Dear Friends of ACOA:

As ACOA approaches the end of its 27th year of activity, I am concerned about the changes which may occur in US policy toward Africa. What direction will the Reagan administration take on critical issues relating to southern Africa's ultimate liberation?

There is good reason to have misgivings—South Africa received the news of the American election results with jubilation. According to the New York Times of November 6, "the South African Broadcasting Corporation declared that Mr. Reagan's victory marked the defeat of 'pseudo-liberalism, permissiveness,...appeasement and anti-patriotism' and meant that 'Western Christian culture' still had a chance to triumph over Communism."

The president-elect himself has commented that "South Africa is an exciting place to me...they certainly don't need us to tell them how to solve their race problems." One of Reagan's key foreign policy advisors is Richard Allen. His ties with Portuguese colonialism in Africa, as a Washington lobbyist for the Overseas Companies of Portugal, are a matter of public record.

These comments are not meant to be partisan, for ACOA has taken a critical view of US policy under every Washington administration. As a non-governmental organization, we express positions that we hope will push our government to much more vigorously support the aspirations of African countries for independence and equality. We trust your support for our role will not now falter, for what little we know of this new administration makes it likely that US policy will regress at a time we face critical issues.

One of those issues is Namibia, where South Africa has maintained its apartheid rule in spite of decisions by the UN Security Council and the World Court declaring its
presence illegal. The UN, backed by the US, has proposed a plan for internationally supervised elections to allow the Namibian people to choose their own independent government. This plan has been consistently frustrated by South Africa's delaying tactics. Pretoria's real fear is that the South West Africa Peoples' Organization (SWAPO) will win such elections, much as Mugabe did in Zimbabwe.

The point of confrontation has been reached between the world organization and South Africa over Namibia. What position will the US take if the question of sanctions is debated soon in the Security Council? Will the extensive economic ties the US and other Western powers have with South Africa bring about a veto in the Security Council—despite backing by the majority of nations for sanctions?

ACOA has worked hard this year to end those US economic ties so vital to the maintenance of the apartheid regime. At this writing, we are in the midst of a national speaking tour by Tozamile Botha, the recently exiled Black South African labor and community leader. Dumisani Kumalo of our staff has just completed a similar tour. Our newest effort is helping to provide the national coordination to urge state and local governments to divest public funds from corporations and banks doing business with South Africa.

In the midst of these activities, we find ourselves grappling with ACOA's worst financial crisis in years—a situation which reflects the economic woes of this period. We come to the end of this year facing a deficit of $30,000. It will be a formidable task to raise this money by December 31, and it will probably mean a cutback in our small, hard-working, modestly paid staff early next year. The issues we face are no less urgent than before; a reduced staff would be a tremendous setback.

Believe me, I am not overstating the problems we confront. Therefore, I ask if you can give a little extra to see us through this crisis and help us enter 1981 with confidence.

Sincerely yours,

George M. Houser
Executive Director