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NAMIBIA: CLARK WELCOMES REFUGEE REPATRIATION  
AND URGES FULL RELEASE OF DETAINEES

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today welcomed the long-awaited start on June 12 in repatriating thousands of Namibian refugees. He also called for further progress on the related issue of freedom for hundreds of Namibian political detainees. Both questions were discussed by his officials with the visiting Information Secretary of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), Mr. Hidipo Hamutenya, who also met Mr. Walter McLean, M.P., the Government's Special Representative for Southern Africa and Commonwealth affairs.

"All friends of Namibia are encouraged by recent progress toward conditions in which free and fair elections can be held. But we cannot rest until all Namibians are able to exercise their democratic rights, including those who suffered exile or imprisonment for their beliefs" said Mr. Clark.

The repatriation of over 41,000 refugees and exiles from Angola, Zambia and other countries by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was to start in mid-May under the UN plan for Namibia. It was delayed pending a general amnesty and repeal of restrictive legislation, proclaimed by the South African administration in Namibia last week after extensive negotiations with the UN. Canada has provided \$2 million of the over \$40 million global budget to enable these longstanding victims of the South African occupation of Namibia to return home, some after an absence of up to 30 years. It will be important to ensure that the concerns about intimidation held by the returnees and other Namibians are addressed effectively.

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Secretary of State  
for  
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État  
aux  
Affaires extérieures

About 280 political detainees believed held by the South African administration in Namibia and by SWAPO in Angola and Zambia were to be released in early June under the UN plan. Canada - joined by Australia, New Zealand and Norway - initiated a series of diplomatic representations in late May urging South Africa and SWAPO to release all detainees, and asking Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe to use their good offices on behalf of the detainees. So far SWAPO has publicly presented about 200 persons, some of whom have been positively identified as released detainees. South Africa has granted international access to - but not yet released - its detainees, and others still remain unaccounted for.

Canada calls on both South Africa and SWAPO to build upon the steps already taken and see the process through, considering that complete settlement of this issue to the satisfaction of the United Nations would substantially strengthen Namibia's transition to independence.