

facilitate the opening of negotiations. For our part, we are confident that the South African people, in determining their new constitutional order, will be guided by the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This Special Session against Apartheid is being held at what we hope will prove to be a critical juncture in South Africa's history. It is vital that we, the members of the United Nations, take this historic opportunity to speak with one voice in stressing the urgent need to remove barriers to negotiations - negotiations aimed at the establishment of non-racial representative government. The exact process of those negotiations will be up to the parties themselves, and need not complicate our deliberations here. But the South African Government must know that the world stands united in demanding that negotiations begin with genuine representatives of all the people, unfettered by restrictions, bannings or imprisonment. When that occurs, the international community will be there to provide whatever assistance is required to assist the peaceful transition to a truly non-racial democracy.

Let there be no mistake about it; Canada is an implacable foe of apartheid. But we will also prove to be a strong, resolute partner and friend to a democratic non-racial South Africa.

There have been several hopeful signs coming from South Africa, gestures that contain within them a tantalizing element of hope. Hope that the new de Klerk government is bringing with it a sense of reality, a sense of compassion, a sense of decency that have been sadly lacking in previous administrations. In particular, we welcome the commitment to repeal the Separate Amenities Act; the release of Walter Sisulu and other political prisoners; the decisions to allow peaceful protest marches, the rally for released political prisoners and, most recently, the Conference on a Democratic Future.

We hope that these are not just gestures, but harbingers of real change. For it must be understood that apartheid can only be abolished, not amended. Cosmetic reforms designed to placate foreign and domestic critics alike will only have the effect of redoubling the conviction and efforts of those fighting apartheid. In this connection, we laud the activities of the Mass Democratic Movement: peaceful, organized mass protests which have, in a very tangible sense, dramatized the unshakeable demands of the oppressed.

It is with a sense of hope that we are gathered here today. And, it was with that same sense that the Commonwealth leaders at their Kuala Lumpur summit reviewed the situation in South Africa against the possibility that significant and long-awaited changes in approach on the part of the South African Government may yet prove within reach.