

THE MWALIMU NYERERE FOUNDATION



"SOUTH AFRICA: TEN YEARS AFTER APARTHEID"

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

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AT

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PRETORIA
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Chairperson,

I am honoured and delighted to be here for this International Conference. I thank the organizers – the Africa Institute of South Africa and its Director – Dr. Eddy Maloka for inviting me to share some thoughts with you.

The subject under consideration – Ten Years After Apartheid – evokes a lot of memories. Memories of the bitter struggle. Memories of tribulations and trials. Memories of the tremendous sacrifices made. But it also brings in the fore memories of the triumph of the human spirit; a triumph brought about by the resilience, tenacity and solidarity of the people of South Africa both black and white against the evil system of apartheid. MADIBA's book, "Long Walk to Freedom" gave us some interesting and extraordinary insight on this. It also reminds us of what became the universalisation of the struggle which manifested itself in an unprecedented degree of human solidarity cutting across, racial, colour, religious and geographic divide. Indeed the struggle against apartheid and towards the realisation of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa encapsulated all that and more.

I wish therefore to pay tribute to the Africa Institute for hosting this Conference which has given us all a unique opportunity for reflection. The presence in our midst of so many distinguished personalities and experts from across the globe demonstrates not only the relevance and importance of the issues to be discussed but also the interest and commitment of those present in support of the crucial transition that this country has been going through in the last ten years. I believe it is also a manifestation of our collective

confidence in the continuing progress and prosperity of this nation through *inter alia* the consolidation of the democratic process.

The 'miracle' of South Africa lies not only in the relatively peaceful and fundamental change that has taken place especially bearing in mind the predictions of doom and gloom. It also stems from the broad and unrelenting support and solidarity that the people of this country have continued to receive from the peoples of the world.

Coming as I do from Tanzania where I had the honour of assuming several high positions of responsibility and which also made it possible for me to work closely with the leaders and representatives of the South African liberation movement, I know the extent of the commitment and contribution of my own country to the struggle. Having served as Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity for three successive terms totalling 12 years and more significantly having been actively involved in OAU affairs including its Dar es Salaam based Liberation Committee for many more years, I am very conscious of the firm support and engagement of the continental organization and its individual member states in the struggle for South Africa's freedom. Furthermore, a decade that I spent at the United Nations as the Permanent Representative of my country and as Chairman of the United Nations Committee on Decolonisation at a very critical period of the struggle not only of South Africa but Southern Africa as a whole gave me a profound awareness of the extent of international solidarity.

Put succinctly, Africans all over the continent and the friends of Africa all over the world were identified with the anti-apartheid struggle in one way or the other. While the level of support and contribution may have differed, there was no mistaking the overall commitment of the peoples of Africa and the world. Thus I recall the great emotions that we all felt when MADIBA (Nelson Mandela) was freed from prison in 1991. And those of us who were here in Pretoria on 10 May 1994 to witness the swearing in of the first ever

democratically elected President of South Africa will never forget that exhilarating, emotional and inspiring experience. In the words of that indefatigable opponent of apartheid the late Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, a great miracle was being performed in South Africa.

On 25 May that year, during the flag raising ceremony for the admission of South Africa in the membership of the OAU in the presence of the Foreign Minister of South Africa, the late Alfred Nzo, I stated that it was a great honour for me personally that that historical landmark has taken place when I was Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity – the organization that has been at the forefront of the liberation of the continent.

In short, what I am trying to say is that South Africa's struggle for freedom and against all forms of indignities and humiliations was our struggle and its victory our victory.

Chairperson,

A bold issue is being raised at this conference; an issue which of late has not been part of the development discourse in its deeper content. While there is a plethora of performance reports in most of our nations, churning out loads of numbers and complex statistics, it is in very rare occasions that the ultimate question is posed – ***what is the meaning of those numbers to the life of a nation and its people***. This conference has decided to grapple with exactly that issue.

