

# Statement

Secretary of  
State for  
External Affairs



# Déclaration

Secrétaire  
d'État aux  
Affaires  
extérieures

92/18

AS DELIVERED

AN ADDRESS BY THE  
HONOURABLE BARBARA McDOUGALL,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,  
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
ON SOUTH AFRICA

OTTAWA, Ontario  
May 14, 1992

External Affairs and  
International Trade Canada  
Affaires extérieures et  
Commerce extérieur Canada

Canada

Madam Speaker,

I rise at a moment when we are witnessing great and historic changes in South Africa, a moment that Canada has precipitated through many of its actions over the past decades.

What was once a great tragedy of our lifetimes has now become a story of renewed hope for all South Africans, black and white. It is a story in which we, as Canadians, have played an important role, one that bears repeating in this House.

Canada has been a leader in the fight against apartheid for many decades. It was John Diefenbaker who led in the Commonwealth -- when South Africa left the Commonwealth -- saying that there would always be a light in the window for South Africa.

Our Prime Minister today is the Prime Minister who led the policy of the Commonwealth regarding sanctions; the former Secretary of State for External Affairs and now the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs was among world leaders in the policy against apartheid in South Africa.

Now that this system is beginning to crumble, the world's attention, and particularly the attention of Canadians, is focused on the initial steps toward establishing a non-racial democracy, a moment that we can all celebrate.

A dramatic milestone in the progress toward that goal came on March 17, when President de Klerk's call for a mandate to continue negotiations was overwhelmingly endorsed by the white electorate. In the wake of that outcome, the Prime Minister asked me to visit South Africa to express in person Canada's strong support for the process of constitutional negotiations currently under way through the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA).

During my four-day visit, I met many of the political leaders actively involved in the negotiations, including Nelson Mandela and President de Klerk, as well as many others -- church and community leaders, academics and businesspeople -- who are working to bring about a peaceful transformation in their country. The experience was a moving one, not only because of the insights that I gained at the formal political level, but also because of the many brave and dedicated people I met who have devoted their lives to combatting the evils of the system that surrounds them.

But the fight for peace, justice, and equality is not over. The road ahead is fraught with difficulty and danger. While in South Africa, I strongly condemned to all whom I met the violence that continues to claim lives on a daily basis. It threatens not only to undermine the current discussions, but to jeopardize the future of democratic development in South Africa. If that country is to have lasting change and assume its rightful place

among the nations of the world, that violence must end. I was discouraged by the tendency of leaders and groups to cast blame on others, rather than to accept collective responsibility for ending this climate of violence and finding new ways of dealing with solutions.

There are no easy solutions, but there will be no solutions at all until people work together. The will among various parties to lay aside their differences and make common cause to end the tragedy of the violence could be an important signal of the commitment that will be necessary to build a new South Africa.

The outside world can play only a limited role in this deployment, but as a country committed to encouraging a peaceful transition in South Africa through these many years, Canada stands ready to consider any calls from CODESA for support through the United Nations, the Commonwealth, or some other appropriate mechanism because of our concern for people and their well-being.

On the other hand, I came away from my visit to South Africa encouraged by the prospects for success in the negotiating process. That optimism does not blind me to the difficulties that lie ahead. There are still significant differences of opinion in a number of crucial areas, but a broad consensus has developed among the parties on the general principles on which a new government would be based, a new constitutional order, and there is a strong sense of the critical importance that these discussions have for the future, not only for the country but for individual South Africans themselves.

In addition to our moral and other forms of suasion, we as Canadians can be proud of the positive assistance we have provided to the development of a new democratic order in South Africa.

Through what we have called our Dialogue Fund, for example, we are providing support in a variety of areas to help South Africans develop a democratic system unique to their own situation. We provided assistance in constitution-making, including the vital area of developing a judiciable Bill of Rights. As well, we are assisting in building a capacity within the democratic movement to develop policy in priority areas such as economic planning, economic analysis, education planning, and a capacity to become part of a permanent public service. All this is in addition to the assistance we have provided and continue to provide to train black South Africans to play a significant role in the new South Africa.

In my discussions I found that South Africans appreciated the fact that Canadians -- unlike some others -- do not seek to prescribe our own constitutional system, or any other. Instead, it is our belief that a political settlement must be secured through a process of peaceful negotiations and ratified through free and fair elections. Political questions can seldom be divorced from questions of economics and the issue of Commonwealth sanctions was a matter of great interest with the people I spoke with, especially since my visit coincided with the decision by the European Community to lift its embargo on oil.

In all of my meetings, I stressed that the Commonwealth policy on sanctions linked the lifting of sanctions to real progress in the negotiations. Only when there is agreement on "appropriate transitional mechanisms which would enable all the parties to participate fully and effectively in negotiations" would we consider lifting our trade and investment sanctions.

I also emphasized that we do not want to keep our sanctions on any longer than necessary. I sincerely hope that the agreement on transition mechanisms will be achieved at the forthcoming plenary session of CODESA, scheduled to start tomorrow, and that we can then take another step in the normalization of our relations.

Because if there was one concern -- among many -- expressed while I was there, it was that the capacity of the economy to revive will depend on international investment, international trade, and only that will give life to the new democracy for the majority of South Africans.

In addition, the lifting of sanctions will not in and of itself restore economic confidence in South Africa. I go back to the question of violence for a moment.

There are many Canadian businesspeople eager to explore opportunities for trade and investment with South Africa. But political stability, most especially an end to the violence, must come before South Africa can, with the help of the outside world, begin to rebuild its economy and be in a position to really attract that outside capital, that business investment, the travel and the interchanges that are so important as well, to address the many inequities left by four decades of apartheid.

The apartheid system had made South Africa a pariah to its neighbours, even though the trade and transportation links established during the colonial period that went on for so long were very hard to break. With recent developments in South Africa, new links are being forged and we can hope for a new era of regional co-operation.

Ironically, the drought that is gripping all of that region of the continent now and exacting such a heavy toll on livestock and on human beings, has proved a catalyst in promoting that new spirit of co-operation among the countries and governments of the region.

Canada, with other donors, has responded to the very urgent and tragic needs of this drought, and we will be providing \$30 million worth of food aid to Southern Africa. Much of that food will have to go through South African ports on its way to Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi. Of course there will be aid to Mozambique.

For the first time in decades, ministers and senior officials from the other Southern African countries are sitting down with their South African counterparts to discuss common approaches to this common and very tragic problem. We are, of course, applauding the collaboration in this effort and wish it well. We are prepared to aid in any way that we can.

The victory over apartheid is a victory for the human spirit for right over wrong. But no victory is easy, nor can it be cause for gloating or premature celebration. The challenges of a new South Africa will be as great as the challenges to the old South Africa. The stakes are very high.

Canada played a significant role in undermining the pillars of apartheid, an abhorrent system that we have been strongly opposed and consistently opposed to. We must continue our efforts and continue to be diligent. While I was there, I assured the South Africans that I met from all walks of life that Canada has been there for them in the past. We will be there with them, both bilaterally and multilaterally, not just as an instrument of government policy, but because of the sympathy and interest and caring that individual Canadians feel for the people of South Africa.

As they themselves are creating this new country, their own new country and their own new constitution, I make those assurances to this House -- that Canada will continue to be there for South Africa.