for immediate release

ACCESS CONDEMNS UNITED STATES STATE DEPARTMENT DECISION TO GRANT VISAS TO SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL RUGBY TEAM

ACCESS, the American Coordinating Committee for Equality in Sport and Society, condemned this morning's decision announced by the United States State Department that it would grant visas to the South African Springbok Rugby team. ACCESS had appealed to President Reagan in late June to deny the visas for the South Africans.

The Springboks have been invited by the American Rugby Football Union and the Eastern Rugby Football Union to tour the United States after the scheduled Springbok tour of New Zealand. The South Africans would play in Chicago, Albany and New York City on September 19, 22 and 26 respectively.

The controversy over the New Zealand tour has dominated politics in that country for almost a year. Two recent demonstrations against the tour brought out 50,000 and 75,000 protesters. There was recent speculation that Prime Minister Muldoon hoped that the Americans would deny visas and then his Government would follow. Now that possibility is ruled out.

The National Chairperson of ACCESS, Dr. Richard E. Lapchick, said that the State Department decision "was part of the package being delivered by the Reagan Administration. It is consistent with all the moves the Administration has made so far regarding South Africa. Suddenly a strategic ally, the State Department now has to convince the American people that apartheid is being softened. What better way to convince the public than by bringing a series on 'integrated' South African teams to the United States?"

"Americans will not see the conditions inside South Africa. They will not know that sports are virtually totally segregated at the club level where 99% of the African people must compete with poor facilities and little training opportunities. They won't know that Africans cannot enter 'white areas' to train in ultra-modern facilities. Apartheid will thus get a face-lift in America without changing at all."

ACCESS has scheduled an Executive Meeting for tonight to decide what actions to take to stop the tour. Pressure on the Administration and rugby unions will continue and other actions, including possible demonstrations, will be discussed.

for more information, call (212) 662-2140

NEWS RELEASE
ANTI-APARTHEID COMMITTEE ACTING CHAIRMAN APPEALS TO UNITED STATES
TO STOP PROPOSED SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY TOUR

The following statement was issued today by the acting Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, Vladimir A. Fravets (Ukraine):

The Special Committee has recently learned of the decision of the American Rugby Football Union to invite the South African Springbok rugby team to tour the United States after the conclusion of their proposed tour of New Zealand. The South Africans are reportedly scheduled to compete in Chicago, Albany and New York City on 10, 22 and 26 September, respectively.

The Special Committee has repeatedly drawn the attention of the international community to the fact that the participation of South African apartheid teams would be a flagrant violation of the Olympic principle of non-discrimination and of resolutions unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on apartheid in sports.

The Special Committee is gravely concerned that the Rugby Union has been enticed by South African propaganda and by offers of financial reward for agreeing to sports exchanges with South Africa.

I deplore the manoeuvres of those sporting bodies aimed at assisting the apartheid regime to break its isolation from international sports. Such efforts represent an absolute insensitivity to the feelings of the people of South Africa.

On behalf of the Special Committee, I appeal to the American Rugby Football Union to immediately cancel its invitation to the South African racially selected teams as a demonstration of its support for the oppressed people of South Africa. I also appeal to the Government of the United States to take urgent action so that the Springbok team will not be allowed to compete in the United States.

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For information media – not an official record