

# Statement

Secretary of  
State for  
External Affairs



# Déclaration

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**NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY  
THE HONOURABLE BARBARA McDOUGALL,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,  
ON THE REPORT OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING  
ON SOUTH AFRICA**

**HARARE, Zimbabwe  
October 17, 1991**

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary-General, Distinguished Heads of Delegation,

At Vancouver, in 1987, Heads of Government established the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa to provide high-level guidance on Commonwealth programs to oppose apartheid. At Kuala Lumpur, in 1989, Heads of Government requested that the Committee continue its work and report again when Heads of Government next meet. I am honoured to submit its Report today.

The Secretary-General has already circulated the written Report summarizing the activities of our Committee. This morning I want to highlight briefly some of the principal points in the Report for your consideration and approval.

My colleagues -- the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Guyana, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe -- and I were tasked with monitoring a period of dramatic change in South Africa. As Heads of Government met in Kuala Lumpur, the newly elected government of President de Klerk was taking the first tentative steps toward opening a dialogue with their political opponents, notably the African National Congress (ANC). In fact it was on the eve of that Heads of Government meeting that a number of black political leaders, including the present Deputy Head of the African National Congress, Walter Sisulu, were released from prison. Heads of Government wisely directed the Foreign Ministers' Committee to give the new de Klerk government six months in office to determine if it was really serious about reform.

By February 1990, dramatic political change began to take place in South Africa. The African National Congress and other parties were once again allowed to take their legitimate place in political life. Nelson Mandela was finally released from his long pain of prison, followed by more than a thousand other political prisoners. The State of Emergency was ended and security legislation was substantially reformed. More than 3,000 South African exiles were permitted to go home, and the recent signature of an agreement with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees will facilitate the return of the others in the months ahead. The South African Parliament has abolished the legislative pillars of apartheid: the Separate Amenities Act, the Group Areas Act, the Land Acts and the Population Registration Act.

Equally important, a dialogue has been launched between the South African government and representatives of the black majority. In October 1990, the government and the ANC signed an accord in Pretoria which paved the way for the release of prisoners and the return of exiles. In response, the ANC agreed to suspend the armed struggle. While my colleagues and I were meeting in Delhi, a National Peace Accord was signed in Johannesburg by the government, the African National Congress, the Inkatha Freedom

Party and many others. It is the most ambitious attempt yet to end the tragic communal violence which has erupted in the wake of political change in South Africa. Continuation of violence will do its perpetrators no good. The Accord is also a persuasive model for a multi-party conference, to develop transitional arrangements which would make it possible for all the parties to participate fully and freely in negotiations. We hope that the first stage of these negotiations, the multi-party conference, will be launched well before year's end.

The past two years have indeed taken us a long way down the path towards democratization in South Africa. But we are not there yet. Apartheid is still alive and well. Black South Africans are still denied access to hospitals and schools, and are intimidated when they try to use the legally integrated community facilities. They continue to fear and mistrust the state security forces. They are still, too often, victims of violence. They are still denied the vote. Prime Minister Manley said yesterday we need progress which is irreversible. We should avoid self-congratulation which could be premature. We agree.

Our challenge in the Commonwealth Foreign Minister's Committee over the past two years has been to give credit when change has taken place; to encourage all the parties to proceed to negotiations as rapidly as possible; and to sustain the pressure for further change.

The major issue confronting us has been the management of Commonwealth sanctions. On this issue, we were very much guided by the Kuala Lumpur Statement on South Africa which declared that the only justification for sanctions against South Africa was the pressure they created for fundamental political change. Their purpose was not punitive, but to abolish apartheid by bringing Pretoria to the negotiating table and keeping it there until that change was irreversibly secured.

My colleagues and I firmly believe that international sanctions have played and continue to play an indispensable role in bringing about change in South Africa. We have proposed maintaining sanctions pressure through all stages of the negotiations process, up to and including the adoption of a new constitution. We also emphasized the importance of the Commonwealth remaining united and purposeful in its application of sanctions, and continuing to lead world opinion concerning South Africa.

