



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION

FRIDAY 13 DECEMBER 2013

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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No. 38 of 2013

Sitting of 13 December 2013

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

At 3.30 p.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENT

OBITUARY - NELSON ROLIHLEHLA MANDELA, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, may I kindly request you to stand up for one minute as a sign of respect to late Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, former President of the Republic of South Africa.

(Members stood up and observed one minute silence).

Please sit down. Dr. the hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is with a feeling of deep humility and a profound sense of loss, that we are gathered here this afternoon, to pay tribute to one of the greatest politicians of our time, an inspirational leader of unyielding courage and breathtaking magnanimity, who healed the wounds of a nation's soul, and came to epitomize the struggle for justice, equality and dignity - a giant of history.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we all knew that the last sparks of his life were flickering away and that he was inevitably fading away from us - yet when the moment came, it left us numb and speechless.

On learning of his sad demise, on the night of 05 December, I immediately gave instructions that all flags in Mauritius and in our missions overseas be flown at half mast and that Parliament should meet today so that we can pay tribute to this exceptional leader of men, who had become a beacon of peace and reconciliation for the whole world, and the moral conscience of his age.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I feel deeply humbled by the fact that I have had the honour and the privilege to have known such an exceptional human being. I always said that he was the Gandhi of Africa and that what Albert Einstein said of Mahatma Gandhi could equally apply to him. He stated -

“Generations to come, it may well be, will scarce believe that such a man as this one ever in flesh and blood walked upon this Earth.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, I was privileged to have been invited to attend his swearing-in ceremony as the first black President of post-apartheid South Africa on 10 May 1994.

In view of the solemnity of the moment, I shall refrain from talking about the petty-mindedness of some in 1994 who exerted pressure for the withdrawal of this invitation to me to attend this historic event.

He later told me, Mr Speaker, Sir, why he had made it a point of inviting me. He explained how Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam managed to send him letters at Robben Island to encourage him and how he supported his cause in international fora.

At the OAU Summit held in Mauritius in 1976, Sir Seewoosagur said and I quote -

“South Africa cannot continue with impunity to flout international opinion and act in defiance of resolutions passed by the United Nations. The aggravation of apartheid and the persistent denial to the majority of the basic rights essential for human dignity together with the consolidation of the minority rule will inevitably result in forms of militancy and violence which the most sophisticated types of weapons will not be able to quell.”

Our links with the ANC have been continuously strengthened over the years. They sent two members of their political bureau to our annual congress for our 75th anniversary, Ms Lindiwe Zulu and Mr Naphtal Manana and I was invited to the ANC's 100th birthday celebrations.

As President, he did me, the single honour of inviting me for an official visit in February of 1998 - which was a true reflexion of the bonds of friendship between our two countries.

And let me quote what he said in his speech -

“And you, Prime Minister, we believe might have been a South African citizen had your father, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, decided to stay here on his way back from Britain after completing his studies. But then yesterday's gain to South Africa would have been today's loss, for we would not now be welcoming you as the harbinger of stronger relations between our peoples.”

On this official visit, Mr Speaker, Sir, he insisted that I unveil a plaque at the Pietermaritzburg Station, where Gandhi, who was a barrister, was thrown off the train because he had dared to buy and sit in a first class carriage of that train!

President Mandela asked me to do this, because he, of all people, understood the symbolic gesture it entailed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, President Mandela returned us the honour, when he made a State Visit to Mauritius in September 1998.

It was a defining moment in the relations between our two countries.

It further enriched the abiding bond of brotherhood rooted in the commonality of our civilisations and humanity.

Perhaps, Mr Speaker, Sir, many do not gauge to its fullness, the privilege and honour that was bestowed upon us when President Nelson Mandela addressed this august Assembly on 12 September 1998.

Very few countries have been blessed with the opportunity of an address to their National Assembly by such a towering personality as him. We should always treasure those moments.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Nelson Mandela's struggle for freedom and democracy was iconic.

He was a unique Statesman who will forever be remembered as a rare gift of God to humanity. We will always be inspired by his leadership and his struggle to give dignity to the oppressed and the voiceless.

