

Promotion of Trade and Investment in Front-Line and Neighbouring States

27. In the light of the importance of strengthening their economic independence and disengagement from South Africa, the Committee reviewed the draft strategy paper submitted by Canada on trade and investment promotion in the Front-Line and neighbouring States. The extremely useful efforts already being undertaken in this regard in a number of different fora, including SADCC and the Preferential Trade Area (PTA), were recognised. The Committee requested the Secretariat to develop an Action Plan taking into account the views of the Front-Line and neighbouring states, SADCC and the PTA and all Commonwealth countries concerned.

Dialogue

28. In keeping with its mandate from Vancouver, the Committee has continued to place a premium on dialogue between the South African Government and the true representatives of the non-white majority as the only peaceful route to a resolution of the conflict. The Committee welcomed recent growing instances of dialogue among South Africans across racial and political lines. For example, in Lusaka in July more than 100 white South Africans from the "Five Freedoms Forum" met with the ANC. The Committee also took particular note of the meeting between State President P.W. Botha and Nelson Mandela on 5 July in Cape Town. The Committee recalled that in its Report the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) had underlined the centrality of Nelson Mandela in any genuine negotiation to bring about the resolution of the conflict. If the meeting was an indication that at long last the South African Government too was beginning to share this assessment of Nelson Mandela's place in the South African political equation, the next logical step should be his immediate and unconditional release. In this regard, the Committee stressed the continuing validity of the Negotiating Concept elaborated by the EPG as a basis for future negotiations.

Countering South African Propaganda and Censorship

29. The Committee noted that since its last meeting the apartheid regime had taken its campaign against the media further with bannings of newspapers and journalists and the imposition of crippling fines. Against this background the Committee reaffirmed the continuing validity of the Commonwealth effort to expose the truth about apartheid and to combat media censorship. In this connection they warmly welcomed and endorsed the report for Heads of Government from the Working Party established by the Secretary-General to develop a Commonwealth strategy for this purpose. The Committee paid tribute to all the Commonwealth governments which had in various ways contributed to the work of the Working Party and to the wider effort to counteract South African propaganda and censorship.

Aid to Victims and Opponents of Apartheid

30. The Committee continued to emphasise the importance of practical and financial assistance to victims and opponents of apartheid, in particular educational, legal and humanitarian assistance and aid to trade unions. Efforts already being made by Commonwealth and other countries were recognised and the Committee called for further responses from all countries opposed to apartheid.