

Mr. President, every one of us here, I am sure, is driven by the same desire: to see the end of the odious system of apartheid. Thus, as each new government comes to power in South Africa, collectively we look for evidence that with this new leader, with this new government, we will begin to see clear signs that apartheid is being dismantled.

If President de Klerk is to be taken at his word, his government intends profound reforms leading to the end of apartheid. Not only must the suffocating web of regulations and laws buttressing apartheid be done away with, but the government must prepare the way for negotiations towards a non-racial democracy with black leaders through the termination of the state of emergency, the release of political prisoners, and legalization of banned political parties. This agenda lies before it - we still await solid evidence that President de Klerk's government is determined to address it.

Apartheid has brought misery, despair and destitution to untold millions, death to thousands and an incalculable financial burden for South Africa and its neighbours. Both the victims and their oppressors have been scarred by this iniquitous system. Apartheid has left an indelible stain on the honour of South Africa.

When apartheid is finally swept away - as it will be - many in the white community will say "we did not know". Through intensive propaganda, designed to encourage fear of the black majority, and strict censorship laws, their government has kept them swaddled in a layer of protective ignorance about what is really going on under apartheid. Little wonder that sanctions are seen as cruel, and often irrational, measures to white South Africans.

Sanctions work. We readily acknowledge that they are far from perfect: they hurt South Africans black and white; but there has simply been no other recourse left to the international community to impress upon Pretoria the urgent need for fundamental change. For forty years the world attempted through diplomatic efforts to bring about apartheid's demise. It did not work. Apartheid is still very much with us, and its pillars, the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act, the Land Act, segregated education and health care, the homelands system, and, above all, the denial of the vote to the black majority, remain entrenched in law. So sanctions must stay.

Discussion regarding the dismantling of sanctions can only commence the day we see evidence of clear and irreversible change. Until then, it would be an affront to those who have and are fighting apartheid from within South Africa to relent, in any way, our pressure on the government.