

## ADDRESS AT THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

13 June 2001

Honourable Speaker,  
First Minister,  
Ministers,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am greatly honoured that you have given us the opportunity to address the Scottish Parliament. I thank you most sincerely for this privilege.

We meet today to cement a long-standing and special relationship between Scotland and South Africa, spanning more than two centuries.

Scattered throughout South Africa are Scottish names that attest to the relationship between our peoples, in an earlier epoch. For example, many of the roads through our world-famous mountain passes were designed and constructed by a Scot, Andrew Geddes Baines, more than a century and a half ago.

Yet the impact of Scotland on South Africa goes far deeper than simply the physical manifestations of a Scottish presence. When in 1795, the London Missionary Society started its work in South Africa, no one would have anticipated that it would contribute indelibly to a non-racial tradition in South Africa which would finally come to fruition with our 1993 and 1996 constitutions.

As you know, John Philip, a Scottish missionary, came to South Africa in 1819, and made a profound contribution both with regard to exposing thousands of Black people to literacy, technical, agricultural and commercial skills, and to the promotion of a society of equal rights for all, irrespective of colour.

Through his own lobbying and that of his congregations, he ensured the passage of the Cape Ordinance 50, which sought to ensure that future legislation in the Cape does not discriminate on the basis of colour.

When in 1834, through an act of the British Parliament, slaves were finally freed, again it was Philip's lobbying that ensured that attempts by the Cape Legislature to reverse the non-racial principle were overturned.

Together with his son-in-law, James Fairbairn, who virtually established the freedom of the press in the Cape Colony, Philip challenged the conventional racist views of the times and pressed forward with the promotion of the rights of Africans.

Largely through the efforts of Philip and Fairbairn, the Cape Colony became, at least legally, the first of colonies in South Africa to move towards a non-racial political order, until the qualified non-racial franchise and common voters' roll in the Cape were finally removed in the 20th century.

Perhaps as important, it was in the area of education that the Scottish influence was felt most. When William Govan became the first Principal of Lovedale College founded by the Glasgow Missionary Society in 1841, he started a tradition of equal education, which developed, into an important educational institution in the Eastern Cape.

Lovedale remained a non-racial co-educational school until the 1890s when legislation made this increasingly difficult. Generations of Africans were educated at Lovedale until it was finally closed by the apartheid regime in the 1960s. I am proud to say that I, too, am a product of Lovedale.

The impact of Lovedale and its role in promoting a fundamental belief in the equality of human beings is incalculable. It is for no small reason that it is said that Lovedale was Scotland's finest gift to South Africa.

Similarly, Scottish educationalists and missionaries played a seminal role in the establishment of Fort Hare College, which was to become the University of Fort Hare and which produced many leading figures of the liberation struggles in Southern Africa, including Govan Mbeki, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela.

For over more than a century, Scottish educational institutions admitted many South Africans, especially black South Africans, who went on to become great leaders in South Africa. I can specifically recall, Reverend Tigo Soga, a product of Lovedale, who became the first translator of Milton's Pilgrims Progress, into Xhosa, who returned to South Africa in 1857 after studying in Scotland.

I also recall the great leader of the African People's Organisation until his death in the 1940s, Dr Abdullah Abdurahman who too did his medical studies in Scotland in the 1880 and 1890s. We remember that life-long stalwart of our struggle, Dr Kesaveloo Goonam who studied at the University of Edinburgh in the 1920s and practiced medicine in South Africa her whole life - except for 13 years of exile - until she passed away in 1998.

I would be amiss if I did not recall two other leaders of our people, Drs Yusuf Dadoo and Monty Naicker, who studied at the University of Edinburgh in the 1930s.

In more recent years, the Scottish link was more directly political, and I want specially to recall the very influential role of the Scottish Anti-Apartheid Movement, now called Action for Southern Africa, Scotland (ACTSA, Scotland), which upheld Scotland's tradition of commitment to our liberty. We shall not forget the pioneering role played by Aberdeen when the city imposed sanctions against apartheid South Africa as early as 1964.

Today those links are being re-forged through a multitude of efforts, such as the Glasgow Caledonian University's co-operation with our largest medical university, MEDUNSA and the University of Transkei.

Thanks, among other things, to the support of the Scottish people, by 1994 we were able to hold our first democratic elections.

In 1996 a democratically elected Assembly drew up our final Constitution of which we are justly proud. Our Bill of Rights entrenches all the freedoms that are an essential part of any genuine democracy.

The overwhelming majority of MP's who entered Parliament in 1994 had never voted before.

Our own experience of democracy was restricted to democratic practices developed and entrenched within the liberation movement and struggle.

Yet, in the past 7 years we have held two national and two local government elections which have all been characterised by robust political engagement, debate and contestation. Moreover they have all been free and fair.

This is because this is what our struggle was about - the establishment of a non-racial and non-sexist democracy, for which many of our people sacrificed their lives over many decades.

In the last national elections in 1999, the number of political parties represented in Parliament increased from 7 to 13, allowing an even greater number of views to be heard. 79 political parties contested our local government elections, last December.

We have succeeded to build a constitutional state, including the establishment of independent constitutional bodies such as the Independent Electoral Commission, a Human Rights Commission, a Gender Commission and the Public Protector.

Our society is irrevocably based on the rule of law, our people having accepted the binding force and legitimacy of decisions taken by our legislatures and judiciary.

We have virtually eliminated political violence and conflict, which has enabled us to focus more effectively on overcoming the legacy of the past and transforming our society.

