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CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARY OBSERVERS TO VISIT NAMIBIA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced today that he has asked an all-party Parliamentary group to observe the pre-election process in Namibia in September, and report its findings to Parliament when it reconvenes.

United Nations-supervised elections are to be held in Namibia in early November to choose a constituent assembly. This assembly will then adopt by a two-thirds majority the constitution under which the country will gain independence early next year.

"All Canadians want these long-awaited elections to be as free and fair as they possibly can be", stated Mr. Clark. "The Government has provided several forms of support such as peacekeepers, refugee aid, diplomatic presence, ballot boxes, technical expertise and facilitation for independent observers. We now look to our elected representatives to assess the progress towards free elections on behalf of the Parliament and people of Canada."

The Parliamentary group will be composed of the following Members of Parliament: The Honourable Walter McLean (P.C., Waterloo), Special Representative of the Government for Southern Africa and Commonwealth Affairs; Ms. Marie Gibeau (P.C., Bourassa), Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade; Mr. Bob Speller (Liberal, Haldimand-Norfolk), member of the Standing Committee; and Mr. William Blaikie (N.D.P., Winnipeg-Transcona), external affairs critic for his party and also a member of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade.

The observer group plans to visit Namibia from September 6-13, so that its members will be able to observe both voter registration and the election campaign. In addition to visiting several regions of Namibia, the group also plans to be in touch with Canada's peacekeeping contingent and our official mission in the territory.

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures