



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPUTY PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA'S MEMORIAL
LECTURE IN HONOUR OF THE LATE NELSON
ROLIHLAHLA MANDELA, JOHANNESBURG, 15 DECEMBER
2014: BUILDING THE LEGACY'**

Mama Graca Machel,
The Mandela family,
Sello Hatang and the Nelson Mandela Foundation,
General Shoke,
Professor Ndebele,
Comrades and friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a singular and deeply humbling honour to have been invited to give this lecture in memory of the founding father of our nation, Isithwalandwe Seaparankoe Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

True to Madiba's own inclinations, we are not here this evening to mourn. We are here to remember.

We are here to reflect on the present and deliberate on the future.

We are here to examine Madiba's legacy and ask ourselves what it is that we need to do to build on it.

As we reflect on Madiba's life and contribution we must heed the words spoken by Cicero in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, where he says:

"Men may construe things after their fashion, clean from the purpose of the things themselves."

For there is always the risk that in seeking to interpret Madiba's life and legacy, we emphasise that which serves the purposes of the present or, worse, that which seeks to advance our own interests.

In doing so, we obscure the complexity and nuance that must necessarily form part of so rich and profound a life.

We should therefore proceed with caution, ever mindful of our responsibility to remember Madiba as he really was and describe his legacy as it truly is.

Nelson Mandela was one of the most remarkable people to which this continent has given birth.

To millions across the globe, he was a moral icon.

And yet, as he would be the first to acknowledge, he was not without fault. He had the courage to make mistakes, and the wisdom to admit them.

Though he may be one of the finest among us, none should deny that he too was possessed of human frailty.

Yet it is thanks to his essential humanity that we are able to recognise in him so much of what we seek in ourselves.

We are able to aspire to emulate his example precisely because we can see in him a part of ourselves.

As we seek to build on his legacy, we should reflect on how the principles that Madiba espoused and relentlessly pursued can shape our moral framework and guide our actions.

For Nelson Mandela, morality was not theoretical. It was practical.

It was the means by which people could improve their condition. It was the means by which we could change the world.

Morality provided a touchstone by which one could measure one's actions and guide one's decisions.

Our struggle is a moral struggle.

If we are to build on Madiba's legacy, we need both to continue the work that he began and hold true to the moral posture that he adopted.

We should seek to pursue at all times that which is right and true and just, no matter how inconvenient, how unpopular or how difficult.

Comrades and friends,

The world today is a better place thanks to the contribution of Nelson Mandela and many of his generation.

It is thanks to them that today we can celebrate 20 years of freedom in peace and unity.

It is thanks to them that all our people have equal rights; that millions more of our people have houses, water and electricity.

It is thanks to them that there are now opportunities for the young that were unimaginable two decades ago.

Importantly, it is thanks to them that we have dignity and pride, confidence and hope.

But the legacy that we honour this evening extends beyond the rights achieved and the lives improved.

For Madiba was a person both of conviction and of conscience.

He understood that revolution is grounded in morality.

Politics must be bound by principle.

He understood that a society such as ours, which is characterised by such enormous disparities of wealth and opportunity, is not only unsustainable.

It is also morally indefensible.

There is something profoundly wrong with a world in which so many have so little, and so few have so much.

It explains why the movement that Madiba led has consistently asserted a bias towards the poor and the working class.

It is why we have always sought to choose the side of the oppressed, the marginalised and the exploited.

As we work to build on Madiba's legacy, we need to constantly remind ourselves of this principle.

It is a principle that must guide those who control the levers of state power. It must guide those who exercise economic power.

We cannot accept the wasteful use of public resources.

We cannot accept the misuse of public resources.

And we cannot accept the theft of public resources.

We need actively to combat a culture that associates public office with entitlement; a culture where there is a tenuous relationship between misdemeanour and consequence.

We need to consistently reinforce the precept that people come first.

All our resources, all our energies, must be devoted to serving the people - the poor and the powerless in particular.

We would be foolish to believe that this is easily accomplished.

Those who bear this responsibility are often faced with difficult and complex choices.

Resources need to be allocated between competing social priorities.

Funds provided to build roads may otherwise have been used to refurbish clinics, employ more teachers or build more houses.

