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UNITED NATIONS DECLARES ELECTIONS
IN NAMIBIA "FREE AND FAIR"

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today warmly welcomed the United Nations judgement that free and fair elections have been held in Namibia. With nearly 98 percent of eligible voters participating in the November 7-11 elections, UN Special Representative Martti Ahtisaari yesterday declared that "the voting process has been free and fair".

"The enthusiasm and perseverance of the Namibian people in exercising their democratic rights is an inspiration to us all" stated Mr. Clark. "The United Nations has done an outstanding job in delivering these free and fair elections".

Later this week the UN Secretary General will present a full report on the elections, including the counting and results, to the Security Council. "Canada will ask the Security Council to move quickly in endorsing the report's findings, and in urging that the election results be honoured both inside and outside Namibia", said the Minister.

Mr. Clark expressed his deep appreciation to the more than 400 Canadians who participated in the massive international effort to conduct the Namibian elections under UN supervision and control. "As a nation, we are extremely proud of those Canadians who came from all parts of our country, and all walks of life, to serve the cause of democracy in Namibia", he stated. The Canadian participants in the election effort include some 250 military peacekeepers, 100 police, 50 elections supervisors, 10 fingerprint experts and two electoral computer experts.

Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

The Constituent Assembly elected this past week will convene later in November to begin work on Namibia's Constitution which must then be adopted by a two-thirds majority. Mr. Clark underlined his understanding that the eventual Constitution will give full effect to the Constitutional Principles previously agreed to by all parties and the UN. These Principles include constitutional guarantees of democracy and human rights. The Minister emphasized that these make a significant contribution to nation-building and national reconciliation. "Canada is a committed sponsor of the Principles, and fully shares the UN Secretary General's view, approved by the Security Council, that they are an integral and binding part of the UN plan for Namibia", stated Mr. Clark.

Canada places great importance on the successful completion of Namibia's independence process, as this will further strengthen the UN's ability to address regional conflicts elsewhere. Mr. Clark also noted, "The example of Namibia's transition to independence will provide an invaluable demonstration to South Africans of the feasibility of fundamental change through a peaceful, democratic and negotiated process."