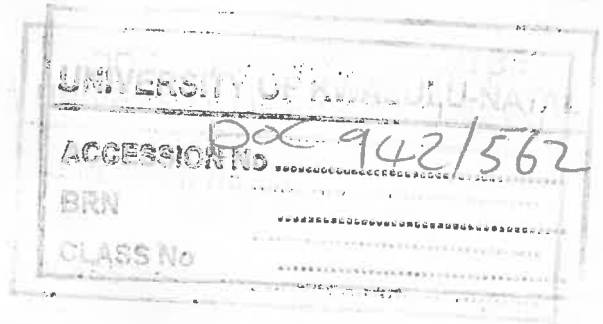


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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The UN Millennium Review - time running out!

(Below we publish an expanded version of the Address of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, at the United Nations Millennium Review Summit Meeting, delivered in New York on 15 September 2005. The Editor.)

In the year 2000, we took advantage of a change in the millennia solemnly to commit ourselves to the Millennium Declaration, which led to the elaboration of the Millennium Development Goals and the proposals for the reform of the United Nations.

The Millennium Declaration was adopted at the UN Millennium Summit of Heads of State and Government on 8 September 2000. Among other things, the Declaration said: "We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalisation becomes a positive force for all the world's people. For while globalisation offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed. We recognise that developing countries and countries with economies in transition face special difficulties in responding to this central challenge. Thus, only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalisation be made fully inclusive and equitable."

Later, it went on to say: "We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone, and to freeing the entire human race from want."

The Declaration also addressed the challenge of strengthening the United Nations. In this regard it said: "We will spare no effort to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing all (our) priorities: the fight for development for all the peoples of the world, the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease; the fight against injustice; the fight against violence, terror and crime; and the fight against degradation and destruction of our common home."

In this regard, it mentioned such UN organs as the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and the UN Secretariat, and called for greater policy coherence and better coordination between the UN and such multilateral bodies as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and others, "with a view to achieving a fully coordinated approach to the problems of peace and development".

The Declaration said: "Responsibility for managing worldwide economic and social development, as well as threats to international peace and security, must be shared among the nations of the world and should be exercised multilaterally. As the most universal and most representative organisation in the world, the United Nations must play the central role."

We have gathered here five years later in a Millennium Review Summit to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the UN, and to assess the progress we have made towards the achievement of the goals we set ourselves in the Millennium Declaration and its attendant documents. We have also convened to take any necessary additional decisions that would help all humanity to move forward faster towards the realisation of these goals.

It would therefore seem quite obvious that we should ask ourselves two fundamental questions. One of these is - what has the review told us about the last five years? The second is - what decisions have we therefore taken in the light of the conclusions brought to light by the review?

One of the facts that stands out sharply from the review is that in truth we have not made the decisive progress we thought we would make with regard to the critical issue of the reform of the United Nations. We have therefore had no choice but to postpone to a later date the decisions we should have made.

The only saving grace with regard to this miserable performance is that as it closed, the 59th General Assembly "reaffirmed our commitment to strengthen the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to address effectively the full range of challenges of our time".

This statement is contained in the "Outcome Document" adopted by the 59th General Assembly on 13 September 2005, which was then considered for final adoption by the 14-16 September Millennium Review Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government.

In this Outcome Document, the General Assembly dealt with various organs of the United Nations, pursuing the reform programme identified in the Millennium Declaration. With regard to the contentious issue of the reform of the Security Council it said:

"We support early reform of the Security Council as an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations, in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and thus further to enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. We commit ourselves to continue our efforts to achieve a decision to this end and request the General Assembly to review progress on the reform set out above by the end of the year."

Yet another fact that stands out sharply from the review is that our approach to the challenge to commit and deploy the necessary resources for the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals has been half-hearted, timid and tepid.

In this regard, and illustrative of this reality, the Outcome Document honestly states that Africa is "the only continent not on track to meet any of the goals of the Millennium Declaration by 2015." And yet, precisely because of the enormous and unique challenge posed by our continent, the Millennium Declaration had included a specific section entitled, "Meeting the Special Needs of Africa".

