

MESSAGE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, H.E.
JACOB ZUMA, TO THE CONFERENCE ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FOUNDING OF THE ANTI APARTHEID MOVEMENT

It gives me great pleasure to extend greetings and best wishes from the government of the Republic of South Africa to the conference marking the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding the Anti Apartheid Movement.

The founding of the Anti Apartheid Movement was a seminal moment in the struggle for democracy in South Africa. It marked the beginning of a massive and sustained effort by many thousands of people across the United Kingdom to advance the cause of the South African people.

The work done by the Anti Apartheid Movement served as inspiration for similar movements in many other parts of the world. In time it came to form an integral component of an unprecedented global effort to end one of the most iniquitous political systems of the Twentieth Century.

It was this effort that contributed in both direct and indirect ways to the eventual defeat of apartheid and the establishment in South Africa of a non-racial, non-sexist, united and democratic country.

Through its work, the Anti Apartheid Movement gave expression to the commitment of the British people to justice and equality. It also managed to mobilise thousands of them to speak out against apartheid and to take direct action to isolate the apartheid regime.

It played a crucial role in pushing successive British governments to take a more determined stance against apartheid, and in giving support to efforts within bodies like the Commonwealth and United Nations.

Today, we celebrate the achievements of the Movement. We also pay tribute to the dedicated and courageous people who formed part of the movement. We remember in particular those who are no longer with us. Many of them lived to see the achievement of democracy, while others passed away before, no doubt confident that victory was certain.

The relationship of friendship and cooperation that exists today between the peoples of South Africa and the United Kingdom owes much to the work of the Anti Apartheid Movement.

It is therefore a matter of great satisfaction that with the advent of democracy in South Africa, the Anti Apartheid Movement saw fit to establish ACTSA as a successor organisation to focus on issues of poverty, underdevelopment and inequality within the Southern African region.

This conference is therefore an important opportunity not only to recall and celebrate the impressive achievements of the Anti Apartheid Movement, but also to reflect on the work that still needs to be done to address the devastating apartheid legacy.

We have made great strides since the dawn of democracy in South Africa. We would not have been able to record such achievements without the goodwill and unstinting support of our friends in the United Kingdom and around the world.

As we face new challenges, we need to deepen that relationship. We need to work together to mobilise the citizens of the developed world behind a global effort to defeat poverty, inequality, illness and underdevelopment.

We need to use our experience of the Anti Apartheid Movement to forge a vibrant global movement to build a better Southern Africa, a better Africa and a better world.

We need to address the unequal power relations between countries of the North and South. We must campaign for fairer trade rules and for the democratic reform of global institutions like the United Nations, World Bank and IMF.

We must work together to strengthen democratic institutions of governance and civil society formations within our region. In partnership, we should undertake practical measures to improve the education, health, wellbeing and economic prospects of our people.

As the government of South Africa we salute all those who formed part of the Movement over the past five decades, and pledge our support to continuing efforts to build partnerships for the improvement of the lives of the people of Southern Africa.

Cape Town
25 June 2009