

Support for negotiations has been a central and consistent element of Commonwealth strategy. Commonwealth members are supporting, in a range of practical ways, the preparations for constitutional negotiations.

The Commonwealth has been equally active in assisting the victims of apartheid. The Committee urged Commonwealth countries to assist with the return of political exiles and the release of political prisoners. Our report on Human Resource Development in a Post-Apartheid South Africa merits support from this conference. The needs are changing, but the Commonwealth's commitment to supporting the development needs of the victims of apartheid continues.

We welcomed the encouraging progress in securing a negotiated settlement in Angola. But we continue to be profoundly concerned about the crisis in Mozambique. We urged all governments with influence on either side to spare no effort to bring the parties together. We welcomed the work undertaken by the Secretariat to promote trade and investment in Southern Africa and welcomed the new emphasis on supporting South Africa's reintegration in the regional economy. The Committee recognized that apartheid has been costly not only for South Africa but also for its neighbours. With the end of apartheid in sight, we appealed to the international community to continue to work to eliminate the legacy of apartheid throughout the region.

One of the great highlights for this Committee was to welcome the Foreign Minister of Namibia, Theo-Ben Gurirab, to our meeting in Abuja. Namibia's independence on March 21, 1990, demonstrated that a non-racial democracy can indeed be achieved through peaceful negotiations. We were delighted to welcome Namibia into the Commonwealth family.

Mr. Chairman, we meet at a momentous time for South Africa. The major parties are poised to enter into negotiations. The next two years will see a process of change at least as extensive, and dramatic, as we have witnessed since Kuala Lumpur. Support from the Commonwealth will be as crucial as ever. The Commonwealth has led world opinion and action on apartheid. We are united; we are focused on supporting the negotiations process; and we are planning for the future. I know that I speak for all my colleagues when I say that we earnestly hope that the dream of a non-racial democratic South Africa, for which the Commonwealth has worked so hard and for so long, will soon be a reality.