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MR. CLARK WELCOMES BREAKTHROUGH ON NEGOTIATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, warmly welcomed the positive steps announced by both the African National Congress and the South African government in Pretoria yesterday. He hailed this announcement as a breakthrough which paves the way for formal negotiations on securing an end to apartheid and a peaceful political settlement in South Africa and expressed the hope that these negotiations would soon begin.

In a joint communiqué issued today at the end of the second round of historic talks between the African National Congress and the South African government, the ANC undertook to suspend its 29-year armed struggle with immediate effect. The government, in turn, undertook to consider repealing security legislation and lifting the State of Emergency in Natal province. Both sides agreed to work together on a formula for the early release of political prisoners and the return of exiles.

"We are particularly pleased that the ANC has agreed to suspend the armed struggle. Canada has consistently called for an end to violence on all sides and we urged the ANC to suspend the armed struggle during Mr. Mandela's visit to Canada last June," stated Mr. Clark. "With this announcement, the ANC has clearly chosen the path of negotiation and peaceful action to bring about an end to apartheid."

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"While the latest developments in South Africa do not yet represent clear and irreversible change in South Africa, they are a major step forward toward this goal. We urge all parties to enter negotiations in a spirit of reconciliation to create a new non-racial democracy in South Africa," Mr. Clark declared.

"As the Prime Minister indicated during Mr. Mandela's visit, Canada stands ready to assist with the resettlement of exiles and political prisoners. We also stand ready to assist the process of negotiations in any way."

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