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First of all I must say that I am very happy to take part in a seminar held on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the independence of Zimbabwe and I thank the organisers.

Having been involved for a long time in the solidarity work with peoples struggling in Southern Africa against colonialism, racism and apartheid, I can't but perceive Zimbabwe as a Frontline State more than anything else and as one of the most important of those states which are in solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.

It is true that there have been some very important and significant changes in Southern Africa, especially in South Africa, with the unbanning in February of this year, after some thirty years or more of illegality, of such important organisations as the ANC, the PAC, the CPSA and some thirty other anti-apartheid organisations and more recently with the liberation of the historical leader of the liberation struggle, Mr. Nelson Mandela. It is true also that on the external front of the apartheid regime, there have been significant gains towards peace.

In August, South Africa was forced to end its direct aggression against Angola, as a result of the heavy economic and political costs for the apartheid regime of an aggression started as far back as 1975 and of its military defeat in Cuito Canavale. There has been, as a consequence, the independence, on March 21st, of Namibia

under UN supervision, facilitated too by an international climate favourable to detente and conducive of a negotiated solution.

But the undeclared war is still going on in Southern Africa and Zimbabwe is directly affected by this war. Inside South Africa itself, there are still people being killed by the apartheid regime every day. Even in Natal where people are being killed in the context of what is being presented as a tribal conflict, those who follow closely the situation in South Africa know that this conflict has a strong political content and is the result of the Bantustan policy of division of the African people. Inkhata, which responsible for most of the killing, operates in the framework of the Bantustan policy together with the apartheid regime in the elimination of the supporters of the ANC and of the Mass Democratic Movement.

Externally, especially in Angola and Mozambique where South Africa is using surrogate forces, people die every day in great number. This happens too on a much smaller scale in some parts of Zimbabwe along the border with Mozambique.

The policy of destabilisation of South Africa against Zimbabwe, as you know, touches different aspects: the military, the political and provokes human suffering. Zimbabwe has been forced, since a short time after its independence, into a permanent military effort, not only to prevent and repel direct attacks against its territory and to protect its sovereignty, but to insure the protection of essential lines of transport and communication to the Ocean. Because the roads, railways, the pipelines to the Indian Ocean via Mozambique are the shortest and cheapest routes for the overseas trade of Zimbabwe and lessen its dependence from South Africa's transport system, Zimbabwe has been militarily involved since the early 80s in repelling MNR's aggression against those lines of communication. Its military intervention is also a concrete form of solidarity with the people of Mozambique and FRELIMO, with whom a special relationship exists, built during the liberation struggle. For these reasons, Zimbabwe is still involved in a big defence effort and its economy is to some extent affected by the war. Let me quote an example: according to press reports published at the beginning of this year, MNR has been able to sabotage the pipeline Beira-Mutare. This costed Zimbabwe a loss of more than 1.300.000 litres of diesel in two weeks which represented about 47 % of the total loss resulting from sabotage of the pipeline in 1989. This is a dimension which has to be kept in mind when we consider the economic situation of Zimbabwe ten years after independence and the question of cooperation between Belgium and Zimbabwe.

The aggressive policy of the apartheid regime involves too much human suffering. People living in the Northeast of Zimbabwe have not only been part of the liberation struggle and have made sacrifices for the independence of their country, but since a number of years they have become the direct targets or the indirect victims of the

incursions made by the MNR. The Zimbabwe government has been forced to build security villages where the people get protection during the night. Production and the way of life have been profoundly affected in the border region by this ongoing war.

The government of Zimbabwe has in mid-March welcomed Mr. Nelson Mandela in Harare after his release from prison and has given him a tremendous reception, even creating a special one-day holiday, called Mandela's day. In doing so, Zimbabwe has stressed the link between peace and development in Zimbabwe itself and the evolution of the political situation in South Africa in a sense favourable to the struggling majority.

It's important too to stress here the appeal made solemnly by Mr. Mandela from Harare to both President W. De Klerk of South Africa and to President G. Bush of the USA. Like its predecessor since Nkomati in 1984, the De Klerk government has been repeating that it has stopped any kind of support to the MNR when it is a proven fact that help for the MNR is still coming from South Africa, either directly from the security forces or from private sources. The US administration does not support the MNR but it is a known fact that it receives assistance from non-governmental sources in the USA. Thus the call by Mr. Mandela in solidarity with Zimbabwe and Mozambique asking both South Africa and the US administration to adopt legislation which would forbid and sanction any person or organisation, who gives assistance to the MNR, is a reaffirmation of the continuous gravity of the situation and of the necessity to put an urgent end to hostility which affects both countries.

As a Belgian citizen, I wish to express too my concern of the fact that trade between Belgium and apartheid South Africa has increased with some 25 % in 1988-1989 compared with the previous year while our trade with and exports to Zimbabwe remains limited.

Taking into consideration the basic issues which are at stake in Southern Africa, democracy and people's self-determination, human rights without racial discrimination, and peace, one would have expected that a democratic government like the Belgian government should have discouraged such an evolution and should have taken steps in conformity with the E.C. restrictive measures applied against South Africa to prevent such increase in trade with apartheid South Africa.

Likewise it is too much to ask such a government to encourage business people and others to reinforce relations with Zimbabwe and other Frontline states rather than with a regime responsible for such a destructive policy in the whole of Southern Africa.