

Nordic Organisations in Independent Namibia

Report from a Conference
in Sigtuna, 9-10 March, 1989



(Högberg, ed.)

The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies
in cooperation with
Nordic Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

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Preface

This is a report from a conference on Nordic NGOs in Independent Namibia, held in Sigtuna, Sweden, March 9-10, 1989.

The initiative to the conference was taken by the Nordic working group on Namibia, appointed by the Nordic ministers responsible for development cooperation. The Working Group is planning the governmental development cooperation with a future independent Namibia. The working group points out, in its report from December 14, 1988, that an important part of the development assistance to Namibia is given by the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Nordic countries, and that a great number of NGOs are planning to assist Namibia also after Independence. This could create chaos in a recently liberated country with an administration in alteration. The Working Group stresses the need for coordination of development activities - both during the Transitional Period and after Independence.

As one step in this coordination process, the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies was requested by the Working Group to organise a conference together with NGOs, in cooperation with the Sigtuna Folk College and with the financial support from SIDA.

The main aims of the conference were:

- To give current information about Namibia and the process towards Independence, including the Namibian view on the role of the assistance during the Transitional Period and after Independence.
- To exchange information about needs, on-going and planned development activities in Namibia, both between representatives from Namibia and from the Nordic NGOs and between the Nordic NGOs themselves.
- To explore the possibilities of co-ordinating the NGO's development assistance on international, Nordic and national level.

About 40 NGOs in the Nordic countries were represented, selected among those who had established contacts with South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) or were working in Namibia.

Representatives from SWAPO, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UNHCR Nordic Office, the UNICEF Swedish Committee, the Namibia Communications Centre, the Nordic Working Group on Namibia and the Nordic government aid agencies were participating as resource persons (see List of Participants, appendix no 3).

The programme (appendix no 2) included information about Namibia in the process towards independence and a presentation of a few scenarios for an independent Namibia. The SWAPO representatives gave their view on the future role of the NGOs. The possibilities for coordination and cooperation between NGOs were discussed from different perspectives.

Due to unfortunate illness the report has been severely delayed. Therefore the information related to the transition period given at the conference, which at that time was very relevant, is now passed by events and therefore

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excluded. The report thus concentrates on issues which are valid in a longer time perspective, mainly regarding the NGOs experiences, plans and perspectives, SWAPO's view on the role of the NGOs and the scenarios of a future Namibia.

Uppsala, Sweden, in September 1989

Summary

A conference on Nordic NGOs in Independent Namibia was held in Sigtuna, Sweden, March 9-10, 1989.

The conference was initiated by the Nordic Working Group on Namibia, appointed by the Nordic ministers for development cooperation. It was organised by the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies together with NGOs, in cooperation with the Sigtuna Folk College and with the financial support from SIDA.

The background was that a great number of NGOs are assisting, or are planning to assist, Namibia in development activities. In order not to create chaos when Namibia becomes independent, this assistance has to be given in a coordinated way.

About 40 NGOs were represented at the conference together with resource persons from SWAPO, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UNHCR Nordic Office, the UNICEF Swedish Committee, the Namibia Communications Centre, the Nordic Working Group on Namibia and the Nordic government aid agencies.

The programme included information about Namibia in the process towards independence and a presentation of a few scenarios for an independent Namibia. The SWAPO representatives gave their view on the future role of the NGOs and the possibilities for coordination and cooperation between NGOs were discussed.

The conference stressed the need to maintain and improve the exchange of information and cooperation between NGOs.

The Swedish NGOs were asked to work out plans for a "Nordic House" (an NGO service centre in Windhoek) and to approach SIDA for possible financing.

The conference wished a follow-up conference in the beginning of 1990 and one representative from each Nordic country was selected as a contact person until next conference.

Namibia in the Process Towards Independence

Presentations were made by Mr Sten Rylander, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms Luise Drüke-Bolewski, UNHCR Nordic Office, Ms Lisbet Palme, UNICEF Swedish Committee, Mr Axel Johannes, SWAPO and Mr John Evenson, Namibia Communications Centre.

The conference listened to presentations of Namibia in the process towards Independence from different perspectives.

Information was given about the involvement of United Nations and its responsibilities in Namibia. The function of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) and the consequences of the reduction of the cost and the size of the UNTAG operation were discussed, as well as the problems concerning the interpretation of Resolution 435.

Information was also given about the schedule and planned procedures for repatriating refugees from the neighboring countries. Special attention was paid to the situation of the children.

The different possibilities for the South African regime to sabotage the process were also analysed.

Namibia after Independence

Mr Tore Linné Eriksen, from the Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs, presented a few scenarios for an Independent Namibia. A summary of his presentation is enclosed as appendix no 1.

