



The American Committee on Africa

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OLDEST ANTI-APARTHEID ORGANIZATION SAYS SOUTH AFRICAN**PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT FALLS SHORT****CALLS FOR TOUGHER SANCTIONS**For immediate release
February 2, 1990Contact: Adotei Akwei
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NEW YORK "South African State President F.W. de Klerk's announcement today is a significant first step, but the time has long passed for first steps," said Jennifer Davis, Executive Director of the American Committee on Africa, the oldest anti-apartheid organization in the United States.

"Apartheid has not ended in South Africa," said Davis, "In terms of practical restrictions the country is now back to where it was in 1960."

"If F.W. de Klerk is serious about dismantling apartheid, he must embrace the South African peoples' demand for one person, one vote. Until that demand is met, the U.S. should intensify the economic pressures which helped to force these initial concessions," said Davis.

The people of South Africa have forced F.W. de Klerk to take these actions, and for them it is certainly a great victory.

At the same time, de Klerk's concessions clearly demonstrate the need for stronger international pressure; the government made these moves precisely because they have lost more than \$32 billions through direct and indirect sanctions over the last five years.

ACOA has received two separate eyewitness accounts of police attacking joyful demonstrators with dogs and teargas, clubbing them off the streets of Johannesburg shortly following the President's Announcement. This raises serious questions about the sincerity of de Klerk's statement.

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Apparently the government is not prepared to meet the minimum conditions necessary for free political dialogue. To end the bans and restrictions on organizations, especially the African National Congress, and people and suspended political executions is an important first step, and the release of Nelson Mandela will also be an advance. But how can the government call for a dialogue when the troops remain in the townships, the harsh emergency laws remain in effect and thousands of people remain in jail? The government must meet the minimum conditions for negotiations as established by the people of South Africa.

Behind the rhetoric of the government's Klerk's statement, ACOA noted that the cornerstones of apartheid still remain intact: The Group Areas Act, the Land Act, the Population Registration Act all remain in force. Above all, 75 percent of the people of South Africa still cannot vote to elect their nation's leader.

"The United Democratic Front, South Africa's largest anti-apartheid organization, today called for sanctions to be intensified. We will continue to work with people in every part of America to intensify the drive for comprehensive and meaningful sanctions. These sanctions would be the best guarantee that freedom will at last come to the suffering people of South Africa," said Davis.

The American Committee on Africa was formed in 1953 to support the African National Congress's Defiance Campaign, led at that time by Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu. ACOA has spearheaded the drive to end U.S. investment in South Africa, leading the campaign for divestment and selective purchasing measures at the state and municipal level and to pass sanctions legislation in Congress.

Press Packet, including statement from anti-apartheid ANC, United Democratic Front and trade union federation COSATU available from ACOA

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