

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

Secrétaire
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Affaires
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**NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY
THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOE CLARK,
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
ON THE RESULTS OF
THE COMMONWEALTH FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN LONDON**

**OTTAWA, Ontario
February 28, 1991**

The Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa (CFMSA) met in special session on February 16 in London, to discuss Commonwealth policy in light of recent developments in South Africa, including the statement made by President de Klerk on February 1, 1991, which committed the South African government to repeal the remaining legislative pillars of apartheid. Members will recall that both the Prime Minister and I welcomed the courage and leadership shown by President de Klerk in making these announcements, as we have welcomed the determination of black leaders to work more closely together. I want to report briefly today to Parliament on the work of that Committee, which Canada chairs, and to table the Communiqué. Participating in the Committee were Commonwealth Foreign Ministers from Australia, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth and the former Foreign Minister of Guyana. We benefited from the participation of Thabo Mbeki, Director of the International Department of the African National Congress and Ron MacLean, Canada's Ambassador to South Africa.

The situation in South Africa is changing quickly and profoundly. Many white South Africans, personified by President de Klerk, have re-examined their conscience and undertaken to change not only public policy, but personal practices and beliefs.

Many black South Africans, particularly Nelson Mandela, demonstrate a generosity and vision that are extraordinary in people so long oppressed. Others, including leaders of Inkatha and the Pan African Congress are beginning to show flexibility, a willingness to experiment, to compromise.

And still other South Africans, black and white, are victims of anger, ignorance, fear.

The world is involved in South Africa precisely because the system of apartheid is so powerful and so deliberate a denial of basic human equality, so singular an instrument of racial prejudice. Just as many South Africans show remarkable responsibility in facing their new challenges, so must the world community weigh and apply our influence with great care. The moral imperative remains: To end apartheid. Now, with change in the air, the question of how we contribute to that goal becomes more complex.

Commonwealth Foreign Ministers, after extensive debate, agreed unanimously on a position that recognizes a commitment to real reform, but will only reward actual changes which dismantle the system of apartheid. We believe our strongest sanctions should remain until the system is effectively abolished, but that lesser sanctions should be lifted in response to tangible proof of a determination to end apartheid irreversibly.

The Committee, therefore, decided to adopt a "program management approach" that would reward concrete action in South Africa. The first stage in the program would be reached when:

- the remaining political prisoners are released;
- the way is cleared for exiles to return home;
- the repressive provisions of security legislation are repealed; and
- the *Group Areas Act* and the *Population Registration and Land Act* are repealed.

Those changes can all be accomplished by late spring or summer, when Commonwealth Ministers will meet again to assess tangible progress and to decide whether it justifies ending certain sanctions, such as the visa restrictions, the ban on tourism, airlinks and restrictions on official contacts.

My colleagues and I were particularly concerned that existing security legislation posed a significant obstacle to free political activity. The Committee called on the South African government to stop the detention of people without trial, the restriction of public gatherings, and to grant South Africans the universal rights to free assembly, free expression and due process of law. Rapid progress must be made on the return of exiles and the release of political prisoners by April 30, 1991, as agreed in the Pretoria Minute of last August.

The Committee also addressed the question of sporting contacts. In future, the embargo on sporting contacts will be treated independently from other sanctions. The Committee agreed to be guided by representative sports bodies at South African, African and, in the fullness of time, international Olympic levels. These organizations will provide the signal for the re-admission of South African sports to international competition. Indications are that this will probably take place on a sport-by-sport basis. The Committee agreed that Commonwealth support and encouragement for the unity talks in South African sports organizations is a high priority.

In order to support the process of negotiated change, the Committee further agreed to provide constitutional expertise and funding for research and conferences that will contribute to the birth of a new, non-racial and democratic South Africa. For its part, Canada is providing \$1.8 million in 1990-91 and has earmarked \$2.3 million for this purpose next year. Canada has also committed \$5.8 million to assist with the return of exiles and released political prisoners.

The Committee also welcomed the Interim Report of the Expert Group on Human Resource Development for a Post-Apartheid South Africa, which the CFM established at its Abuja meeting, chaired by a Canadian, Mr. John Harker. We endorsed the Expert

Group's call for an enhanced Commonwealth program of training and work placements to prepare black South Africans to take senior jobs in a post-apartheid government.

The meeting demonstrated the continuing unity of purpose of the Commonwealth. The concept of the "program management approach" marks an important policy development for the Commonwealth and the international community. Sanctions have been crucial in bringing about the changes which have occurred to date, and will go on being crucial if the destruction of apartheid is to be ultimately assured.

South Africa is starkly different from what it was. There is a long way to go. Canada has played a steady, constructive role in moving that change forward and we intend to continue on that course.