It would not be amiss, Mr Speaker, Sir, to recall briefly how from 1948 to 1990, the blacks, coloureds and Indians were caught up literally from cradle to grave in the shameful net that apartheid cast upon them.

The ugly tentacles of apartheid, like those of a hydra, controlled the behaviour of the non-white segment of the South African population. Normal social behaviour was criminalised; and a new form of social deviancy was defined to suit those who believed in their superiority by virtue of the colour of their skin!

It all started in 1948 with the coming into power of the National Party.

In 1949, the Mixed Marriages Act which prohibited marriages between people of different race groups was voted.

In 1950, the Population Registration Act, which was, in fact, the cornerstone of apartheid, categorised the nation into White, Black, Indian, Malay and coloured citizens.

During that same year, the Group Areas Act stipulated where and with whom people could live.

In 1951 the Black Authorities Act established the black homelands.

In 1953 the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act prescribed the public amenities that were available to the various race groups.

In 1957 the Immorality Act prohibited sex between people of different race groups.

In 1968 the Prohibition of Political Interference Act prevented members of different groups from belonging to the same political party.

The majority of the population was deprived of the most basic human rights by a plethora of oppressive legal measures. The movement of Black people was regulated and controlled in the most stringent manner. They were not free to own their own land.

Millions were forced into the cauldron of poverty. Human beings were treated as commodities to be bought and disposed of, at the whims and caprices of the masters of the day. This was neo-slavery at its best!

However, the systematic and institutional ostracisation of non-whites could not stifle the spirit of freedom fighters, like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Ahmed Kathrada, amongst others.

The barbaric acts of brutality by the South African authorities in places like Sharpeville and Soweto; and the brutal murder of Steve Biko only fuelled the flame of determination to resist and put an end to the obnoxious system of apartheid.

Mention should also be made of the heavy price paid by the frontline States when South Africa created the Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS) which propped up the rise of another racist regime next door in Rhodesia under the leadership of Ian Smith.

The racist Government in South Africa, with the help of some western countries, tried to put up puppet regimes in neighbouring countries by providing financial and logistical support and unlimited supplies of arms to the Opposition against the majority – the same tactic, Mr Speaker, Sir, of providing money to traitors so that they can divide and rule.

We recall the mysterious and suspicious circumstances under which Samora Machel was killed.

We remember the violence of the white supremacist group AWB (the Afrikaner Resistance Movement) whose then leader, Eugene Terre'blanche, threatened to "trample the ANC into the grave".

Mr Speaker, Sir, it was only in 1991 that President de Klerk announced a major reform initiative that led to the repeal of the Population Registration Act.

It was thanks to Nelson Mandela and the struggle of the ANC that Blacks could walk the streets of South Africa not as subservient creatures but as free human beings.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there were many prophets of doom who were predicting and even hoping that there would be bloodshed should the ANC win the elections in 1994.

One day, during a SADC Summit, President Nelson Mandela invited me to his official residence and we had a long and fruitful discussion on many matters.

He also related to me how the assassination of Chris Hani, leader of the South African Communist Party, nearly derailed the whole process of peaceful transition.

He also related to me how he decided to confront the Head of the South African Defence Force, General Constand Viljoen; he coolly looked into his eyes and calmly persuaded him to call off his plan to start a full scale war intended to prevent the historic election from taking place.

Mr Speaker, Sir, South Africa has been lucky to have had such a man as Nelson Mandela.

Just imagine for a moment, what might have happened, if Nelson Mandela had not been there.

South Africa would have become a racial inferno and a blood bath would have ensured begetting hatreds and revenge lasting generations.

He was God's gift to South Africa and to all of us.

The trajectory of his life bears testimony to this.

He was no ordinary mortal but a man of destiny, who saved his country from a blood bath, liberated his people and united them into a rainbow nation.

Yet, it is difficult even to comprehend this extraordinary being when you know what he had actually been through.

He was a good and decent man, who could not bear to see the injustice and the inhumane treatment being handed over to his countrymen.

He was rebel with a cause. His middle name – Rolihlahla which means troublemaker was well chosen, for he had the fearlessness and the fiery desire, that only real leaders have, to fight the system that imprisoned his people, even if he had to put his own life on the line.