Choices sometimes need to be made between jobs created, lives improved and skills imparted.

There are moments too when the law seems at odds with justice; when development appears at odds with compassion.

Those who must deal with illegal land invasions, for example, must confront such contradictions.

For it is they that must make the hard choices between integrated planning and the rule of law and the prospect of families spending cold nights out in the veld.

These are the moments when we must consider not just the legal consequences of our actions, but also the morality of our actions.

These are matters about which, as a society, we need to reflect deeply and honestly.

This is not just an issue for the state.

It is an issue for business. It is an issue for all social formations and sectors.

We seek moral behaviour not only among our public representatives and civil servants.

We seek it too among our business leaders, professionals, workers and community leaders.

If we are honest about our devotion to the principles that Madiba embodied, then we all need to act in a way that gives them meaning.

If there is any value in the millions of rand that corporate South Africa spent in paying homage to Madiba, then business needs to embrace the implications of his message.

For business has a responsibility not merely to pay tax, comply with regulations and treat employees fairly.

It has a responsibility to be an active participant in the fundamental transformation of the economy.

It has a moral responsibility - at least as equal in weight to those of its social partners - to confront poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Our sense of justice should be deeply offended by a society in which islands of wealth are surrounded by a sea of poverty.

Each of us has a role to play in achieving a prosperous, more equitable society in which all may enjoy equal opportunity.

Each of us has a role to play in the improvement of the lives of all South Africans, be it the living conditions of migrant workers; the provision of housing and essential services to people in informal settlements; or ensuring that those who live in rural areas have the means and the opportunity to make a living off the land.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nelson Mandela sought not only the liberation of South Africa, but also a better, more just, more equitable world.

He spoke out against discrimination in all forms and manifestations. He spoke out against injustice and oppression and exploitation across the world.

He asked what was the value of our freedom when the people of Palestine remain under occupation; when millions still live in slavery; when over a billion people in the world live in extreme poverty; and the powerful still wage war on the powerless.

Like him, we should be bound by our principles to seek the resolution of conflict, the defeat of global poverty, an end to environmental degradation, and the establishment of a more democratic system of global governance.

Like him, we should not be daunted by the scale of the undertaking, nor deterred by the myriad obstacles we will confront.

It is a matter of great significance and much encouragement that Madiba was greatly respected and loved by so many people across the globe.

It gives us hope that his principles are equally shared by the many governments, organisations and citizens of the world that joined us in mourning his passing.

It gives us confidence that there exists across the world both the will and the means to achieve meaningful progress.

It gives us confidence that there exists the possibility that the nations of the world - especially those that are most powerful - will cast aside narrow self-interest in favour of the equal advancement of all the world's peoples.

Comrades and Friends,

The principles that Madiba embodied find meaning both at the lofty heights of global affairs and in our day-to-day interactions with each other.

It was in respecting the equal rights and dignity of all people that Madiba made his greatest contribution to our sense of worth and purpose.

It must therefore be a matter of grave concern that we live in a society where respect for the rights and integrity of another is so frequently and shamelessly violated.

As a society, as individuals, we cannot allow to continue the violence that is perpetrated against women and children.

We must challenge the notion that women must occupy a position of lesser importance in the home, in the workplace, in the classroom or in society.

We must encourage all sexually-active South Africans, particularly the young, to respect themselves and their partners - to use condoms consistently, stick to one sexual partner and get tested for HIV at least once a year.

Many people infected with HIV still face discrimination and abuse. This is irrational and unacceptable. It is an affront to our shared humanity and we must do all that we can to stop it.

Though our society faces many challenges, we are confident that we will prevail.

South Africans have demonstrated a tremendous capacity to overcome even the most intractable of problems.

We have it within us to treat each other with respect, and to place the needs of others above our own.

We have it within us to heal the divisions of the past and eradicate the inequalities of the present.

We have it within us to build a future in which all may enjoy equal rights and opportunities.

By working together, by holding true to the values that Madiba embodied, by drawing inspiration from his life, we will be able to properly honour his memory and complete the long walk that he began.

I thank you.

ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENCY

15 December 2014

Website: www.thepresidency.gov.za

Operation Phakisa: www.operationphakisa.gov.za