



(Associated with The American Committee on Africa) • 198 Broadway • N.Y., N.Y. • 10038 • (212)962-1210

April, 1980.

Dear Friends:

The overwhelming, hard-won victory of the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe in the recent elections is cause for great celebration, but also a reminder of the unfinished struggle for the independence of Namibia. The enclosed brochure describes three projects for which The Africa Fund ( tax-exempt associate of the American Committee on Africa) is seeking to raise funds to assist SWAPO as it meets material needs of tens of thousands of Namibian refugees in Angola.

The projects include shipment of medicines and supplies; providing handicraft and educational materials, and providing transport vehicles and repair. I am writing to invite your participation in these projects, to adopt portions of the projects as goals for material aid fundraising by your group.

Each project can be broken down into manageable items. We would be happy to provide concrete details for your group, (e.g. \$200 airfreight 50 cartons of Streptomycin anti-biotic; \$300 will purchase two potters' wheels; \$600 will provide four tool boxes to train Namibian refugees in vehicle repair.)

We would also be happy to provide whatever assistance you may want for information to prepare educational materials, help in locating films, speakers, literature and suggestions for fundraising events. We encourage you to adapt the brochure and any other information you may need to your own needs, or we would be happy to provide additional copies.

Of course all funds received from your work will be directly and wholly applied to the project you have selected. Further information-Africa Fund annual reports, audited financial statements, etc. is available at your request. And individual supporters who make donations payable to "The Africa Fund-Namibia Projects", may obtain tax benefits for their contributions.

In Solidarity,

Paul Irish  
Associate Director

PI:mns

Encl:

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## namibians: building for a free nation

The people of Namibia have been struggling for their freedom for close on a hundred years. Now they urgently need support as they begin their final thrust for liberation.





Long ago, in 1920, the League of Nations granted South Africa a mandate over the scantily-populated country then known as South West Africa, now called Namibia by its black majority population. Control was to be exercised for "the well being of the people." Instead racist South Africa introduced apartheid laws, imprisoned opponents and began appropriating the country's mineral wealth for itself.

This ruthless behaviour led the United Nations General Assembly to terminate the mandate in 1966, but South Africa refused to leave, ignoring appeals for a peaceful transition to majority rule and independence for Namibia.

Thousands of Namibians have now taken up the struggle for self-determination. Led by their national organization, SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization), they have boycotted fraudulent elections, organized nation-wide strikes and given extensive support to the armed struggle initiated in 1966.

South Africa is the strongest and most heavily armed country in Africa. Yet the courage and determination of only 1.4 million black Namibians has forced South Africa to commit more than 50,000 soldiers to preserving its power in Namibia. The state has unleashed a campaign of intimidation against the civilian population marked by torture and mass arrests.

## **The Refugees**

Thousands of Namibians have fled this terror, some 60,000 of them having sought safety in Angola since it became independent in 1975. Even once across the border their situation is desperate, and they look to SWAPO to help meet their needs.

The refugees are mostly the very young, mothers with children and the elderly. These are people who want to play a role in building a new country. They are not guerrilla fighters, but this has not given them any protection against constant South African attacks.

In a 1978 raid on a refugee camp at Cassinga in southern Angola, South African troops killed 600 people and destroyed everything that had been built. Twenty-eight of the 40 students SWAPO was training to become assistant nurses died in the attack.

In 1979 The Africa Fund responded to the immediate emergency by air-lifting \$26,000 worth of medicines to SWAPO. We plan to continue this medical assistance program. We also want to help SWAPO rebuild life for the Namibian refugees.

## **Building the Future**

This work is already well under way. Camps have been relocated in safer areas. Collaborating with concerned international agencies, SWAPO has already drawn up health, education and agricultural projects.

These projects have a dual purpose. They seek to make the refugees self-reliant as quickly as possible. Perhaps even more important they are designed to equip people for their future return to a free Namibia. People are being taught new skills, they are also learning new ways of working together, new ways of thinking about themselves, their history and their goals. Later the refugees will be able to draw on this experience as they begin the task of constructing an independent and free Namibia.

The Africa Fund, in collaboration with OXFAM-Canada has undertaken to raise support for two SWAPO refugee projects. These projects will improve the daily lives of the refugees—but they also have valuable longer term implications, and on both grounds we believe that they deserve your support.

## Recovering a People's Culture

Namibia has a rich history and cultural heritage, but most of it was hidden or obscured by the colonial system. Children in school were taught European history and contempt for their own traditions and skills. In the refugee settlements, Namibians from all over live together; as they share the stories of their experience at home, their traditions of resistance to colonialism, their music and songs, they are able to lay the foundations for a new history and national culture.

This project will draw on the skills of traditional artisans and artists, and on the knowledge of the elders. Its aims include providing equipment and materials for handicraft production, training the handicapped, recording and transmitting the new Namibian culture, preserving the oral traditions of the elderly and incorporating this rediscovered wealth into the school curriculum.

A modest budget of \$10,000 will cover the purchase of materials, including tape recorders, notebooks, three typewriters, paper and the tools necessary for handicraft work.



## Transport and Vehicle Repair

The new SWAPO settlements are located in isolated areas. They will be difficult to attack, but they are also difficult to reach—and most of SWAPO's transport equipment was destroyed in earlier raids. Materials for all SWAPO's health, education and construction programs will have to be transported by road.

Providing transport is thus core to SWAPO's ability to develop improved conditions for people in the settlements and to its capacity to begin training people for the future. In addition to providing vehicles, this project will also make available some of the tools and equipment necessary to maintain a SWAPO garage and training program for mechanics.

The budget for this project is \$80,000, which includes the cost of two trucks, two four-wheel drive vehicles which can be used for a variety of purposes including ambulance duty, spare tires, spare parts, tools and equipment required for training mechanics. The first vehicle will go to Angola as soon as enough funds have been collected to cover its costs.

Today's newspapers are filled with the tragic stories of refugees in many countries. It is difficult to choose among so much pain. Yet we believe that helping SWAPO and the people of Namibia is a choice worth making—because it is delivering critical assistance to people already taking control of their future. Your help now will not only prolong life, it can play a vital role in transforming that life and providing the Namibians with the capacity to build a better future.



## OTHER PROGRAMS OF THE AFRICA FUND

The Africa Fund was founded in 1966 to provide humanitarian aid to African people struggling for independence, and to work towards increased American understanding of African issues through a program of research and literature publication.

Current Africa Fund projects include the shipment of medicines and supplies for Zimbabwe refugees in Mozambique and Zambia, Namibian refugees in Angola, Saharan refugees in Algeria and the provision of surgical supply kits to the Mozambique Ministry of Health. The Fund also provides legal counsel and financial assistance to individual African refugees with emergency needs.

In the U.S., The Africa Fund is the major source of information and literature on southern Africa for church, university, union and civic groups and individuals concerned about the area.

In 1979, The Africa Fund spent more than \$211,000. Of this total, \$127,000 was devoted to grants and projects, \$66,000 went to research and literature, \$15,000 to membership mailings and \$3,000 to program coordination. Our budget for 1980 is \$250,000. The Africa Fund depends on voluntary contributions, primarily from individuals, to carry on our work. Contributions are tax-deductible.



198 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10038.

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Upon request a copy of the latest Annual Report filed with The Board of Social Welfare may be obtained by writing The New York State Board of Social Welfare, 2 World Trade Center, New York, New York 10047 or to The Africa Fund.