The SWAPO View on the Role of the NGOs

Presentations were made by Ms Libertine Amathila, Mr Kaire Mbuende, Mr Elia Kaakunga and Mr Axel Johannes, all from SWAPO.

An important basis for the NGO planning is the view of SWAPO on the role of the NGOs. The following is a summary of the comments by the SWAPO representatives:

The NGO assistance given to SWAPO, during the last 15 years of struggle as exiles, have significantly contributed to the present position of SWAPO.

SWAPO welcomes continued assistance, but would like to reserve its right to define the priorities.

When discussing the role of the NGOs in the future a distinction should be made between the direct cooperation between NGOs and the government and the cooperation between NGOs and popular movements, like trade unions, farmer's associations, churches etc. On one hand there will be a state directed economic plan, but on the other hand the government will allow the NGOs to take initiatives on certain specific programmes for which there is provision. NGOs can play an important role both in assisting the government and in assisting their sister organisations.

Major concerns

At present one major concern is to ensure victory for SWAPO in the elections. NGOs can assist with sending as many persons as possible to Namibia in order to help monitor the elections and to protest against intimidation and discrimination during the transition period. This must be done in a coordinated way, both nationally and internationally. One problem is that the South African authorities control the issuing of visas until independence and that the processing of visas is very slow.

Financial support is also needed for the election campaign, among other things for equipping campaign workers.

SWAPO has no possibility to return school-children, who at present live in refugee camps, immediately. Therefore children from the age of eleven up to 17 will complete their studies in exile or stay until relevant facilities are available in Namibia. There will be a need for financial support to them and the adults staying with them.

Other areas of great need are means of transport as well as mobile hospitals and clinics. The launching of alternative health structures is crucial in order to prevent the South African army from crippling the health services in the rural areas.

Even though the UNHCR and the churches will assist the refugees, they will ultimately become the responsibility of SWAPO. Funds for food will be helpful, especially for SWAPO refugees if the question of impartiality will limit the assistance given by the UNHCR.

NGOs are involved in the running of educational, health and other programmes in the refugee camps. The SWAPO policy is to transfer as many

projects as possible into Namibia. The NGO assistance in these projects will still be needed "in the first days" of an independent Namibia.

Another important task for NGOs is to assist the Independent Namibia with skilled manpower, both for replacing whites who are leaving the country and for making an expansion possible. Urgent areas of expansion are in non-formal and formal education, decentralized industrialization, housing, as well as to increase the economic productivity and to strengthen people's democratic movements.

Development Needs and Scope for NGO Cooperation

The main objective of the conference was to improve cooperation between the NGOs and to identify ways and means for such a cooperation. These issues and the needs of an independent Namibia were discussed in working groups, divided according to major area of development activity.

A report of the Nordic governments' development assistance and the Nordic NGOs' assistance to Namibia was given as a background to the working group discussions.

A clarification of different levels of cooperation was presented as an introduction (see below).

An outline of the already existing coordination is presented on page 11.

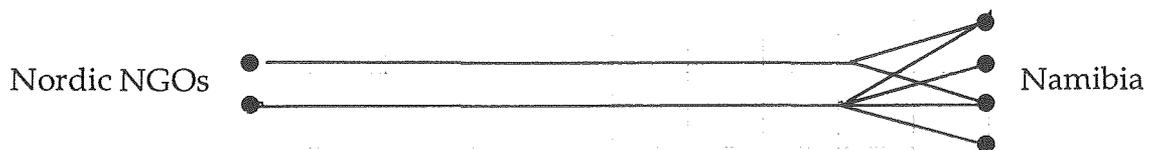
The following is a summary of the introduction and the reports from the working groups:

Different levels of cooperation

Very many organisations have already indicated that they intend to support the Independent Namibia. If all these organisations move in, they will create a chaos for each other and for the new government structures. The NGOs in Namibia can not handle many more external donors than they handle today.

The only way to minimize the strain on our own and the new Nation's resources is through coordination and cooperation.

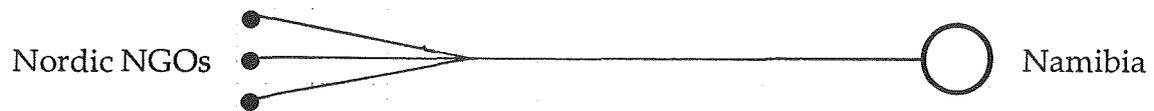
Four different levels of ambitions, from coordination to deeper cooperation, can be identified:



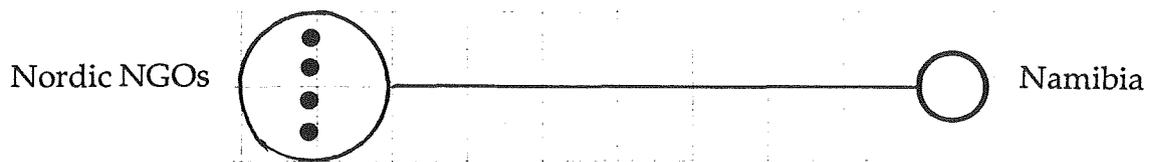
1. "To keep one another informed". This means that each organisation does its own planning and establishes its own contacts in Namibia, but tries to avoid overlapping through sharing of information. This would create heavy strains on the local administrative resources.



