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THE CITIZEN, Johannesburg, 11 December 1991

R75,6-m for repatriation 'inadequate' ①

By Annette van Zyl

THE R75,6 million that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had initially requested for the repatriation and integration of about 30 000 South African exiles, was "quite inadequate", the newly appointed chief of the UNHCR mission, Mr Kallu Kalumiya, said yesterday.

Speaking at a Johannesburg Press Conference to announce the arrival today of 120 people from Tanzania, Mr Kalumiya said the UNHCR could only calculate precisely how much it would cost to bring the refugees back to the country after everybody had registered, but added that the present amount was not nearly enough.

Mr Kalumiya said the amount had been calculated on the basis that there were still about 24 000 people living in exile abroad, and 6 000 who were in the country.

"If one takes qualitative aspects such as the economically bleak situation of the country into consideration, the high unemployment rate, and the fact that most of the refugees will be going to urban areas, then the initial assessment is not adequate."

As soon as registration of exiles in foreign countries was completed, which was expected to be by the end of the month, then the UNHCR would try to revise their monetary appeal to the international community, said Mr Kalumiya.

The first return of exiles organised under the auspices of the UNHCR, will take place this morning when 120 former pupils of the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College will arrive on a chartered Air Tanzania flight.

"The first flight marks a new step in co-operation between the South African Government and the UNHCR initiated in September with the signing of a joint Memorandum of Understanding concluded for the return of exiles.

The UNHCR is working in close collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) which is co-ordinating all air transport arrangements for the return of exiles.

The National Co-ordinating Committee for the Repatriation of South African Exiles (NCCR) will be organising temporary reception, ground transportation, and the provision of basic needs.

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Business Day, Jo'burg, 11 Dec 1991

World's hotel groups show interest in SA

MARCIA KLEIN

THE local hotel industry has been the subject of keen enquiries by some of the world's major hotel groups wishing to capitalise on SA's re-entry into the global arena.

Groups that have been speaking to Fedhasa and SA's major hotel groups include Ramada, Best Western, Hyatt, Forte, Sheraton, various banks and representatives of international hotel interests.

But industry players said yesterday it could be some years before this initial interest turned into money on the table and new hotel operations.

Fedhasa executive director Peter Hearfield confirmed yesterday he had had discussions with most of these players.

He said their major motivation was to enlarge global representation "now that SA is back on the world map".

Although he believed they were serious about entry into SA, Hearfield said most plans were not at an advanced stage and it could be up to three years before any new international operation got off the ground.

However, a source said yesterday that Sanlam Properties could be near to completing negotiations with an international company — possibly Ramada — on the President Hotel in Cape Town.

Industry players were not certain how the groups intended coming into the market, but said they would probably be looking at management contracts — without becoming major investors — rather than acquisition.

Hearfield said: "International companies were also realising that the SA market was tough and there were certain economic barriers, with no magic formula which had not already been tried locally."

He said the entry of major players posed no threat to the local industry. It would raise competitive standards but not undercut local rates.

Protea Hotels MD Arthur Gillis said his group had spoken to Ramada, Best Western, Sheraton and others.

International hotel groups seemed interested in management contracts but may have realised that the SA market was not that simple, said Gillis. International brands had to be adapted to local conditions and he felt the international groups "would have more chance of success with a strategic alliance, like Southern Sun and Accor on the Formule 1 project".

Gillis said there was room for international players at the top of the market but these groups were looking at a room rate of about \$300 and a 70% occupancy to break even in the five star market — placing themselves out of the range of local holidaymakers.

Karos hotels had spoken to Best Western, Hyatt and a Japanese group, chairman Selwin Hurwitz said.

But Karos was not interested in forming a partnership with an international group as it had come a long way itself, investing R100m on upgrading its assets.

Sun International MD Ken Rosevear had met some international groups, but had not had any serious discussions.

He said the local industry was complicated and international groups did not have the infrastructure in areas such as bookings.

This sort of service would be costly to run with only one or two operations, and in this light, entry did not seem likely for the next few years, he said.

Don't expect too much from SA reform: Minister

HARARE. — Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Nathan Shamuyarira yesterday cautioned against too much optimism in the commitment of the South African Government to the creation of a non-racial democratic society, the national news agency Ziana reports.

"In such a fast-changing situation it is easy for the people to be fooled by the emerging pattern which may not be a lasting pattern," Mr Shamuyarira said, addressing the opening session of the Africa Fund Committee.

Mr Shamuyarira said the situation in South Africa had changed since the formation of the fund. When the fund was established, it was envisaged that it would be used as "a tool to force the South African Government to go to the negotiating table."

He said a Patriotic Front had been formed, and a meeting to lay the ground for constitutional talks had been scheduled for December 20.

The Africa Fund, set up by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to express solidarity with anti-apartheid movements in South Africa, should remain intact, because it still had a part to play in the fight against apartheid and racial oppression.

"We believe that there is still an important task for the fund to perform," he said.

However, in a speech later, the chairman of the fund, Mr Shri Mehrotra, said the fund was facing financial problems because of the diminishing aid.

"The resource position of the fund is much worse than what it was when senior officials met in Kuala Lumpur in May 1991," he told the meeting.