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PM-COMMONWEALTH-GAMES; 0214

EDS: SPORTS INTEREST

CANBERRA (CP) - THE THREAT OF A BOYCOTT OF THE 1990 COMMONWEALTH GAMES IN AUCKLAND REMAINS ALTHOUGH MEMBERS OF A COMMONWEALTH COMMITTEE SAID TODAY THEY HOPED IT WOULD NOT OCCUR.

NEW ZEALAND FOREIGN MINISTER RUSSELL MARSHALL MET WITH THE COMMONWEALTH COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA TO DISCUSS HIS COUNTRY'S FEARS THAT A BOYCOTT THREAT MIGHT DISRUPT JANUARY'S GAMES.

SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE SUGGESTED A BOYCOTT TO PROTEST PLANNED TOURS OF SOUTH AFRICA BY BRITISH CRICKETERS AND AUSTRALIAN RUGBY PLAYERS.

"WE CERTAINLY HOPE THAT A BOYCOTT DOES NOT OCCUR," EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER JOE CLARK SAID AFTER THE THREE-DAY MEETING ENDED.

HOWEVER, FOREIGN MINISTER BENJAMIN MKAPA OF TANZANIA SAID HE COULD OFFER NO ASSURANCE THAT HIS COUNTRY AND OTHERS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH IN AFRICA WOULD NOT BOYCOTT THE GAMES.

"WE WILL HAVE TO SEE HOW THINGS DEVELOP OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS," SAID MKAPA.

TWO WEEKS AGO, A TOUR BY 16 ENGLISH CRICKETERS WAS ANNOUNCED IN LONDON. THE SOUTH AFRICANS ARE ALSO ORGANIZING AN INTERNATIONAL RUGBY TEAM TO PLAY AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

INVITATIONS TO THE PLAYERS, INCLUDING SOME FROM AUSTRALIA, HAVE BEEN SENT THROUGH THEIR INDIVIDUAL RUGBY FEDERATIONS. SEVERAL OF THE SIX INVITED FROM AUSTRALIA HAVE ALREADY DECLINED FOR PERSONAL REASONS.

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PM-COMMONWEALTH-HIGHLIGHTS; CXN; 0080

!!!!CORRECTION

CANBERRA - 501 LAST PARA TO ADD WORD COMMONWEALTH ... AFRICA.

A REPORT PREPARED BY CANADA, CONCERNING A FINANCIAL UPGRADING OF THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES AND A RECOMMENDATION THAT THEY BE HELD IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WAS RECEIVED BY THE COMMITTEE. A MEETING OF COMMONWEALTH REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE HELD TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSALS, WHICH INCLUDE FINANCIAL AID AND ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND A TRAVEL ASSISTANCE PLAN FOR PARTICIPANTS.

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