

## **Address at a Banquet at the Guildhall London**

13 June 2001

Your Royal Highness  
The Lord Mayor and Mayoress  
My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen  
Esteemed guests:

We feel privileged that we have the possibility to attend this important function and to spend some time in the company of so distinguished a gathering.

Your city undoubtedly is - and I believe will remain - at the centre of world finance. It is therefore an unforgettable honour to be at the Guildhall, at the heart of it all.

I am deeply grateful to you, Lord Mayor, for having extended the invitation to us to enjoy your hospitality and to offer some views in the presence of your eminent guests.

I bring to you all the warmest greetings from our people - the diverse but uniting citizens of South Africa.

As a country we are far from Britain, yet very near.

Our experience of life is vastly different from yours. You stand in the vanguard of the developed, post-industrial world, in the cusp of the electronic era. You are a key leader of the better-off, developed North.

We in South Africa are part of that important and significant section of humanity, the developing South.

Together with the sister countries of the South, we see our role and our destiny as being advocates for the world of the downtrodden. We embrace this role with a sense of humility, optimism, enthusiasm and resourcefulness. We cherish a real hope of success, in company with other African nations working tirelessly for the same cause.

We are hard at work on an African Recovery Programme, MAP, focused on the revival of the continent. We have to end the situation according to which Africa is categorised as 'the hopeless Continent'. How wonderful it will be when, one day, we all wake up and say - Africa is no longer what she used to be!

Among other things, we look forward, to an ever-modernising order, to expanding economies that address the welfare of the people and to a successful spanning of the digital divide. We are determined to thrust our country and our continent in strength into the global era that has dawned.

You will hear much more about MAP in the months ahead, and I commend it to you as Africa's own answer to Africa's own problems. We accept that the buck stops with us, and cannot be passed to others. But we also know that without your sustained involvement with us, we will not succeed.

In much the same way that the Atlantic Charter forged a way ahead for peace and development after World War II, MAP is an African Charter to ensure our proper place in the community of nations.

But as we pursue our African initiatives, we are conscious that we have a foot in your world, too.

Our circumstances have given us the possibility to play a role in uniting the fortunes and experiences of two seemingly conflicting sides of the world, which are in fact two sides of the same coin - the developed North and the developing South.

And for a too-often ailing Africa, as our bottom line, we ask for elementary justice for impoverished nations crippled by unnecessary foreign debt. Major forward movement on this matter now will be an immeasurable investment in future trade, investment and global prosperity.

Our own destiny will always be, enthusiastically, Africa.

But we also love humanity, in its totality. We must therefore play our role in the whole world, however limited that role, in the cause of democracy, compassion, an end to poverty, good health, the development of science and technology, sustainable growth, brotherhood and sisterhood, peace.

Yet, we are also certain that we cannot play that role successfully if we do not act in partnership with you, the people of these British Isles.

Of great importance in this regard are the continuously expanding economic relations between our two countries. You remain, for us, among the top three countries in the world in terms of both trade and investment. We are very keen to expand these critically important relations.

In particular, we urge you continuously to take advantage of the investment opportunities that exist in our country, to access our domestic market, a significant part of sub-Saharan Africa and the markets of the world, as many companies are already doing from South Africa.

I beg your indulgence to relate to you what you already know, but which we convey largely for emphasis.

Ours is a growing economy. It is an open economy. The infrastructure is in very good shape and continues to expand in all sectors to cover previously excluded areas of our country. There is universal recognition of the fact that the macro-economy and the economic fundamentals are sound.

I am very pleased to say that the deployment of your economic power has become an engine for change, for an expanding prosperity and for the success of the democratic project in South Africa.

The country is politically stable, and plays an ever-growing role in Africa and among the countries of the South as a partner with others in advancing the goals of democracy, human rights, peace and prosperity.

As government, we are ready at all times to listen very carefully and to respond as speedily as we can to the requirements that ensure an investor friendly climate.

I stand before you, people of Britain, on this summer night, and once more thank you for the role you played in helping to bring democracy, belatedly but irrevocably, to our shores.

You were well-placed to do this. Your country was very good to us, to those who were here in exile, over so many years. As we coped with the burdens of struggle and of exile, you helped to feed us.

You sheltered us.

You let us share in your learning and your culture. Your country was the central rallying point for one of the most remarkable and successful global mobilisations against racial injustice ever seen.

Thanks to that support, in 1994 we managed to forge a constitutional democracy from the ashes of apartheid.

Since then, we have seen repentance by those who did wrong and we have seen reconciliation among people who were bitter enemies.

We have seen years of negative economic growth reversed.

We have seen regional belligerence turned, with shades of the Atlantic Charter, into ploughshare diplomacy.

We have seen rampant inflation tamed.

Our currency has weathered the hurricanes that hit the emerging economies so savagely.

We experience growing national stability, despite distressing events elsewhere.

We have worked tirelessly to overcome our social, health and other problems, both inherited and new.

And we shall continue with all this work - as we did, against the odds, in forging our democracy.

We shall continue resolutely to engage the huge challenges of disease, illiteracy, poverty, crime, natural disaster and environmental degradation with the single-mindedness that our situation demands.

And in so doing we shall remain true to our democratic order.

We may even be able, from time to time, to offer words of modest encouragement to others with problems not totally dissimilar to those we faced in the early 1990s.

There is no total victory, yet. But there is real progress, we have done our homework; and there is every reason to press on.

In all of this we are driven by the knowledge that nothing is beyond the possible, having destroyed one of the most inhumane political systems of our time.

We are driven by the energy and the resilience of our people. We are inspired by the palpable sense of hope among our people; hope for the future, hope for the rebirth of Africa. We intimately share the passion with which these people, black and white, embrace one another across the divides of the past.

And we embrace you too because we know from our experience you are to us true friends, with whom we are doing business, with whom we must do more business.

There is much that remains to be done to build the South Africa we all wish to see. You have walked with us in the past. I know that you will not let us walk alone now!

I thank you.