed consultation with Rajiv Gandhi. The potential of the García-Gandhi connection was registered promptly by a terrorist attack on the Indian embassy in Lima.

Appeal and plan of action

As chairman of the AFRICA Fund committee, Rajiv Gandhi presided over the summit. At the group's several hours-long closed-door deliberations Jan. 24, sandwiched between a public inaugural and ceremonial closing the following morning, an appeal, plan of action, and set of rules for operating the fund were adopted.

Vice chairman of the Committee is Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, and the other members are, Zimbabwe Prime Minister and NAM chairman Robert Mugabe, Congo President and Organization of African Unity (OAU) chairman Col. Denis Sessou-Neusso, Nigerian Chief of General Staff Augustus Aikhomu, Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid, Yugoslav President Sinan Hasani, and President García. Argentine President Raúl Alfonsín sent a special representative, Raúl Alconada Sempe.

The documents had been prepared in several preceding rounds of official meetings in Lusaka and Delhi, coordinated by Gandhi's special envoy to Africa, the former U.N. ambassador N. Krishnan. Indian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Eduardo Falero had earlier toured southern Africa to assess priorities in terms of the fund's mandate.

The 800-word appeal states the summit leaders' concern at the "sharp deterioration" of the situation in southern Africa and their regret at the continued intransigence of the Pretoria regime. Asserting that apartheid is a "crime against humanity," the appeal calls for concerted action for its complete dismantling. The appeal is complemented by a 50-page plan of action setting forth projects and measures covering seven areas of priority assistance to the front-line states, support for the liberation movement, and mobilization of public opinion and financial resources. Assistance to the front-line states includes relief of shortages of essential commodities, strengthening of transport and communications, compensation for negative trade effects of sanctions, and development of human skills for effective management of national economies. The State Bank of India will manage the fund's account.

All economic development?

In a session with the press following the summit, Minister Falero reacted sharply to the accusation that the fund was "all economic development." The committee members were agreed, he stated, that the fund's focus is to end apartheid, and that the political edge has to be kept there. He added, "The main purpose is to develop and enhance the self-reliance of the front-line states."

This approach falls short of the recommendation contained in a study for the fund by Dr. R. Pancharukhi, director of the independent think tank, the Delhi-based Research and Information Systems for the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (RIS). Pancharukhi has argued that the short-term objective of assisting the front-line states to enforce sanctions against South Africa was inadequate, and that the long-term development needs of the states of the Southern Africa Coordination Council (SACC) must be incorporated into the AFRICA Fund. "It must be appreciated," the study said, "that the present extent of economic dependence on South Africa of SACC countries would be undesirable whatever the political character of that country."

The study said that the SACC states had been "deliber-

ately incorporated by metropolitan powers and large corporations into the colonial and subcolonial structures centering in general on the Republic of South Africa"—an economic integration strategy in which the "development of national economies as balanced units, let alone the welfare of the people of South Africa, played no part."

The AFRICA Fund's narrowing of approach to aiding the front-line states to bear the brunt of sanctions on South Africa, ignores the economic disaster facing these countries. In Mozambique, relief agencies warn that by mid-1987, southern provinces of the country will be stricken with a famine as horrific as the 1985 famine in Sudan and Ethiopia. All five nations, especially Zambia, face epidemics of AIDS, which has already infected up to 10% of the population.

A crippling bias

Even to be effective in its own terms, the front must succeed in drawing some support from beyond NAM, from the OECD nations, as several committee members stated. Governments as well as institutions and individuals will be invited to participate, according to the plan of action. "All those of who oppose sanctions in good faith [because of the harm to blacks in South Africa and the front-line states]," as Algerian President Bendjedid put it, can come forward to help end apartheid.

Although Minister Falero told the press that there had been "positive response and indications" from countries outside of NAM, so far the fund has mustered a mere \$70 million, and that from committee members themselves. With projects in hand totaling several billion dollars—including more than \$700 million for rehabilitation of migrant labor in Mozambique alone—this is not an auspicious beginning.

Indian officials have successfully beat down the bogey first floated by the British press last September that the fund was a military vehicle. However, the fund's explicit endorsement of the so-called liberation movement, the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-African Congress (PAC), SWAPO—and its entertainment of some \$50 million of funding requests from that quarter—implies a deeper compromise of its avowed goals to facilitate a non-violent transition in South Africa on two counts. First, it tends to cut the fund's leaders off from contact with other, generally moderate political forces among black and Afrikaaner alike, who are not only significant as political forces, but vital to a negotiated solution.

Second, the so-called liberation movement has already rejected a peaceful solution. ANC leader Oliver Tambo's recent remarks in the United States made that clear for those who had not cared to notice his organization's sponsorship of the notorious "necklace" killings of moderate black activists. Or, one could point to the ANC's boycott of the just-concluded *Indaba*, organized by Chief Buthelezi, the moderate leader of 6 million Zulus, where blacks, whites, and Asian South Africans came up with a formula for multi-party

democracy with universal suffrage. This formula will be applied in Natal, a province containing one-fourth of South Africa's entire population, and could be a model for the country.

Even the fund's vice-chairman Kaunda pointed out that it would not be accurate to put sole blame on the South African minority regime for the persistence of apartheid. In reality, he said, it was "short-sighted individuals in the West who pandered to the magnates of certain multinationals," the real authors, beneficiaries, and overseers of the apartheid system. Having "lived as strange bedfellows with the apartheid regime for half a century," as he himself put it, Kaunda can appreciate the subtle realities of a situation which has otherwise been distorted beyond recognition in the media. But then, in an odd defiance of such insight, he issued a sectarian call on behalf of the ANC in the very next breath.

The García factor

President Alan García's interventions in the public session of the summit point to his potentially decisive contribution to the fund's direction, and its ability to make a viable initiative. García roused his fellow committee members and the 1,000 person audience in New Delhi's prestigious Vigyan Bhavan Conference Hall from a rhetoric-induced fog with a passionate statement identifying the broader significance of the AFRICA Fund.

"Apartheid, colonialism," García said, "are the horrible expressions of a world economic system that has run its course." This system has smothered human creativity and produced the "cultural wasteland we see all around us today," he said. Pointing to the moral bankruptcy of the East and West alike, García said that establishment of the fund is a "moral flag," a step toward the restoration of certain basic ethical norms and human principles with which to create a better world.

The "voice of the poor is rejected," García elaborated. "Daily material conditions are imposed by might and force of arms and international institutions, but it is we poor and not the rich and powerful who are taking the initiative to find a solution. We represent their lost moral strength. We cannot just look to our own national interests, we must look to the whole world."

"We must join in our poverty, and make it our strength, as an expression of hope for the future. For it is not just southern Africa," García said. "Some day, we will have to face up to other, bigger problems—the debt problem, the problem of economic sovereignty, the establishment of a real international currency."

Described by one of India's leading dailies as "an irresistible moderate," García bridged the gap between Africa and Asia on the one side, and Ibero-America's predominantly Catholic-influenced cultures on the other. García's own close relationship to Pope John Paul II could give a powerful new dimension to the fund's work.