

The Commonwealth has had a long history of opposing apartheid. This Committee's work is only beginning. At this first meeting we will be looking at all the objectives and issues of the Okanagan Statement. I expect that we will set in train initiatives in a number of areas. This will be the start of a process taking us to the Heads of Government Meeting in Kuala Lumpur. My colleagues and I intend to ensure that the Commonwealth will retain its leading role in ending apartheid. At the same time through our efforts we will want to keep this issue before the public in all parts of the world.

We all know that the Government of South Africa must itself recognize the inevitability of change in South Africa. It must negotiate with all legitimate leaders of the South African people, including those it has jailed and forced into exile, towards the creation of a non-racial representative government for all South Africans. It must make a commitment to dismantle the structure of apartheid and permit a non-racial society to emerge. Without early movement towards this bright future South Africa could well descend into an even more chaotic chapter of human history. With a non-racial future South Africa's contribution to Africa and to the world can be enormous.

The Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers can help. The Commonwealth can do more to bring a non-racial democratic South Africa closer. That is what we are here to do. Thank you.