But of course it is not only Africa that faces a bleak future represented by the failure to advance in a convincing manner towards the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In this context, the recently published UNDP Human Development Report 2005 says:

"As governments prepare for the 2005 (14-16 September) Summit, the overall report card on progress makes for depressing reading. Most countries are off track for most of the MDGs. Human development is faltering in some key areas, and already deep inequalities are widening. Various diplomatic formulations and polite terminology can be found to describe the divergence between progress on human development and the ambition set out in the Millennium Declaration. None of them should be allowed to obscure a simple truth: the promise to the world's poor is being broken.

"This year, 2005, marks a crossroads. The world's governments face a choice. One option is to seize the moment and make 2005 the start of a 'decade for development'. If the investments and policies needed to achieve the MDGs are put in place today, there is still time to deliver on the promise of the Millennium Declaration. But time is running out.

"The Summit is the moment to mobilise the investment resources and develop the plans needed to build the defences that can stop the tsunami of world poverty. What is needed is the political will to act on the vision that governments set out five years ago."

The Outcome Document correctly says: ".We reaffirm our commitment to work towards a security consensus based on the recognition that many threats are interlinked, that development, peace, security and human rights are mutually reinforcing, that no State can best protect itself by acting entirely alone and that all States need an effective and efficient collective security system, pursuant to the purposes and principles of the Charter."

We firmly believe that the reason we have not made the progress we should have, during the last five years, is precisely because we have not as yet achieved what the Outcome Document described as "a security consensus".

We have not achieved that "security consensus" because of the widely disparate conditions of existence and interests among the Member States of the UN as well as the gross imbalance of power that define the relationship among these Member States.

It is the poor of the world whose interests are best served by real and genuine respect for the fundamental proposition that we need the "security consensus" identified by the Outcome Document.

The actions of the rich and powerful strongly suggest that these are not in the least convinced that this "security consensus" would serve their interests. Accordingly such important matters as non-proliferation and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, matters of common concern to all humanity, do not feature at all in the Outcome Document.

This means that these issues have been put outside the scope of the multilateral "security consensus" which is such a central part of the contemporary system of international relations and a fundamental requirement

for the security of each and every nation.

Thus the powerful, some of whom are weapons states, use their power to perpetuate the power imbalance in the ordering of global affairs. As a consequence of this, we have not made the progress of the reform of the UN that we should have.

Because of that, we have the result that we have not achieved the required scale of resource transfer from those who have these resources, to empower the poor of the world to extricate themselves from their misery. Simply put, this means that the logic of the use of power is the reinforcement of the might of the powerful, and therefore the perpetuation of the disempowerment of the powerless.

This is the poisonous mixture that has given us the outcome that will issue from this Millennium Review Summit to the peoples of the world. We should not be surprised when these billions do not acclaim us as heroes and heroines.

Perhaps the time has come that we should drape ourselves in the clothes of heroes and heroines by ensuring that by the time the 60th General Assembly concludes, the billions we represent will have just cause to say that we did indeed act to ensure the faithful implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

Thabo Mbeki

ANC AND ALLIANCE CHALLENGES

Partners agree on process to address current difficulties

The Alliance has agreed to support the process adopted by the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting last Friday towards addressing current difficulties arising from the trial of ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma.

In a regular meeting of the Alliance Secretariat this week, the Alliance leadership called on all members of the movement to "redouble their efforts on the important tasks of building unity and cohesion in our ranks and advancing the agenda of social transformation".

This takes place as the discussion at the NEC is being reported to ANC structures around the country in meetings at provincial and regional level.

All Alliance partners expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the meeting of the ANC's NEC. In terms of the NEC discussion, the ANC has established a process led by the President and the Deputy President of the ANC to identify and address the substantive issues that have arisen. The Alliance expressed appreciation of the fact that the ANC was exercising a clear leadership role towards the resolution of these issues.