He had agreed with the decision of the ANC leadership to follow a non-violence course until the Sharpeville massacre in March 1960 – when the South African Police opened fire on a peaceful crowd of Black protesters – killing 69 people.

He then reluctantly argued forcefully for the setting up of a military wing of the ANC and a change of tactic.

He was put on trial first in August 1962 and given five years for incitement and leaving the country illegally.

He then eluded capture many times, when he became known as the Black pimpnel.

He was eventually captured again and put on trial for sabotage, a charge, Mr Speaker, Sir, which carried the death penalty. On 12 June 1964, Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment.

He used his eloquence and passion to turn his trial into an indictment of the apartheid regime.

His lawyers warned him, that such a course would be an invitation for the death penalty, but he would not refrain from saying what he wanted to say.

He was on his feet for 4½ hours and he ended up by addressing the court in those terms and I quote -

“I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

There was stunned silence when he ended.

The Court sentenced him to life imprisonment. He was to spend the next 27 years, mostly on Robben Island where the most dangerous criminals were incarcerated. Together with his comrades in arms, a humiliating treatment was inflicted upon them by the white wardens.

They were routinely made to dig a pit and drop into it; the jailers then urinated on them before making them fill the pit again. They tried to break Mandela's morale - by not giving him the letters Winnie Mandela wrote to him and then spreading rumours about her. When his mother died, he was refused permission to attend her funeral. And when his eldest son was killed in an accident at the age of 24, he was again refused permission to attend the funeral. One can imagine, Mr Speaker, Sir, what a terrible blow it must have been to him! He felt guilty for he thought that if he was there for his son, maybe all this could have been avoided.

You can ask yourself what kind of man was he, not to feel any bitterness when he was eventually released. It was an act of exceptional generosity of spirit that led him to invite his jailers to his inauguration ceremony and to his first official dinner as President.

While he was singled out and treated so inhumanely, he was thrice - not once - given the option of freedom provided that he would discard the ANC and its Leaders, but he refused every time.

He replied by a letter which was read by his daughter and this is what he said -

“I am a member of the ANC

I have always been a member of the ANC and

I will remain a member of the ANC until the day I die.

I cherish my freedom dearly, but I care even more for your freedom.

Too many have died since I went to prison.

Too many have suffered for the love for freedom

I owe it to their widows, to their orphans, to their mothers and to their fathers who have grieved and wept for them.

Not only have I suffered during these long, lonely wasted years.

I am not less life-loving than you are.

But I cannot sell my birthright, nor am I prepared to sell the birthright of the people to be free.

Only free men can negotiate.

Prisoners cannot enter into contracts.

I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you, when the people, are not free.

Your freedom and mine cannot be separated.

I will return”.

Any other man, Mr Speaker, Sir, would have chosen the easy way out after having been submitted to such cruel and harsh treatment, but not Nelson Mandela.

He was made of a different timber, he was no ordinary mortal.

Mr Speaker, Sir, you reach the pinnacle of humanity when you overcome the limits of human endurance and humiliation and still keep your dignity and your convictions intact.

He was later interviewed by Sir Trevor Mc Donald of ITV who asked him repeatedly whether in the darkest days of his time in prison, he ever feared for his life.

He typically replied by quoting Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar. He said -

“Cowards die many times before their deaths,

The valiant never tastes of death but once (...)”

Mr Speaker, Sir, Nelson Mandela’s story is a remarkable one.

A lesser man might have remained forever embittered of the white regime that had piled so much humiliation and suffering upon him. Instead, he showed the real measure of the man he was, when he uttered these words on the day of his release, and I quote -

“As I walked out the door thro’ the gate that would lead me to freedom, I knew if I did not leave my bitterness and hatred behind I’d still be in prison!”

He showed by his words and by his deeds that he had a deep understanding of the human spirit. He epitomized humility and modesty and he allowed his head to see further than his heart. He saw the need for reconciliation and the triumph of principle over mere power.

Viewed from the vantage point of the present, the whole of Nelson Mandela's life seems to have carried the energy of legend and the weight of epic narrative.

His noble high mindedness makes him a beacon of peace and reconciliation throughout the world.

