"What are sanctions?"
Sanctions are punitive measures taken by individuals or a government to show their disapproval of, punish or modify the behavior of another country. Sanctions are usually economic measures and can range from symbolic penalties to full economic warfare.

Since 1959 South African anti-apartheid activists have called for mandatory comprehensive economic sanctions against their country. These would include trade embargoes that would cut off imports and exports, as well as bans on financial relationships such as bank loans or direct corporate investment.

"Does the U.S. have sanctions against South Africa?"
Yes, the U.S. Congress, overriding a presidential veto, imposed limited sanctions on South Africa in 1986. The current law prohibits: new investments; new loans to government agencies; the import of Krugerrands or gold coins; the import of uranium, coal, textiles, agricultural products, crude oil and petroleum products; the import of military articles; the import of articles exported by organizations controlled by the South African government; exports of computer goods and technology to apartheid-enforcing and administering agencies. But the sanctions law has been poorly enforced by the Reagan and Bush administrations and is riddled with loopholes that allow products the Congress intended to ban into the country.

"What impact have sanctions had on South Africa?"
The limited sanctions of the U.S. and the other countries have been among the main reasons for recent change in that country. The international arms embargo has forced South Africa to pay markups of up to 100 percent for arms, and they have found it difficult to purchase advanced aircraft and electronic technology. The international oil embargo has forced South Africa to pay up to $2 billion a year to evade the ban by oil producing countries. Over 200 U.S. companies and over 60 British companies have withdrawn from South Africa because of the unfavorable climate resulting from international pressure and sanctions.

The Washington Post recently reported that the cumulative impact of sanctions against South Africa since 1986 is between $32 to $42 billion. The Post states that South African losses stem from capital outflows, lost export earnings and slowed growth rates that are the result of U.S. and other sanctions.

"If sanctions have hurt the South African economy, haven't we met our goal?"
No, the goal of the sanctions is to isolate South Africa until the apartheid system is dismantled. Despite recent changes anti-apartheid activists and organizations have repeated their calls for sanctions. Lifting sanctions would slow the pace of change in the country.

"But hasn't de Klerk made changes?"
Yes, South African President F.W. de Klerk announced a number of changes on February 2 in his opening address to Parliament. Many of the announced reforms, however, were laws overturned in practice by the people of South Africa during the Mass Defiance Campaigns conducted in 1989.

Since February the South African government has:
• released Nelson Mandela and a few other political prisoners;
• suspended the use of the death penalty;
• lifted banning orders restricting political activists;
• lifted the State of Emergency in all provinces except Natal and;
• pledged to lift the Separate Amenities Act which segregated public facilities.

De Klerk has also entered into talks with the African National Congress (ANC), the national liberation organization. But over 2,000 political prisoners remain in jail and amnesty for exiled activists has not been established. Police violence against activists has actually escalated in many areas, especially Natal.

"Don't the changes mean that apartheid is almost over?"
No! Even with the release of Mandela and other changes the apartheid system remains in effect. De Klerk’s reforms have not touched the “pillars of apartheid,” which include the:
• Group Areas Act—which prohibits different races from living in the same community;
• Population Registration Act, which uses race to determine access to social services;
• Land Acts—which restrict land ownership to 4 million white control 87 percent of the land, leaving 13 percent to some 28 million blacks.

Also, brutal laws developed to protect the system, including the Internal Security Act, remain intact. Under existing security legislation, the ANC leadership, including Nelson Mandela, could be re-arrested at any time.

"Shouldn't we give de Klerk a sign of support and relax some of our sanctions?"
De Klerk and his ruling National Party have made it clear that they do not support majority rule in South Africa. Although committed to reform, their goal is to fashion a complicated power-sharing arrangement that would guarantee continued white domination by giving whites veto power. The anti-apartheid movement of South Africa, since the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955, called for a non-racial democracy in South Africa. They will accept nothing less and neither should we.
“Doesn’t de Klerk face a threat from conservatives?”

Opponents of sanctions have long cited this as a reason to either lift or deny sanctions. The idea that all whites will join the conservative opposition is a myth. In fact, pressure is accelerating the divisive trends in the white community: while some move right, even larger numbers are shocked into realizing the need for change. If the right wing is to be isolated, pressure must be kept up.

“Won’t continued sanctions hurt blacks?”

Before sanctions, unemployment among blacks was between 25–35 percent. In some “bantustans” where tens of thousands of Blacks are forced to live by apartheid laws, unemployment has been reported as high as 50 percent, before any sanctions were applied. The apartheid system generates systemic unemployment to maintain a cheap labor pool and to exert leverage over those who are working.

The human costs of apartheid have been exorbitant. Apartheid dictates an inferior education system for Blacks, a dysfunctional and overburdened health care system and families are destroyed by forced separation. In fact, the entire southern Africa region has paid the high price of apartheid. South Africa has conducted an economic and military war against the region that, according to the UN, has cost the region nearly $56 billion. Sanctions have not caused this situation which “hurts blacks the most,” apartheid has.

“But aren’t U.S. corporations a positive force for change in South Africa?”

U.S. companies pay over $200 million per year in taxes to the apartheid government. President Reagan’s October 2, 1987 sanctions report to Congress claimed that U.S. corporations spent $200 million in a ten year period on social programs for Blacks there. But in that same ten year period, corporations paid over $1 billion in taxes to fund the apartheid army, policy and other repressive structures. Withdrawing that tax income and technical expertise from South Africa is the most positive change that U.S. corporations can make.

Offering some programs limited to those urban Blacks working in U.S. companies does not address the major concern of the majority population. The struggle for justice in South Africa is not for training programs for a few, but justice for all.

“What should U.S. citizens do to support sanctions?”

It is critically important for concerned citizens to voice their support to Congress for both the maintenance and intensification of sanctions. In recent conversations with Members of Congress and their staffs many say that they have not heard from their hometowns on this issue. Calls, letters, telegrams and home district visits are extremely important.

How to use these Talking Points:

Lobby to...

- Visit, write or telegram your Representative and Senators to express your support for the maintenance and intensification of sanctions.
- Organize a delegation from your church, school, union or community group to meet with your Representative and Senators during the summer. Use these talking points to prepare your delegation.
- All Members of the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate are up for re-election this year. Make sanctions an election issue. In public forums, question the candidates. Make sure they are committed to maintaining and intensifying sanctions against South Africa.
- For information on sanctions legislation, lobbying and South Africa call the AFRICA HOTLINE: (202) 546-0408.

...Keep the pressure on!

...Nothing has as yet happened to the apartheid system which warrants a change of policy on sanctions. Whites are still governing the country without our consent. For this reason our position remains the same on sanctions: maintain and campaign for their intensification.

Rev. Frank Chikane, General Secretary
South African Council of Churches

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