

Mr. President,

I consider myself fortunate to address this assembly under your wise presidency. Bangladesh and Canada have had a long and mutually productive relationship. Our membership in the Commonwealth which, as a multiracial organization, has focussed so intensely upon the problem with which we deal today, gives me special encouragement as I speak before this broader audience today.

Canada, like others who have spoken here today, is deeply offended by the policy and practices of apartheid. Canadians are deeply committed to its eradication. We are also committed to peaceful change in South Africa.

Some ask why South Africa and its apartheid system are targets of our concern? Racism and injustices, they suggest, exist in other societies. We do not need Pretoria's reminders to tell us that. We have fresh in our memory discussions at this Assembly about the UN Decade to Combat Racism, and on the status of the UN's landmark covenants and conventions on Human Rights. We remember that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination is now in its third decade.

Clearly humankind has a long way to go in its quest to end the widespread, blight of racism and racial prejudice. Canadians take this task to heart. We believe we must attack this human failing in all quarters. But a major focus of our concerted attention must be dedicated to ending the only political and social system which has as its underlying tenet and basic structure the principle of racial differentiation. We wish to act in ways that benefit those who have been its victims.

The minority white domination in South Africa is sustained by doctrines of racial superiority, and by systems designed to both reflect and entrench racial inequality. This management through racism prevails only in that country. I am reminded of the words of the Secretary General in his annual report this year, where he noted: "We still face the reality of widespread and egregious infringement of human rights, a reality that casts shame on our era. No form of infringement is more widely encompassing or abhorrent than that of apartheid." The Secretary General went on to note that "Apartheid is, in reality, far more than a problem of human rights abuse. It is a problem with tenacious racial, political