

SOUTH AFRICA IN AFRICA AND THE WORLD

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Maybe we should start by reminding ourselves of where we come from. I wish to re-capture the essence of the Apartheid South Africa as well as the envisaged way forward in the words of two outstanding sons of our soil and leaders.

The late President Chief Albert Luthuli in 1961 at the Nobel Lecture said:

"Apartheid survives because those who sponsor it, profit from it. They provide moral whitewash for the conditions which exist in the country for the fact that the country is ruled exclusively by a white government elected by an exclusively white electorate which is a privileged minority; for the fact that 87% of land and all best agricultural land within reach of town market and railways is reserved for white ownership and occupation and now through the recent group areas act non-whites are losing more land to white greed; for the fact that all skilled and highly-paid jobs are for whites only; for the fact that all universities of any academic merit are an exclusive preserve of whites; for the fact that the education of every white child costs about 64 Pounds per annum whilst that of an African child costs about 9 Pounds per annum and that of an Indian child or Coloured child costs about 20 Pounds per annum; for the fact that white education is universal and compulsory up to the age of 16 whilst education for the non-white children is scarce and inadequate; and for the fact that almost one million a year are arrested and gaoled or fined for breaches of innumerable pass and permit laws which do not apply to whites."

The late President Oliver Reginald Tambo also had this to say:

"The true patriots of South Africa, for whom I speak, will not be satisfied with anything less than direct individual adult suffrage and the right to stand for and be elected to all organs of government. In economic matters we will be satisfied with nothing less than equality of opportunity in every sphere, and the enjoyment by all of those heritages which form the resources of the country which up to now have been appropriated on a racial "whites only" basis. In culture we will be satisfied with nothing less than the opening of all doors of learning to non-segregatory institutions on the sole criterion of ability. In the social sphere we will be satisfied with nothing less than the abolition of all racial bars."

Today we meet in London, Africans and Europeans, under very different circumstances having together with the rest of the international community defeated Apartheid, a system the international community aptly described as a crime against humanity. We are here to report and to discuss with you how South Africa is being transformed and to map out the challenges that lie ahead as we approach the end of our first decade of freedom. A non-racial, non-sexist South Africa is in the making, at peace with itself, its neighbours and the world as our President Thabo Mbeki said.

Our people shocked the world with their magnanimity in victory. Having declared in the Freedom Charter that South Africa belongs to all who live in it. They embarked on a process of reconciliation rather than in a process of revenge and retribution, led by our former President Nelson Mandela. Whereas the rest of the world expected a bloodbath, instead, there was a peaceful transition which the world called a miracle. As Frank Dobson said last night, this was not a miracle by any extra terrestrial powers, but it was the result of a vision of our collective leadership of the ANC and the experience gained in our long, just struggle and the cooperation of President de Klerk and others in the National Party.

Conscious of the fact that this was not only our victory but the victory of all Africans and all the forces that had participated in the anti-Apartheid struggle all over the world and other organizations, we could not replace Apartheid with another unjust system. There would be no difference between us and our oppressors. My colleagues would be discussing with you all the changes that have taken place inside the country in education, health, housing, safety and security, the justice system, economics and trade, land and agriculture, environment and tourism, local government, arts, culture, science and technology, to name but a few.

The Organisation of African Unity fulfilled its mandate of achieving solidarity and unity amongst Africans and the decolonisation of Africa. The continent sacrificed enormously to support our struggle under the leadership of the OAU. Now that we are all free, save Western Sahara, the possibility exists to concentrate on the renewal of our continent and restoring the continent to its pre-colonial glory. There is a critical mass of leadership that is committed to a continent of peace and stability, democracy and the respect for human rights, good governance, economic development, emancipation of women and the restoration of our cultural heritage. South Africa has both a responsibility and an obligation to contribute to the continent's renewal in building a peaceful and prosperous continent.

As Africans, we have recognized that just as we needed partners in our colonial struggles, we need partners now in the struggle against poverty, underdevelopment, the Aids pandemic and other diseases. To this end, as Africans we realised that we needed a different organization to take up the new challenges, hence the transformation of the OAU into the AU. The South Africans are playing a major role in this and we were pleased to host the launch of the AU which is a natural progression from the OAU whose mandate was the elimination of colonialism on our continent. A task well performed. The AU's primary objective is now to move the continent out of its poverty and underdevelopment and to give hope to our people and to get rid of Afro-pessimism. The AU aims at putting Africa on the path to sustainable development.

