



WRAPPING IT UP: Commonwealth Secretary-General Sir Shridath Ramphal, left, listens to Canadian External Affairs

Minister Joe Clark at a news conference yesterday on the last day of the Commonwealth meeting in Australia. AP PHOTO

Clark rebuffs Botha aid request

By Tim Harper Toronto Star

CANBERRA — External Affairs Minister Joe Clark says he will tell his South African counterpart the Commonwealth will not offer further help to rebuild southern Africa until apartheid is ended.

Roelof Botha had written Clark, who is the chairman of the Commonwealth foreign ministers conference on South Africa, asking that the Commonwealth work with South Africa to help front-line states in southern Africa.

Written to banks

Botha had given Clark assurances that progress was being made in the region.

He said the Commonwealth was off track in its punitive stance against South Africa for its apartheid policies.

Clark, in his reply, will tell Botha that most of the reconstruction needed is due to South Africa's destabilization of the region.

Clark has also written to the international banking community — those to whom South Africa owes money — telling them the Commonwealth is calling on them to tighten the debt vice in which South Africa finds itself.

South Africa is struggling with a

1990 repayment date for much of its \$21 billion (U.S.) foreign debt.

But foreign ministers yesterday refused to recommend that Pretoria be slapped with more trade sanctions.

With Canada and Australia leading the way, the meeting agreed instead to push other nations to upgrade their measures against South Africa.

Their recommendations now go to the Commonwealth heads of government when they meet in October in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The Commonwealth committee of foreign ministers on southern Africa has met at six-month intervals since it was formed at the 1987 Commonwealth meeting in Vancouver. The Canberra meeting ended yesterday.

The measures should satisfy critics at home who felt the Commonwealth was backing away from sanctions as an instrument of pressure on South Africa, Clark said.

"What you should understand," Clark told reporters, "is that this Commonwealth process began (at the 1985 Commonwealth meeting) at Nassau after a long period of condemnation of apartheid but not

a great deal of co-ordinated international action to oppose it.

"There has been a dramatic change in the situation of apartheid since the Nassau conference due in no small measure to the leadership which has been shown by the Commonwealth."

The Commonwealth will do more when it can be persuaded that other countries will follow, Clark said.

But that stance didn't seem to satisfy many critics in the Australian capital.

Archbishop Ted Scott, former primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, said he felt it important that Canada and Australia fulfill

'Take next step'

their 1985 pledge that further measures be taken if apartheid remained in South Africa.

"I think they should take the next further step," Scott said.

—Joe Hanlon, the author of an independent report to the ministers urging a phase-out of all South African trade over the next five years, was also critical of Clark's plans for Commonwealth ministers to work on other countries to get tougher.

"There's no need for Clark to go to the U.S. to talk about sanctions when they've got tougher sanctions than the Commonwealth," he said.

Clark mentioned the United States, West Germany, Japan and Brazil as four countries that could adopt stronger measures against South Africa.

Ben Mkapa, the Tanzanian foreign minister, denied the four African ministers at this meeting lost the battle for further trade sanctions.

More sanctions could be adopted at the heads of government meeting in Kuala Lumpur if one of the leaders takes the initiative, he said.

"I was going to press for leaving the door open for further, stronger sanctions to be adopted," he said. "That door has been left opened."

The message to Pretoria, Mkapa said, "is that the course of sanctions is irreversible. And they better get it."

But Nigerian Foreign Minister Maj-Gen. Ike Nwachukwu had publicly called for new trade sanctions and members of the Zimbabwean delegation — who were critical of Canada when this committee met in Harare — were saying privately they wanted further action.