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STATEMENT BY THE CANADIAN DELEGATE TO THE
WORLD CONFERENCE FOR ACTION AGAINST APARTHEID,
THE HONOURABLE ROBERT STANBURY, P.C., M.P.,
LAGOS, NIGERIA, AUGUST 24, 1977

The Department of External Affairs announced today that the Honourable Robert Stanbury, P.C., M.P., the Canadian Delegate to the World Conference for Action Against Apartheid, which is taking place in Lagos, Nigeria from August 22-26, was elected Vice-President of the Conference.

Mr. Stanbury delivered a message on behalf of the Prime Minister expressing support for the aims of the Conference and pledging the active involvement of the Canadian Government. The text of the Canadian statement, delivered by Mr. Stanbury in the Plenary Session of the Conference is attached.

Mr. President,

The Canadian Delegation wishes to express appreciation to the Government of Nigeria and to pay tribute to its commitment to the cause of human justice in hosting this World Conference for Action Against Apartheid. The leadership of Nigeria, the most populous state of Africa and one of its most economically powerful, is an essential element in efforts to promote racial justice in South Africa and in Southern Africa as a whole.

Apartheid is an evil abhorrent to us all. By its very nature it engenders gross violations of the rights of the great majority of South Africans. It is true that South Africa is not the only nation which employs violence against its citizens or disregards their basic human rights. There are unfortunately many others that do so. However, South Africa is in a category by itself. It is the sole state which by means of a complex body of legislation has guaranteed that the political, economic, and social possibilities of a person are determined by the colour of his skin. Apartheid, like the system of slavery eradicated more than a century ago, aims to perpetuate a high standard of living for white South Africans through an economy based on the exploitation of non-white labour. The realities of life for a black South African are cruel. He receives a salary as little as one-tenth of that received by a white countryman doing essentially the same work, he is denied the right to live in the city where he works, and often he is not allowed even to bring his family to the African township where he lives. His possibilities for advancement are severely limited by reservation of the most desirable occupations and levels of responsibility for whites, the future of his children is similarly limited by the inferior and unjust Bantu education system.

South Africa's scheme of Bantustans, allocating 13 per cent of the land to 80 per cent of the population who lose their right to South African citizenship, is a hypocrisy which has been condemned by the international community. The so-called independence of the Transkei has been rejected, as will be that of any other Bantustan.

The past two years have witnessed a blossoming of determination of the South African majority to achieve full equality. This determination, particularly among youth, to demand of their society opportunities no less than those available to any other citizen, cannot be suppressed. It will continue to grow, and if full-scale racial war is to be avoided, the Government of South Africa must begin now, in co-operation with all its citizens, to restructure South African society. It is a formidable task but one which must be achieved before bitterness and disillusionment so deepen as to poison the well of hope for future racial harmony.

The fundamental reform of South Africa into a non-racial society can be accomplished only by South Africans. International efforts must focus on actions which will, on one hand, encourage a change of mind and of heart of those now in power, and, on the other hand, give moral, political and humanitarian support to the majority of South Africans in their long and hard struggle to achieve justice and equality.

Canada has strongly supported pragmatic and effective international action to promote eradication of the apartheid system. In 1963, for example, we placed an embargo on the sale of military equipment to South Africa and in 1970 expanded this embargo to cover spare parts for such equipment in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. Canada is a major contributor to the United Nations and non-governmental funds which have been established to provide educational training and humanitarian assistance to the majority peoples of South Africa. Our United Nations' Ambassador is Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa. We consider such programmes essential and of increasing importance, particularly in view of the massive outflow of people from South Africa in the wake of the repressions of the past year. We appeal to all members of the international community to provide generous support to such United Nations' and other international and non-governmental organisations' programmes, and to assist the African states which have generously responded to the plight of these South Africans.

We support the termination of sporting contacts with South African individuals and teams and we have been participating in the elaboration of a declaration on this subject. It is our firm hope that a declaration whose terms will draw universal support will be adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its coming session. A consensus declaration would serve as a coherent expression of the unanimity of the international community on this issue.

A variety of other measures, particularly economic, have been suggested as means of bringing future pressure for change on South Africa. Canada trades in peaceful goods with all countries, even those with whose policies we are in profound disagreement. However, we have implemented faithfully all mandatory decisions of the Security Council and we will participate fully in discussion of proposals for future action. Canada's position in the council will be influenced by the nature of future developments as they affect not only South Africa itself but Southern Africa as a whole.

Mr. President, the apartheid policies of South Africa lie at the core of the issues menacing the stability of Southern Africa. Not until each of these issues has been resolved in favour of basic human rights and racial justice will that region enjoy the harmony and stability which all desire for it. The international community is committed with growing intensity and singleness of purpose to the elimination of apartheid. If this conference reflects that in the adoption of a strong consensus declaration, it will give impetus to the struggle of South Africans to gain the enjoyment of their inherent rights through majority rule. This conference will succeed, and will come to be seen as a milestone in the progress of freedom, if it emphasizes and builds our common objectives -- the end of apartheid and the development of a just society in South Africa.