In a statement released after the meeting, the Secretariat said: "It was agreed that this process must be given full support by all Alliance partners. On this basis, the next ten-a-side meeting of the Alliance, which intended to discuss a number of issues including the proposed Alliance Commission of Inquiry, will be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the ANC process. Furthermore, all Alliance partners committed themselves to contributing to the creation of a climate conducive to the conduct of this process."

At the same time the Alliance reaffirmed its full support for the Deputy President of the ANC in these trying times. Such support may find expression in a variety of ways. In this respect COSATU has led in the creation of a 'Friends of Jacob Zuma Trust'. Members of the Alliance also plan to participate in various activities in solidarity with the ANC Deputy President on 11 October 2005.

"These activities will be undertaken with a view to building the unity of our movement as a whole. This means that support for the Deputy President should be expressed in a manner that respects and supports the entire leadership of our movement," the Secretariat said.

The Secretariat discussion follows agreement by the NEC on a process led by ANC President Thabo Mbeki and Deputy President Jacob Zuma to urgently address recent developments within the ANC and Alliance. This is necessary to ensure the democratic movement as a whole continues to focus on the strategic responsibility of social transformation.

This followed a presentation by the President and Deputy President on the principles which should guide the movement as it addresses the current difficulties.

The NEC authorised the President and Deputy President to make recommendations about how the NEC should engage the substantive discussion of these developments at a specially convened NEC meeting, to be held as soon as possible.

The meeting called on all members of the ANC, including the leagues, to respect the process led by the President and Deputy President, and not engage in any activity outside this process. It also appealed to the ANC's Alliance partners themselves to respect this decision and await the outcome of decisions that will be taken by the NEC at its specially convened meeting.

The NEC also agreed that, in the meantime:

- * The proposals contained in the presentation will serve as a basis for briefings to membership, starting with Regional General Councils which should be held within the next two weeks.
- * Interactions should continue within the Alliance, to clarify the ANC's position on these matters as contained in this presentation. These interactions should also take on board matters that were canvassed at the recent Alliance 10-aside meeting, including the proposed commission on the issue of a "political conspiracy".
- * In the medium-term, the ANC should launch an intensive political education campaign within all our structures, and work with the Youth League, Women's League and Alliance partners to do the same.

In their presentation, the President and Deputy President said, among other things, that current developments in the ANC and the rest of the Alliance regarding the Deputy President of the ANC call for collective and decisive leadership by the NEC. Urgent steps are required to ensure that the democratic movement as a whole continues to focus on our strategic responsibility of social transformation.

In attending to the current difficulties, the ANC holds dear the pertinent basic principles that have guided our approach to the process of social transformation. Critical elements of these principles include:

- * respect for the rule of law,
- * preventing the abuse of state institutions for personal material gain or

- personal agendas,
- * a principled stand against factionalism and ethnic and racial chauvinism,
- * the principle of freedom of speech within the ranks of the movement,
- * collective leadership and a culture of openness among leaders,
- * leaders should always lead by example, as custodians of the values and best practices of the movement.

"Noting the difficulties that the current situation has imposed on the Deputy President, it is a matter of fundamental principle that the ANC should support him in his work as a leader of the ANC, and as a person and comrade facing challenging circumstances. His dignity must at all times be protected. In this, we are informed by the basic principle that the Deputy President is innocent until proven otherwise," they said.

"There is one ANC, and we therefore reject the notion that individuals should be required to choose sides, on the basis of the absolutely false assertion that we lead two contending factions within the movement... We call on all members and supporters of the ANC to respect the process that the movement has put in place comprehensively to deal with this matter."

MORE INFORMATION:

Report on NEC Discussion, 9 September 2005
<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/2005/pr0909.html>

Statement of the Alliance Secretariat, 14 September 2005
<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/2005/pr0914b.html>

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Progress in pushing back the frontiers of poverty

The national effort to push back the frontiers of poverty by meeting the basic needs of the country's poor and marginalised is gathering pace with progress recorded across a range of important sectors.

