

Mr. Chairman,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Distinguished Heads of Delegation

At Vancouver, Heads of Government established the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa. I am honoured to submit its Report today. The Chairman earlier listed a number of other documents that were either commissioned by the Committee or originated in proposals first put forward in the Committee.

The Secretariat had also prepared for the Committee's use a document reporting on developments in Southern Africa since the last formal meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers in Canberra in August. My colleagues and I met informally on Monday of this week with the Reverend Alan Boesak and Mr. Thabo Mbeki of the African National Congress to hear their views on the latest events in South Africa.

Because there have been confusing press reports, I should make it clear that, at no time, did Mr. Boesak suggest it would be appropriate to relax Commonwealth pressure on South Africa now. He believes it is essential that pressure be maintained, and that the mere promise of reform should not be rewarded by any relaxation of pressure. He does believe that it would be reasonable to expect the South African Government to demonstrate its commitment to real reform within six months from its inauguration, and that it would be appropriate, at the end of that time, to hold South Africa to account if it had not acted on the programme presented to President de Klerk in his meeting with clerics last week. That is the position Dr. Boesak conveyed to our dinner.

This morning I want to highlight briefly some of the principal points in the Report and offer some observations on the Committee's experience.

The Committee included the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Guyana, India, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Foreign Minister of Malaysia, as host of this CHOGM, attended the Canberra meeting and we sought to keep other Governments fully briefed. There was a frank and collegial atmosphere. All members attended all sessions, although schedules were often inconvenient. We all learned from the experience, and were able to submit a unanimous report. We were very ably assisted in our work by both the present and the new Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, and by officials of the Secretariat.