At the Special Session in London, Foreign Ministers adopted a Programmed Management Approach to sanctions. It links changes in the application of our sanctions not to mere statements of intent but to the adoption of real and practical steps in the dismantling of apartheid.

This approach was further refined in New Delhi. We unanimously agreed to recommend to Heads of Government that the arms embargo -- a mandatory sanction imposed by the United Nations Security Council -- should be maintained until a democratic government is firmly in place in South Africa. We further recommended that the financial sanctions, which we believe are the most effective measures, should be lifted only when agreement is reached on the text of a new constitution. But other economic sanctions, including trade and investment measures, should be lifted when appropriate transitional mechanisms had been agreed which would enable all the parties to participate fully and effectively in negotiations.

My colleagues and I unanimously agreed to recommend to Heads of Government the immediate lifting of the "people to people" sanctions. This step would not only acknowledge the substantial progress that has been made to date but would also facilitate dialogue and interaction with the anti-apartheid movements in South Africa.

Finally, a word on sports. The Commonwealth, through the Gleneagles Agreement, has led the international community on the question of sporting contacts with South Africa. We continue to do so. The Committee proposed that all Commonwealth restrictions in respect of an individual sport, including international competition, would be lifted when certain rigorous criteria had been achieved. This approach to the management of the sports embargo was subsequently adopted by the International Olympic Committee.

My colleagues and I believe that an important and delicate balance has been struck in the management of Commonwealth sanctions. We acknowledged the progress that has been made in recent months. We emphasize the crucial importance of formal negotiations on a new democratic government in South Africa. We shall maintain pressure on all the parties until a democratic government is in place in South Africa. We commend this approach to Heads of Government for your consideration and approval.

As Prime Minister Mulroney said yesterday, this is an act of historic leadership for the Commonwealth. Our sanctions were first because we were the most committed to change, to justice. Others followed. Now, we are almost there, almost able to turn our attention to the urgent and profound needs of the people. Our Committee's recommendations propose the way.

In addition to sanctions, the mandate of this Committee covers three areas: support for dialogue and negotiations in South Africa; aid for the victims of apartheid; and political developments in Southern Africa.

Support for negotiations has been a central and consistent element of Commonwealth strategy. Commonwealth members are supporting, in a range of practical ways, the preparations for constitutional negotiations.

The Commonwealth has been equally active in assisting the victims of apartheid. The Committee urged Commonwealth countries to assist with the return of political exiles and the release of political prisoners. Our report on Human Resource Development in a Post-Apartheid South Africa merits support from this conference. The needs are changing, but the Commonwealth's commitment to supporting the development needs of the victims of apartheid continues.

We welcomed the encouraging progress in securing a negotiated settlement in Angola. But we continue to be profoundly concerned about the crisis in Mozambique. We urged all governments with influence on either side to spare no effort to bring the parties together. We welcomed the work undertaken by the Secretariat to promote trade and investment in Southern Africa and welcomed the new emphasis on supporting South Africa's reintegration in the regional economy. The Committee recognized that apartheid has been costly not only for South Africa but also for its neighbours. With the end of apartheid in sight, we appealed to the international community to continue to work to eliminate the legacy of apartheid throughout the region.

One of the great highlights for this Committee was to welcome the Foreign Minister of Namibia, Theo-Ben Gurirab, to our meeting in Abuja. Namibia's independence on March 21, 1990, demonstrated that a non-racial democracy can indeed be achieved through peaceful negotiations. We were delighted to welcome Namibia into the Commonwealth family.

Mr. Chairman, we meet at a momentous time for South Africa. The major parties are poised to enter into negotiations. The next two years will see a process of change at least as extensive, and dramatic, as we have witnessed since Kuala Lumpur. Support from the Commonwealth will be as crucial as ever. The Commonwealth has led world opinion and action on apartheid. We are united; we are focused on supporting the negotiations process; and we are planning for the future. I know that I speak for all my colleagues when I say that we earnestly hope that the dream of a non-racial democratic South Africa, for which the Commonwealth has worked so hard and for so long, will soon be a reality.