



Commonwealth News Release

COMMONWEALTH COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS
ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

Sixth Meeting, New Delhi,
13-14 September, 1991

Members of the Committee

1. The Hon. Mrs. Barbara McDougall (Canada) - Chairperson; Senator The Hon. Gareth Evans (Australia); Dr. Cedric Grant (Guyana); The Hon. Madhavsingh Solanki (India); The Hon. Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Malaysia); The Hon. Major-General Ike O.S. Nwachukwu (Nigeria); The Hon. Ahmed Hassan Diria (Tanzania); The Hon. W.C. Wonani (Zambia); The Hon. Dr. Nathan Shamuyarira (Zimbabwe).

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Recent Developments in South Africa

2. The Committee noted that since its last meeting in London in February 1991 there had been further significant developments in South Africa. The Government had repealed the Land Acts, the Group Areas Act, the Development of Black Communities Act, the Population Registration Act and substantially amended the Internal Security Act. The outstanding issues which had held up the repatriation of the estimated 40,000 exiles had now been overcome as a result of the agreement reached between the Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on 16 August 1991. There had also been important progress on the release of political prisoners. The Committee welcomed all these developments as constituting yet another major advance towards negotiations between the Government and the acknowledged representatives of the black majority.

3. The Committee was, however, acutely conscious of the remaining difficulties in the way of progress. Many political prisoners were still held in South Africa, including in the so-called homelands. Their release must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

4. At the same time violence had emerged as a serious threat to the negotiating process. Right wing terrorism, designed to derail the reform process, had increased in scope and intensity. Of even greater significance were the recent press revelations which had compelled the Government to admit its secret funding of organisations opposed to the democratic anti-apartheid forces. There was mounting evidence that elements of the security forces had perpetrated acts of violence, including train massacres, and provided military training to opponents of the anti-apartheid

Issued by the Information Division, Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House,
Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX, Britain. Tel: 071-839 3411; Fax: 071-930 0827; Telex: 27678

forces. The Committee expressed its grave concern at these developments and their incalculable consequences.

5. The Committee noted the measures announced by President de Klerk on 30 July to put an end to these covert activities but stressed that the test of the Government's sincerity would be effective action to end the violence. The Committee called upon the South African Government to ensure the strict impartiality of the security forces and to exert full control over the far right wing elements.

6. The Committee welcomed the Peace Accord adopted on the final day of its Meeting, 14 September, which flowed from the National Peace Initiative taken by church and business leaders to bring together representatives of the Government, the African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha Freedom Party. It saw the Peace Accord as the most comprehensive attempt yet to come to grips with the violence and stressed the importance of making the Accord work in practice in the months ahead. The Committee shared the hope that the adoption of the Accord would be followed by an All-Party Conference, paving the way for constitutional negotiations.

Negotiations

7. In the context of negotiations, the Committee observed that the recent revelations of secret Government funding of Inkatha and other organisations had eroded confidence in the Government's good faith. In the circumstances, the Government could not be both referee and player. The Committee therefore called for the establishment of appropriate transitional mechanisms, including an interim government, which would enable all the parties to participate fully and effectively in negotiations.

Commonwealth Response

8. The Committee recalled the objective of Commonwealth policy toward South Africa set by Heads of Government in New Delhi in 1983: the eradication of apartheid and the establishment of majority rule on the basis of free and fair exercise of universal adult suffrage by all the people in a united and non-fragmented South Africa. The measures adopted in Nassau in 1985, and in London in 1986, sought to impress on the Pretoria authorities the compelling urgency of dismantling apartheid and erecting the structures of democracy through negotiation. In Kuala Lumpur in 1989, it was emphasised that the purpose of sanctions was not punitive but to bring Pretoria to the negotiating table and keep it there until fundamental and irreversible change had been secured.

9. Support for negotiations had therefore been a central and consistent element of Commonwealth strategy. The Committee reaffirmed its Abuja Commitment to provide material and professional assistance towards preparations for constitutional negotiations. In addition the Committee pledged the Commonwealth's readiness to assist in facilitating the actual process of negotiations, and in implementing the outcome of a negotiated settlement, in any way deemed appropriate by the parties. They shared the view of the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on

Southern Africa, that the negotiation of a non-racial democratic constitution "is now the most urgent and pressing question".

