



INCLUSIVE SOCIETY INSTITUTE

SPEECH

MESSAGE OF SUPPORT: 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF FORMER PRESIDENT MANDELA'S INAUGURAL SPEECH OF 10 MAY 1994: FREEDOM PARK, PRETORIA: FRIDAY, 10 MAY 2024

“Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must produce an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity's belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for glorious life for all.

We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination”.

I was there. It was an electrifying atmosphere. The people were filled with excitement, hope, and the belief that a new united South Africa was born.

Have we honoured that commitment 30 years on?

The Inclusive Society Institute, through our *GovDem* poll, regularly tests the pulse of the nation. We assess their attitudes on a range of topics. Perceptions are not good.

Only around 22% of South Africans believe crime is being managed well. But the perception and the data, tell two very different stories. The South Africa of today is safer than the South Africa ushered in by President Mandela in 1994.

The data tells us that since the advent of the new democratic order, the South African authorities have both qualitatively and quantitatively improved crime management in the country. Don't get me wrong, it is still not where it must be, but it is improving.

- The number of murders per one hundred thousand of the population has decreased from 66 in 1995 to 45 today.
- Whereas some talk about the genocide of white farmers, in the three years preceding 1994, there were on average 64 farm murders per year, which has reduced to 56 (below the national average).
- Residential burglary has reduced by 55,7%, and business burglary by 55,3%.
- All in all, the annual number of all property-related crimes, when measuring it based on the number of incidents per one hundred thousand of the population, has improved by 63 percent, from 1663 in 1994/5 to 620 in 2022/3.
- In current day value, the authorities spent around R1,064 per citizen in 1996 in keeping them safe, and this has grown to R1,818 per citizen in 2024.

When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

The public perceptions with regard to South Africa's healthcare system is not good. But the perception and the data, tell two very different stories. The South Africa of today is healthier than the South Africa ushered in by President Mandela in 1994.

Once again, don't get me wrong, it is still not where it must be, but it is improving.

- The number of doctors have nearly doubled from 2000 to 2021 and the people to doctor ratio has improved considerably from 3808:1 to 2760:1.
 - The number of nurses have increased by 123,4% since 1998 and the people to nurse ratio has improved from 340:1 to 218:1.
 - There is greater efficiency in that average length of stay in a public hospital has decreased from 6,4 days in 2008 to 5,9 days in 2021, and in the last two decades still-births have come down from 27 per thousand to 20 per thousand.
 - In 2002, 75 infants and under-5's died per 1000 births. This came down to 31 per 1000 births – it more than halved.
 - And the average life of a South African has increase from 55,5 years in 2002 to 62,8 years in 2022.
- When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

If some of the narratives in the public space were to be believed, South Africa's education system is dysfunctional. But, once again, the perception and the data, tell two very different stories. The South Africa's learning environment is better today than the South Africa ushered in by President Mandela in 1994.

Don't get me wrong, there is still much to be done, but it is improving.

- The percentage of the population (20 years+) with no education reduced from 13% in 1995 to 3,2% 2021.
- Those with Matric increased from 18,7% in 1995 to 35,3% when measured in 2021.
- Despite pupil numbers rising by 1,056,985 since 2000, pupil to teacher ratios have remained constant (in fact slightly improved from 33 pupils per teacher in 2000 to 31 to 1 today). That says teacher appointments are keeping pace.
- The matric pass rates are better: The overall pass rate improved by some 20% since 1994 – from 58% to 83% last year. Bachelor passes have doubled over the same period, so even if one were to criticize the low requirement to pass, in real terms those achieving higher standards are up.
- The number of students receiving NSFAS grants more than doubled since 2011.

When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

So my message to those that ask whether South Africa is becoming a failed state, is that, given the empirical data, it is the wrong question to ask. The narrative should be: "Imagine where South Africa would have been in the absence of state capture, cadre deployment and mismanagement".

