

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

Secrétaire
d'État aux
Affaires
extérieures

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CLARK APPLAUDS SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, applauded the positive steps towards fundamental change and negotiations announced by South African President F.W. de Klerk in his opening speech to Parliament today. He described the speech as an encouraging beginning and said Canada will maintain its activities, urging further concrete movement to end apartheid.

"Today is a good day for South Africa. President de Klerk has removed many of the significant obstacles to meaningful negotiations towards a non-racial democracy. We also look forward to welcoming soon the release of Nelson Mandela. It is particularly important that he will be released into a situation in which bans have been lifted on the African National Congress and other political organizations. The easing of other restrictions, including on the press, also enhances the prospects for freer political debate, dialogue and negotiations. We commend President de Klerk for taking these initiatives. We also congratulate all those whose tireless efforts to bring about an end to apartheid are beginning to bear fruit".

"When Prime Minister Mulroney embarked on a policy of seeking to bring effective international pressure to bear on the Government of South Africa, he knew it would not be instantly successful. But he also knew that eventually this pressure, coupled with measures to assist victims and opponents of apartheid, and enhance dialogue across the racial divide, would bring positive results. Canada is proud to have contributed to the changes that have taken place. We intend to maintain pressure until those changes are irreversible, and at the same time remain ready to assist the process of negotiations in any way."

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Canada

"While today's announcements do not denote in any way an end to apartheid, they have significantly improved the prospects for negotiations towards this goal. We urge the South African Government to continue to move forward on this path and end the State of Emergency and other remaining restrictions. We urge all parties to enter negotiations in a spirit of reconciliation and with the clear goal of creating a new non-racial democracy in South Africa."

"President de Klerk's speech deserves and will receive from Canada careful consideration. We will closely monitor the implementation of these measures and other developments in the coming weeks."

In his speech, President de Klerk announced, among other measures, that Nelson Mandela would be freed soon, the African National Congress, Pan-Africanist Congress and South African Communist Party were unbanned, that certain political prisoners would be released, restrictions had been lifted on 33 organizations and 374 individuals, media emergency regulations were abolished except for new security regulations that will control TV and film coverage of unrest incidents, and a moratorium on hangings.