

Southern Africa: the Way Ahead the Kuala Lumpur Statement

South Africa

1. Heads of Government continued to view the system of apartheid in South Africa as a serious challenge to the values and principles of the Commonwealth and reaffirmed that its total eradication remained their shared responsibility and common goal.

2. Heads of Government reviewed the situation in South Africa against the possibility that significant changes in approach on the part of the South African regime, for which the Commonwealth had striven for so long, may yet prove to be within reach. In recent weeks, the regime had accepted a degree of peaceful political activity by the black majority and on the eve of this Meeting had released from prison eight political leaders.

3. However, they noted that the state of emergency remained in force; the ANC, the PAC and many other organisations remained banned; Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners remained incarcerated; many more continued to be detained without trial; and executions in political cases had not stopped. There had also been no action to indicate that the new South African Government was prepared to dismantle the pillars of apartheid, especially the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act, the Bantustan 'homelands' policy and the system of separate education.

4. Heads of Government agreed that such encouraging signs as there had been were very much the product of a combination of internal and external pressures. In this context they welcomed the role now being played by the Mass Democratic Movement in its sustained, disciplined and peaceful opposition to apartheid. They attached importance to acceptance of peaceful demonstrations and political manifestations as a test of the sincerity of the new Government and its professed desire for change.

5. In considering the way forward, Heads of Government reiterated their preference for a negotiated and peaceful settlement and in this context reaffirmed the continuing validity of the EPG's 'Possible Negotiating Concept'. Among other measures, that Concept calls for

On the part of the (South African) Government:

- (a) Removal of the military from the townships, providing for freedom of assembly and discussion and suspension of detention without trial.
- (b) The release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and detainees.