

MEDIA ADVISORY

FIRST EVER ALL-AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CONFERENCE JOHANNESBURG, 2-4 NOVEMBER 1998

Around 100 grassroots activists from some 44 African countries arrive this weekend in South Africa for the first ever All-Africa Human Rights Defenders Conference, organized by Amnesty International from 2-4 November in Johannesburg.

The conference is the culmination of a series of regional workshops in North, East, West, Central and Southern Africa, organized as part of a year-long campaign to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It will be officially opened on 2 November by **Jacob Selebi**, Director General of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs and **Pierre Sané**, Amnesty International Secretary General who is based in the organization's London headquarters.

Workshops taking place during the conference will focus on the threats faced by human rights defenders throughout the continent; the particular dangers faced by women's rights activists; the role of journalists; short and long-term protection methods; and setting up an Africa-wide network of human rights defenders.

Delegates are expected to approve a "Johannesburg Declaration" to protect and promote the work of African human rights defenders, which will be presented to the first world summit of human rights defenders in Paris this December.

Media arrangements: (all at Holiday Inn Garden Court, JHB International Airport)

- 1400 hrs, 2 November: Official Opening ceremony; followed by
1530 hrs, 2 November: Press briefing and opportunities for individual interviews
- 0830-1030, 4 November: There will be a special opportunity to meet with journalists participating in the summit for a discussion on journalists as human rights defenders
- 1400 hrs, 4 November: Closing ceremony followed by press briefing and opportunities for individual interviews

A number of the participants will be available for interview throughout the conference. They represent varied backgrounds, issues, genders, countries and areas of work. Interviews can be held in a variety of languages including: English, French, Portuguese, Swahili, Arabic, seSotho, and isiZulu.

To obtain a media pack, including a list and brief biographies of participants available for media

opportunities, to attend the press briefing or to arrange an interview, please call:

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