

ADDRESS TO THE SWEDISH PARLIAMENT*

Stockholm, March 13, 1990

It is a matter of the greatest joy to me that I have, at last, arrived in Sweden. It will come as no surprise to you that for me, this is the first time ever that I have occasion to utter even one word in any parliament anywhere.

This is therefore an historic day for us. It foretells of the moment when black men and women will sit side by side with white men and women in a South African parliament, together adopting laws as equals and as elected representatives of all the people of our country.

But it is also a joyful day which shall remain in our memories for as long as we live. It is joyful because we know that here we are among steadfast friends who have stood with us in the common struggle, for decades.

We know that as elected representatives, all of you, regardless of the parties to which you belong, represent the common anti-apartheid and democratic positions of the overwhelming majority of the Swedish people.

These national Swedish sentiments have led to the very happy situation in which, between us, we have established a system of

* Mr. Mandela's first visit outside Africa was to Sweden—to express appreciation for the support of Sweden and to meet Mr. Oliver R. Tambo, President of the ANC, who was recuperating from an illness in a Stockholm clinic.

relations from people to people. This is a relationship that transcends the important structured official relations which define our extensive system of cooperation. It provides the warmth of human friendship among people that cements these official ties.

We have a vision of South Africa as a united, democratic, non-sexist and non-racial country. We see ourselves as not aligned to any military blocs. At the same time, we shall be firmly aligned with regard to the fundamental and universal issues of human rights for all people, the right and possibility of every individual to full and unfettered development, the right of every country to determine its future, protection of the environment and peace in a world that should be free of regional conflicts and the threat of a nuclear war.

We believe that the people of this country share this glorious vision as well. It is this which has nullified the great distances that separate our respective countries and peoples, with the one in northern Europe and the other in southern Africa. We have become political neighbours who willingly share whatever little bread and salt we may have. The strength this gives us is impossible to measure.

It is between us common cause that we have not yet ended the apartheid crime against humanity. Consequently, the conditions do not yet exist for our people to transform their country into a non-racial democracy. We, together, have therefore some important tasks to accomplish.

We have to continue the struggle to liberate ourselves. This we are doing and shall pursue, without regard to the cost to ourselves as individuals. We must, through struggle, end the system of apartheid as soon as possible. It remains our wish that we could, without delay, produce a just solution arrived at through a negotiated political settlement.

Whether this happens and how soon, will depend on what the Pretoria regime does. As yet, it has not even completed the process of creating a climate conducive to negotiations. As you know, we shall be meeting President F.W. de Klerk and his colleagues to

address this issue, as soon as the necessary arrangements have been completed. We are convinced that the Harare and United Nations Declarations on South Africa provide the basis for the speedy liquidation of the apartheid system.

We need your continued support in the struggle to abolish the system of white minority domination and exploitation which has brought such untold misery to both our own people and those of southern Africa as a whole. We would like to take this opportunity to salute this outstanding democratic institution, the Swedish Parliament, which has stood in the front ranks of the international forces that have fought against the apartheid system.

From here has issued legislation which has made an important contribution to the process of securing the international isolation of apartheid South Africa. For many years you have approved budgets which have enabled this country to extend invaluable humanitarian assistance to the ANC, the Democratic Movement and the suffering people of our country. From here you have provided moral and political leadership which has inspired many others throughout the world and sustained us in those dark days in prison when it was impossible even to guess when the terrible night of racial tyranny would give way to a new dawn.

We thank you for all this with all our hearts and without reservation. But the fact of the apartheid system requires that we ask you to persist in the path on which you have embarked. To help us end apartheid, you must continue to provide moral and political leadership. It is precisely your unwavering commitment to these positions that guarantees a speedy end to the apartheid system.

The road we still have to traverse will not be long. It may not be smooth and easy. But clearly the racist tyranny is on its way out. While South Africa has elected its last racial parliament and its last apartheid president our deepest desire is that we walk the last mile together. And having done that, we shall, as one, look at the new vistas that will open up and see how we should exploit our established friendship to extend and deepen mutually beneficial cooperation between our peoples.

New challenges are upon all people throughout the world. Old problems demand urgent solutions. New problems have to be addressed without delay. The times demand greater and not less cooperation among the nations to find solutions to issues that might be national in their specific expression but universal in their essence. It should surely be possible that we who have joined hands to bring to a close the old detestable world of white racial oppression, should combine to contribute whatever little we can to answer those challenges.

In a week's time, Namibia will become an independent State. We are greatly moved by the fact of the enormous contribution you made to the achievement of this victory, among other things, through your support for SWAPO. We look forward to meeting in Windhoek, if not all, at least some of you.

This is a victory that is close to our hearts. We rejoice in the joy of the Namibian people. We have to contribute to the fullness of this historic success by making certain we end apartheid in our own country, create the conditions for peace to rule supreme throughout our region and enable the peoples of southern Africa as a whole to rebuild their countries when that day comes. It will be with special warmth that the millions of our people will receive the Swedish participants at our victory celebrations. We thank you and thank the millions you represent for making it possible for us to say unashamedly that we have a true friend whose name is SWEDEN.