

Prime Minister,

Secretary-General,

Colleagues and distinguished guests

Thank you Prime Minister Hawke. We are all honoured by your presence here and pay tribute to your unflagging efforts and those of your countrymen in the fight against apartheid. I would like to thank you, your Foreign Minister and the people of Australia for your commitment to equality in southern Africa and your hospitality here in Canberra.

Canberra, like Ottawa, lies a great distance from South Africa, but when measured not in kilometres but in commitment and conviction, the problems of South Africa are very close to us all. Our meeting, the last before Commonwealth Heads of Government gather in Kuala Lumpur, lets us assess prospects for change and negotiation. We must analyze both what has changed and what has not and send signals, not only to Commonwealth Heads, but also to South African leaders, black and white.

South Africa has not remained still since this Committee was formed at Vancouver. Nor have we. In the first year of our mandate, the atmosphere in South Africa grew even more menacing. Shortly after our Lusaka meeting, the mass democratic movement was mauled by bannings. Political detentions sought to stifle dissent, and censorship grew with attacks on the alternative press. Destabilization disrupted the Front-line States and no solution to Namibia was then in sight.

We responded, by reaching out to the victims of apartheid and by using the instrument of sanctions to apply pressure for change. Our Committee kept the case for sanctions before the international community and before South Africa.

We initiated studies to evaluate the application and impact of sanctions to assess South Africa's relationship with the international financial system. In Toronto we made a number of concrete proposals to tighten and intensify Commonwealth sanctions. Of particular import, were the emphasis on financial sanctions and measures to prohibit the transfer of technology which could serve to circumvent the arms, oil and computer embargos. In Harare we agreed to a proposal which could lead to a substantial strengthening of the arms embargo.

Recognizing that none of us has significant economic leverage alone on South Africa, we have each sought the support of nations who do, particularly those who continue to carry on significant trade and financial dealings with South Africa in areas under Commonwealth sanctions. We need to continue our efforts to widen the adoption of Commonwealth measures.