

PRESS CONFERENCE -- SWAPO-SAMRAF TOUR

September 17, 1980 -- 11 A.M. -- 777 UN Plaza

SWAPO, recognized by the United Nations as the "sole and legitimate" representative of the Namibian people, has struggled for fourteen years to win independence from South Africa's illegal occupation. Current negotiations are being conducted in the UN Security Council to arrange a cease-fire in Namibia despite the intransigence of the apartheid regime. Over 70,000 troops of the South African Defence Force currently occupy Namibia.

South Africa taking over Namibia from Germany in 1915, was granted a Mandate by the League of Nations to govern the territory (then known as South West Africa). The Mandate was revoked by the UN Council for Namibia in 1966 when the occupation was declared illegal as well as "a crime against humanity."

Despite the UN General Assembly's decree protecting the natural resources of Namibia from export and foreign control, crucial world reserves of uranium, gold and diamonds continue to be plundered by the South African government and the multinationals profiting from the exploitation of Namibia.

Ms. PASHUKENI SHOOMBE, who will officially represent SWAPO, is a member of the Central Committee of SWAPO's Women's Council. She is the Assistant Secretary for Information and Political Orientation on the Council. Formerly a teacher in Namibia before being forced to flee her country, Ms. Shoombe is a graduate of the UN Institute for Namibia in Lusaka, Zambia. As a member of the SWAPO Women's Council, she has been actively participating in the struggle for the liberation of Namibia.

MICHAEL MORGAN, representing SAMRAF, will accompany Ms. Shoombe on the tour. He is a 25-year-old white South African who deserted the South African army after witnessing atrocities committed by the South African Defence Force on the Namibian border. Mr. Morgan is one of a growing number of South African war resisters who, acting out of solidarity with the liberation movements in southern Africa, are organizing to build support for the resistance movements in the countries to which they fled and to build support for the liberation movements themselves.