From the brevity in which the issue is posed at this conference, the calibre of participants, and the broad spectrum that you all represent, I get the impression that the reflections at this conference do not simply invite an exercise of stocktaking, or merely of interpreting trends and tendencies. I also believe that we are here not to continue celebrating the resounding victory

against the abominable system of apartheid, or to embark in an exercise of self-glorification.

This conference is essentially asking: – ***where is South Africa, a decade after apartheid.*** We are all too aware that in the life of a nation, particularly one that comes from many many of years of subjugation, exploitation and humiliation of the majority of its people, 10 years is too short a span of time to allow for passing any judgement on its performance. Indeed, for a nation such as South Africa, which suffered for decades of the most vile and evil system of oppression in modern history, little can be expected to change in such a short period.

Yet, for a people who have rendered the ultimate sacrifice to reclaim their humanity; one year, one month, and even one day, of freedom and dignity constitutes a valuable stretch of time in the meaning of their life. They would remain vigilant in ensuring that the deeds they have embarked upon and the direction of their endeavours correspond to what they have fought for and is in line with the collective vision that they have always strived for.

Chairperson,

I do share the importance attached to the theme of this conference because it goes beyond a reflection on the achievements of a single decade, and that its ramifications transcend the confines of South Africa. Indeed, we are all too familiar with the predicament of our countries in the developing world as they went through their loss of innocence, with their euphoria dissipating, and strived to sustain their resolve and determination. In the case of Africa, its 45 years of independence have seen it traverse a trajectory whose shifts and changes have often taken only short periods of time to change entire trajectories.

Perhaps I should hasten to underscore at this juncture that the predicament of a post-apartheid South Africa have ramifications beyond its borders and to the whole of Africa. The mere fact that this nation could sustain and consolidate its democratic dispensation for 10 years, and to propel a dynamic economy, as well as strive to meet the needs of all her people, has not only reaffirmed the negation of the apartheid system, but it has also empowered and inspired the African people as a whole while at the same time underscoring the virtues of unity.

The 10 years of harmony and progress in South Africa have ascertained beyond doubt that when there is a commitment and dedication, a people can overcome the dysfunctions of their diversity and harness their differences to become a source of strength. Ten years of post apartheid South Africa have proved to the rest of the Africa and the world at large that it does not need to foster exclusionism, alienation, and dehumanisation of the majority of the people to develop a nation that is characterized by a multiplicity of races, ethnicities, religions, and a range of resource endowments. If anything, the experience of the past decade confirms that a democratic dispensation offers greater dividends than any exclusionist system and ideology.

Ten years after apartheid, South Africa is assuming its rightful position in the Continent's endeavours. It was uplifting for me while serving as the Secretary General of the Continental Organization to see the Government of this country taking up a vanguard position in pursuing the African agenda. Today, 10 years after apartheid, finds South Africa returning into the fold of African nations. It is quite evident that even within this short period, as a previously dismembered part is gradually bonding back, the Continent shows indications of retrieving its full potential.

Progress that has been achieved in the area of conflict prevention, management and resolution in the Continent bears testimony to an enhanced

momentum arising from South Africa's engagement in this endeavour. The leadership and coordinating role it has played in resolving the conflict in Burundi, Lesotho and Comoros, as well as its active involvement in collective efforts in other African crisis areas such as that of Democratic Republic of the Congo have enhanced the capacity to promote peace, security and stability in the Continent. The contribution of South Africa in transforming the African Union's Mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution has been quite significant. Indeed, 10 years after apartheid, we are witnessing a new dawn of peace emerging in Africa in which the major challenge is to mobilize forces for peace keeping; disarm former combatants and integrate them into harmonious communities; resettle displaced populations and pursue efforts at post conflict reconstruction.

Africa and the world at large has been exposed to a powerful virtue by South Africa as it strives to come to terms with its past. The catharsis generated by a genuine search for truth relating to past atrocities, and deploying this into a means of fostering reconciliation and forgiveness is now emulated across the region and many parts of the world. Post apartheid South Africa has taught all of us that even those who are made into the worst enemies, creating a relationship in which some are brutalized and dehumanised, can overcome the trauma of such a tragedy and the compulsion towards vengeance through a genuine process of reconciliation. As Africa enters this new era in which it seeks to be at peace with itself, after years of conflict and devastation in many of its parts, useful lessons can be derived from South Africa 10 years after apartheid.

