

It is a great pleasure to meet here in New Delhi, and also singularly appropriate. Delhi is a city at once ancient and modern, a true meeting place of cultures from both East and West. And India's contribution to justice in South Africa goes back a long way indeed. Over 40 years ago India led the way in taking concrete measures against apartheid. Nearly 80 years ago the African National Congress (ANC) acknowledged at its creation the example of the Indian National Congress. And it was a young lawyer visiting from India, thrown off a South African train one night in 1893, who refused to accept things as they were and went on to change both countries forever -- that man was Mahatma Gandhi.

This meeting in Delhi also offers us an occasion to reflect on the Commonwealth's role in the past decade in encouraging change in South Africa. It was the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Delhi in 1983 which declared that only the establishment of democratic rule can lead to a just and lasting solution in South Africa.

Two years later, in Nassau, our Heads of Government set out a detailed agenda for international action towards this objective. These were the first significant steps to galvanize international concern and transform it into constant and persuasive pressure. On this issue, the Commonwealth led and the rest of the world followed.

The reason Commonwealth sanctions policy was so influential and effective was because its purpose from the very beginning was clear and constant. As our Heads of Government put it in Kuala Lumpur: "The Commonwealth's role is to facilitate the opening of negotiations between the South African authorities and authentic black leaders. Our purpose is to bring Pretoria to the negotiating table and keep it there until change is irreversibly secured."

And now, at last, our collective efforts in the Commonwealth have begun to bear fruit in recent months. A new South Africa is at last in sight. Over the next two days we will be closely reviewing important recent developments. At the end of our deliberations I hope that we will emerge with an approach that will sensitively reflect the many challenges and opportunities offered by a South Africa in transition, an approach that will both give credit where it is due and sustain the pressure for further change.

In the past two years, the political environment in South Africa has been radically transformed. The African National Congress and other parties were unbanned. Nelson Mandela and other leading opponents of apartheid were released. A dialogue was initiated that led to historic agreements between the ANC and the government. The State of Emergency was ended. The South African government has abolished the legislative pillars of apartheid: the Separate Amenities Act, Group Areas Act, the Land Acts and the Population Registration Act. It has substantially reformed