



ministry of finance

Department:
The National Treasury
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SATAYGRAHA CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

TONGAAT, 29 APRIL 2006

ADDRESS BY TREVOR A MANUEL, MP, MINISTER OF FINANCE

Dear Friends

Thank you for joining us here in this special centenary celebration of Satyagraha and the commemoration of that great individual, Mahatma Gandhi, whose life and contribution was shaped by his own experiences in this part of the world. Moreover, we need to remind ourselves that we are celebrating his life and contribution over this very special weekend which affords a time for celebration and reflection about ourselves. Lest we forget, this extended weekend started with the celebration of our nationhood and it will end on Mayday, in recognition of the contribution of workers to what we are.

The concept of nationhood, is as important now as it was in the life and struggles of Mahatma Gandhi. He said, “nations are born out of travail and suffering.” Against this criterion, we as South Africans, have certainly earned our right to nationhood. Our nationhood and our freedom was not handed on a plate, nor did it occur only in recognition of the fact that we live together in one geographic space. Our nationhood was born of struggle and suffering. Our nationhood was earned. Our nationhood must therefore be cherished and handed down with full appreciation from generation to generation.

Nationhood is not an event. Its form and shape cannot be predetermined. Nationhood is an active building process. For us, the outlines of what must be built are set out in the Preamble to our Constitution, which reads

*We, the people of South Africa,
Recognise the injustices of our past;
Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;
Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and
Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.*

We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to

Heal the divisions of the past and establish as society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;

Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;

Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and

Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

May God protect our people.

Nkosi Sikele' iAfrika. Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso.

The “we” who desire all of these good things can surely not be merely government as the elected representatives of the people. The “we”

includes all of us. We must all then commit to working for that quality of nationhood that the Constitution speaks of. We have to act for what is right and we have to act against what is wrong.

So, when we observe crime around us, and we fail to act, we are not contributing to the building of a nation. So, when we observe wrongs in the community, like those who wage chemical warfare against our youth – we must act, because that is what we committed to do when we adopted the Constitution. When we observe the abuse of the rights of any of us, we must act, because that is what we committed to do when we adopted our Constitution. When we see activities that deny the potential of any of us, we must act. When we observe blatant criminality exercised against the vulnerable, we must act. If we wish to live out the spirit of the Constitution, which is the same as the spirit of Gandhijee, then we will soon find out that it is better to prevent bad acts, by building strong communities.

If we want to build, then we need to strengthen our own integrity. If we wish to strengthen our own integrity, then it is worth remembering what Gandhijee called the Seven Sins:

- **Wealth without work**
- **Pleasure without conscience**
- **Knowledge without character**
- **Commerce without morality**
- **Science without humanity**
- **Worship without sacrifice**
- **Politics without principle.**

These “Seven Social Sins” are the words engraved on the tomb of Mahatma Gandhi, just outside of Delhi. These are the words that we should remember him by. These words must live on in each of us, as these words will define the quality of service we are each prepared to render.

The building of a caring democracy depends on the contribution of each one of us. Let us work to make a difference.

Thank you.