2. The organisations divide the responsibilities for certain sectors between themselves and avoid to work with too many sectors at the same time. This would reduce the number of local contacts somewhat.



3. The NGOs pool resources into a certain coordination office, which carries out all contacts in Namibia (cp. with the Church assistance via LWF).



4. Organisations in a country or a region form a coalition and would be able to offer a bigger and more concentrated assistance.

Non-formal education

The churches have been involved in both formal and non-formal education, adult education and small-scale literacy campaigns.

The trade unions would see functional literacy as an important part of the trade union work. Literacy campaigns should be organised at a local level. The material used should be adapted to the students and the classes held during working hours (depending on the attitude of the government).

Future needs of vocational training would be training for pre-school and nursery school teachers. Cooperation between women's organisations and to offer drop-outs secondary education or vocational training are other important areas, as well as education through press and radio.

It is important that the NGOs in the future join government campaigns, in order to make them nationwide.

A special department in the government should coordinate the activities. There should be a distinction between the necessary governmental coordination of NGO activities and NGOs' cooperation to strengthen their sister organisations, where governmental involvement is not desired.

Formal education

The church aid organisations are, among other things, supporting a number of community schools, which offer alternatives to the so called bantu education. The Nordic countries support especially Oshigambo and Martin Luther High School, via World Council of Churches (WCC) and Lutheran World Service (LWS).

The solidarity organisations primarily give political support to SWAPO. They are mainly supporting the Loudima school, situated in Brazzaville, and a printshop project.

Needs for formal education: Funds, personnel (both for vocational training and for "general knowledge") and material (buildings, equipment, text books). Scholarships will be needed until higher education is set up in Namibia.

The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies could possibly in the future be used as a producer of books for educational purposes. Finnida has an ongoing project at a publishing house in Helsinki, where they assist SWAPO in training people to produce text books.

The Nordic NGOs will have to wait for the priorities until SWAPO and the Namibian organisations have evaluated the educational experiences so far.

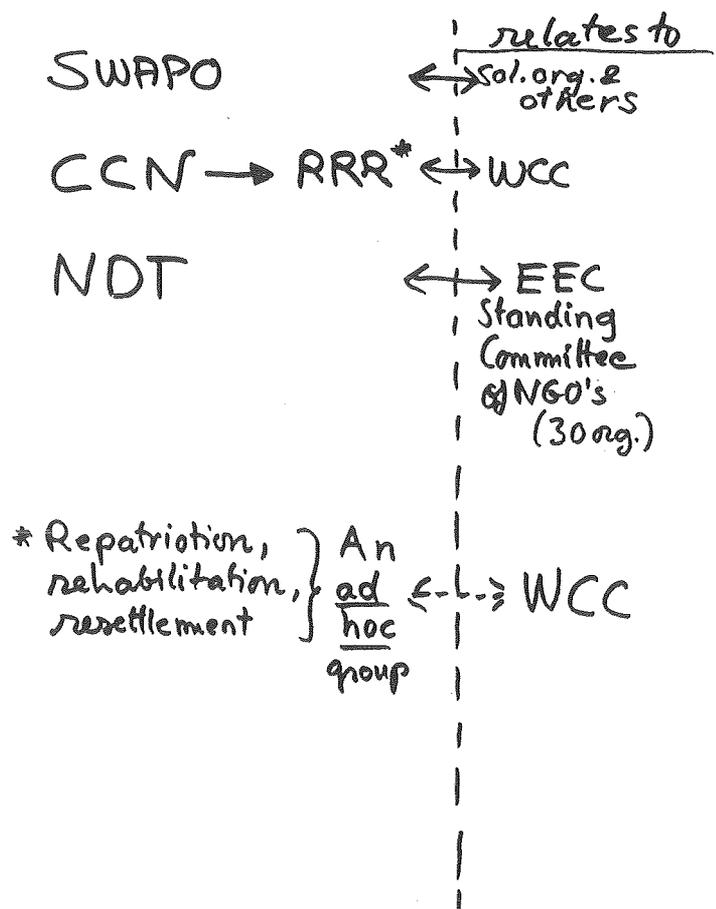
Existing cooperation between NGOs

COOPERATION BETWEEN ORGANISATIONS

Existing networks



NAMIBIAN PARTNERS



- Abbreviations::
 CCN = Council of Churches in Namibia
 LWS = Lutheran World Service
 NDT = National Development Trust
 RRR = Repatriation, Rehabilitation, Resettlement
 WCC = World Council of Churches

The outline shows the existing cooperation between NGOs, presented by the working group dealing with formal education.

