

AM-COMMONWEALTH-AFRICA; BGT 1ST LD; 0530

1ST LEAD - 499 (UPDATES WITH OPENING OF CONFERENCE; QUOTES)

By DENNIS PASSA

CANBERRA (CP) - EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER JOE CLARK SAID TODAY AT THE OPENING OF A COMMONWEALTH FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING THAT A REPORT RECOMMENDING TOUGHER SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA IS

"THOUGHT-PROVOKING" BUT REFLECTS ONLY THE VIEWS OF ITS AUTHORS.

THE REPORT, COMMISSIONED BY THE COMMONWEALTH COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA AT ITS LAST MEETING IN FEBRUARY IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE, ALSO QUESTIONED WHETHER CANADA WAS DOING ENOUGH TO FIGHT APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA.

"THESE EXPERTS ARE INDEPENDENT OF OUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS AND THEIR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REFLECT THEIR OWN VIEWS," CLARK SAID TODAY AT THE START OF THE THREE-DAY CONFERENCE.

"THEY HAVE PROVIDED US WITH A FAR-REACHING AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING DOCUMENT WHICH WILL BE A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO THE SANCTIONS DEBATE," CLARK SAID.

THE OPENING CEREMONY AT THE NEW \$1.2-BILLION PARLIAMENT HOUSE WAS ATTENDED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM EIGHT COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES, INCLUDING AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER BOB HAWKE.

HAWKE TOOK ISSUE WITH REBEL CRICKETERS FROM ENGLAND AND AN INTERNATIONAL GROUP OF RUGBY PLAYERS, INCLUDING SOME FROM AUSTRALIA, WHO ARE PLANNING A TOUR OF SOUTH AFRICA.

"SOME CLAIM THEY BELIEVE THAT THESE EVENTS WILL ACTUALLY HELP BREAK DOWN THE BARRIERS OF APARTHEID," HAWKE SAID AT THE OPENING.

"UNFORTUNATELY, THE OPPOSITE IS THE CASE."

"THE DECEPTION INVOLVED IN ORGANIZING SUCH TOURS, THE GLOATING FROM SOUTH AFRICA WHICH FOLLOWS THEIR ANNOUNCEMENT, THE COSMETIC AND PERIPHERAL MULTI-RACIAL EVENTS WITH WHICH THEY ARE EMBROIDERED ALL UNDERLINE THE FACT THAT THEY GIVE COMFORT AND SUPPORT TO THE APARTHEID REGIME."

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY GENERAL SIR SHRIDATH RAMPHAL TOLD THE OPENING THAT HE CONDEMNS THE SPORTSMEN FOR "HAVING ALLOWED GREED TO GET THE BETTER OF PRINCIPLE."

OPPOSES BOYCOTT

BUT HE CAUTIONED AGAINST ANY BOYCOTT OF THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES IN RUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, IN JANUARY. SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE CALLED FOR SUCH A BOYCOTT IF ENGLAND IS ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GAMES.

"WE DO NOTHING TO RENEGADE CRICKETERS, OR FOR THAT MATTER, TO EVEN MORE CHRONICALLY RENEGADE RUGBY PLAYERS, BY MAKING THE ATHLETES OF THE COMMONWEALTH THE EFFECTIVE TARGET OF OUR RESPONSE," SAID RAMPHAL.

NEW ZEALAND FOREIGN MINISTER RUSSELL MARSHALL IS EXPECTED TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE THIS WEEK AND ASK THAT CALLS FOR A BOYCOTT OF THE GAMES BE IGNORED.

RAMPHAL SAID: "I HOPE HE WILL GIVE HIM (MARSHALL) THE ASSURANCE THAT WHATEVER OTHER FORMS THE COMMONWEALTH'S CONDEMNATION OF THIS SHABBY TOUR TAKES, DAMAGE TO THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES THEMSELVES WILL NOT BE ONE OF THEM."

"THAT SATISFACTION, APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA MUST NOT HAVE AGAIN."

ON SUNDAY, CLARK, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, SAID THAT PRESSURE ON SOUTH AFRICA'S WHITE-MINORITY GOVERNMENT IN THE FORM OF TRADE AND OTHER SANCTIONS MUST CONTINUE TO BUILD "UNTIL THERE IS CLEAR PROOF THAT APARTHEID IS BEING DISHANTLED."

"THAT IS THE COMMITMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA," CLARK SAID.

"WE ARE IN THIS FIGHT TO BRING AN END TO APARTHEID, AND THAT WILL BE A PRIORITY OF OUR GOVERNMENT UNTIL THAT BATTLE IS WON."

CLARK WAS RESPONDING IN PART TO THE INDEPENDENT EXPERTS' REPORT ON SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

THAT REPORT ... PARA 4 - 499