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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

22 November 1985

Dear Charles,

Mr  
Prime Minister  
CDP  
22/11

South Africa: Eminent Persons Group (EPG)

Mr

The Prime Minister may like to have a summary of the position now reached.

The Commonwealth Secretary-General wrote to Sir Antony Acland today enclosing a list of those who have agreed to serve on the Eminent Persons Group (EPG). I attach a copy of Ramphal's letter and enclosure. As you will see, the Canadian nominee is Archbishop Edward Scott, the Anglican Primate. He appears to have no previous African experience but should not be objectionable to the South African Government. Malcolm Fraser and General Obasanjo have been appointed co-chairmen of the Group.

Ramphal has asked that the UK, together with Canada and Australia, should take the lead in informing the South African Government of the composition of the Group and of the terms of the Commonwealth Accord. We have arranged to do this through our Ambassadors in Pretoria on the morning of Monday 25 November. The Secretariat intends to release a statement at noon on that day and Ramphal is also planning to make his own statement in New York.

Mr Moberly, who saw Pik Botha on 20 November, reports that the South African Government remain hostile to the EPG and that there is still considerable doubt whether they will agree to cooperate with it. Pik Botha argued strongly that there should be no public statements which might make it even more difficult for the South African Government to react positively. We are concerned that Ramphal, in his proposed statement on 25 November, may jeopardise the EPG's prospects as far as South Africa is concerned and Sir Antony Acland has therefore put this point to him, urging him to confine his remarks to a purely factual statement about the composition of the Group and the date of its first meeting. Ramphal has undertaken to reflect but it must be doubtful whether he will heed this advice.

/Lord Barber

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Lord Barber is visiting South Africa on his own account next week and expects to see P W Botha. This will be excellent preparation for the first meeting of the Group which Ramphal has proposed should take place in London on 12-14 December. That meeting will presumably be largely devoted to agreeing terms of reference, on which we have already fed in some ideas to the Secretariat.

*Yours ever,*

*Colin Budd*

(C R Budd)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
PS/10 Downing Street

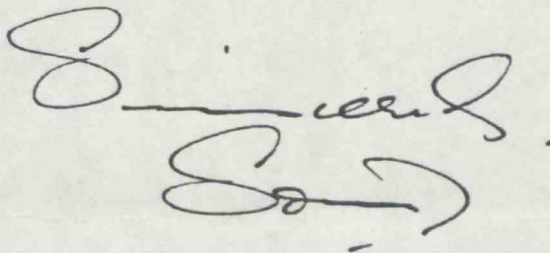
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22 November, 1985

Dear Anthony,

It is now clear that we can proceed to the constitution of the Group of Eminent Persons contemplated by paragraph 5 of the Commonwealth Accord on Southern Africa agreed by Commonwealth Heads of Government at Nassau. Reaching out to the government and the concerned parties in South Africa is a major part of the Group's function and I trust that it will wish to do so once it starts its formal proceedings. However, in advance of the Group developing its working procedures, it would be helpful if Commonwealth embassies in Pretoria could bring the text of the Commonwealth Accord on Southern Africa to the attention of the authorities there along with advance intimation of the constitution of the Group of Eminent Persons. The list is as attached. Mr. Fraser and General Obasanjo will be Co-Chairmen of the Group of Eminent Persons. It is my hope that the Group will hold a preliminary meeting in London within the next few weeks.

While I am addressing this to Australia and Canada as well, I rather specially rely on your good offices in view of the time constraints.



Shridath S. Ramphal

Sir Antony Acland, KCMG, KCVO,  
Permanent Under Secretary of State,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office,  
London, S.W.1.

COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS

1. Mr. Malcolm Fraser,  
former Prime Minister of  
Australia - Proposed by Prime Minister  
Hawke
2. General Olusegun Obasanjo,  
former Head of State of  
Nigeria - Proposed jointly by President  
Kaunda and Prime Minister  
Mugabe with the concurrence  
of the Government of Nigeria
3. Lord Barber of Wentbridge,  
Chairman, Standard Chartered  
Bank and former Minister of  
the Government of the United  
Kingdom - Proposed by Prime Minister  
Thatcher
4. Dame Nita Barrow,  
a President of the World  
Council of Churches, former  
President of the World YWCA  
and Chairperson of the  
International NGO Women's  
Forum in Nairobi - Proposed by Prime Minister  
Pindling with the concurrence  
of the Government of Barbados
5. Mr. John Malecela,  
former Minister of the  
Government of Tanzania - Proposed jointly by President  
Kaunda and Prime Minister  
Mugabe with the concurrence  
of the Government of Tanzania
6. Sardar Swaran Singh,  
former Minister of the  
Government of India - Proposed by Prime Minister  
Gandhi
7. The Most Revd. Archbishop  
Edward W. Scott, DD, Primate  
of the Anglican Church of  
Canada - Proposed by Prime Minister  
Mulroney