The AU as a continental body is structured such, that it is capable of meeting the challenge of the 21st Century. Some of its organs include the setting up of a Pan African Parliament that we hope will have its inaugural session in the first quarter of 2004. Already 27 member states have ratified the PAP Protocol. A Court of Justice, which is also well on the way towards establishment. An Economic, Social and Cultural (ECOSOC) Council which should be up and running in the first half of 2004. The ECOSOC will bring Africa's civil society on board as the most important strategic partner with governments to implement all socio economic plans and programmes.

In addition to the above, the Continent has decided to set up a Peace and Security Council whose major objective will be to contribute to the elimination of Wars/Conflict on the Continent. We are well on our way to putting this together. The PSC will have a Continental Standby force which will serve as a deterrent as well as a rapid deployment force. Very careful thought and processes have been given to the mechanism and operations of this Force. A common African Defence and Security Policy is being drafted and will serve as the basis upon which Peace Keeping and Preventative Diplomacy will be premised. South Africa has been very active in trying to create peace and stability on the continent through the AU and SADC.

We have undertaken a lot of conflict resolution responsibilities. South Africa, having transformed our defence force from a killing machine that reigned terror all over Southern Africa to a defence force that protects our sovereignty and territorial integrity we are now able to contribute to disaster relief as we did in Mozambique during the floods and to peacekeeping as we are doing in the DRC, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Comores, etc. NEPAD (The New Partnership for Africa's Development) is the socio-economic development programme by which we hope to achieve these objectives. As you may know, NEPAD was adopted by the AU at its Summit in Lusaka 2001 as a programme of action of the AU. Although it is a very young programme, it has however already developed and prepared projects that will lead to us attaining some of our set objectives.

The priorities of NEPAD are peace and security, democracy and respect for human rights,

good governance, land and agriculture (food security), education, skills training and health, provision of reliable energy, water, information technology, market access, sound macro-economic policies, transport infrastructure, telecommunications, the details of which you will get in the commissions. And this is supposed to be a partnership between government, business and civil society, partnership with countries of the South, partnership with countries of the North, G8 and the EU and partnership with business and civil society internationally. Let me say something on the Peer Review Mechanism. Let us from the onset, state that this is a voluntary mechanism acceded to by African states for doing a systematic examination and assessment of the performance of a state by other states (Peers) through designated African institutions in political and economic governance. The aim is to learn from one another, share best practice, identify and assist in identifying weaknesses in order to reach acceptable standards. It is not punitive or an instrument of exclusion.

The Africans have also come to terms with the fact that without the emancipation and involvement of women in the renewal of the continent the renewal will remain an unfulfilled dream. The women have to be the engine of development, hence the bold step of insisting that at least 50% of the leadership of the commission of the AU should be women. I think it is the first international organization to implement that. South Africa is contributing to this by ensuring that in South Africa itself women are in the leadership positions in government, in Parliament, in the judiciary and in other areas of civil society. We are also encouraging business to include women in their management positions. We are very proud of what we have achieved so far, though not enough. Not many countries manage to achieve what we have achieved in less than 10 years. The number of women at our tertiary institutions has also increased and they will be in the majority soon.

We are confident that having dared to declare the 21st century an African century, we have the commitment and the capacity together, in partnership with you and the rest of the world, to achieve this goal. South Africa is also accommodating a lot of students from the continent in our institutions and is cooperating with the continent in many other fields. There are still lots of challenges that lie ahead in bringing peace to the whole continent. In Cote d'Ivoire, peace is still fragile. Also in Liberia, the Manoir River Basin countries and the Central African Republic. The peace process in Sudan and Somalia is progressing, but slow. The Zimbabwean problems are taking long to resolve. The Ethiopia and Eritrean situation is also fragile.

A lot has been said about how South Africa should resolve the problems of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is an independent, sovereign state and not the 10th province of South Africa. We firmly believe that the Zimbabweans themselves, across party political and other divides have the responsibility to resolve their problems on the basis of the will of the people of Zimbabwe. Certainly all of us want Zimbabwe to succeed and have an obligation to help them move forward. On the primary problem of the land, we believe the redistribution of land is an attempt to correct an historic injustice and we support them in that. We may disagree with the methods used and we believe that they made mistakes in the implementation of the land reform policy, but that does not take away the fact that it had to be done. We also recognise that there are some political problems and a socio-economic crisis in Zimbabwe which is of concern to all of us, especially the immediate neighbours. And therefore we have a real interest and we believe, maybe naively so that the solution will come from a dialogue amongst the Zimbabweans themselves. We are assisting in the way we believe best which may not be what others believe. But from where stand, we believe that that is the best way.

We today stand proud as a people and contribute in a systematic way to the pursuance of a complex global agenda whose key elements include the war against poverty and underdevelopment, preservation of peace and the strengthening of the global multilateral system as a bedrock for a system of civilized international governance which is so necessary to inspire collective responsibility in addressing old challenges as well as in confronting new ones such as global terrorism. South Africa is very active in the Non-Aligned Movement and in the promotion of South-South cooperation including the spirit of solidarity and friendship with the Asian continent.