One can grasp the depth of his character when he often quoted the Victorian poet, William Ernest Henley to his fellow prisoners from the poem "Invictus" and I quote -

"Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the pit from pole to pole,
 I thank whatever Gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.
 In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have neither winced nor cried aloud
 Under the bludgeoning of chance
 My head is bloody, but unbowed
 Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the horror of the shade,
 And yet the menace of the years
 Finds, and shall find me, unafraid
 It matters not how strait the gate,
 How charged with punishment the scroll,
 I am the master of my fate
 I am the captain of my soul".

I think, Mr Speaker, Sir, this sums up what Nelson Mandela was. He was a man of unbelievable courage and still he had the instinct to value reconciliation over vengeance. This is what being a hero is about.

As Hegel said about others -

“They may all be called heroes, inasmuch as they have derived their purposes and their vocation not from the calm regular course of things, sanctioned by the existing order, but from a concealed fount, from that inner spirit, still hidden beneath the surface, which impinges on the outer world as on a shell and bursts it into pieces”.

Such were Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln, the heroes of an epoch.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I had the singular honour of representing our country at the memorial service for Nelson Mandela along with many dignitaries from the rest of the world. This was indeed a poignant and highly emotional ceremony - perhaps one of the biggest, if not the biggest, in history.

Indeed, never in the history of the world have we witnessed such a spontaneous outpouring of grief and love on the demise of a political leader. Thousands of people gathered as well as over 140 world leaders and a galaxy of stars and celebrities in tribute for a man who touched the world. On the way to the FNB Stadium, near Soweto, thousands of people lined up the road to bid farewell to their beloved Tata - others were singing ‘*Hamba Kahle Madiba*’ which means Goodbye Madiba.

Many banners and posters were displayed, but one which stood out and which in my view summed up the life and struggle of Nelson Mandela was written in Zulu which translated in English means: “Thanks to you Madiba, I am now recognised as a human being”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is only when I looked at his motionless body that it dawned upon me that this bright light which shone over us all is now extinguished forever. His death has left an aching void in the whole world. But it should prompt us for self-reflection. He has shown us the way to live – that bind our human spirits together.

There is a word in South Africa - *Ubuntu* - which encapsulates what Nelson Mandela stood for – a recognition that we are all bound together in ways that can be invisible to the eye; that there is a oneness to humanity; that we achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others, and caring for those around us.

It is up to us to make the effort to remember Nelson Mandela’s humanity and what he stood for.

To make sure that we never forget, I have requested the Bank of Mauritius to ask the main banks to consider awarding three scholarships to deserving students from Mthatha - formerly known as Umtata, the birthplace of Nelson Mandela. As a mark of our profound admiration for such a distinguished Leader, I have also decided that a statue of Nelson Mandela be erected on the Waterfront in Port Louis.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to seize this opportunity to inform the House that action is being taken to restructure the Nelson Mandela Centre. Amendments to the Act will be effected to review its membership and ensure the effective implementation of the measures towards the attainment of the objectives of the recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission.

I also hope, that this Assembly and the Nation will agree, I will request the Vice-President to declare the day of his burial – that is Sunday 15th December, a day of mourning from 6 a.m to 6 p.m.

I am also inviting all Mauritians, wherever they are and whatever they are doing, to stop at the precise time of his burial and to observe one minute of silence.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Nelson Mandela made reference to the *karma* of our soul, when he said and I quote -

“There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere,
and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death again and again
before we reach the mountain top of our desires.”

His long walk to freedom is over at last and his place is now secure amongst the litany of the greatest spiritual leader the world has ever known.

But as the former Senator Edward Kennedy said at the funeral of his assassinated brother, Robert Kennedy and I quote –

“The cause endures

The hope still lives

And the dream shall never die”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with these concluding remarks, may I now request you to be kind enough to direct the Clerk of the National Assembly to convey the deep condolences of the Government and of this Assembly to Mrs Graça Machel, Mrs Winnie Mandela, the Mandela children and family, President Zuma and the people of South Africa as well as the hon. Max Sisulu, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of South Africa.

I thank you.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger): M. le président, depuis une semaine le monde est en deuil.

