



MINISTRY OF FINANCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

FREEDOM DAY ADDRESS
GALESHEWE, KIMBERLEY
27 APRIL 2005

TREVOR MANUEL MP, MINISTER OF FINANCE

Programme Director

Your Excellency, Premier Dipuo Peters

Honourable Minister Pandor

Your Worship, Mayor Moira Martin

Honourable MEC's, MPL's and Councillors

Dear Friends

It is truly great to join with the people of the Northern Cape in this wonderful celebration. Eleven years of democracy is well worth celebrating. Eleven years of continuous achievement is a great opportunity for a huge celebration. So today, it is our duty and our responsibility to celebrate as only the Northern Cape can.

But in celebrating, we cannot ever allow any person to disrespect this day. For to disrespect Freedom Day is to disrespect our freedom. To disrespect our freedom is to disrespect the struggle which was a long, long sacrifice for so many South Africans. Too many of whom died before they saw freedom. Yesterday,

President Mbeki recognized the contribution of a number of those martyrs. He also used the opportunity to give awards to many whose lives have been in struggle – many of them are well into their seventies, but they never faulted in providing dedication, leadership and service, asking for nothing other than the opportunity to serve. What distinguishes all of those whom the President recognized yesterday is that they amassed no personal wealth, except the experience of struggle. Their lives and sacrifices have won our freedom.

So yes, we honour them and celebrate them, but we must also celebrate our achievements, our present and our collective future. Yes, we have much to celebrate.

For us, democracy did not arrive one fine day in 1994. Nor did it arrive with the unbanning of our movement in 1990. Our democracy was considered by our forebears in the ANC as long ago as 1936, in a document entitled the *African Claims*. This process was taken forward in 1955 with the adoption of the Freedom Charter, which for fifty years has lit our path to the future. So, today, we celebrate that guidance.

Understanding this means that we must always ask what the real meaning of our freedom is. Our long and hard struggle, the clear vision could never be merely about the right to vote every five years. Our freedom is for a democracy which touches the lives of all South Africans. Our freedom is premised on policies that must unapologetically seek to improve on the lives of the poorest South Africans.

Voting every five years for National and Provincial Government, and for some years in between for Local Government is very important. Voting is the peaceful means to put into office those who carry our hopes and dreams, those who are empowered to take the correct decisions about our lives and those who must be accountable to all South Africans.

But merely voting every five years is insufficient to bring democracy. We need policies and measures to alter the course of history to favour the poor and the historically disadvantaged. And we need good governance to effect the changes.

Water always flows downhill, and, in life, opportunities tend to flow towards those who already have. If you need to get water to the poor who live uphill, then you must put in place special measures to pump the water there. Similarly, if we want to ensure that the opportunities don't favour those who already benefited from apartheid, then we must put in place special measures to ensure that the opportunities are pumped to where the disadvantaged are. And, we should never apologise for seeking to reverse the course of history – as long as we are clear about our intent and accountable in our actions, our freedom places truth on our side.

Now, when we talk of opportunities, it includes business opportunities, but the larger challenges are outside of business. The opportunities we speak of are those which need to arise in the everyday lives of our people. Our freedom asks of us to reverse the misfortune that the children of poor parents are born into. Our freedom asks of us to break the cycle of poverty and underdevelopment. When our freedom asks that, we have to deliver.

It is for this reason that we can and must look back on eleven years of solid achievement. The world marvels at just how much we have already done. But we cannot afford to be arrogant – we must always be our own conscience of what remains undone – and on Freedom Day, recommit ourselves to work even harder.

The primary cause for harder work is our people – those who have yet to benefit fully from democracy. But, there are also millions of poor people around the world who look to us – all of us as South Africans, to help from the depths of poverty that surround them. This is one of the reasons that President Mbeki, Deputy President Zuma and so many Ministers have to constantly travel to some of the world's poorest countries to encourage their struggles for peace and democracy and their struggles against poverty and despair. We have that task of leadership foisted upon us.

Our young democracy has achieved so much because we have strong policies and a government with great commitment to our people. We have achieved so much because we believe fundamentally in a government that is focused on

development. But, we believe, as fervently, that we will do more if all of our people are as committed and as actively engaged.

Last year, we asked for your vote to establish a People's Contract. This year, we return to you and ask for a strengthening of your side of that contract. An active government and a passive people do not produce a dynamic democracy.

We are only too aware that our work does not reach far enough. We are very conscious of the pockets of poverty and hunger in every township and rural area. We are alive to the fact that we are losing too many of our youth to the evils of drugs and gangsterism. And we desperately want to change all of this soonest. But we cannot do it alone. We desperately need the active participation of well organized communities to drive the changes. This is the partnership. This is the People's Contract. For us, it was a statement of beliefs and not merely a vote-catcher last year.

So I ask each one of you to commit to Freedom. I ask each of you to commit of your time and energy. I ask each one you to make the contract work. I ask each one you to ensure that our twelfth year of Freedom will be even better than the previous eleven. I ask each one you to celebrate this, our Freedom Day, with respect.

Thank you.