

Mr. RAMALHO ORTIGAO (Portugal): The Permanent Representative of Denmark has already expressed the common views of the 12 Member States of the European Community on the draft resolutions regarding the policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa. However, my delegation would like to make some further brief remarks on the matter.

The Portuguese delegation has repeatedly emphasized here, as in other forums, that it firmly condemns the system of apartheid. Once again it reaffirms its strong objection and opposition to this aberrant society based upon institutionalized racism and racial inequality, which is designed to maintain the privileges of a minority.

Only the elimination of the repressive system of apartheid will make possible the climate of confidence which southern Africa needs to establish the genuine political stability so essential to the normal development of all the countries of the region.

The South African authorities must undertake once and for all a sincere effort to establish a dialogue with all the different communities in their country, thus creating the necessary conditions for all its inhabitants to have equal access to political rights, freedom, work and social justice.

My delegation regrets not having been able to support all the draft resolutions on this item, even if we recognize that this year they have been more carefully drafted. Although we concur with the thrust of many of their essential proposals, we still have reservations of principle on certain aspects.

For example, we do not agree that General Assembly resolutions should endorse violence, whatever its form, as the only choice in redressing situations of injustice. On the contrary, they should, rather, encourage dialogue and the preservation of the principle of peaceful settlement of conflicts. Furthermore, we believe that the total isolation of South Africa will only hamper the initiatives of all those who are fighting inside the country for fundamental reforms to the present system. Similarly, the delegation of Portugal cannot support verbal violence and certain discriminatory references in the resolutions we have just adopted, since they do not contribute to the formation of a consensus, which could be the basis for effective international pressure to restore to the majority of the South African population their legitimate rights.

As we did in the case of a similar resolution last year, my delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution on concerted international action for the elimination of apartheid. However, we stress that we have reservations on certain formulations in the operative part.