Please, note that the trade unions cooperation is missing and that other organisations are cooperating with SWAPO than shown above.

Health and medical services

The existing aid from NGOs consist of equipment, medicine, manpower and means of transport. Collection of medical data has been carried out in Kwanza Sul among 5 000 children between 0 and 10 years.

During the transitional period there will be needs for assisting the churches in providing medicines and other services, a few ambulances, manpower (nurses and doctors), continuation of assistance to the children remaining in the refugee camps and to start to plan for a base-line data collection.

The post-independence plans are to collect base-line data, recruit manpower, start carrying out vaccinations and other preventive health care. Assistance with essential drugs will be needed continuously.

The main need will be in primary health care in the rural areas. The base-line data collection will have to be carried out first, region by region, starting in the north where the the war destruction is the worst. Urban services will not be a problem, because the infrastructure is already there. There might be a need for replacing doctors leaving for South Africa.

Cooperation is established between the Africa Groups, The Save the Children Alliance, organisations for disabled and the churches and their counterparts. There is a need for a church coordinating body for medical services inside Namibia.

The future cooperation partner in Namibia will be the Government Health Services.

Rural development

Some of the NGOs represented have already established contacts with SWAPO and/or other organisations in Namibia, others are just waiting to assist if their competence and resources are needed.

Fields of competence, where the NGOs could assist, are: physical planning, energy saving, environmental protection, social service including repatriation of refugees, recruiting and administering volunteers, cooperative farming, and land distribution. Areas of specific interest/need are: transport and fighting desertification.

The NGOs think they could assist in the following four areas of future needs:

- organising farming cooperatives, i e support peasant's cooperation in different fields
- small-scale irrigation schemes
- short term savings- and credit systems in small and local scale
- assisting farm workers on big commercial farms (including health and education).

Land reform and land re-distribution are important, but nothing the NGOs can do much about.

Non-specific

The working group consisted of NGOs that not yet were committed to any specific sector or to sectors like self-help housing and economic statistics plus representatives from government agencies.

There should be ways of thinking in flexible terms depending on what type of resources the NGO can offer. Some NGOs might, for example, be able to

provide qualified manpower, but no funds and then funds could be available from other sources.

In some areas the Namibian NGOs, like the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN)/National Development Trust (NDT), might have the manpower and can execute the project with the contribution of funds from external NGOs.

In more sophisticated technology, in more sensitive areas of planning etc. some NGOs, well known to the future government, may be requested to act as "trusted advisers".

It was noticed that while the Namibians may look primarily at the NGOs as sources of funds and manpower, the NGOs themselves may have additional objectives, such as the wish to learn something from their work and to get information to be used to increase the involvement of their members/constituencies in their own countries.

The Nordic NGOs may wish to put emphasis not so much on execution of projects but rather on building organisations/institutions, to transfer knowledge of organisation; to develop skills as well as self-confidence and self-reliance among the people of Namibia.

Coordination and cooperation

On the issues of coordination and cooperation in general the following remarks and suggestions were made:

- There is a need for producing and sharing information about planned activities between the different NGOs. Therefore a coordinating committee should be established on a Nordic base.
- One joint office for Nordic NGOs should be established in Namibia for coordinated contacts with Namibian NGOs and the government.
- It would be an advantage if there is a coordinating body on the Namibian side, for example National Development Trust (NDT), which should have the power to decide whether they want or do not want initiatives taken by the foreigners. (NDT was established in the end of 1988. It is planned to function as a coordinating body with representatives from the churches, the trade unions and the students movement. Due to the situation in Namibia the NDT has not yet had any possibilities to start its planned operation.)
- It is important that the Namibian organisations also cooperate with their counterparts in other SADCC-countries.

Some words of caution

- All development assistance should be given on the request of the Namibian Government or a Namibian partner organisation.

- It is important to be aware of the power relations between strong NGOs and a government, which - at least during the first years - will have its weaknesses.
- Experiences from other countries show that it is important for NGOs to carry out their own identity and that they do not want to be anonymous. It is important to discuss how the organisations planning to work in Namibia consider how to do this with the least pressure on the Namibian side and how to work together with similar organisations - whether it is done within a Nordic grouping, through international contacts or together with like-minded organisations.
- The government agencies were challenged to state whether they would be able to finance coordinating efforts or not. With their experiences from other countries, where this has been proven difficult, they were reluctant to commit themselves. At least SIDA has declared willingness to consider new forms of support to coordinating efforts.
- Does the NDT have the capacity to handle all the coordination activities from the Namibian side?