Following President Mbeki's address to the ASEAN Summit a decision was taken to

strengthen Afro / Asian solidarity. An initiative led by SA and Indonesia is in motion. Following a successful meeting in Indonesia in July this year, South Africa will host the Africa, Asia Solidarity Regional Organisations Council (AASROC) next year. This will culminate in a Summit in 2005 in Bandung which will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Bandung Conference that gave birth to the Non Aligned Movement. Later this year Africa will consolidate her relationship with China when the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa plays host to a conference between us. NEPAD will be the main feature of our agenda.

Through the TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on Africa's Development) process Japan is also on board and has made commitments to support NEPAD especially in the areas of Health and Education. Next year South Africa will be hosting an Africa/Brazil forum as part of our effort to reconnect with the Africans in the Diaspora. Brazil has the second largest concentration of Africans in the world, second to Nigeria. We were honoured to host the World Conference Against Racism. Our own history made this a landmark event for our people. We are conscious of our responsibility to actively pursue the programme of action agreed upon. We are convinced, as President Mbeki said last night, that the best contribution we can make to this effort is to succeed in our own country in building a truly non racial society at peace with itself and enriched by human diversity. Last year, we were further honoured when we met in Johannesburg for the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD).

As custodians of the outcomes of these two major international conferences we bear a special responsibility and hope that you will assist us to turn its conclusions into reality. South Africa took a non-precedented step of voluntary giving up its programme of weapons of mass destruction. We have also successfully initiated various measures to ban anti-personnel landmines and end the proliferation of small arms. Today we recommit ourselves to the fundamental elements of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. We hope that nothing will be done by anyone to unravel that important pact amongst the nations of the world. Whilst we remain committed to non-proliferation, we also insist that the nuclear weapon states must carry out their obligations under the Treaty to rid themselves and the world of all nuclear weapons. We have a special interest in making the world a safer place for all its inhabitants, but to achieve our objectives we need to mobilise world public opinion to achieve real and lasting peace. We are painfully aware that there are obstacles on the way to our forward march as we claim the 21st Century as ours. A major obstacle is the unequal international trade and economic architecture that favours the rich countries of the North.

This fact was made very clear to us during the WTO meeting in Cancun. We are disappointed at the inability of some to go beyond their narrow interests. This behaviour can only lead to increased global divide, more tension and greater despair of those marginalized. This is hardly the environment necessary for global peace and security. We believe this should be obvious. We call upon everyone here to be an ambassador for the alternative. The alternative of a world driven by a commitment to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment and recognition of the need for an effective mutually beneficial and credible multilateral system as a foundation for the necessary partnership between the North and the South in the interest of human security and global peace. The United Nations Charter provides the basis for such a multilateral system. Our critical task is to strengthen this noble institution. A key part of this strengthening is its necessary reform. That is why SA stands firmly behind the initiative of the Secretary General Mr Kofi Annan announced during his address to UNGA 58. We also stand firmly behind many other global initiatives that promote peace and development based on solidarity amongst the peoples of the world.

Let me end by reminding all of us here that notwithstanding all the goodwill that exists, for as long as the commitments and pledges are not translated into hard resources they are meaningless. Let us work together in mobilizing the resources that exist in the world for the elimination of poverty and underdevelopment, not only for the benefit of South Africa, but for the benefit of all the poor of the world. I want to assure you that in the same way as we defeated Colonialism and Apartheid, we as Africans are already engaged in this titanic struggle to defeat backwardness, underdevelopment and poverty. We shall be victorious with your help and support. We recognize fully that the primary responsibility lies with us. We commit to honour our own obligations.

This does not mean we shall not falter on the way. But we need friends who shall walk with us all the way - convinced of our own loyalty to our people. Friends who will support us when we stumble and not push us further down if only to confirm deeply held prejudices of African incompetence. Once again you have been our tremendous source of support. Let us continue to work together. I would like to invite you as our all weather friends to take time off and celebrate with us our first decade of freedom. We have decided to celebrate together with the Haitian people who will at the same time be celebrating their bicentenary. The struggle of the African slaves, inspired by both the French and American Revolutions, sought to assert the equality of humanity and that revolution became an inspiration for all of us. We are having a joint celebration of 200 years of the oldest African Republic and 10 years of the youngest African Republic. We are mindful of the fact that both Haiti and South Africa are facing similar challenges. This celebration will allow us to pause and recharge our batteries for the many challenges and battles that lie ahead. Let future generations count us amongst those who boldly rose to the challenge when the call came.