



MINISTRY OF FINANCE

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**ADDRESS AT THE OCCASION OF THE UNVEILING OF NOBEL SQUARE
V & A WATERFRONT, CAPE TOWN
16 DECEMBER 2005**

TREVOR A MANUEL, MP, MINISTER OF FINANCE

Director of Ceremonies, Mr Vuyo Mbuli;

Premier Ebrahim Rassool;

Our Nobel Laureates here present – Former State President F W de Klerk, and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu;

Representatives of the Families of Former President Nelson Mandela and Nkosi Albert Luthuli;

Family Representatives of all South Africa's Nobel Laureates;

Dear Friends.

This very special square will be the place where all of South Africa's recipients of Nobel Prizes will be remembered. Already, there are 10 South Africans who have been so recognized. For today, however, the focus will be on the four distinguished recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Occasionally, nations should pause to consider what defines them. In some instances, it might be the singleness of language and culture, in yet other instances, the definition may be as basic as a shared geographic space. We, as South Africans, are distinguished by the privilege of a struggle for definition, which struggle has allowed us to take some far-reaching decisions. Today, 16th December is our Day of Reconciliation. In a previous era, the relationship of a person to the nation was defined by how they celebrated 16th December – for some it was the “Day of the Covenant”, a commemoration which sent strong messages about division and battle; for others, it marked the Umkhonto we Sizwe Day, the day on which the armed struggle was launched.

We, in that struggle for definition of our South Africaness, opted for Reconciliation as a statement of who we are, a statement so powerful that we must celebrate it with a public holiday. Of course, in so doing, we also afford ourselves an opportunity each year to reflect on the UN Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. So each year, as we consider the matters of reconciliation in South Africa, we can measure progress against a world standard.

But who we are and what we are, doesn't happen automatically, as some miracle might. Who we are and what we are is a product of the quality of leadership we as South Africans are privileged to have. The fact that we have four recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize is a recognition of that fact.

In his Acceptance Speech on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize on 10 December 1961, Nkosi Albert Luthuli explained the nature of the responsibility of leadership. He said, “ in my country, South Africa, the spirit of peace is subject to some of the severest tensions known to man.” And, over the next forty years, those tensions were stressed to the very limits. In his Acceptance Speech on 10 December 1993, then State President F W de Klerk, reminded us of the measure of those tensions, “more than 3 000 people have died in political violence since the beginning of this year”.

Today, we celebrate the spirit of Reconciliation, we celebrate this South African nation, and we give thanks for the quality of leadership that rescued from the depths of separation.

But today, we also want to pay that very special tribute to those of our leaders whose efforts were recognized by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize. We need to remind ourselves that the Prize is not a competition, or a championship. Over the past 105 years since its inception, the prize was awarded only 86 times. There were many years when either because of war, or the absence of obvious recipients, the prize was not awarded. Of the 86 awards, the prize was shared 24 times, and awarded to agencies of the United Nations a further 6 times. So the recognition is indeed a rare feat. Further, in almost every instance, the Peace Prize was awarded for different actions in different situations, requiring different effort, but each time the award recognized the super-human effort made. The fact that

there is no other instance in the history of the prize where on three different occasions it was awarded for the same endeavour makes our achievement so truly remarkable.

This year's recipient, is another African, Mohamed El Baradei who was recognized for his principled stand in the International Atomic Energy Agency. In his acceptance speech he spoke of the struggle for peace needing to shift to incorporate the 'threats without borders'. He referred to the fact that the world spent \$ 1 Trillion on armaments, yet a mere 1 % of that amount would ensure that no person in the world went to bed hungry – but that 1% was not available.

When one reads the acceptance speeches of our own Nobel Peace Laureates, one is struck by the strength and uniformity of the message.

So, Nkosi Albert Luthuli said, “ As our contribution to peace, we are resolved to end such evils as oppression, white supremacy and racial discrimination, all of which are incompatible with world peace and security.”

Archbishop Tutu said, “ There is no peace in southern Africa. There is no peace because there is no justice. There can be no peace and security until there be first justice enjoyed by all the inhabitants of that beautiful land.” And “where there is injustice, invariably peace becomes a casualty.”

Former State President F W de Klerk said, “ Peace does not fare well where poverty and deprivation reign. It does not flourish where there is ignorance and a lack of education and information. Repression, injustice and exploitation are inimical with peace.”

And, looking forward to a day like today, Former President Nelson Mandela said in Oslo on 10 December 1993,

“ The value of our shared reward will and must be measured by the joyful peace which will triumph, because the common humanity that bonds both black and white into a human race will have said to each one of us that we shall all live like children in paradise. Thus shall we live, because we will have created a society which recognizes that all people are born equal, with each entitled in equal measure to life, liberty, prosperity, human rights and good governance.”

That is what we celebrate today. The strength of the message remains the joy of reconciliation.

Of course, we must also here remember the other South Africans who have been recognized by the Nobel committees over the years. Nadine Gordimer and J M Coetzee were recognized for their excellence in literature. And Max Theiler, All McCormack, Aaron Klug and Sydney Brenner were recognized for their efforts in the struggle against ignorance and disease.

This square must acclaim all of them.

We want this Nobel Square to be that place where we will bring our children to encourage them in the endeavour for the betterment of all humankind. This square should not be a garden of remembrance but a spur to action, for as Mohamed El Baradei reminded the world last week, there are many struggles which demand our attention, and cry out for leadership. Our colleagues gathered at the Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation, even as we speak here, are engaged in one such site of struggle – the battle between the world's rich and poor nations. There remains so much to be done on the African continent in the struggle to secure peace. And right here in south Africa, the twin struggles against greed and want must continue to ensure that we are fitting followers of the that great leadership which has been so amply demonstrated by our four great Nobel Peace Laureates.

From time to time we shall have to replenish our energies. This square must be the place to which we come for a dose of strength, resilience and tenacity. A gentle reminder of what is possible.

Thank you.