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STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

Notes for an intervention by the
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Member of the Canadian Delegation
to the Forty-First Session of the
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on item 33: the Question of Apartheid

Canada

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Mr. President,

I consider myself fortunate to address this assembly under your wise presidency. Bangladesh and Canada have had a long and mutually productive relationship. Our membership in the Commonwealth which, as a multiracial organization, has focussed so intensely upon the problem with which we deal today, gives me special encouragement as I speak before this broader audience today.

Canada, like others who have spoken here today, is deeply offended by the policy and practices of apartheid. Canadians are deeply committed to its eradication. We are also committed to peaceful change in South Africa.

Some ask why South Africa and its apartheid system are targets of our concern? Racism and injustices, they suggest, exist in other societies. We do not need Pretoria's reminders to tell us that. We have fresh in our memory discussions at this Assembly about the UN Decade to Combat Racism, and on the status of the UN's landmark covenants and conventions on Human Rights. We remember that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination is now in its third decade.

Clearly humankind has a long way to go in its quest to end the widespread, blight of racism and racial prejudice. Canadians take this task to heart. We believe we must attack this human failing in all quarters. But a major focus of our concerted attention must be dedicated to ending the only political and social system which has as its underlying tenet and basic structure the principle of racial differentiation. We wish to act in ways that benefit those who have been its victims.

The minority white domination in South Africa is sustained by doctrines of racial superiority, and by systems designed to both reflect and entrench racial inequality. This management through racism prevails only in that country. I am reminded of the words of the Secretary General in his annual report this year, where he noted: "We still face the reality of widespread and egregious infringement of human rights, a reality that casts shame on our era. No form of infringement is more widely encompassing or abhorrent than that of apartheid." The Secretary General went on to note that "Apartheid is, in reality, far more than a problem of human rights abuse. It is a problem with tenacious racial, political

and economic roots - one that jeopardizes the stability and security of an entire region. Only the total elimination of apartheid will restore peace to South Africa and to Southern Africa as a whole." Apartheid is a direct affront to decent people throughout the world - to non-whites, who are presented as children of a lesser god. It is an affront to whites, who resent a racism that wrongly implicates them.

For years Canadians have heard and praised the voices of reason in South Africa - Lutuli, Suzman, Naudé, Boesak, Mandela and Tutu alike. But none of us should be under any illusions. The news blackout in South Africa may make us think things are better. Not so! We are still very much in a race against time, if voices such as those are not to be stilled by oppression, or violence. We give thanks, in retrospect for the moderation of a leader such as Kenyatta. With the benefit of hindsight, we can now see that the path of moderation and tolerance is possible in Africa - even after turmoil and disharmony? Since we spoke to this issue from this podium last year, Canada has not been alone in taking actions to help ensure that the race can be won. With others - governments, institutions, churches, individuals and industries - we have worked in this pursuit, with the ultimate goal of ending apartheid. We hope and pray that the South African Government will not remain unheeding to our call, nor deaf to the aspirations of the majority of its people.

The measures Canada has taken against South Africa are amply spelled out in documents of the General Assembly (such as A/41/506 Add 2 of 21 October 1986) and these will be familiar to this audience. But measures against South Africa are only part of the strategic assault on apartheid. Canadians contribute on a very large scale to Non-governmental Organizations, working in South Africa. Those NGOs, representing increasingly large numbers of Canadians, have both helped on the ground and have educated Canadians about developments in South Africa. My life long interest in Africa was cemented by five years in Nigeria as Director of CUSO (the Canadian Peace Corps) and chaplain at the University of Nigeria. I found that Africans even in the 1960's were of one mind regarding the scourge of apartheid.

My involvement is but one example of Canadian appreciation for the aspirations of Africans. The Canadian Government values very highly its dialogue with non governmental organizations. Such organizations and

our churches have assisted South African trade unions, black education, and refugees abroad, while also monitoring the human rights abuses that might otherwise have remained hidden.

Canada provides assistance in other ways to those who suffer under apartheid. We make grants to the Trust Fund for South Africa and UNEPTSA. We have assisted, in some cases for the past ten years, NGOs in their efforts to aid black South Africans. Last year \$2 million dollars was given to NGOs to bolster their programs of assistance to black South Africans and \$1 million was pledged in humanitarian assistance to the families of political prisoners in South Africa. The Canadian Government announced in June 1986 an increase from \$5 to \$7 million in our contribution for educational assistance in South Africa. Similarly, we have not ignored the needs of South Africa's neighbours either in their efforts to lessen their dependence on South Africa or in maintaining their economic development in the face of difficulties forced on them by South Africa. These are positive actions that add weight to our fight against apartheid. Opposition to apartheid must in our view be matched by action designed to promote peace and prosperity in post-apartheid Southern Africa.

Canadian assistance to South Africans has one objective. That objective is to help the victims of apartheid and encourage the process of economic and social development and thereby hasten long overdue political change.

