

This Committee was established to keep a steady Commonwealth focus on apartheid, and not let the world's attention slip away, as it did in earlier times. All the world is offended by apartheid, but the Commonwealth feels a particular obligation to end that system, and to end it peacefully. So many of our Member States and citizens live literally on the front lines. So many children of the Commonwealth have their futures blighted, or their sense of their worth demeaned, by this legalized racism. And South Africa itself was once a member of the Commonwealth family and would be welcome home again, once apartheid is gone.

The commitment of the Commonwealth has always been clear, but a focus was needed, an instrument to explore alternatives, to expose destabilization and propaganda, to maintain the pressure for change, and to open channels through which black and white South Africans might find common cause.

As we begin our final formal meeting, I want as Chairman to thank my colleague Foreign Ministers for giving this issue and our work your unfailing priority. But I want also to draw a lesson about modern international life, and the special nature of this Commonwealth.

We represent, in this Commonwealth family, the world's diversity - diversity of culture, languages, and standards and visions of life. Each of us has preoccupations at home, which could divert our attention away from the fight against apartheid. But we have not been diverted, the Commonwealth will not be. The individual measures we have adopted each have their own weight. But what matters most of all about the Commonwealth, what makes our position against apartheid impossible to ignore, is that we will not relent until the system is ended. That has been the purpose and the standard of this Committee, as it is of the Heads of Government meeting to which we will report. Because that determination is so universal and so strong, I am convinced we will finally see an end to apartheid.