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CANADA WELCOMES PARTIAL END OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today applauded President de Klerk's decision to terminate the four year old State of Emergency in three of South Africa's four provinces, but expressed his regret that it would remain in force in Natal.

"This is an important and constructive step and a welcome signal of the South African Government's commitment to dialogue and negotiations," stated Mr. Clark.

For the past four years the Canadian Government has condemned the State of Emergency in South Africa and the political repression, detentions and media censorship that flowed from its provisions. By ending the State of Emergency in most parts of the country, the South African Government has removed one of the most significant obstacles to meaningful negotiations towards a non-racial democracy.

In welcoming this latest South African Government action, Mr. Clark also noted that other obstacles to negotiations are being addressed in the context of a joint ANC/South African Government Working Group set up after the talks between President de Klerk and Nelson Mandela at the beginning of May. These issues include the return of political exiles, the release of political prisoners, and the revision of security legislation. Mr. Clark noted that some political prisoners had already been released.

"We look forward to the results of the Working Group and hope that all the remaining obstacles to formal negotiations will soon be eliminated," added Mr. Clark.

The continuation of the State of Emergency in Natal underlines the serious threat violence in that province poses to the effort to secure a peaceful settlement in South Africa. Mr. Clark urged all parties, including the South African Government, to work together to bring peace to that strife-torn province.