

Repressive provisions of security legislation are to be repealed by June: we look forward to detailed proposals in the near future. Accordingly, Commonwealth Foreign Ministers, who met in London February 18 under Canadian Chairmanship, welcomed recent substantial progress. They agreed to review Commonwealth sanctions policy and recommend an appropriate response when action had been completed on prisoners, exiles, security legislation and the legal pillars of Apartheid. They undertook to continue to deploy sanctions and other forms of pressure to bring about an early and peaceful end to Apartheid. They also reconfirmed the Commonwealth's continuing readiness to assist the negotiation process in any way the parties concerned consider appropriate.

Events in Eastern Europe also continue to be encouraging. Canada has observed some progress in Albania since our last meeting. The very severe repression to which the Albanian people have been subjected for 40 years seems now to be giving way to a spontaneous popular movement for more freedom and democracy.

Canada urges the current leadership of Albania to use restraint in its actions against demonstrators and rather work together with the new opposition movements in a constructive fashion in order to speed up the democratic process demanded by the population. We hope that the democratic test of multi-party elections on March 31 will be allowed to proceed and provide all Albanians with a direct say in their own political future. This test will serve as a marker of what has been accomplished and what remains to be done -- for example, concerning political prisoners -- to bring Albania back into the ranks of European countries that are guided by the principles of law, equity and justice.

Mr. Chairman,

It is clear that the international community faces an enormous challenge as we approach the year 2000: the challenge of creating a world in which all citizens enjoy the fundamental rights and freedoms set out in the universal declaration more than 40 years ago.

The government and the people of Canada are committed to working with the rest of the international community to meet that challenge: through the Commission and other multilateral Fora; in our bilateral relationships with other nations, and through our own institutions, such as the new-established International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Montreal.

Turning the vision set out in the Universal Declaration into reality will not be easy, and it will not come without time and sustained effort. But it will ultimately be rewarding: for today's citizens, and for the generations that will follow us in the future.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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