

CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR THE PROMOTION OF DIALOGUE
ABOUT A NON-RACIAL SOUTH AFRICA
AND EFFORTS TO COUNTER PROPAGANDA AND CENSORSHIP

The key objective of Canadian policy with regard to South Africa is to encourage negotiations that will lead to a non-racial democracy. Canadian efforts are two-pronged. Economic and other sanctions are designed to pressure the South African Government to take steps that will result in irreversible change. At the same time Canada has a number of programs designed to assist victims of apartheid, promote dialogue about a non-racial future and counter South African propaganda and censorship.

Canada is trying through specific projects to promote dialogue about a non-racial future among South Africans from all walks of life. In their October 1987 Okanagan Statement, Commonwealth Heads of Government declared: "we believe that we should take advantage of any opportunity to promote real internal dialogue." Following the August 1988 meeting of the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa (CFM), Canada launched a \$1.6 million fund to promote dialogue among South Africans. The projects are designed by and for South Africans. Projects include assisting the alternative press, funding events bringing together South Africans of different races, support for human rights and professional organizations trying to break down the barriers of apartheid, promotion of the idea of a non-racial future through the arts and popular culture and assistance for discussions between the ANC and primarily white South Africans.

Commonwealth Heads of Government also noted in Vancouver the need to expose the truth about apartheid and declared that the Commonwealth should give high priority to counteracting South African propaganda and censorship. Canada prepared a strategy on that subject and presented it to the CFM in Toronto in August 1988. At that time Canada also announced the establishment of the \$1 million Canadian Action Plan to counter South African propaganda and censorship. Some of the activities under this plan are carried out under the Dialogue Fund since censorship remains a serious impediment to dialogue, and a free press plays a key role in promoting dialogue.

The objectives of the plan are to counter the effects of South African propaganda and censorship through activities designed to raise the awareness of the real situation in South Africa. Activities include assistance to the alternative press in South and Southern Africa, the establishment of a special initiatives program at our Embassy in Pretoria, the establishment of a Visits and Speakers Program in Canada and assistance to NGOs to undertake projects to inform and educate Canadians about the realities of apartheid.