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*Yours, J. J. J.*

The Okanagan Statement on Southern Africa, Programme of Action

1. We continue to recognise the situation in Southern Africa as one of the major challenges facing the world community today. We reaffirm our shared international responsibility to work together for the total eradication of apartheid and the brutalities that it continues to inflict on its victims within and in the neighbourhood of South Africa.
2. We consider that the crisis engendered in the region by apartheid has seriously deteriorated since the last Meeting in Nassau. Repressive measures resulting in more suffering and loss of life have been intensified within South Africa, and the toll taken by acts of war and destruction directed against South Africa's neighbours in an attempt to maintain and defend apartheid has continued to rise. Southern Africa urgently needs regional peace and stability.
3. It is therefore our collective view that the urgency of international action against the intolerable situation that exists in Southern Africa has heightened and that as Commonwealth members we have the continuing obligation to make an effective contribution towards the ending of apartheid and relieving South Africa's neighbours of the burden of being forced to devote much of their resources to their resolute and determined efforts to defend their security and advance the cause of freedom and independence in their region. We recognise that these states are making intolerable sacrifices in a cause that concerns all countries and peoples.
4. We have reviewed developments in Southern Africa since our Nassau Meeting which produced the Accord on Southern Africa and reaffirmed our shared commitment to its objectives. We also recall the London Review Meeting in August 1986 which considered the Report of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG), Mission to South Africa, established under the Nassau Accord. The EPG was to initiate, in the context of a suspension of violence on all sides, a process of dialogue across lines of colour, politics and religion, with a view to establishing a non-racial and representative government.
5. Meeting for the first time in full session since the publication of the Report, we warmly commend the work of the EPG and agree that the EPG mission offered a real opportunity for the South African Government to initiate a negotiating process between the Government and the true representatives of the black majority, leading ultimately, to a peaceful resolution of the problem of apartheid and to a break in the cycle of violence in the region. Pretoria's rejection of the 'Negotiating Concept' submitted by the EPG, which was underlined by its brutal attacks against Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe on 19 May 1986, was nothing less than a tragedy for the region.
6. At Nassau we appealed to the authorities in Pretoria to take a number of steps in a genuine manner and as a matter of urgency if the crisis of apartheid was not to end in even greater

tragedy. In spite of the Pretoria régime's increased intransigence since Nassau, we remain convinced that only through negotiations can catastrophe be averted. We are encouraged in this by the obvious yearning for peace with justice which is evident among South Africa's peoples of all races as was dramatically highlighted by the recent Dakar Meeting. Accordingly, we again call on the South African Government to accept the 'Negotiating Concept' of the EPG which remains as valid today as it was when the Group put it forward.

#### **Commonwealth Response - Sanctions**

7. With the exception of Britain we believe that economic and other sanctions have had a significant effect on South Africa and that their wider, tighter, and more intensified application must remain an essential part of the international community's response to apartheid.

8. We realise that if the sanctions and other measures we have adopted are to have maximum effect, they must be part of a wider programme of international action. While mindful of the widespread view within the international community that comprehensive and mandatory sanctions would be the quickest route to bring Pretoria to the negotiating table, we, with the exception of Britain, believe that, pending the acceptance of such a position by the international community as a whole, genuine efforts should be made to secure the universal adoption of the measures now adopted by most Commonwealth and other countries including the United States and the Nordic countries. We commit ourselves to continuing efforts to secure a more concerted application of a global sanctions programme.

9. Further, in the interest of greater effectiveness, we have decided to continue co-ordination by the Secretariat of the implementation of measures as agreed by each member and to identify any efforts to frustrate them.

10. With the exception of Britain, we agree to evaluate on a continuous basis the application of sanctions in order to assess their impact. Moreover, given the significance of South Africa's relationship with the international financial system and the need for a better understanding of developments and possibilities in this sphere, with the exception of Britain we will initiate an expert study, drawing on independent sources, to examine this aspect of the South African economy.

11. Finally, mindful of our commitment at Nassau which we reaffirm here in Vancouver, we agree that we will continue to take further action individually and collectively as deemed appropriate in response to the situation as it evolves until apartheid is dismantled, in the case of all but Britain that includes sanctions.

#### **South Africa and its Neighbours**

12. In addition to our programme of action addressed directly to apartheid itself, we believe that the desperate plight of South

Africa's neighbours calls for a comprehensive response from the international community. Substantial and invaluable help is already being provided by several Commonwealth countries through programmes of development assistance and security. However, the capacity of South Africa's neighbours to resist Pretoria's policy of destabilisation and destruction must be strengthened.

13. South Africa's aims are clear enough. In part, their actions are intended to coerce the Front-Line States into abandoning support for the black majority in South Africa, and to force them into co-existence with apartheid. They are also intended to perpetuate the dependence on South Africa of the majority of these countries whose development efforts are now being undermined by the need to confront Pretoria's aggression. Therefore, if assistance for the region's development is to be effective, the international community must also address the security needs of the Front-Line States.