Sanctions

10. The Committee recalled that at its London meeting last February it had agreed on a programmed management approach relating any change in the application of sanctions to real and practical steps towards the ending of apartheid rather than to mere statements of intent. In the period since then the South African Government had taken a number of practical steps towards the ending of apartheid, including the abolition of the legislative pillars of apartheid, the amendment of security legislation, the repatriation of exiles and the release of a significant number of political prisoners.

11. In recognition of the effective role that sanctions have played in bringing about change in South Africa, the need to continue to use effective forms of sanctions pressure to assure a successful final outcome, and the need to maintain the catalytic role played by the Commonwealth in shaping the international community's response in this context, the Committee has given close consideration to how the different categories of sanctions should be managed in the future.

12. In relation to the arms embargo - applied by the United Nations and supported by a variety of specific Commonwealth measures - the Committee agreed to recommend to governments that this not be lifted until a new post-apartheid South African government was firmly established with full democratic control and accountability.

13. In relation to economic sanctions and in particular financial sanctions, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Harare as follows :

- (a) that the most demonstrably effective of all sanctions, financial sanctions - including lending by international financial institutions like the IMF - should (subject to any contrary recommendation that might be made by agreement at the proposed All-Party Conference) be lifted only when agreement is reached on the text of a new democratic constitution; and
- (b) 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.

14. In relation to the "people-to-people" sanctions, namely consular and visa restrictions, cultural and scientific boycotts, restrictions on tourism promotion and the ban on direct airlinks, the Committee agreed to recommend to CHOGM, Harare, that these now be lifted, having regard to :

- (a) the substantial progress that has been made in

overcoming the four obstacles to negotiations previously identified (namely, repeal of the three "pillars" laws; review and amendment of security legislation; clearing the way for return of exiles; and release of political prisoners);

- (b) the signing into effect of the National Peace Accord on 14 September; and
- (c) the need to give external support and encouragement to, and to achieve free interaction with, democratic anti-apartheid forces within South Africa;

and moreover

- (d) on the condition that any resumption of direct airlinks be on the basis that SAA and other South African airlines proceed with appropriate affirmative action programmes.

15. In relation to the sports boycott, the Committee agreed that it was appropriate that this continue to be lifted on the selective basis now being implemented in consultation with the democratic anti-apartheid forces, as set out in more detail below.

Sporting Contacts with South Africa

16. The Committee recalled that, at its London meeting, it had agreed that Commonwealth support and encouragement for efforts towards unifying sport under non-racial administration was to be of the highest priority and that it was appropriate for those sporting codes which achieved unity to be recognised by the international community.

17. Following that meeting, governments and international sporting federations had addressed the question of sporting links with South Africa on a sport-by-sport basis. They had been guided in this matter by the views of representative non-racial sporting organisations in South Africa.

18. The Committee agreed that all Commonwealth restrictions in respect of a particular sport, including international competition, will be lifted once the following criteria had been met:

- * the formal endorsement of the achievement of unity by the appropriate representative non-racial sporting organisation in South Africa;
- * readmittance to the relevant international governing body;
- * agreement of the appropriate non-racial sporting organisation within South Africa to resume international competition.

19. In this regard, the Committee welcomed the decision of the National Olympic and Sports Congress (NOSC) announced on 25 August, and endorsed by the African National Congress, that road running, amateur boxing, professional golf, taekwondo, and cricket (after 1 October) had met all the criteria for a return to international competition.

20. The Committee also stressed the need for assistance to sports men and women disadvantaged by apartheid and welcomed the assistance already being provided by Commonwealth members and sporting bodies.

