



the Commonwealth lifted sanctions. In 1991, restrictions on tourism promotion, cultural and scientific boycotts, and the ban on sports contacts were lifted. If all goes well, organizers hope South Africa will compete at the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria, British Columbia.

In 1993, South Africa set up a multiracial advisory council, the Transitional Executive Council, to oversee the transition to democracy. In a speech to the United Nations, Mr. Mandela asked that all remaining trade, investment and financial sanctions be removed. The Commonwealth did so in September. The ban on the sale of weapons to South Africa remains.

Meanwhile, the Commonwealth is helping the country prepare for a new and democratic South Africa. For example, it is helping to train administrators for the coming social and political changes, it has also been active in helping to control violence.

International observers will be there to watch the coming

election, and to try to ensure the vote is free and fair. A series of Commonwealth observer groups have been there since 1992.

Observing elections is nothing new for the Commonwealth. In the past few years, it has sent teams to Malaysia, Bangladesh, Zambia, Seychelles, Guyana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho and Pakistan. Missions are only sent when governments invite them, and all political parties must agree to their presence. These missions are aimed at boosting the confidence of voters that the electoral system will be fair and the results will reflect the wishes of the people.

The Commonwealth helps countries set up democratic practices in other ways. It provides experts to help strengthen democratic systems and laws. It helps governments to adopt practices found to work well in other Commonwealth countries. It also sends technical experts, such as lawyers who can help rewrite laws and train local lawyers.

Promoting democracy and

human rights is an important part of Canada's foreign policy. Respect for human rights is needed to achieve peace, prosperity, and good government everywhere and Canada has long been a leading voice in insisting that human rights be given a high priority in the Commonwealth.

In 1991, a committee sponsored by five Commonwealth NGOs and chaired by a Canadian, Flora MacDonald, described the human rights records of some Commonwealth nations as "deplorable and often appalling." Following this, the Commonwealth leaders meeting in Harare passed a declaration that put the spotlight on human rights principles. In 1993, the Heads of Government Meeting in Cyprus released a statement that reaffirmed "their commitment to democracy, fundamental human rights, the independence of the judiciary, and just and honest government as essential ingredients of the Commonwealth's fundamental political values."