

## **Address on Receiving the Freedom of the City of Kingston**

Jamaica, 30 June 2003

Leaders of the City of Kingston,  
Friends, brothers and sisters,  
Fellow Africans:

I am honoured by the warm welcome extended to us by the wonderful people of Jamaica, and in particular, its capital city, Kingston.

I am deeply moved to receive the 'Freedom of the City of Kingston', making me a fellow resident of this great city, where once legendary citizens such as the Honourable Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Norman and Michael Manley lived.

This City produced some of the most talented practitioners in the musical arts, and shared with the world the creativity of these residents.

No endowment can surpass the gift of freedom to share with a people their rights, culture, history and residence, with all the glory that goes with their city.

In South Africa we have a saying which reads: 'you are because I am, and I am because you are', and so it is that South Africans are liberated in no small measure because of you. We owe you so much.

The ties that bind us, despite our physical separation by the Atlantic Ocean, are anchored in a painful and yet rich history of suffering and triumph from the shackles of slavery, colonial and racist oppression.

We are greatly inspired by the fact that you took up the struggle against Apartheid colonialism as your own. We thank you most sincerely for honouring that great leader we all share, Nelson Mandela, as a tribute to the unconquerable strength of the spirit to be free.

Your mother continent, Africa, has embarked on an exciting but challenging journey towards its renaissance. Accordingly, the Organisation of African Unity has given way to the African Union, which has among other things adopted its development programme, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, NEPAD.

At the heart of the initiatives of NEPAD is the common resolve of the peoples of our continent truly to take their destiny into their own hands and succeed in building a better life for themselves. Surely, we are intelligent enough to learn from our successes and failures, so that we do not repeat what is wrong, but build on what has been proved to be right. I am convinced that our development challenges are the same as those that face Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean. The Renaissance we speak of in Africa today is not confined to the physical boundaries of the African continent, but includes Africa's sons and daughters in the Caribbean and elsewhere on our globe.

The fact that we share these challenges, is a clear pointer to the reality that we share a common destiny. We therefore need to build on our close historical ties of solidarity and friendship, developing our cooperation to deal with the problems of poverty, underdevelopment and global marginalisation.

In as much as we have said that we need unity within Africa to achieve the advances Africa must make, we have also said that all people of African descent, wherever they are, in Africa and in the Diaspora, should act in unity to overcome the problems we all face universally.

Our advances in this new context of struggle are predicated on tapping all our resources, both on the continent and in the Diaspora.

Marcus Garvey championed the unity of the oppressed as a condition for our movement forward. This unifying philosophy still resonates today, though in a different world, a world marked by globalisation as the defining characteristic of the world social and economic system. The Honourable Marcus Garvey raised the need for all Africans in the Diaspora to return to the 'Mother Continent', Africa, where they could make a contribution, by helping to fight colonialism and rebuilding their continent once freedom was achieved.

The terrible journeys that brought our ancestors to these shores, have given you Jamaica as your physical and beloved home. Yet we could achieve "the return to Africa" that Marcus Garvey spoke of, in many symbolic and practical ways, by for example responding to the call to combine our efforts and resources for the upliftment of African people everywhere.

I am certain that, acting together, Jamaica and South Africa, Kingston and Tshwane (or Pretoria) can and will make an important contribution towards the achievement of these goals.

On behalf of all our people and in my name, I thank you most sincerely for the important gift of the Freedom of the City of Kingston, Jamaica.

Thank you.