Cooperation Models

The conference also discussed cooperation in working groups divided according to types of organisations. The following is a summary of their reports:

Solidarity organisations

The solidarity organisations stressed the need for a Nordic NGO-office in Windhoek, basically for the solidarity organisations that are not aligned to international NGO structures, like the trade unions and the churches.

The office should be financed by a government agency, SIDA being the most possible source. Practical necessities: an office with telephone, telex etc, a hostel, a store and transport facilities.

Functions: information, contact and representations, planning and executing transition period aid, identify suitable working positions for volunteers, facilitate feasibility studies, receive delegations, travel agency, logistics, and technical support for Namibian coordination organs.

Trade unions and cooperatives

Some organisations' counterparts do not cooperate with SWAPO and will not cooperate with a future government. At present there is no cooperative movement in Namibia, but when it starts the trade unions and the cooperative movement will start cooperating with it.

Many organisations do cooperate indirectly with SWAPO, for example, in the election campaign. The organisations are contributing actively to build structures and to provide information, though it is the trade unions and SWAPO who decide about the structures.

The organisations do have quite developed structures of coordination and are not particularly interested in planning for coordination, except for sharing general information.

Churches and Christian organisations

The working group made reflections on the reports from the functionally divided groups.

In the field of non-formal education the churches would strengthen the existing structures in Namibia and emphasize on training of operational staff.

The organisations working with formal education are reluctant to start new schools, but will support the already existing ones and also improve the coordination via CCN.

In the field of health care and medical service it was noted that the churches are mainly operating large hospitals, but will have to be prepared to extend their activities into primary health care,

It was noted that the churches have an extensive network in Namibia, which would make them suitable for working with rural development.

The churches found it vital to strengthen the existing church structures and Christian activities in Namibia. There was also a need for information from Namibian churches to supportive churches outside the country.

The group expressed interest in a Nordic committee for NGOs.

A world-wide and church-wide meeting in the World Council of Churches soon after the conference was seen as an important part of the coordination process.

Namibia Communications Centre in London planned the establishment of an monitoring press office in Windhoek. Its task would be to provide local and visiting journalists with news, reports and background information about all aspects of the independence process. This was seen as an important venture.

Other organisations

The working group, mainly consisting of representatives from the volunteer organisations, wanted to establish a Nordic Namibia Committee with representatives from all the Nordic countries and all kinds of NGOs. Service areas for the committee would be information, projects and a follow-up conference.

National working groups should collect information on Namibia and annual reports from the NGOs on a national basis.

The establishment of a Nordic clearing house in Windhoek was suggested, to give service to all NGOs, but especially to NGOs with no established contacts in Namibia. The personnel should be employed by or through an existing umbrella organisation, for example a volunteer organisation.

Government agencies

The government agencies would ideally like to have a Nordic office and a Namibian office who coordinate their respective NGOs. A council should be responsible for the organisation. The Namibian office would be in contact with people at a local level and would forward information about local needs to the Nordic office.

Remarks: Special attention was paid to the fact that some organisations are not interested in such an organisation. Some of them work with already coordinated international organisations, some have got direct contacts to Namibia and some want to establish contact on an NGO to NGO basis. There is a possibility for the government agencies to force the NGOs to coordinate or else refuse funds, but the agencies found it neither desirable nor possible to control the NGOs in this way.

The government agencies could not, at this stage, promise any amount of money to be used for a coordination project. Their opinion was that the system should be built up by the NGOs themselves, with financial support from government agencies.

There could be a danger that the Namibian government would interfere with a coordinating office if it becomes too strong. Another danger in a large organisation is bureaucratization.

The Namibian government will have to take into consideration if there is a need for separate coordinating bodies corresponding to different networks, like the Nordic countries, the EEC, Canada and the USA.

The idea of a Nordic and a Namibian office for coordination could be seen as a model, but it is seen as more likely that the NGOs in the beginning will develop the contacts they already have.

Conclusions

During the final plenary session the following main conclusions were made:

- Exchange of information and cooperation is already taking place, within different networks as the solidarity movements, the cooperative movements, the churches and so on. The conference stressed the need to maintain and improve these contacts.
- The Swedish NGOs, with the Africa Groups in the lead, were asked to work out plans for a "Nordic House" (NGO service centre) in Namibia and to approach SIDA for possible financing.
- The conference expressed a wish to have a follow-up conference in the beginning of 1990.
- It was discussed whether there is a need for a Nordic coordinating committee at this stage. Several participants feared that such a committee would imply a new bureaucratic structure.

