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COMMONWEALTH TO LIFT PEOPLE SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA, SETS TERMS FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, announced today in New Delhi that the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa had recommended to Heads of Government that Commonwealth "people-to-people" sanctions now be lifted, and clarified conditions for the lifting of economic and sporting sanctions.

When ratified by Heads of Government in Harare in mid-October, this decision will allow Canada and other Commonwealth members to issue visas in South Africa, promote tourism, enter into air links and related sales agreements, and have full cultural and scientific contacts.

Making public the Concluding Statement of the Committee (annexed), which she chairs, Mrs. McDougall said the Committee emerged from its deliberations "with a view that reflects with some sensitivity the many challenges and opportunities offered by a South Africa in transition, and also an approach that both gives credit where it is due and sustains the pressure for further change."

The Committee agreed that Commonwealth trade and investment sanctions should be lifted when appropriate transitional mechanisms had been agreed in South Africa which would enable all the parties to participate fully and effectively in negotiations. Financial sanctions should be maintained until a new democratic constitution is agreed.

The Committee also agreed that all Commonwealth restrictions on a particular sport including international competition will be lifted when the appropriate non-racial sporting organization in South Africa endorses the unification of that sport, agrees to international competition, and the sport is readmitted to the relevant international governing body.

The Committee was created at the 1987 Vancouver Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting and includes Australia, Canada, Guyana, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs has chaired the Committee since its inception.

A full transcript of Mrs. McDougall's opening remarks at the closing press conference in New Delhi is attached.

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TRANSCRIPT OF OPENING REMARKS BY
THE HONOURABLE BARBARA McDOUGALL,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
AT CLOSING PRESS CONFERENCE OF
COMMONWEALTH COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA
SEPTEMBER 14, 1991, NEW DELHI

Thank you very much for the introduction, and, at the risk of being repetitive, I too would like to begin by thanking Foreign Minister Solanki and the Indian government for their wonderful hospitality in New Delhi. And also to point out that the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) here in 1983 was the one that defined our common objective as a Commonwealth on South Africa in terms of the establishment of non-racial democracy, so that the results of our meeting today, I think, have brought us full circle from that meeting in 1983. I also want to thank the Secretary General, Chief Anyaoku, who I think has been an enormous support and also his staff who worked hard not only on the preparations for the meeting, but also on the substance and process, and I think much of our success is due to him.

In my opening speech, which was circulated and therefore which you all read, I said that Canada hoped this Committee would emerge with a view that reflects with some sensitivity the many challenges and opportunities offered by a South Africa in transition. And also an approach that would both give credit where it was due and sustains the pressure for further change.

We have accomplished exactly that.

There is now, for the first time, in place a program for the removal of sanctions in South Africa as the situation evolves. Following a careful and thoughtful review, this Committee has recognized that there has been a significant change, therefore we are now recommending to our Heads of Government who will meet in just three weeks in Harare that people-to-people sanctions be removed now.

These include:

- consular and visa restrictions on South Africans;
- boycotts on cultural and scientific contacts;
- restrictions on tourism promotion; and
- the ban on direct air links.

At the same time, we have recognized that much remains to be done to abolish fully apartheid and to bring about a democratic government in a new South Africa. As a result, we have recommended that CHOGM maintain the Commonwealth's economic and trade sanctions until all parties in South Africa are able to participate fully and effectively in negotiations.

We also recommend that financial sanctions, those that we believe in fact to be the most effective, be maintained until there is an agreement on the text of a new democratic constitution for South Africa.

I believe that an important and delicate balance has been struck. We have acknowledged the progress that has been made in recent months -- important progress that we welcome. At the same time, we are committed to maintaining the pressure to meet our full objective -- an objective on which there has never been any doubt -- bringing a new, non-racial and democratic South Africa into the community of nations.

The Commonwealth has led world opinion and action on South Africa and remains at the forefront. We are united, we are focused on what counts, and we are looking to the future.

I should also note that several other items were discussed.

We have expressed our deep concern about the situation in Mozambique. We also have noted that South Africa's acts of destabilization have resulted in material damage to other nations in the region and, with the end of apartheid in sight, we are looking for appropriate measures to help the reconstruction efforts of the countries of the region.

We have also examined an excellent report on the significant human resource development needs in a post-apartheid South Africa -- and the Commonwealth is committed to doing its part to meeting those needs.

Even as we sit at this table, an historic event is taking place in South Africa. The Peace Accord is being signed literally at this moment in Johannesburg. We are heartened by this key development and I know that I speak for all of my colleagues when I say that we earnestly hope that the dawn of a new South Africa for which the Commonwealth has worked so hard over so many years will soon be with us.

Thank you.