

72nd International Labour Conference
Report of the Committee on Apartheid
Statement made in Plenary
by the Canadian Delegation (Government)
on June 19, 1986

Mr. President,

I have asked for the floor in order to add Canada's voice to those of so many others who condemn in the strongest terms the abhorrent practices of apartheid. Every passing day provides us with new evidence that it constitutes a flagrant violation of fundamental human rights — including, in particular, those of black workers.

In these circumstances, it is wholly legitimate for the ILO to concern itself with the consequences for workers of the institutionalized application of apartheid. Once again, we have a special report of the Director-General which presents in objective terms the intolerable situation facing black workers in South Africa. I have not come here, however, to ^{try to move you with} ~~add to the~~ rhetoric, but to speak of concrete and practical action.

Mr. President, on the 12th of June, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Joe Clark made the following statement in

in the Canadian House of Commons : "Eight months ago, in Nassau, Canada and forty-eight other members of the Commonwealth established a group of seven eminent persons to seek ways of dismantling apartheid and erecting the structure of democracy in South Africa. That was done in the belief that the multiracial Commonwealth, of which South Africa was once a member, had a better chance than any other institution to encourage change without violence. While the Eminent Persons Group was still in Capetown, the Government of South Africa launched bombs and raids on Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana . Their report concludes that, at present, there is no genuine intention on the part of the South African Government to dismantle apartheid. It reports that political freedom, far from being established, is being more rigorously curtailed, and the cycle of violence and counter-violence grows. It finds that the concrete progress looked for in the Nassau Accord has not materialized.

"By its actions, its words, its raids against its neighbours, the South African Government has closed one more door on dialogue. The temptation is to conclude that they will never respond to our entreaties, never

change by choice. That is not the view of the Eminent Persons — not yet. But it is their view that steady pressure is essential to any prospect of peaceful change. Their report read in part:

"We point to the fact that the Government of South Africa had itself used economic measures against its neighbours and that such measures are patently instruments of its own national policy. We are convinced that the South African Government is concerned about the adoption of effective economic measures against it. If it comes to the conclusion that it would always remain protected from such measures, the process of change in South Africa is unlikely to increase in momentum, and the descent into violence would be accelerated. In these circumstances, the cost in lives may have to be counted in millions."

The Secretary of State went on to say:

"Canada has already taken several economic and other measures against apartheid. After the August meeting, we are prepared to take more, in concert with the Commonwealth if possible, on our own if necessary. We believe the Commonwealth will move forward united against apartheid." Mr. President, to encourage that result, to maintain that pressure, the Secretary of State announced four new Canadian measures against apartheid, as follows:

"We are ending Canadian Government procurement of South African products, and are urging our provinces

to consider parallel action in their own jurisdiction. We will ban the promotion in Canada of tourism in South Africa.

"We are allocating an additional two million dollars to our programme for the education and training of blacks in South Africa.

"Finally, we have informed the South African Government that Canada will no longer accept the non-resident accreditation of the four South African attachés to Canada for science, mining, labour and agriculture. They will no longer be authorized to carry on their official functions in Canada.

"Those are measured steps -- economic, diplomatic, humanitarian -- to maintain steady pressure against apartheid."

Mr. President, in the light of that statement, Canada's position on apartheid is clear. Thus, we are in agreement with the basic intent and purpose of the report before us today. We have reservations about some of the conclusions, which go beyond the mandate of the ILO, and which might be more properly be addressed in the Security Council of the United Nations. We share the reservations expressed by others, ^{relating to} ~~concerning~~ paragraphs 5,7 and 8 in Section A(3). We are concerned also that some of the recommendations could prove counter-productive, such as recommendation No.A(6) which calls for a ban on scientific, educational, sporting and cultural

exchanges with the South African régime. While Canada has long since banned sports contact with South Africa, this does not apply to education and other forms of contact directed to assisting blacks in South Africa. I feel certain that no one in this Assembly would want us to withdraw our new educational training programme for the black people of South Africa.

Mr. President, the Government and the people of Canada are alarmed at the escalating violence in South Africa and on its borders, flowing from the continuing breaches by the Government of South Africa of basic human rights including labour standards.

The Prime Minister of Canada and six other Commonwealth leaders will meet in London in August to consider what further action the Commonwealth can take together to increase pressure against apartheid.

~~On June 12,~~ The Secretary of State for External Affairs the Honourable Joe Clark ^{has} affirmed that Canada will be "in the forefront of those who oppose apartheid. These measures do not rule out further steps in the near future. On the contrary, they portend more severe measures, if the South African Government continues to refuse to enter a dialogue except on its own narrow terms."

June 19, 1986

Mr. Chairman,

The Canadian position on apartheid is very well known. We continue to condemn the abhorrent practices of apartheid as a fundamental violation of human rights, particularly the rights of black workers.

We are convinced that the ILC has a legitimate interest in these questions, particularly the appalling consequences of the application of apartheid to workers, in which discrimination on the basis of race has been institutionalized. Who can deny that the disgusting policy of apartheid affects black South Africans in the South African work force every day in a variety of pernicious ways? The 1985 report of the Director-General gives a comprehensive and objective but nonetheless shocking picture of this intolerable situation.

We must at the same time protect the ILC by ensuring that its conclusion does not go beyond its mandate. Thus, while we are in agreement with the broad thrust of the report before us today, the Canadian delegation has reservation about

some of the conclusions, which raise questions which should more properly be addressed in the Security Council of the United Nations. To illustrate this point, Canadian Law includes the "United Nations Act", which is an Act respecting Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations. That Act provides that when, in pursuance of Article 41 of the Charter of the U.N., the Security Council decides upon a measure to give effect to any of its decision and calls upon Canada to apply such measure, the Canadian government may make the necessary orders and regulations to implement such decisions. There is no similar legislation permitting such action on the basis of decisions of the Labour Conference.

We are however increasingly concerned at the lack of progress in South Africa on these flagrant breaches of the standards of civilized nations the world over, including in particular labour standards, due to the continued intransigence of the South African government. As a consequence, the present Canadian government has undertaken a complete review of its policy towards South Africa.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that this statement makes clear the position of the Canadian government on the important questions raised by this report.