Mr. President,

The indignities and injustices of apartheid weigh heavily on women. We must not ignore this fact. The Nairobi Women's Conference, which I attended as leader of the Canadian delegation, in its Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women describe women and children as the group most oppressed by ... "direct inhumane practices such as massacres and detention, mass population removal, separation from families and immobilization on reserves ... where they suffer disproportionately from poverty, poor health and illiteracy." It is heartening to note that the international community is beginning to respond. Earlier this year the Economic and Social Council on the advice of the Commission on the Status of Women recognized both the impact of apartheid on women and the role women play in its eradication. The Council adopted four resolutions noting their special needs. It

called for increased measures of assistance for the women of Southern Africa. Let us listen to what governments in the area have to say on this subject. Let us respond positively.

Canada's measures against South Africa will not destroy either the country or its economy. They are not intended to do so. Our message, underlined by our actions, is that there is little patience with Pretoria internationally. We wish to signal our belief that there is little time for that government to take concrete steps which could end the spiral of violence and draw South Africa back to the community of nations.

Meanwhile, it should be clearly understood that we, and those who have joined us in taking action against apartheid, are shouldering our solemn responsibilities as members of the international community. Responsibilities, I might add, that are outlined in the UN Charter, which South Africa not only signed, but helped draft. Our vision of the sanctions we have thus far put in place centres upon psychology and change, not punishment or destruction. Such measures are not an end in themselves. Before it is too late, they are intended to induce Pretoria to see the light and to dismantle apartheid and negotiate the establishment of a truly representative government. I well recall the words contained in the report of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, of which Canada was a part, and which is represented in this assembly by the Distinguished Ambassador of Barbados, Dame Nita Barrow. I quote "...it is not sanctions which will destroy the country, but the persistence of apartheid and the government's failure to engage in fundamental political reform." I commend to you the eloquent comment of Sonny Ramphal, Commonwealth Secretary General, in his foreward to that same report: "The human spirit in South Africa is crying out for the world's help, for the world's solidarity. It is proclaiming for all who allow themselves to hear that it is not freedom that South Africa should fear but freedom's denial."

We cannot fail to note that there have been some hesitant steps along the path of reform in South Africa and that the higher court system has often courageously worked against the government in the cause of basic justice. Many whites also work, at great risk, for universal democracy. But can we say that internal trends in South Africa have shown any real improvement or lessening of the repression? Indeed, the State of Emergency, the broadening of police powers and the

manipulation of news are revealed as blunt instruments, scarcely masked behind a veil of twisted legality.

If President Botha is prepared to describe apartheid as outmoded, why then does his government persist with its "homelands" policy, one of the basic building blocks of the iniquitous apartheid society? Ask those who lived in Oukasie. This settlement has just been "deproclaimed" in the bizarre vocabulary of apartheid. Ask its people. They have now been consigned, on the basis of race, to Lethlabile. They have been consigned to a place they did not choose. They have been consigned to live a life rooted in segregation. Is this, as press reports suggest, a microcosm of the tactics employed by a government intent on dividing and moulding the lives of the black population? I wish to God that it were otherwise.

As a clergyman, I take more encouragement from another development than I do from the pronouncements of President Botha or his government. The white Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa, seemingly reflecting some cautious liberalization has, in recent days, rejected the theological rationale for enforced racial segregation. That body, which formulated the scriptural justification for apartheid has not, however, discarded other principles of racial separation. It maintains its commitment to separate units for different racial groups. Cannot that Church in the name of God and humanity, go further and join with its non-white branches, denounce apartheid and become non-racial? Think of the example that would be set for South African society if the leaders of that church were to be people with a strength of purpose and a colour-blind humanity akin to that of the new Anglican Archbishop of Capetown! I do not believe that this is too much to ask for a religion which is based on the Christian ethos of human love and mutual acceptance.

Mr. President,

The steps outlined in the Commonwealth Nassau Accord have gained wide acceptance as the objectives of concerted international pressure on South Africa. Such solidarity of purpose continues to grow. South Africa, however, has yet to be persuaded that it must undertake the following if there is to be an orderly and peaceful

transition to a non racial and democratic society:

- the commitment to the abolition of apartheid;
- the lifting of the state of emergency;
- the release of Nelson Mandela and others imprisoned and detained for their opposition to apartheid;
- the revocation of the ban on the African National Congress and other political parties;
- and above all, a dialogue with representative black leadership.

At the same time, we call on all the parties engaged in the use of violence in South Africa to put an end to the tragic spiral of bloodshed and instead to pursue the positive option of dialogue, discussion and debate. Surely this is the path to a peaceful South Africa with full international support.

Earlier in this session, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, called on all countries, especially those with significant economic relations with South Africa, to implement concrete measures to force the pace of the dismantling of apartheid. Consistent with our commitments deriving from the Nassau Accord, here at the United Nations and within la Francophonie, we welcome the actions of the United States, the European Community and Japan which, together with those of the Commonwealth, will underline the commitment of democratic countries to the abolition of apartheid. We call on other countries who have dealings with South Africa to pause and ask what more may be done to apply meaningful pressure.