The conference agreed on selecting one representative from each Nordic country as a contact person until next conference.

The contact persons are the representatives from World University Service in Denmark, The Africa Groups of Sweden, The Namibia Association in Norway and the Finland-Namibia Association.

After the Conference

After the conference the Nordic contact persons have had continued informal contacts on coordination.

SIDA and Finnida have been approached on financing a "Nordic House" in Windhoek. The applications have, so far, not been successful.

Namibia after Independence

Mr Tore Linné Eriksen, the Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs, presented a few scenarios for an independent Namibia at the conference. The following is a summary of his presentation.

The existing socio-economic, military and political structures will to a great extent decide the freedom of action for a new government.

Namibia is a country ravaged by war, the economic system is extremely dependent on South Africa, the natural resources are exploited by foreign companies, the income distribution is extremely unequal and the white minority have access to 60 percent of all viable farmland, while the majority are restricted to overcrowded and infertile reserves..

Furthermore, South Africa has never wanted and does not want an independent Namibia. The military defeat in Angola and the high cost of the occupation of Namibia were factors that forced South Africa into a formal acceptance of the UN peace plan.

South African destabilisation

The South African strategy will concentrate on preventing SWAPO from getting a 2/3 majority in the elections. If South Africa succeeds in this strategy there might be a long executive and legislative gap between the elections and the Namibian independence, because the South African regime will then block the agreement on the constitution.

The Namibian Independence will mark a significant shift in the regional balance of power. The frontiers of an independent Africa will move closer to Pretoria. If independence is achieved according to the UN plan, South Africa is expected to have clear strategies for destabilising an "undesired" government. This expectation is based on the history and the strategy of South African destabilisation in other countries in the region. (Acts of destabilisation have made SADCC member states suffer a material loss of appr. 40-45 billion US dollars since 1980.)

South African rulers are desperately fighting to maintain their regional economic dominance and the existing trade and transport links. The South African strategy is also to pressurize the neighbouring states to reduce their support to the African National Congress (ANC).

Occupation of Walvis Bay

The South African regime has already undertaken preparations for destabilisation.

One of them is the illegal occupation of Walvis Bay. Walvis Bay is Namibia's only deep water port.. It is also the terminal for the railway system, a centre for fishing and for the water supply system for Rössing Uranium Mine and Swakopmund.

The occupation gives South Africa control of Namibia's basic access to the outside world. Foreign control might also prevent or make an early diversification of trade and transport away from South Africa more difficult.

Walvis Bay is also a very important South African air and naval base, which constitutes an immediate threat to the territorial integrity. Especially the old ports, Swakopmund and Luderitz, are vulnerable for military actions or acts of sabotage, either from Walvis Bay or from the South African border.

The impact of the loss of Walvis Bay is somewhat played down in the SWAPO document *Namibia's Economic Prospects Brighten Up*. There are possibilities to reactivate the ports in Swakopmund and Luderitz or to develop raillinks to Angolan ports, but that would consume a lot of resources which are urgently needed for other purposes.

Similar considerations apply to the transport system.. The rolling-stock for road and rail transport is mainly South African owned and could easily be withdrawn from Namibia. Major repair facilities are in South Africa or in Walvis Bay. This is a challenge to cooperation with the NGOs.

Puppet regime

South Africa has put a lot of efforts and money into the establishment of a puppet regime in Windhoek and an administration which will have repressive effects on an independent Namibia.

At the local level a bantustan-like system has been built up. These authorities have been financially propped up by the central government and equipped with armies or ethnic homeguards. They are prepared to serve as future instruments for terror, destabilisation and ethnic fragmentation.

The financial support of the bantustan authorities has contributed to a budgetary collapse at the central level. Over the last seven to eight years the investments have declined in production, social services and private consumption - except for the collaborating elite.

South Africa has tried, but not succeeded, to buy political loyalty through spending a lot of money on salaries to state employees. This has created a widening income gap within the black Namibia. It will put a new government into the choice between keeping these income inequalities and use less money for development projects or reducing the salaries or the administrative employment and run the risk of resentment among vocal groups.

"Loans"

South Africa claims that Namibia must take over loans, to the amount of around 500 million USD, that the present administration has taken. These "loans" have partly been used to cover budget deficits caused by the bureaucracy and the war and partly to pay for the nominal transfers of railway, power and selected mining assets. (These assets should, according to international law and practice, be transferred free of charge to a new government during a period of decolonisation.)

According to the ruling by the International Court of Justice in 1971, Namibia has no legal, political or moral obligations to pay the "debt". But in reality, the South African regime can use the debt issue for its own purposes and it may be difficult for Namibia to get access to credit from Western financial institutions.

