



ALL SMILES: Nelson Mandela in a jovial mood as he faces the international press in Paris.

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ANC leader forced to take a break

GENEVA — Nelson Mandela's gruelling schedule took its toll yesterday as the exhausted ANC deputy president — on the fifth day of the six-week international tour — cancelled an appointment to catch some much-needed rest.

Alarms flickered across the world when news was received that a doctor had examined Mr Mandela (71) after his first public appearance in Switzerland.

Mr Mandela left South Africa on Monday on a tour of 13 countries spanning three continents. He visited Botswana and then flew to France for a crammed, two days of meetings with French President Francois Mitterand, other top politicians and business leaders. He arrived in Switzerland yesterday and flies to West Germany tomorrow.

After an address to the International Labour Organisation yesterday, Mr Mandela cancelled an appointment at the International Red Cross.

He did not disappoint waiting fans who gathered at the headquarters of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to listen to the man for whose freedom they have campaigned for decades.

ESMARE VAN DER MERWE

short off-the-cuff speech but then handed over to the ANC's foreign affairs director, Thabo Mbeki.

Arriving at the WCC, Mr Mandela told waiting newsmen that he was in good health. He denied that he had been examined by the doctor accompanying him on the tour, saying: "He has given me no instructions which suggest that I am not well. In fact, he did not even take my blood pressure today as he usually does every morning".

But Mr Mandela admitted that it was "quite possible" that his schedule would be cut back.

His close aides looked concerned and said they would definitely relieve the pressure on the deputy president. They said the ANC's Ahmed Kathrada had telephoned from South Africa to ask about Mr Mandela's health soon after the news was reported.

Mr Mandela will meet anti-apartheid organisations today before taking a weekend break at an undisclosed venue in Switzerland. He will resume his