"Sanctions busters" must not be allowed to prevail. The skills of which South Africa boasts in the area of "unconventional trade" cannot be allowed to flourish. South African businessmen, many of whom have professed an opposition to apartheid, should pay attention to reform, not to ways of fighting the adverse effects of sanctions and of taking advantage of the short term opportunities that might arise. Their energies should be devoted to pressing for change, rather than searching for loopholes.

For years, Canadian Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and churches have held shares in a number of transnational corporations and banks. They have spoken out at shareholders' meetings regarding corporate investment policies in South Africa. The objectives of the guidelines and codes of conduct, which have been put

in place to protect the black majority must not be abandoned and at the same time, we must search for new ways to develop the skills - entrepreneurial and technical - that will be required in a post-apartheid South Africa. In this endeavour, narrow profit motives must not be the paramount considerations.

Mr. President,

South Africa's neighbours have suffered grievous damage from Pretoria's policies of disruption and intervention. This was underlined to me by President Kaunda and other front line leaders last year following the Nairobi Conference. There is now a real prospect of South African retaliation for international or regional sanctions against apartheid. It is important that these countries know that the international community is ready to assist in the event of hardship and interventions from South Africa.

The Canadian Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, has made clear Canada's commitment to work with other countries to assist southern African states to meet the challenge. The Canadian Minister for External Relations, Monique Landry, met President Kaunda only a week ago to reassure him of Canada's commitment.

Of course we have long been a contributor to regional development and we have worked to reduce dependency on South Africa through bilateral programmes and through the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). Now in cooperation with the SADCC we want to review needs and develop plans to meet contingencies. In addition to developing projects we will also help private importers to explore the possibilities of increasing trade with the SADCC countries in the face of disruption to normal trade patterns.

In the context of the Front Line States, mourning as we do the untimely death of Samora Machel, we welcome the selection of Joaquim Chissano as his successor as the new President of Mozambique. He is a man of great stature and experience. That experience will be a valuable asset in facing the many challenges now confronting his country.

I stand here Mr. President, as a white parliamentarian, representing the government of a truly integrated, multicultural and multiracial society. One in five Canadians is now of the visible minorities and the ratio, we are proud to say, is growing. Our indigenous

people have full rights and, like other Canadians, a say in the governance of Canada. Our acceptance of refugees from troubled areas of the world, across lines of colour and race has, I believe, given us special insights into the riches that a multiracial society can bring to a country, one which led the Commonwealth challenge to South Africa in 1961. I mention with considerable pride that the people of Canada have recently been presented the prestigious Nansen Award by the UNHCR. This underscores the international recognition of what I have just said.

Thus, we Canadians believe that our own history lends even more credence to our call upon the leadership in Pretoria to reform, to end apartheid - to come back to reality and to the comity of nations. I say: Do not recycle apartheid - end it! I say: Do not continue racial segregation - end it! Recognize, before the roof falls in, that life, a good life, in South Africa is possible without racial domination and without apartheid.

Those of us who oppose apartheid have taken the struggle for freedom and equality in South Africa as our common cause. In spite of all that we have done, however, we should not ignore the fact that the sanctions imposed so far will be small comfort to the majority of South Africans, if they continue to be faced on a daily basis with the repression of apartheid. We hope they will not turn a deaf ear to the voices of moderation from within their own communities. But the South African government and its supporters must change direction. They must break with the evil which is apartheid. If not, violence will reign. The opportunity for negotiated and peaceful change will pass. And South Africa will descend to the very chaos the masters of apartheid fear.

Those prospects force us to keep up the relentless pressure on the Government of South Africa. It must be clear that if South Africa does not answer the call for concrete action, if our step by step approach does not bear fruit, the world will act again, and act with even more stringent measures. Change will come to South Africa. We hope and pray it will be peaceful, constructive change. But change it will.

The people of South Africa should determine their own future. The main burden, after all, of the liberation of South Africa will be borne by South Africans themselves. Nevertheless the international community has a key role to play. The challenge it faces is to bring about the rapid and peaceful eradication of the inhumane

system of apartheid while there is still time. There is no policy practised by any member state that has been condemned by this Organization so categorically, so unanimously and for so long. It is a disgrace to humankind that apartheid continues to exist.

Mr. President,

Canadians stand in spirit on the banks of the Limpopo river and look south. We do not like what we see. We, therefore, join with others in calling for the elimination of apartheid as one of the major imperatives of human society and of this Organization. At the same time we offer our prayers that South Africa will soon heed the will of the international community and acknowledge the rights of all of its people, lest it slide into chaos and conflagration.

Mungu Ibariki Afrika ...

God bless Africa. Thank you, Mr. President.