

ACTSA Press Release
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London
For Immediate Release

South Africa State Visit: An affirmation of solidarity and opportunity to develop global solutions, says Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA)

The state visit of President Jacob Zuma of South Africa to Britain (3 -5 March) is an affirmation of the solidarity between people in Britain and South Africa. The democratic government of South Africa has consistently thanked those who took action against apartheid and supported the struggle for freedom and democracy for South Africa. It continues to request support today as it seeks to ensure decent and sustainable livelihoods for all South Africans.

During the state visit the South African government will want to encourage investment in South Africa. ACTSA calls on people to reverse the boycott of apartheid South Africa and buy fairly traded South Africa products and support sustainable tourism. We are in Fairtrade fortnight. The British and South African governments will discuss the global economic crisis. ACTSA calls for measures to be adopted which reduce the impact of the crisis on the poorest and to maximise decent jobs. We expect Zimbabwe to be discussed and urge support for the people of Zimbabwe to find solutions to their crisis based on democracy and respect of human rights. We hope and request that the situation in Swaziland where political freedom is denied will also be discussed. We believe that the visit provides an opportunity for Britain and South Africa to develop leadership on climate change and ensure there is an international legally binding agreement which tackles the causes of climate change, provides additional resources to developing countries and supports the reduction of poverty.

ACTSA and the National Union of Teachers will be launching 'Football and Freedom', a pack for schools, on March 3rd. The materials will allow teachers to use children's passion for the World Cup to explore South Africa's history, culture and the challenges and successes of development.

During and following the visit ACTSA will continue to build links and solidarity between Britain and southern Africa in support of development, democracy, rights and justice.

Ends

Notes for Editor

ACTSA was established in 1994 as the successor organisation to the Anti Apartheid Movement.

The schools pack 'Football and Freedom' will be launched at Alexandra Park School, N11 at 5pm on Wednesday, 3rd March. The launch will be addressed by Dr Blade Nzimande, South African Minister of Higher Education and Training, Christine Blower, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers and Tony Dykes, Director of ACTSA.

Commenting on the pack Tony Dykes said: "This summer millions of children in Britain will eagerly follow the World Cup in South Africa. Freedom and Football will provide a unique opportunity to use the World Cup to introduce them to South Africa's history, culture and development. Twenty years ago Nelson Mandela was released from prison. Children today know him as a great statesman, but very few know about the role of him and others in the struggle for racial equality and freedom for all South Africans, or the achievements of the new South Africa as it works to overcome the legacy of apartheid."