

There is no question in my mind that sanctions have forced a quickening of the pace for change. It is now time to turn the page and get on with the challenges of a new South Africa because South Africa does matter, not just to South Africans, but to its African neighbours, and to all the nations of the world who share a common destiny, bound up in the harmony of the human race.

Try to imagine a future where the majority of countries in Africa are democratic, working together on behalf of all the peoples of this enormous continent. In a shrinking world, there is tremendous potential for Africa to become a renewed frontier in the twenty-first century!

South Africa can be a beacon of hope for Africa and the world -- hope for reconciliation, development and progress.

The world can certainly use some new models for change. Much of the progress that has been made toward universal standards of human rights unfortunately has come from what Canadian John Holmes has called "the mobilization of shame".

And there is still much to be ashamed of!

The evil of racism is far from vanquished. Throughout much of Africa, catastrophic post-Colonial political and economic failure has left millions of people in misery, their leaders in urgent need of effective principles for political stability and economic progress.

We believe that it is senseless to address these various problems in isolation. Consequently, Canadian foreign policy has been focused on the need to make progress in three basic areas: the establishment of basic human rights; the development of democratic institutions, including free elections and an independent judiciary; and the establishment of "good governance" -- in other words, the sound administration of public resources, including recognition of the needs of the poor, of women, and of minorities and other disadvantaged groups.

In the case of South Africa, Canada has provided assistance to the process of expanding the definition of democracy. We do not seek to prescribe our constitutional system, or any other. Every state must find its own path to freedom. But we do advocate strongly that a political settlement must be secured through a process of peaceful negotiation and ratified through free and fair elections.

For this reason, the world is eagerly watching the first steps toward the sharing of powers in South Africa because those steps will provide an indication of the prospects for peace, stability and equality in South Africa.