Despite the best resolve of our people, our achievements have not been without problems and setbacks. Nevertheless, we can never forget that these achievements were rendered possible, to a great degree through the support from the international community, friendly governments, institutions and political parties, not least among which has been the support from people and organisations in Scotland.

As we enter the 21st century, we do so alive to the fact that there are many challenges. We are well aware that for Africa, the last 4 decades have been turbulent ones.

We have seen the hopes of many African people dashed after the celebration of independence as they observed the frustration of their democratic hopes in waves of military coups, conflicts, greed and corruption. We have no doubt that these have contributed to the current condition of African indebtedness, poverty and underdevelopment.

Yet, we closed the last century on a note of hope, since we are convinced that we are at the start of a different stage in the history of the African Continent. It is and will be a period during which the process of democratisation will spread relentlessly and inexorably across the continent.

At this moment, as we meet at the beginning of what we have designated as the African Century, we look forward to the future with confidence, knowing that we have the support of friends and allies who have sustained us through the darkest days of our history. A new generation of African leaders has acknowledged the mistakes we have made as a Continent, noted the obstacles and assessed the setbacks.

We have recognised the need to establish, nurture and consolidate democracy, to prevent and to resolve conflict, and to focus our efforts on the true rewards of democracy, on the eradication of poverty, and the upliftment and development of Africa.

There is no doubt that Africa's democratic Parliaments are central to our success, as they are no doubt to yours.

As the elected representatives of our people, Parliaments are not only the custodians of democracy and the guardians of a human rights culture, but as important, we are the vanguard of the forces that must ensure the realisation of the aspirations of our people.

In an era of globalisation that is characterised by rapid technological progress, advances in knowledge, technology and science have the potential to eradicate human suffering, poverty and inequality from the face of the earth.

Sadly, though, we have seen within the contemporary period the exacerbation of and rapid marginalisation of the poor, resulting in an increase in inequality both within countries and between the developed and developing worlds.

Today, 80 countries have per capita incomes lower than a decade ago. The assets of the world's top 3 billionaires are now more than the combined GDP of all the least developed countries with their population of 600 million.

The challenges of the developing world do not receive the required attention from the developed industrial powers. Yet, it is important for us to recognise that world prosperity and security is dependent on eradicating the global sea of poverty.

The world cannot flourish when more than half of its population lives on less than two dollars a day and a fifth on less than one dollar a day. It cannot be business-as-usual when communicable diseases such as TB, malaria and HIV/AIDS continue to kill and prevent millions of Africans from functioning at their full potential.

The language of free trade cannot be sustained when the products of developing countries are denied access to the markets of the developed countries, when African producers are denied the ability to compete fairly and effectively in a playing field that is tilted against them because of subsidies and other impediments.

Last year, for instance, OECD countries' subsidies to their farmers amounted to roughly \$1 billion dollars a day, far beyond development assistance extended to the developing countries.

Yet there is nothing that suggests that the marginalisation of the poor is fundamental to globalisation. The challenge that Africa and the developing world face is to intervene in a way which shapes the outcomes of globalisation so that it benefits the poor and the marginalised and places our countries on a path of sustainable growth and development.

Our approach in South Africa is to strengthen regional and continental co-operation and unity, so that we are better equipped to engage the broader international community in the age of globalisation.

Through our contributions to the regional formation of SADC we have concretely to engage with these new challenges. Similarly, the OAU, soon to be African Union, has mandated some of us to lead the process of developing a revival plan for Africa. This plan will be presented to the OAU Summit in July this year.

The Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP) is a plan of a global partnership in which Africa takes its own lead in addressing its own development challenges. The key priority areas of the programme are peace, security and governance; investing in Africa's people; diversification of Africa's production and exports; investing in ICT and other basic infrastructure and developing financing mechanisms.

>From our perspective, these priority areas must be implemented simultaneously and in interaction with one another. It is a plan in which African leaders will take joint responsibility for a comprehensive programme of action with the objective of restoring peace and security; promoting democratic systems of government; reducing poverty and attaining the international development targets for health and education.

This initiative by African leaders does pose a challenge to our international development partners, since clearly we still need to mobilise both domestic and foreign resources if we are to end underdevelopment and poverty on the African Continent.

As we embark on this programme of action, the African leaders hope to develop a new partnership with developed countries and multilateral institutions based on the following principles:

- African leadership and responsibility for the development of the continent;
- Binding commitments by developed countries and multilateral institutions to an agreed set of obligations with accompanying milestones and time-frames; and
- Agreement on the objectives and programme of action.

Current efforts with regard to debt relief are not sufficient and need to be speeded up and we would need to look beyond simply debt sustainability.

We need to look at debt relief as a way of releasing additional resources for development. Technical assistance will be need to be provided to build the capacity of African countries to formulate their own Poverty Reduction Strategy strategies.

African leaders can and have started to take a leadership role in the resolution of delivering development on the African continent. The Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme forms the basis of this development agenda. For it to succeed we will need to strengthen our institutions of governance within our own countries.

However, legitimacy is the basis of all institutions of governance, and so it must be within the international order.

We recognise the need to democratise decision-making in the international arena. This includes as a priority, the restructuring of key multi-lateral organisations such as the UN, the international financial institutions and international trade organisations.

So while Parliaments are the custodians and promoters of democracy, human rights and human development in their own countries, they have to play a role in promoting this agenda in the international institutions of governance as well. The imperatives of globalisation oblige us to do this.

Our great hope is that the 21st century will be the African century. We are certain that the Scottish people and the Scottish Parliament will help us realise this historic objective.

I thank you.