

News Release

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CLARK CHAIRS COMMONWEALTH COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA IN ABUJA, NIGERIA MAY 16-17, 1990

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today announced that he will chair a meeting of the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa, in Abuja, Nigeria on May 16 and 17.

The major theme of the Abuja meeting will be the Commonwealth's role in support of a peaceful negotiated settlement in South Africa. "I am particularly pleased that Nelson Mandela has agreed to participate in our discussions and provide his insights on the way ahead for South Africa," noted Mr. Clark. Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs was the first Western Foreign Minister to meet Nelson Mandela following his release in February. This will be their second meeting.

En route to Nigeria, Mr. Clark will meet in Dublin with Irish Foreign Minister Gerard Collins on May 11 and, in Athens, with South African Foreign Minister Roelof (Pik) Botha on May 13, and with Greek Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras on May 14.

During his meetings with Mr. Collins, who is currently serving as the Chairman of the European Community Foreign Affairs Council, and with Mr. Samaras, Mr. Clark will emphasize the importance Canada places on maintaining international sanctions against South Africa. "Sanctions have played a crucial role in bringing the parties together to discuss a negotiated settlement. They must be maintained until there are signs of clear and irreversible change," stated the Minister.

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In Athens, Mr. Clark will meet with Mr. Botha, who is in Europe for other meetings, to discuss the current situation in South Africa and in the region. They last met in August 1987 in South Africa just prior to the Vancouver Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

"It will be useful to have a first-hand briefing about the South African Government's position as I prepare for the deliberations in Abuja," said Mr. Clark.

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