



THE PRIME MINISTER



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Nelson Mandela is the most courageous man of our times. His achievement could have been to lead a mass protest movement against oppression. It could have been to overthrow apartheid or to get the ANC into power. And any of these would have made him a hero. But Nelson Mandela's strength of belief and strength of character led him to evolve a set of beliefs which transformed his country, and enabled him to convert the moral crusade that sent out a message about the kind of future every society should seek.

Nelson Mandela's considered decision - made while he was still imprisoned by the apartheid regime - to work for a multiracial South Africa demonstrates a courage without rancour or bitterness. This decision set the direction for the new South Africa, a country which has made the sort of progress which would have been unthinkable in the last days of apartheid, and which embraced its return to the international community after its apartheid-era isolation. There is perhaps no clearer demonstration of that transformation than South Africa's hosting of this year's FIFA World Cup - the first to be held in Africa. It will be both a festival of football and a celebration of modern South Africa.

Of course the modern South Africa continues to face challenges to erode apartheid's legacy of inequality. And Nelson Mandela, through his personal interventions and through his charities, continues to work for a just society, across the continent as a whole as well as in South Africa.

I count it as an honour to have been in Nelson Mandela's presence and talked with him on a number of occasions in the last

decade. And I am grateful for his advice and friendship. Nelson Mandela's passion for justice is undimmed by the years and his support in the long struggle for fairness in the developing world is an inspiration to me and to us all.

Clinton Bawa

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