South Africa like most of African countries is a mosaic of peoples, cultures, and religions with a rich array of institutions. It is a microcosm of Africa endowed with a vibrancy that makes a difference. The challenge confronting all of is how to use this rich diversity to be a source of strength instead of division thereby strengthening democratic governance and uplift

the lot of our people. South Africa's success in managing diversity within a democratic framework of governance, and using it as a strength and asset for development is a major contribution that it can make to Africa's struggle for promoting a democratic culture.

The success of South Africa in avoiding the anticipated implosion of its society due to the existing multiple diversities, that are tainted with hostilities by a self serving ideology of apartheid, is an exemplary lesson that the rest of Africa acknowledges. The past 10 years have proved that social and cultural diversities can be harnessed positively to create affluence and to rectify acute inequities. The relative harmony among its people that has been achieved in this short period, and the manner in which South Africa prides itself with its many tongues, many races, and many cultures provides a beacon of hope for those African has countries that are still struggling to overcome the dysfunctions arising from such primordial differences.

The embodiment of what post-apartheid South Africa represents is a man of whom the whole Continent, and indeed the whole world reveres. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela is a living icon who has not only epitomized the essence of redeeming both the victim and the perpetrator of apartheid, but he also represents the true meaning of a democratic dispensation. Madiba, is a tower of strength, a guiding light, a symbol of the African vision. He incarnates the essence of people's struggle to reassert their humanity, and at the same time, the foundation he laid in building a post-apartheid South Africa has importance for the whole Continent.

Chairperson,

In relation to Africa, one cannot overlook the dynamism exhibited by South African investors in entering into partnerships, acquiring enterprises, and opening outlets in other parts of the Continent. Such investments have contributed to procuring modern technologies, resuscitating old enterprises

and increasing government revenue through fiscal mechanisms. When properly directed and streamlined these economic linkages should provide the necessary levers to the Continent's quest for economic integration.

It is this quest for closer unity, solidarity, cooperation, and integration that the African Union represents. It is more than a coincidence that the revitalized Continental body was launched here in South Africa in the city of Durban, President Thabo Mbeki, becoming the first current Chairman of the African Union. The honour given to South Africa to host the first Assembly and the launching of the new Organization symbolized the high esteem African leaders and the African people hold for the achievements of this country.

The central role played by President Mbeki in conceiving and initiating the New Economic Partnership for Africa – NEPAD – once again underscores the significance of post-apartheid South Africa. Even at this early stage of its development, South Africa has not been deluded by its economic prowess relative to other African countries. Through a clarity of vision it has realized that the future of this country is inextricably linked with that of the rest of Africa. NEPAD provides a framework of action that takes into account the new global realities, particularly in seeking a transformation of Africa's economic relations within the global arena.

While the milestone South Africa has attained is significant to the rest of Africa, the impact of this achievement has a greater bearing to the people of this country who had paid the ultimate sacrifice to be where they are now. I have had the opportunity of reading the report of the first ten years of freedom and the challenges of the second decade. One cannot but be impressed by the achievements made in this short period, knowing the magnitude of deprivation and distortion that was found. I am aware that for the next three days, this conference will devote itself into examining the various facets of this historical conjuncture relating to South Africa.

On my part, and mainly deriving from the early experience of the rest of Africa as it grappled with the challenges of change and transformation I feel encouraged by the foundation that has been laid in the first decade. There is a recognition that the quest for a post-apartheid South Africa is not simply a replacement of one state structure by another, rather it is in the systemic transformation that will lead to the well-being of the people of South Africa as a whole. Many countries in the rest of Africa took a long time to discover that the replacement of the colonial masters by the indigenous leadership was not an end in itself. At times even the notions of class and race were mixed up, trusting that the change of racial composition while leaving the structures intact defined progress. However, it was soon realized that the real challenge lay in how such changes are entrenched within the framework of the democratic participation of the people at all levels and in all spheres, and how this translates into the empowerment of the people and the improvement of their daily lives.

