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Timetable set for sanctions

BILLY PADDOCK

TRADE and investment sanctions against SA could be lifted by Commonwealth countries as soon as a multiparty conference on negotiations was under way, diplomatic sources said yesterday.

But financial sanctions, including lending by financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, would remain until agreement was reached on the text of a new democratic constitution. The sources said, however, financial sanctions could be lifted earlier if recommended by the multiparty conference.

The Commonwealth committee of foreign ministers, which met earlier this month under the chairmanship of Canadian Foreign Minister Barbara McDougall, has recommended this timetable to the heads of government meeting in Harare next month.

The foreign ministers also recommended the immediate lifting of people-to-people sanctions, including consular and visa restrictions, cultural and scientific boycotts, restrictions on tourism promotion and the ban on direct airlinks.

A senior diplomatic source said given the composition of the committee — the foreign ministers of four African countries and of Malaysia, Guyana, India, Australia and Canada — there was little doubt the recommendations would be accepted.

The committee took a tougher line than the ANC's recommendations on a phased lifting of sanctions because financial sanctions were "the most demonstrably effective of all sanctions" and it was still neces-

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sary to use "effective forms of sanctions pressure to ensure a successful final outcome".

The committee recommended that "other economic sanctions, including trade and investment measures, should be lifted when appropriate transitional mechanisms had been agreed upon which would enable all parties to participate fully and effectively in negotiations".

The source said this recommendation effectively meant that as soon as a multiparty conference was up and running, this pressure could be lifted.

He said it was not clear how the recommendations would be implemented.

The ANC's policy on the phased lifting of sanctions, decided at its conference in July, stated that financial sanctions, along with trade and investment sanctions, should be lifted once an interim government was in place.

Meanwhile, TIM COHEN reports that Commonwealth secretary-general Emeka Anyaoku has hinted at a more conciliatory approach towards SA, saying political progress here might enable the Harare meeting to "unite in helping to end apartheid and build a new SA".

In a pre-summit statement yesterday, Anyaoku also called for the doubling of the organisation's main development fund, the £30m Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, by the year 2000.

The committee of foreign ministers had recommended the phased lifting of sanctions in view of the "real, if sometimes still faltering steps" towards a democratic SA.

Real obstacles remained and without full voting and constitutional rights for the majority in sight, a relaxation of all international pressure would be inappropriate, Anyaoku said.

KIN BENTLEY reports from London that representatives from SA would probably be invited to the Harare meeting only if a "unified, interim arrangement" had been achieved by then.

Commonwealth secretariat spokesman Patsy Robertson said that in the past, the ANC and PAC would attend such summits as a matter of course. But, she said, should a "unified group" for SA not have evolved in time, it would "not (be) helpful" to have just ANC and PAC representatives.

Govt education plan 'neglects key issues'

DAVE LOURENS

A BROADLY based forum was necessary to formulate a restructuring policy for SA education, the Urban Foundation said yesterday.

The foundation was responding to government's education renewal strategy which it said represented an opportunity to begin the process of reconstructing SA education — but several key issues had to be addressed.

A member of the foundation's education policy and system change unit (Edupol), Jane Hofmeyr, said these were the grievances of disaffected groups, historical disadvantages, allocation of resources and macro-policy concerns. Edupol member Peter Buckland said the education crisis stemmed from problems of legitimacy and financial and administrative capacity restrictions.

Although the strategy represented a genuine attempt at change by the authorities, it had consulted only one key policy group, and focused mainly on adjustments to the existing system rather than opening a debate [illegible]ut fundamental reconstruction of the system.

Crucial aspects such as teacher education and language policy had been neglected.

The legitimacy of any negotiating forum would be open to question unless it was seen to address day-to-day issues such as lack of textbooks and classrooms and under-utilisation of facilities. Unless short-term gains could be delivered, the longer-term negotiation process would be in jeopardy.

Edupol believed priority had to be given to establishing an acceptable process which would provide opportunities for all stakeholders to participate.

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Top hotel chain has big plans for SA

BRENT VON MELVILLE

THE world's second largest hotel group is poised to take on SA's top-notch hotels with plans to build 10 major four- and five-star hotels in SA over the next few years.

Ramada International, which last year had 47-million occupants in more than 900 hotels worldwide and a turnover of $5,5bn, has "definite" plans to build in SA, according to development and franchise relations vice-president Ulrich Gevers.

Interviewed in Johannesburg yesterday, Gevers said the US-based, Hong Kong-controlled group would be looking initially to build or buy a hotel in each of the three key cities — Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town — over the next few months. Certain sites "had already been looked at".

He said the group was known for taking over existing hotels and bringing them to Ramada standards.

Gevers said the group would be putting in its four-star Ramada Hotel and five-star Ramada Renaissance hotels. It was currently talking to SA-based institutions for financing, although the group was "certainly prepared to participate in the equity of the hotels as long as it made financial sense to do so".

He added that SA could be the springboard for Ramada's launch into the rest of southern Africa. The group was also active in the casino and gaming market and Gevers hinted it had been involved in negotiations with Sun International.

Richards Bay gets steel export terminal

BRENT VON MELVILLE

ISCOR, in a move intended to capitalise on increasing export potential, has entered into an agreement with Rennies for the development of a dedicated terminal for the export of steel at Richards Bay.

Industry sources say the move will dovetail neatly with the joint Iscor-Safmarine venture for the construction of a new $50m bulk iron ore-steel carrier.

The deal will also see Rennies clearing and forwarding a much bigger volume of Iscor steel.

At a presentation to analysts in Johannesburg this week, Rennies CE Pete Steyn confirmed plans for the terminal, but did not divulge its size.

According to Iscor figures, current steel exports account for about 46% of sales, or 2,6-million tons.

Iron ore exports have increased over the past few years, with 1991 levels reaching 14,3-million tons.

The new bulk iron ore carrier, in which Iscor will have a 60% interest, will be built in Romania and will be capable of carrying 150 000 tons.