

And we have pursued this policy with others, recognizing that on this issue there is no better approach than one of concerted action.

What have been the results of our efforts?

To begin with, we can state without equivocation that sanctions have worked - particularly financial sanctions. The ban on new loans and the renegotiation of debt for progressively shorter periods at higher rates hurts the South African economy. Scarce capital is syphoned off. Growth is stunted. Business confidence is weakened. The ability of Pretoria to fund its extraordinarily expensive security apparatus is shaken.

The effect of sanctions was recognized by the former Governor of the Reserve Bank of South Africa, the late Gerhard de Kock, when he stated in May, before his resignation, that South Africa was "bleeding". He warned that "if adequate progress is not made in political and constitutional reform, South Africa's relationships with the rest of the world are unlikely to improve".

The damaging effect of sanctions is also being recognized at the political level. Former Junior Foreign Minister Kobus Meiring declared in Cape Town in July that "we have to break the isolation to get the money we need for development ... How do we do it? It is as simple as this; we have to make ourselves acceptable".

Law and Order Minister Vlok conceded that same month that "our ability to make decisions is limited. If sanctions are introduced against us we can do nothing ... We do not live alone in this world".

And President de Klerk himself has referred to "the international stangehold which ... is presently inflicted on our economic growth potential".

It is a long way from the recognition of a problem - and its source - to an acceptable response. But it is an important step.

Of course, action by the major US and West European banks will be key. That is why the Commonwealth despatched a group of officials to the current round of debt negotiations to encourage cooperation in this regard, encouraging an elimination of multi-year debt rescheduling, and higher repayment terms over shorter periods.