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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Amnesty International Delegation Visits South Africa

An Amnesty International delegation led by Secretary General Pierre Sané is in South Africa between 12 and 19 July 1997, to prepare Amnesty International's 23rd International Council Meeting (ICM) -- which will be held at the University of the Western Cape, from 12-19 December 1997.

Other delegates include Mary Rayner, Amnesty International's researcher on South Africa, based at the organization's International Secretariat in London, and Anne Burroughs, Press Officer for Amnesty International's USA Section.

The ICM -- Amnesty International's biennial world congress -- will gather together around 500 people from more than 60 countries which make up some of the organization's one million members around the globe. This will be the first occasion in which it has been held in Africa, and delegates will debate and set out the movement's strategy and priorities for the next two years.

During the visit, delegates will meet with representatives of the South African government, local authorities and nongovernmental organizations. They will be seeking the cooperation and involvement of South Africa's human rights community in activities prior to the ICM aimed at increasing the protection for human rights defenders elsewhere in Africa and globally. At meetings with government officials, Mr Sané will also raise some of Amnesty International's concerns and current work in the areas of the criminal justice system and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), as well as South Africa's role in international human rights protection. While in the country, Mary Rayner will attend the TRC hearings on prisons in Johannesburg on 21 July.

After leaving South Africa, Mr Sané will visit Malawi on 21 and 22 July to hold talks with President Bakili Muluzi concerning the abolition of the death penalty, and meet other senior government officials, human rights activists, religious leaders and journalists.

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