Policy of the Western countries

The position of major Western countries might be a critical factor on issues like the status of Walvis Bay, the "debt", Namibia's right to claim compensation for the illegal exploitation of natural resources, the right to implement the land reform or the right to change the rules regulating the operations of the foreign companies.

An assurance of support will make it much easier for a Namibian government to take action. The amount of aid offered and the conditions put on aid are, in this respect, also important factors. NGOs and individuals in the Western countries, including the Nordic states, have an important task in influencing the policy of their own countries.

Economic and social structures

The economic and social structures, which form the basis for a discussion on future developments in Namibia, have their roots in the German colonization in the late 19th century. After the genocidal conquest, in the war 1904-07, the Namibian people were banned from owning livestock, their land was seized and they were subjected to a harsh regime of migrant labour or forced labour. At this time also large-scale mining started, mainly based on copper and diamonds.

After South Africa seized Namibia from Germany in 1915 the number of white farmers, mainly Boers, were steadily increasing. At present 4 000 white farmers control more land than what is left for 200 000 African families. The settlers are heavily subsidized by technical assistance, transport infrastructure, marketing service and other services from the state.

Export and import

The export-led expansion started after the Second World War. South African companies moved into fisheries. Anglo American Corporation and De Beers benefited from a virtual diamond monopoly as well as expansion outside the mining sector. US transnational companies invested in mines. The British Rio Tinto Zinc moved into uranium mining in the early 1970s.

South African colonial strategy has created extreme distortions in the national economy. Most goods outside peasant farming are produced for export, such as cattle and karakul pelts, canned pilchards and fishmeal, base minerals, diamonds and uranium etc. On the other hand nearly all consumed goods are imported, including half of the basic foodstuffs and 90 percent of the manufactures.

The Namibian GNP per capita ranks among the highest in Africa, but this is no indication of the living standard of the great majority of the population. The growth in the 1950s - 1970s created extremes of wealth and poverty. On average the whites enjoy incomes approximately 20 times those of most blacks.

Unemployment

The peasant agriculture can not be described as a subsistence agriculture. Long-term ecological degradation, speeded up by the drought in 1977-85, has destroyed the basis for a peasant economy. The effects of the war, such as forced removals, closing down of schools and hospitals, clinics taken over by

the South African military forces, destruction of crops, poisoning of water, burning of people in squatter camps, have of course worsened the situation.

This development has also led to an increasing unemployment. Squatter settlements are growing in Windhoek and in the mining towns. A survey conducted a few years ago in Katutura, the main area where Africans live in Windhoek, showed that 43 percent of the inhabitants were unemployed.

The abrupt end of the long boom in the late 1970s, coupled with drought, depressed commodity prices and imported inflation from South Africa, have had a devastating effect on the masses of black workers and stock-farming peasants. As always, the elderly, the unemployed, children and women suffer most.

Colonial links to South Africa

Namibia's political economy is in many respects typical of colonial territories, but one difference is that the colonial power is a direct neighbour.

South Africa is the primary source of both imports of food, consumer goods and capital equipment, and is also the destination for several of Namibia's export of raw materials. Transnational and South African corporations dominate the mining, fishing, meat production, petroleum, banking and financial service sectors. Several overseas exports, such as diamonds and processed fish, are marketed through South African parent companies. The higher level of the administration is staffed by white South Africans, which implies not only possibilities for active sabotage, but also unwillingness to initiate changes.

The links to South Africa do also include the membership of the Rand Monetary Area and the Southern Africa Customs Union. There are no border and foreign exchange controls with South Africa, which has facilitated the capital outflow since the 1970s.

Prospects for economic development

There are several studies of the prospects for economic development in Namibia. One of them is *Namibia: Perspectives for National Reconstruction and Development*, produced by the United Nations Institute for Namibia in Lusaka. The following is just a brief survey of the major issues which the Namibian government will have to confront:

In a short-term period, the major problem is related to **food supply**. The growth of the urban population increases the need for maize. Maize can easily be bought from Zimbabwe or Zambia, but in case of a closed border to South Africa or South Africa employing the food weapon there will be a problem of transport infrastructure and internal distribution. In terms of planning for the worst scenario, food supply has to be given high priority by all partners involved, including the NGOs.

Another area of contingency planning is **energy**. In a long-term perspective Namibia has got resources enough to be self-sufficient, but in a short-term perspective the country depends on supply from or via South Africa, mainly for coal and oil.

In a medium- to long-term perspective the critical questions are concerned with a major **land reform** and a massive transfer of resources to the peasant

agricultural society. There is no short cut to food self-sufficiency without major redistribution of land and significant improvements in terms of small-scale irrigation, extension services, credit facilities, agricultural research to work out agricultural commitments suitable for the widely different agricultural conditions - as well as a well-functioning state apparatus in the field of transport, distribution of inputs and marketing of output.

