

During this period the Government of South Africa continued to advance proposals for so-called "power-sharing" which are utterly unacceptable to the South African majority. In the October 26 municipal elections, the overwhelming majority of blacks were disenfranchised and most of the rest simply stayed away. That experience left no doubt that black South Africans will not be told who their real leaders are. Only genuine leaders can negotiate on behalf of their people.

The system of apartheid remains fundamentally unchanged. And while the political situation appears more uncertain than it has been for some time, there is simply no evidence to suggest that the white South Africans supporting the Government have yet accepted the reality that they cannot continue to deny the most fundamental rights to the majority of their countrymen.

So the international community must continue to put pressure on Pretoria through sanctions and other means. It must also encourage where possible efforts aimed at convincing supporters of apartheid that there is a better way, a more just way than adherence to an immoral and debilitating system of racial discrimination.

Here at Harare the Committee has reached the midpoint of our work. We will be focussing more than ever on the run-up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kuala Lumpur. We have helped keep the issue before the public and have set in train several initiatives. There is much to be done and we are looking forward to our exchanges over the next three days to move the process forward substantially on a wide range of issues.

We will be looking at ways to help the people of Southern Africa achieve their true potential, a potential that has for too long been stymied by racial discrimination and repression in South Africa and destabilization of the rest of the region. A continuation of the status quo can only lead to greater misery and violence. Peaceful but fundamental change in South Africa will unleash a tremendous potential for good. It is a challenge and an opportunity that must be grasped.