Presenting the latest update on the programme of action of government's social cluster, Minister of Education Naledi Pandor said despite challenges in a number of areas there was no doubt the cluster would be able to deliver on the targets set by President Thabo Mbeki in his State of the Nation address earlier this year. South Africa were also likely to meet the targets set for 2015 as part of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Interventions by the state to directly address poverty and underdevelopment are continuing to benefit greater numbers of South Africans, improving their quality of life and complementing government efforts to stimulate economic growth and employment.

Two and a half million children are now registered for the child support grant, which represents more than 78% of targeted children. The target is to have 3.2 million children registered by 2006. The total number of social grant beneficiaries is now around 9.7 million - two million more than the target.

This is taking place alongside work to establish and operationalise the National Social Security Agency, which will streamline the provision of social grants and reduce wastage and fraud. Staff are currently being employed in the national office, and over 5,000 existing staff in provinces will be transferred to the agency by April next year.

The implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for the Management, Care and Treatment of HIV and AIDS forms part of a range of programmes to provide comprehensive health care to all South Africans. The intensification of prevention efforts through the Khomanani campaign will be given a boost with 2006 being declared the 'Year for Acceleration of HIV Prevention in Africa'. The comprehensive plan is now established at 178 sites across all 53 districts and in about 60% of sub-districts. By the end of June, nearly 62,000 patients had been enrolled for antiretroviral therapy. Government is extending nutritional interventions by providing nutritional and vitamin supplementation.

"Progress is being made in the development of the Health Charter which aims to strengthen collective efforts within the health system to improve access to affordable and quality health care," Pandor said.

The provision of health care to all relies on adequately skilled and committed health practitioners. A Human Resources Plan for Health is therefore being developed, alongside discussions with retired nurses and South African nurses working overseas to find ways of meeting this need within the public health sector.

Progress is also being made in the implementation of the comprehensive human settlement plan, known as 'Breaking New Ground'. Priority is currently being given to the provision of rental housing to ensure the poor have access to accommodation close to places of work and other economic activities. The President recently launched the Brickfields project in Newtown, Johannesburg. Other major projects include the N2 Gateway in the Western Cape and Cosmo City in Gauteng.

National government is assisting municipalities to deal with blockages in delivery caused by a lack of local capacity. A housing indaba will be held on 22-23 September with various role-players in the housing sector on the implementation of the plan and the fast-tracking of delivery. The indaba is expected to result in the signing of a Housing Social Contract with role-players in various sectors, including developers, contractors, financial institutions, non-governmental organisations and other government institutions.

As part of the National School Nutrition Programme, more than 22,000 people have been recruited nation-wide and have been provided with work opportunities to prepare and serve school meals. The scheme has also supported the emergence of a number of small and medium enterprises and cooperatives. A number of schools have established vegetable gardens to enrich the nutritional value of the meals served in schools.

The Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) is on course to reach its target of one million job opportunities in five years. Some 223,400 work opportunities have been created from 3,400 projects nationwide in the first year. Of those who benefited from these projects 38% were women, 41% youth, and 0.5% disabled.

"The EPWP focuses on ensuring that labour-intensive methods are used in government service delivery programmes in the infrastructure, environmental and culture, social and economic sectors," Pandor said.

The highest number of work opportunities - at least 158,000 - have been created in the infrastructure sector, followed by the environment and culture sector, with almost 58,800 work opportunities created.

Pandor said three provinces - KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga - still

report that children are forced to learn under trees because of lack of sufficient classrooms. To address the lack of school infrastructure in the country, over 1,750 classrooms have been completed at existing schools and just over 4,000 classrooms are currently under construction.

Progress is also being made to provide all schools with water and sanitation. Since February this year, 87 schools have been provided with water and sanitation and work is underway to extend this to an additional 240 schools.

"In conclusion," Pandor said, " we can say that significant progress has been made in a number of areas. Clearly there are challenges in some areas but the sector is functioning effectively in addressing these."

MORE INFORMATION:

Social Cluster programme update, September 2005
<http://www.info.gov.za/aboutgovt/poa/report/social.htm>

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<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/2005/at37.htm>

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