

News Release

Communiqué

Department of
External
Affairs



Ministère des
Affaires
extérieures

No. 065

March 29, 1989.

NAMIBIA: CANADA TO OPEN OBSERVER MISSION

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced today that Canada will have its own observer mission in Windhoek during Namibia's one-year transition to independence starting April 1. Mr. Clark made the announcement after meeting Mr. Andimba Toivo ya Toiva, Secretary General of the SWAPO liberation movement, to discuss the UN-supervised transition and elections in November.

"It is appropriate that Canada, as a UN Security Council member and a major sponsor of the original 1978 settlement plan for Namibia, will have its own means of information and action to support our longstanding commitment to the independence of Africa's last colony based on free and fair elections" said Mr. Clark.

The mission is distinct from the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) to which Canada is contributing 250 troops. It will be involved in monitoring, liaison and observation throughout the transition year and, as with any other mission, will report to Mr. Clark through the Department of External Affairs. Canada undertook as long ago as 1978 to "maintain observers at Windhoek during the transition". The observer mission is to comprise 6 or 7 Canadian diplomatic and support staff, the first of whom is now in Windhoek. The staff will be accredited to South Africa, a procedure endorsed by the UN and followed by other countries. The mission is a further manifestation of Canada's support for Namibia's independence process, in addition to our \$15 million assessment for UNTAG, \$2 million aid for refugees, and other humanitarian/development assistance.

.../2

Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

Canada

From April to June there will be major military withdrawals and demobilizations, and the return of as many as 60,000 refugees. From July on there will be a long election campaign, then voting for a constitutional assembly in November, and finally negotiation of a constitution to be adopted by a two-thirds majority before independence expected in April 1990.