

**Minister of Public Works
Mr J Radebe
14 December 1996**

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At the Reconciliation Day Ceremony Morogoro, Tanzania

Honourable members of the Tanzanian Government, your Excellency, the High Commissioner for South Africa to Tanzania, members of the diplomatic corps, members of the Tanzanian civil service, ladies and gentlemen.

May I begin by expressing my deepest appreciation and pleasure at being back in Tanzania. I spent many memorable years here, mainly in Dar-es-Salaam, whilst working as a journalist on Radio Freedom, the voice of the African National Congress. As part of the ANC exiled community in your country, I was privileged to live in a country free from colonialism and to get to know many people here.

Morogoro is significant in the history of South Africa. It was here that the African National Congress held its historic Morogoro Conference of 1969.

We adopted our Strategy and Tactics as well as a revolutionary programme: the vision and the means towards our liberation. Our successes today as a democratic country owe a great debt to our experience here.

Morogoro is not only associated with the destruction of apartheid. It also made significant contributions to our vision for the reconstruction and development of a democratic South Africa. SOMAFCO, the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, began a new era with its emphasis on a new form of people's education after the devastation of 1976.

The basic elements of our programme at SOMAFCO are now law. Many of its students and teachers today play significant roles in many sectors of our society.

Another reason why Morogoro is important for the reconstruction in South Africa is Mazimbu, with its emphasis on vocational training and the development of basic skills for young South Africans who were denied these opportunities at home.

I am particularly proud as Minister of Public Works in Government to oversee programmes which continue the vocational and training traditions of Mazimbu.

On behalf of the African National Congress and the Government of the people of South Africa, I wish to express our profound gratitude to the people and government of Tanzania for the donation of these facilities in the 80s. Your generosity allowed our dreams to become a reality.

In the wake of the 1994 elections in South Africa and the establishment of an ANC-led Government of National Unity, December 16 has become the Day of Reconciliation, where we pause to think of the past but also concentrate on the future prosperity of our country.

December 16, before 1994, used to be observed in different ways, symbolising the racial and colonial chasms that divided our country. For the oppressed masses it was observed as Heroes' Day, as a day of recommitment to the struggle against colonial oppression and exploitation. We also observed it as a day of commemoration to the countless comrades who had fallen in the centuries-old struggle against racial oppression in our country.

For the Whites, and particularly the Afrikaner people, it was first Dingaan's Day, to mark the Boers' military victory over our heroic people. Its name changed often over the years, but it remained a celebration of our subjugation by the white supremacists.

This year, December 16 is very special indeed. It comes just days after President Nelson Mandela signed South Africa's new constitution on December 10, international human rights day. That constitution closes a dark and ugly chapter in the history of our country and the region as a whole. The insult to African dignity represented by apartheid has finally been constitutionally whipped off the face of the globe.

Our victory must be shared by all those who stood by us in the struggle for democracy. The people of South

Africa pay tribute to the people of Tanzania and other Frontline States for their limitless and selfless moral and material support to our struggle against the denigrating, inhuman and oppressive system of apartheid. We pay tribute today, here in Tanzania and at home in South Africa, to the large numbers of people who died, or were maimed, or who lost loved ones at the hands of apartheid brutality during those awful years.

Today in South Africa I am pleased to report that the efforts to build a new country have become the property of the vast majority of our people, black and white, young and old, men and women. The fears of freedom and democracy which many whites felt have largely melted as a result of their participation in our new parliament and through the process of negotiating a new constitution. We have established a situation in which diverse cultures and people can truly live together in peace. This has not been an easy task, nor is it complete. But we are well on our way to achieving it. Through the leadership of our President Nelson Mandela, and the support of friends everywhere, we are proud to return to Africa.

Currently we are engaged in the economic and social reconstruction and development: of our country. But we cannot merely heal the body; we must heal the spirit.

For this reason, we have established and are beginning to see the results of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, headed by a man you all know very well, Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The Commission aims to heal the wounds of the past, to allow victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to come to terms with the new order, and more importantly, themselves as common citizens of the world.

This is a painful process: there have been heart-rending accounts given at public hearings of atrocities and of state terrorism.

Slowly, some of the perpetrators from within the apartheid state's security forces have begun to come forward. One man, acting on behalf of the old order, who commanded a force which killed many women and children in the dead of night has just this last week been freed from prison after being granted amnesty. He had confessed and revealed all he had known about the events. He had tearfully pleaded for forgiveness from the families of the deceased. There are many more instances. Our collective hope in South Africa, is that no matter what size the pain, it must be followed by forgiveness after those responsible have claimed responsibility and in humility ask for that forgiveness.

We hope that we will succeed. We hope that our reconciliation process will become a path to follow for other nations and people that suffer from similar wounds.

Reconciliation in South Africa must go hand in hand in the region and Africa as a whole. But unlike the old South Africa we will act within Africa only in co-operation and consultation with our partners in the Southern African Development Community and the Organisation of African Unity - we cannot act unilaterally.

Our programmes in the region should be driven by a philosophy "Partners in Peace, Partners in Development". It is only through working together that Africa will be able to overcome efforts to marginalise our continent and our region.

In conclusion, on behalf of the people of South Africa and their government, I wish to express our profound admiration and gratitude to the continued wisdom and statesmanship of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

I thank you. Nkosi sikelel 'iAfrica. God bless Africa.

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