

# STATEMENT DISCOURS

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Statement in the  
House of Commons by the  
Right Honourable Joe Clark,  
Secretary of State for  
External Affairs

OTTAWA

November 18, 1987.

All parties in this House have supported the actions taken by the Prime Minister and Government of Canada to hasten a peaceful end to apartheid. A central element of our policy has been to recognize and enlarge the important role of the Commonwealth in encouraging peaceful change in southern Africa. Members of the House shared the Prime Minister's determination that the meetings he chaired in Vancouver of the Commonwealth Heads of Government should maintain the pressure upon South Africa to end apartheid.

Four of the Front Line States are members of the Commonwealth. So are Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi; so was South Africa, until her adherence to apartheid cast her out. Those "family connections" of the Commonwealth impart a unique capacity to help end the evil of apartheid, and help promote secure and enduring economic development. Other nations have more economic influence in southern Africa; but no other organization has the potential political influence of the Commonwealth. That was demonstrated most clearly by the work of the Eminent Persons Group, whose authority rested upon the combined credentials of the individuals involved and the Commonwealth which sponsored them. The negotiating concept formed by the Eminent Persons Group remains the best prospect of ending apartheid, and was obviously the most enduring result of their work. But the Eminent Persons Group was also important as proof that the world's abhorrence of apartheid was not passing and would not wane.

Part of the challenge facing serious opponents of apartheid is to maintain and increase the steady pressure upon Pretoria. That becomes even more important as the Government of South Africa increases its repression and censorship at home, and intensifies its propaganda abroad. Commonwealth Heads of Government, in Vancouver, noted, and I quote: "The unfolding - but often unseen - tragedy of South Africa impels us to ensure that the world continues to focus its attention on apartheid until we meet again in full session." In that spirit, all member countries except Britain accepted a Canadian proposal that a Committee of Foreign Ministers be established to meet periodically between now, and the next Heads of Government meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1989. The mandate of that Committee is broad - "to provide high level impetus and guidance in furthering the objectives agreed upon" by Heads of Government in what has become their Okanagan Statement.

I have the honour, on behalf of Canada, to chair that Committee, whose other members include the Foreign Ministers of Australia, India, Guyana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

I have been in touch with my colleagues on the Committee, and with the Commonwealth Secretariat, and am advising Parliament today that the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers will hold our first meeting in southern Africa itself, in Lusaka, Zambia, at the beginning of February. We are using the weeks before that meeting to take up directly some of the initiatives in the Okanagan Statement, and to work with the Commonwealth Secretariat on others.

The Vancouver Conference focused on three major areas - sanctions, aid to the Front Line States, and reaching into South Africa to aid the victims and opponents of apartheid, and generally promote dialogue. The Committee of Foreign Ministers, and the Secretariat, will look into means to widen and intensify the program of economic measures already in place, including an examination of the way sanctions have been frustrated, and studies on the impact of sanctions and on South Africa's financial relations.

The Committee will also give priority to encouraging and assisting the opponents of apartheid within South Africa, and to counteracting the effects of censorship and propaganda. Real progress against apartheid requires genuine dialogue between the South African Government and authentic black leaders. Unfortunately, as I learned for myself during a visit to southern Africa in August, the short term prospects of reaching that goal are not great. But we believe the Commonwealth can contribute to the possibility of internal talks by increasing our contacts with South Africans of different view points.

At Vancouver, Heads of Government were unanimous in their resolve to strengthen the capacity of South Africa's neighbours to resist Pretoria's policy of destabilization and destruction. Mozambique is particularly important to the landlocked of the Front Line States; so the Commonwealth established a special technical assistance fund for Mozambique, and is committed to establishing secure infrastructure, including the rehabilitation of transportation routes, and measures to protect them against attack. Each country will decide how it can best contribute, and Canada has pledged \$20 million to rebuilding the vital Limpopo railway line.

The mandate of the Committee of Foreign Ministers is far-reaching. It will keep the pressure on South Africa. It will give encouragement to the opponents of apartheid. It will re-inforce the Commonwealth's role in promoting change and dialogue. Canada will contribute to the Committee's work in every possible way.

Everyone in this House believes apartheid must be ended. This Government also believes apartheid can be ended, and a better system put in place. That, of course, requires countries like Canada to continue the kind of leadership the Prime Minister provided in Vancouver. South Africa should be in no doubt that, if other measures fail, all of Canada's economic and diplomatic contacts will be terminated. That would be a last resort, when our other influence has ended. Both the Government of South Africa, and the opponents of apartheid, should also know that Canada intends to continue to mobilize our resources and our influence to maintain steady pressure and leadership against apartheid and the violence it engenders.