Le monde est en deuil parce qu’il a perdu un héros politique et moral exceptionnel, un géant qui a été salué dans une unanimité et une ferveur sans précédent.

Né en 1918, d'ascendance royale, rien ne prédestinait Nelson Mandela à mener le combat héroïque qu'il choisit plus tard de mener. Rien sinon, peut-être son nom, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, called Rolihlahla, dans sa langue maternelle de xhosa veut dire *troublemaker*. Or, l'ordre établi d'alors c'était l'apartheid.

Nelson Mandela connut la prison pour la première fois en 1952 à Durban. Douze ans plus tard, condamné à la prison à vie, il passa 27 ans en prison sur Robben Island d'abord puis à Pollsmoor Prison et Victor the Verster Prison pour en sortir en 1990 à l'âge de 71 ans.

Mr Speaker, Sir, son premier enfant, Madiba Thembekile, né en 1946 mourut, comme l'honorable Premier ministre vient de nous le rappeler, dans un accident de la route en 1969. On refusa à son père alors sur Robben Island le droit d'assister à son enterrement. Son deuxième enfant, une fille nommée Makaziwe, née en 1949, mourut de maladie neuf mois plus tard. Il eût en tout, M. le président, six enfants, dont trois filles encore en vie, 18 petits-enfants et 12 arrière-petits- enfants.

Nelson Mandela, M. le président, opta dans un premier temps pour la non-violence et contre un front politique interracial, puis il s'associa à partir du début des années 50 à des militants anti-apartheid venus de toutes les communautés sud-africaines et arriva à la conclusion que –

“That the ANC had no alternative to armed and violent resistance to apartheid”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a turning point in the anti-apartheid struggle and that of Nelson Mandela was the Sharpeville massacre of 21 March 1960. In the context of a campaign protest against so-called passed laws by Nelson Mandela's ANC and by the Pan Africanist Congress.

Nelson Mandela publicly burned his past in solidarity. Riots broke out across South Africa, martial law was proclaimed, both the ANC and the PAC were banned. Nelson Mandela was arrested on 05 August 1962 and the famous Rivonia Trial started at Pretoria on 09 October to end on 12 June 1964 when he and others were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another turning point was the Soweto uprising of 16 June 1976, whilst Nelson Mandela was still on Robben Island. It took place in the context of protest by school students of Soweto and elsewhere against the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction. Stephen Bantu Biko, better known as Steve Biko and his black consciousness movement had played a significant role in organising those student protests. Steve Biko was arrested on 18 August 1977 and was brutally murdered in Police custody. By then, his fame was said to have equalled that of Mandela himself.

Then, in September 1989, F. W. de Klerk became President of South Africa. Before that, Mr Speaker, Sir, Mikhail Gorbachev had become Secretary-General of the Communist Party of the Soviet

Union in March 1985 and had launched his policy of Glasnost and Perestroika in 1986. On 06 September 1989, general elections were held in South Africa with F. W. de Klerk seeking a reformist mandate. In the Whites only House of Assembly, de Klerk's National Party won 48% of the vote, the Pro-Apartheid Conservative Party 32% and the Anti-Apartheid Democratic Party 20%. President de Klerk released ANC prisoners, but not Nelson Mandela who refused to disown violence at that point in time. Then, the Berlin Wall fell on 09 November 1989. De Klerk met Nelson Mandela the following month. Mandela was released unconditionally on 11 February 1990 and the ban on the ANC and political parties was lifted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, negotiations to bring about the end of apartheid were very difficult and thousands died in political violence in spite of Nelson Mandela's tireless efforts. On 10 April 1993, Chris Hani, a very popular ANC leader, an eventual successor to Mandela was assassinated outside his home to the east of Johannesburg. Nelson Mandela made a very powerful national appeal for calm. The first multiracial elections took place a year later. Nelson Mandela became President on 10 May 1994 at the age of 75 and retired in June 1999 at 80. Revered as the Father of the rainbow Nation and as the architect of reconciliation and democratic and non-sexist South Africa.

Down all those years, Mr Speaker, Sir, the two most powerful and famous speeches of Nelson Mandela were probably his Rivonia trial four-hour speech on 20 April 1964 and the one he delivered three days after Chris Hani's assassination in April 1993.

