

SOUTH AFRICA

The 'Possible Negotiating Concept' of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group on Southern Africa

"The South African Government has declared its commitment to dismantling the system of apartheid, to ending racial discrimination and to broad-based negotiations leading to new constitutional arrangements for power-sharing by all the people of South Africa. In the light of preliminary and as yet incomplete discussions with representatives of various organizations and groups, within and outside South Africa, we believe that in the context of specific and meaningful steps being taken towards ending apartheid, the following additional action might ensure negotiations and a break in the cycle of violence.

On the part of the Government:

- (a) Removal of the military from the townships, providing for freedom of assembly and discussion and suspension of detention without trial.
- (b) The release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and detainees.
- (c) The unbanning of the ANC and PAC and the permitting of normal political activity.

On the part of the ANC and others:

Entering negotiations and suspending violence.

It is our view that simultaneous announcements incorporating these ideas might be negotiated if the Government were to be interested in pursuing this broad approach.

In the light of the Government's indication to us that it:

- (i) is not in principle against the release of Nelson Mandela and similar prisoners;
- (ii) is not opposed in principle to the unbanning of any organizations;
- (iii) is prepared to enter into negotiations with the acknowledged leaders of the people of South Africa;
- (iv) is committed to removal of discrimination, not only from the statute books but also from South African society as a whole;
- (v) is committed to ending of white domination;
- (vi) will not prescribe who may represent black communities in negotiations on a new constitution for South Africa;
- (vii) is prepared to negotiate on an open agenda;

the South African Government may wish to give serious consideration to the approach outlined in this note."