Commonwealth Programmes

Human Resource Development for a Post-Apartheid South Africa

21. The Committee welcomed the final Report of the Expert Group and commended it to Heads of Government, looking forward to the Commonwealth playing as significant a role in the human resource development of post-apartheid South Africa as it had in the elimination of apartheid. It agreed that progress towards a non-racial democracy would be seriously constrained by the present apartheid structures. The education and training of members of the deprived majority to occupy strategic positions in the transition period and beyond would therefore be crucial to progress. The Committee endorsed the Report's strategy, with its emphasis on developing skills and institutions in a number of priority areas, including central administration, local government and technical services. The creation of a new civil service culture, with specific targets set for advancement of members of the deprived majority to top management positions during the transition period, was especially important. A start should now be made to support training and placements within South Africa in the interests of speed and cost-effectiveness. Members of the Committee pledged their governments' assistance in implementing the Report's recommendations, and were confident that other Commonwealth governments would wish to do likewise. They also underlined the potential for enhanced co-operation with the United Nations, whose Education and Training Programme for Southern Africa was evolving along similar lines, including the possibility of exchange placements and a joint donors' conference.

Mozambique

22. The Committee noted that, despite an encouraging initial start, the Government and the RENAMO rebels had yet to sign a full ceasefire agreement and enter into substantive negotiations on the outstanding constitutional issues. It commended the Government for its efforts to bring about peace and reconciliation in Mozambique and appealed to those supporting RENAMO materially and otherwise to stop giving the rebels such support, which was fuelling RENAMO intransigence. It urged all governments with influence on either side to spare no effort to bring the parties together.

23. The Committee commended the Special Commonwealth Fund for Mozambique (SCFM) for its significant contribution to

Mozambique's priority needs, notably in the fields of transport and communications and institutional and human resource development. The Committee urged all Commonwealth governments to make additional pledges to the Fund to enable it to reach its target of £10 million envisaged for the full five financial years of operations to 1993.

Namibia

24. The Committee reiterated its view that Namibia's independence demonstrated that fundamental change to a non-racial democracy could be achieved through a democratic and negotiated process. Namibia's peculiar colonial legacy also necessitated continuing international support. The Committee therefore urged support for the Secretary-General's appeal for resources for the Enhanced Commonwealth Programme of Technical Assistance for Namibia, pending the full integration of the Programme into the CFTC's country programme operations. The Committee also expressed the hope that Walvis Bay, now jointly administered by South Africa and Namibia, would soon be reintegrated into Namibia in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 432 (1978).

Commonwealth Plan of Action for the Promotion of Trade and Investment in Southern Africa

25. At Kuala Lumpur Heads of Government requested the Secretary-General to draw up a plan of action to promote trade and investment in the Front-Line and neighbouring states in order to reduce their dependence on South Africa. In view of the unfolding changes in South Africa and the region, the Committee agreed that a study be conducted, in consultation with SADCC and PTA member countries, to examine the implications of South Africa's reintegration into the regional economy; and in that context to suggest how best the Commonwealth and the wider world could assist the promotion of trade and investment in the region.

26. The Committee noted that South Africa's acts of destabilisation and other measures taken in defence of apartheid over the years had resulted in great material damage to the economies of the countries of the region. With the end of apartheid in sight, the Committee appealed to the international community to adopt, in consultation with SADCC, the PTA and other interested parties, appropriate measures to help the reconstruction efforts of the countries of the region, so helping to eliminate the legacy of apartheid.

LSE Centre

27. The Committee noted the Report of the LSE Centre for the Study of the South African Economy and International Finance, established to monitor South Africa's links with the international financial community. It reiterated the importance it attached to the work of the Centre, in the context of the continuing need to exert pressure on South Africa, and in the longer term as a means of assisting resource flows for the economic development of post-apartheid South Africa.

Consultations

28. The Committee greatly valued its consultations with Mr. Alfred Nzo and Mr. Mendi Msimang, members of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress, Mr. Ahmed Gora Ebrahim, External Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania; and Dr. Willie Breytenbach, Professor of African Studies at the University of Stellenbosch.

Appreciation

29. The Committee expressed its appreciation and gratitude to the Government and people of India for the warm hospitality and the excellent facilities provided for its Meeting.