

Mr. President,

Secretary-General,

Colleagues and Distinguished Guests.

Thank you President Mugabe. It is a pleasure and an honour to share the floor with such a distinguished opponent of apartheid, at the opening of this third Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

I would like to thank you, your Foreign Minister and the people of Zimbabwe for such gracious hospitality. I am very pleased that Harare is the site for this meeting. There are few places, more appropriate, to deliberate on the means to end apartheid or to consider the nature and the cost of South Africa's destabilization. The issue of destabilization is a focus of this meeting.

Much has happened since we last met in Toronto, some positive developments, some negative. The stark fact remains that none of the more positive developments reveals any change in South Africa's commitment to apartheid, and some of the negative developments, such as the outcome of the Delmas trial, raise serious new threats to the internal non-violent opposition to apartheid.

However, we may well be entering one of those periods which historians later will say was "seminal" in South African history. I say this, not in the expectation that Pretoria has seen any writing on the wall, but in the knowledge that the inevitability of fundamental change cannot be shut out of the minds of the white minority for very much longer, despite the powerful communication tools at the sole disposal of the regime. And despite the powerful tools of repression used by Pretoria, the movement for democracy in South Africa cannot be silenced; it can only be forced to become more creative in mobilizing people to express peaceful but resolute opposition to apartheid.

It is important to focus on South Africa's efforts to destabilize its neighbours. That happens every day, and should not be obscured by welcome developments elsewhere. There is hopeful progress in Namibia, although that change has only just begun, and will require care and vigilance at every step. It is essential to secure conditions which allow genuinely free and fair elections.

Speaking for my own country, Canada is prepared to do our part in the major international effort that is required in Namibia. Our goal is not only to guarantee free and fair election of a truly representative government, but also to help the people of Namibia meet their post-independence development needs. If we take care, an independent Namibia can mark an important step forward in Southern Africa. But there should be no illusion. That step has not yet been taken. And an independent Namibia does not mean the end of apartheid, nor the end of South Africa's attempts to disrupt its neighbours.