The **fisheries** could substantially contribute both with providing food for consumption and with foreign exchange. But then there would be a need for a "moratorium" up to five years in order for the pilchard stock to recover. A 200 miles exclusive economic zone off Namibia's coast would have to be declared immediately.

The general mood in the SWAPO policy document concerning the **mining sector** is optimistic. There are reasons for the assumption that there are more mineral reserves, like coal and gold, than what have been reported so far. But based on the experience of the neighbouring countries, a note of caution is appropriate. Geological and technological expertise will for many years rest with the foreign companies, who are well experienced, both in exploiting natural resources and in exploiting human resources. And the mechanisms for "transfer pricing", for overbuying, do not disappear as soon as Namibia becomes independent. The future reserves of diamonds, copper and uranium are quite uncertain, as are the prices.

The idea of diverting funds from the mining sector into agriculture and social services is very attractive. Namibia is in a better position than most African countries when it comes to foreign exchange, and there is scope for major reforms and improvements. But the situation is at the same time more complex. Other countries with a dominant mining sector have witnessed depressed or volatile prices, alarmingly rising costs of production, cost of management fees and they have also been faced with governments with vested interests sustaining capital-intensive mining and in close cooperation with foreign corporations.

Another area of great importance is to identify key personnel in sensitive areas and to plan for replacing them if they leave.

The coordination of all **foreign inputs** is essential.

Conditions for an optimistic scenario

There are possibilities for a more optimistic scenario of Namibia's future in the Southern Africa region. The present ties to South Africa are not given by God or nature, and there are alternatives, often much cheaper, to South African goods and companies. Namibia is not a landlocked country and is not dependent on migrant workers in South Africa. The settlements in exile have been bases for developing new methods and organisations for health, education and alternative production. Namibia will be invited as the tenth member of SADCC and there are possibilities for a very close cooperation, especially with Botswana, Angola and Zambia.

If Namibia gets the chance to cooperate fully with the countries in the region there are openings in the areas of transport, telecommunications, trade, agriculture, research, industrial cooperation, energy coordination and so on.

But there are two conditions for an optimistic scenario:

The first is that South Africa allows the people of Namibia to reconstruct and develop their country without employing the well-known weapons of economic, military and political destabilisation.

The other condition is that Angola is also allowed to live in peace. This is largely the responsibility of South Africa and USA, the two powers who support and arm the UNITA bandits.

Fight apartheid!

Finally, a very important support to be rendered to the Namibian people by Western NGOs could be to fight the apartheid regime in South Africa. Effective sanctions combined with political and material support for the liberation movements are important steps in this direction. It has to be repeated, again and again, that neither Namibia nor the other countries in the region can achieve peace and development as long as the present apartheid regime is allowed.

Programme for the NGO-conference on Namibia, in Sigtuna, Sweden, March 9-10, 1989

Thursday

Thursday morning the attention is focused on the Transitional Period, as a background to the main long term perspective.

- from 9.30 Arrival/Coffee
10.00 Words of welcome, presentation of participants
 Mr Bertil Odén, SIAS and Mr Bertil Högberg, Sigtuna Folk College
10.30 The UN and the Transitional Period
 Mr Sten Rylander, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Ms Luise Drüke-Bolewski, UNHCR Nordic Office
 Ms Lisbet Palme, UNICEF Committee of Sweden
11.00 What do we expect of the Transitional Period?
 Mr Axel Johannes, SWAPO
 Mr John Evenson, Namibia Communications Centre
 Questions and discussion
12.30 Lunch

Thursday afternoon the attention is focused on the long term perspective

- 14.00 Needs and expectations on the role of the NGOs after Independence
 SWAPO
15.00 Coffee
15.30 Presentation of inventories on governmental aid agencies' and the
 NGO's present work and future plans in Namibia
 Mr Dag Ehrenpreis and Mr Bertil Högberg
 Introduction to working group activities
17.00 Dinner
18.30 Working groups (according to area of activity)
20.00 Social evening

Friday

- 09.00 Namibia and the Future - a few scenarios
 Tore Linné Eriksen
10.00 Working groups (cont. from Thursday evening)
11.00 Reports from the working groups
12.00 Lunch
13.30 Working groups (according to type of organisation)
15.00 Reports from the working groups, Summing up
17.00 Departure/Dinner

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List of Preparation Material

Nordiska arbetsgruppen för bistånd till Namibia: *Nordisk rapport om Namibia-bistånd* (including an inventory of the NGO-support to Namibia), 1988-12-14.

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