14. The Commonwealth is well placed to give a lead in this field. The Commonwealth has always considered assistance to the region as an integral part of its support for the struggle against apartheid. But so far, such assistance has been directed mainly to efforts to reduce dependence on South Africa. In the face of a systematic campaign to undermine the economies of these countries, the Commonwealth should itself take - and encourage the wider community to take - a broader view of the region's needs; assistance is needed both to advance disengagement from the South African economy and to provide for its security against South African aggression.

15. Against this background, and while acknowledging the continuing value of the forms of bilateral and multilateral assistance now being provided, we have decided to initiate an enhanced programme of co-ordinated Commonwealth assistance consistent with and complementary to the objectives of SADCC and other agencies collaborating to this and with the region, including the Africa Fund. We see these efforts as directed towards the Front-Line and neighbouring states, particularly Mozambique. We further see these efforts directed to key sectors such as transportation and communications, embracing both their rehabilitation and their physical protection. In this respect we have decided to give priority attention to the Limpopo Line and the Port of Maputo. On a related matter, we propose to examine the question of transit rights of the land-locked states of the region.

16. We see Mozambique in a key geographical position in relation to the Front-Line States. If the region is to cease to be hostage to South Africa, special and urgent attention must be given to the needs of Mozambique. We have therefore decided to establish a special fund to provide technical assistance to Mozambique. We also stand ready, if requested, to embark upon a process of consultations with a view to enabling those of our members in a position to do so to make appropriate contributions to the security needs of Mozambique and other Front-Line States requiring such help.

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### Reaching into South Africa

17. We are agreed that the Commonwealth should give support to the victims and opponents of apartheid within South Africa.

18. We endorse individual and collective efforts to provide assistance to the victims of apartheid and we resolve to augment those efforts to the fullest extent possible. We recognise the particular value of the Nassau Fellowship Programme in providing educational opportunities to young South Africans, and intend to expand it.

19. In light of the problems created by the state of emergency and other repressive measures in South Africa, we consider the provision of humanitarian and legal assistance to detainees and their families a high priority, and those in a position to do so undertake to increase their individual efforts in this regard.

20. Recognising its growing importance, we shall also increase our support to the trade union movement in South Africa, in particular, for labour education.

21. We plan wherever possible to increase our individual contributions to economic and social development programmes in such fields as education.

22. Despite having to confirm the conclusion of the EPG that Pretoria is not prepared to negotiate fundamental change in South Africa, we believe that we should take advantage of any opportunity to promote real internal dialogue. In the absence of movement by the authorities in Pretoria, we shall increase our contacts with South Africans of differing viewpoints. We shall make an enhanced effort to give support to the opponents of apartheid through such activities as the organisation of conferences on the future of South Africa, the arrangement of visits and the publication of studies related to ending apartheid. We have agreed to consider means by which these activities could be co-ordinated and their importance highlighted.

23. The need for Commonwealth action to counteract South African propaganda and censorship by exposing the truth about apartheid has been made more pressing by the draconian curbs imposed on the press at the beginning of 1987. These amount to an all-out attempt to replace independent reporting of events in the country with its own propaganda. Largely as a result of these restrictions, much of what is happening in South Africa no longer reaches the television screens and newspapers of the outside world.

24. In view of what is at stake, we are agreed that the Commonwealth should give high priority to counteracting South African propaganda and censorship.

## Namibia

25. We are gravely concerned that the impasse in Namibia's progress to independence under the terms of Resolution 435 seems to have assumed the proportions of a permanent stalemate. We again stress the illegality of South Africa's presence in Namibia and we remain unanimously convinced of the view that Resolution 435 provides the only basis for an internationally acceptable settlement of the Namibian question.

26. Linking the withdrawal of Cuban forces to a settlement under Resolution 435 - a linkage which we have unanimously rejected - has, in effect, provided an opening for the South African régime to continue to frustrate any progress towards implementation of the Resolution. The challenge, therefore, is to develop an effective process of negotiation leading to the Resolution's implementation.

27. At Nassau we made it clear that the action which we envisaged in the Accord on Southern Africa should be directed equally towards ensuring South Africa's compliance with the wishes of the international community on the question of Namibia. We also recall that at New Delhi we agreed that if South Africa continued to obstruct the implementation of Resolution 435, the adoption of appropriate measures under the charter of the United Nations would have to be considered. These continue to be valid conclusions.

## The Way Forward

28. 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. With the exception of Britain, we see great value as a measure of our continuing concern in establishing a Committee of Foreign Ministers able to meet periodically to provide high level impetus and guidance in furtherance of the objectives of this statement. The Committee will comprise the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Guyana, India, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe and will be chaired by the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada.

29. We believe that this Statement provides a framework for a significant Commonwealth initiative to assist the region, and is one to which a number of Commonwealth countries, which hitherto have not been in a position to contribute to multilateral efforts, will be enabled to do so. It will require detailed consultations between both donor Commonwealth governments and the countries in question. We are instructing the Secretary-General to initiate these processes as a matter of the highest priority.

Lake Okanagan  
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