



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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I warmly welcome the announcement that the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) will be held on 20-21 December in Johannesburg. CODESA will be the forum for negotiation of a new constitution for South Africa and over twenty South African political groups have agreed to attend.

This is a crucial stage in the process towards a non-racial, democratic South Africa. While this process will undoubtedly be a difficult one, I am deeply heartened by the spirit of goodwill and cooperation with which parties are approaching the negotiations.

The Commonwealth has been at the forefront of international efforts to end apartheid in South Africa and it is clear that its efforts have been rewarded by the progress that has been made. At Harare in October, Commonwealth Heads of Government pledged to assist the transition to a non-racial South Africa.

In this spirit the Commonwealth has accepted an invitation from CODESA's Co-Chairpersons to send observers to this historic meeting. I welcome the invitation and I am pleased to announce that Sir Ninian Stephen will participate in the Commonwealth observer team.

Sir Ninian will join five other eminent representatives from Commonwealth member states in observing the proceedings of the two-day inaugural session of CODESA.

It is my sincere hope that CODESA will lead to the peaceful achievement of a democratic, non-racial South Africa. On behalf of the Australian Government and people, I wish the participants well in the difficult task ahead of them.