On one specific issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, although there was a great feeling of affinity and kingship for Mandela within the Jewish Community of South Africa, Nelson Mandela never missed an opportunity of expressing his active solidarity with the Palestinians and of saying that South Africa's freedom would remain incomplete until the Palestinians achieved their freedom.

Both Fatah and Hamas have been mourning like us - more than us - his death, Mr Speaker, Sir. Last Friday, President Mahmoud Abbas described Nelson Mandela as, and I quote –

“The bravest and most important world personality to stand with us (...).”

‘Us’, being of course, the Palestinians, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Here, in Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, Basdeo, then Sookdeo Bissoondoyal campaigned against apartheid even before the 1948 historic general elections. In January 1971, the MMM circulated an anti-Banda petition and organised an anti-Banda and anti-apartheid demonstration at Plaisance Airport on 12 January. As a result, several civil servants, including late Zeel Peerun, former Member of this august Assembly, lost their jobs.

After the 1982 general elections, one of the first things the new government did was to give official recognition to Nelson Mandela's ANC and to the PLO of Yasser Arafat.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in 1998, on the occasion of Nelson Mandela's official visit to Mauritius, the African Cultural Centre was renamed as the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture; a tribute which I feel we are now called upon to enhance in a consensual manner. After what I have just heard the hon. Prime Minister proposing, I agree fully, but I do believe that we should go one step further.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Nelson Mandela once said, I quote –

“I was not a messiah, but an ordinary man who had become a leader because of extraordinary circumstances.”

Typical Nelson Mandela! Nelson Mandela, Mr Speaker, Sir, indeed lived through extraordinary circumstances, but he was no ordinary man! He was *un être d'exception, un héros politique et moral exceptionnel, un géant que le monde entier salue à l'unanimité depuis une semaine*, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me end by saying we should not cry because Nelson Mandela has died, as we all must do. We should rejoice that he has lived and left to the human race the invaluable heritage of an exemplary life of courage, love, principle, honesty and humility, Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Members.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I associate myself with the tribute paid by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister and by the hon. Leader of the Opposition to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Madiba for those who cherish him, a man of destiny, who has gone through numerous exacting trials, sometimes, on the brink of death, but who never faltered in his struggle to free and shape the destiny of his people.

He had unleashed a wave of light that had swept away the darkness of the cursed system called apartheid.

He called himself a mere mortal. Yet, he has been a great and outstanding human being, with a remarkable message for those who fought and are now still fighting for freedom and against occupation, which is, to struggle to free the oppressed from the tyranny of the oppressor and to free the oppressor from his own prejudice and inhumanity. He has taught us that the penultimate purpose of a struggle is to achieve the freedom to be free, that is, the right to be free from oppression.

The ultimate purpose, however, he explained, and I quote -

“For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

A noble soul indeed!

His demise is not only a loss for South Africa but also for the rest of the world which needed and still need to be guided and inspired by the light of the ideals of peace, justice, tolerance and democracy for which he has dedicated his whole life and striven for.

Nelson Mandela is certainly one of the very rare Statespersons who has stood out for a higher level of human relationship in the political sphere.

In spite of having been subjected to the most inhumane forms of oppression for over quarter of a century, he nurtured no bitterness against his oppressors – a quality of all-embracing human generosity and warmth, which stood out most prominently in his character.

South Africa must be proud to have borne to the world a prominent human rights and freedom fighter, a leader and a Statesperson of imperishable renown in the person of Nelson Mandela.

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Madiba, is no more, but his legacy remains and it rests with all of us to endeavour in building a truly democratic world, free from oppression, war, injustice and intolerance.

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela will be remembered, not only as a man of his times, but as a man of all times.

His long walk to freedom is over but mankind's long walk to justice, peace and freedom continues.

I now direct the Clerk of the National Assembly to convey to the President and to the People of the Republic of South Africa, through the good offices of the Office of the Speaker of the Parliament of South Africa, the deep and heartfelt condolences expressed by the House.

Thank you.

The House stands adjourned.

At 4.11 p.m. the Assembly rose and stood adjourned, as already resolved, to Tuesday 17 December at 11.30 a.m.