Chairperson,

On 14 April this year, South Africa will hold its third democratic elections, and a full ten years will have elapsed since the fall of apartheid and the dissolution of its last white minority government.

One of the principal demands in the liberation struggle, as we sought to end the legacy of apartheid was "The people shall govern." It is this vision which inspired the African peoples through out the continent to forge ahead towards the establishment of multi-party democracies and holding elections so that the people can decide on how they are governed, by whom and for what period. The new South Africa is itself an expression and part of this African Renaissance towards the transfer of power to the people.

As President Mbeki and other African leaders have emphasized, the African Renaissance has begun. The history of our liberation demands that we do everything possible to defend the gains that have already been achieved in our respective countries. There is also the need to enhance the capacity of the African Union to act as an effective instrument for peace and the promotion of human and people's rights. These are political imperatives of the African Renaissance which are inspired by the painful history of our continent based on the recognition that none of our countries is an island which can isolate itself from the rest, and that none of our countries can truly succeed if the rest fail. At the same time, the genuine liberation of our continent lies on pushing the frontiers of poverty and the current scourge of HIV/AIDS which has mostly affected our continent and Southern African region in particular. The restoration of the dignity of the peoples of Africa, demands that we deal as decisively and as quickly as possible with these calamities.

We must succeed to meet the needs of our people, i.e. to eradicate poverty and inequality, inculcate the culture of human rights among all our people, succeed to rebuild and reconstruct our economies, achieve high and sustained rates of economic growth, reduce unemployment especially among the youth and women, and provide better lives for our people. We must take decisive steps to challenge the spread of HIV/AIDS, of which Africa accounts for the largest proportion of the people who are infected with the disease.

It is important that I should underscore the urgent need to sustain and reinvigorate our determination to effectively combat the scourge of the HIV-AIDS. The Continent has come a long way in the struggle to deal with the devastation of this pandemic. While we are making progress in advocacy and developing means to combat disease, the pandemic remains unyielding in many parts of our Africa. We cannot afford to relent on promoting prevention, de-stigmatization, compassion, and increasing access for treatment. This pandemic is undermining our development efforts and

eroding most of our achievements, particularly in improving the welfare of our people. I have said it before, and I believe that it is valid, that HIV-AIDS is a threat to our collective security. Like in any situation of aggression, we need to enter into total mobilization, into a combat mode, to confront this enemy. In this struggle for our very survival, I am of a firm belief that South Africa should be in the fore front.

I would like to conclude by reiterating two points. One, the people in the rest of Africa fully identified with the hopes and aspirations of the people of South Africa in the struggle against apartheid. They were driven by a consciousness that this Continent and all its parts have a shared predicament and a shared future. Many sacrifices were made for the total liberation of this Continent and a lot of optimism was built around this vision. Indeed, the early generation of leaders and the people of Africa strongly motivated in spirit and action by this view. It is important that the new generation of Africans do not lose this spirit of a shared predicament. Conscious efforts should be made to sensitise the younger generations the importance and relevance of the Continent not only in relation to the past struggle, but more important to our shared future.

The second issue I wish to reiterate relates to the pioneering dynamic that South African investment is unleashing across the Continent. Through the medium of private investment, South Africa is sharing with the rest of Africa its relatively advanced capital and technological endowments. However, as the country consolidates its linkages with the rest of the Continent, it may be appropriate to devise mechanisms for ensuring that the investment are directed towards areas of higher social benefits and promoting sustainable economic development. Perhaps the effective operationalization of the NEPAD programme may lead to such outcomes.

Finally, I would to convey my best wishes to the Government, Political Parties, and people of South Africa as you prepare to hold your third

democratic elections next month. Indeed, as you go towards this important process the eyes of Africa and the whole world would be on you. Your successful accomplishment of this feat is Africa's success, because you will come out of it stronger. Furthermore, the entrenchment and consolidation of democracy in any one African country, and more so in South Africa, is a triumph for the whole Continent and for every African.

I thank You!