



## Message to the State President from the Prime Minister

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MESSAGE TO THE STATE PRESIDENT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Mr President

First let me thank you for your very full letter of 4 October setting out your Government's reform programme. I found it helpful to have this before our Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

That meeting is just coming to an end. It has been dominated by the issue of South Africa and by demands from virtually all the participants for extensive trade and economic sanctions against your Government. I have found myself to all intents and purposes alone in resisting these. In doing so, I have placed great weight on your assurance to me that you are taking steps to end all racial discrimination and to give effect to the principle of participation by all communities in the political process.

The outcome of our discussions here has been a declaration setting out our approach. This comprises a firm condemnation of apartheid, a call for a political dialogue between the South African Government and representatives of the black community in the context of a suspension of violence on all sides, and a political signal to your Government by the introduction of specific measures. In our case, these are the measures which we are already taking with two very minor additions: action to preclude import of Krugerrands and withdrawal of official support for trade missions and fairs. Although they are very minor indeed, I should frankly have preferred not to take these steps. But they were necessary to secure the reference to an end to violence and support for a dialogue.

It is also proposed to establish a group of "eminent Commonwealth persons" to make contact with your Government and representatives of all communities to encourage the process of political dialogue in South Africa. May I urge you to welcome



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the establishment of the group and offer in principle to co-operate with it. It would undermine the efforts which I have made to resist pressure for trade and economic sanctions against South Africa if you were to reject the proposed mission. We shall keep you informed of the details as they emerge: and shall do our best to impress on the members of the proposed group the need to avoid prejudicial statements and positions (though you will recognise that some things are bound to be said which your Government will find distasteful).

I sincerely believe that the outcome of the meeting as a whole can be regarded as not unhelpful from South Africa's point of view and as lending support to the course on which your Government is embarked.

Yours sincerely

MARGARET THATCHER