

You suggest that it is disingenuous to conclude that sanctions are effective. One only need refer to statements made by your fellow cabinet ministers to see this is not the case. For example, Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok conceded during a speech last month that sanctions were hurting the South African economy and that the government could not isolate itself from the international community: "Our ability to make decisions is limited - if sanctions are introduced against us we can do nothing...we do not live alone in this world." Also in July, your former Junior Foreign Minister, Kobus Meiring, was quoted as saying "we have to break out of international isolation to get the money we need for development and to get knowledge and technology....How do we get it? We have to make ourselves acceptable."

You suggest that recent surveys show that the majority of black South Africans reject sanctions. We had already been aware of the Chamber of Mines survey, although we hardly consider those who commissioned it and determined the wording of questions to be a disinterested "independent" party. Apart from the criticisms that have been made about the survey's methodology, a basic point must be made. Blacks in South Africa are denied the basic right to express themselves freely through the political process. Until blacks are given the opportunity to do so, we will continue to pay heed to blacks in church groups, trade unions, extra-parliamentary political, community and other organizations who have the respect of their communities. Notwithstanding your comments, we note that leaders of the South African Council of Churches, COSATU, NACTU and the United Democratic Front - organizations which represent millions of black South Africans - support the implementation of sanctions as part of the international community's pressure for change.

We intend to maintain that pressure until we see concrete evidence of the dismantling of apartheid and negotiations with genuine black leaders towards the establishment of non-racial, representative government.

I intend to share this response with my Commonwealth colleagues on the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Clark  
Secretary of State for  
External Affairs "