In calculations done by the economic research team of the ISI, it is suggested that the current 6,5 trillion rand economy could have been around 9,5 trillion rand. We have improved the lives of our people. We could have done far better.

There is reason to be concerned. **BUT** we should not despair. If we put shoulders to the wheel, it is possible to deliver on Mandela's pledge.

At his inaugural speech, President Mandela also said that:

“We have triumphed in the effort to implant hope in the breasts of the millions of our people. We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity - a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world”.

Mmmm... Let's think about that.

There is no doubt that in the first decade and more, under President Mandela, and followed through by President Mbeki, South Africa came together as a nation. We were building a South Africa that belonged to all who lived in it, both black and white.

Our economy was growing, there was optimism and hope in the air, society was transforming, it was tangible.

People, from all races, were working together to build a united South Africa.

A common national ethos and identity was emerging.

As the last Secretary General of the National Party I can reveal that the policy opposites of the ANC and NP were narrowing.

My team and I drafted the manifesto of the then NNP for the 2004 election. It was a difficult process, because we were basically on the same page. We had to be creative in placing clear blue water between ourselves and the ANC.

Because, on economic matters we were basically of the same mind, with some emphasis differences. For example, we wanted slightly more flexible labour laws.

On social issues the NNP as a party supported the death penalty, and were pro-life when it came to abortion. But even there the party allowed its members to vote their conscience. I was, for example, even though being SG, anti the death penalty.

After flirting with the DA, the NNP withdrew from the DA since we could not associate with the idea of what is bad for the country is good for the opposition. We wanted to be co-builders, hence our then election campaign *'For your fair share'*.

All of this culminated in the NNP merging with the ANC in 2005. A significant moment in history where these two enemies reconciled to the point of joining forces.

But a LOST moment in history, because shortly afterwards, the 'wedge' was introduced.

The wedge designed in the boardrooms of London, gave birth to the notion of white monopoly capital as a veil to hide state capture, and to disguise wholesale corruption. It wasn't the theft that was holding progress back, it was the anti-transformists they would argue.

I have shown you where South Africa would have been had we not the lost those nine years. I am convinced that transformation would have progressed far more, had it not been for those lost years.

But it is what is. And unfortunately it has had a dramatic impact on nation-building, reconciliation and social cohesion.

The same *GovDem* poll referred to earlier, revealed that social cohesion in South Africa has regressed considerably since the Mandela-Mbeki era.

In the poll, less than half of the respondents were of the view that a united nation could be forged out of all the population groups in the country. Less than a third percent believed it possible.

Even more disquieting is the finding that only 39 percent of South Africans were of the opinion that reconciliation in South Africa is moving in the right direction. This held true across all the race groups, where similar trends exist.

Trust amongst the various groups is worryingly high. For example:

- From the same *GovDem Survey*, only 40 percent of White South Africans trust their Black compatriots, and similarly only 41 percent Black South Africans trust their White compatriots;
- Only 48 percent of South Africans trust people from a different religion to their own;
- Only 43 percent of South Africans trust people from different nationalities. Similar trends existed across all the major race groups; and
- Of particular concern was the finding that 68 percent of South Africans did not trust immigrants from other African countries, and some 66 percent did not trust immigrants from overseas. And likewise, similar trends were registered across all the race groups.

Social cohesion is far more than a cultural imperative. It affects all aspects of societal life. It is necessary for creating business and investment confidence, the prerequisite for economic growth and job-creation; and it is necessary to ensure a peaceful and stable environment. It nurtures a sense of belonging, and creates hope for the future for all citizens, who then see a place for themselves in the country. This builds trust and patriotism amongst the various communities of the country, who then work together to build prosperity and a shared future.

This President Mandela not only understood, he embodied it. And he made it the focus of his presidency.

Let's honour President Mandela by rekindling the spirit of 1994.

Let's honour President Mandela by once again putting social cohesion at the top of the agenda – the positive spins-offs for the economy and transformation will be profound.

Let's honour President Mandela by getting the symbolism and rhetoric right – symbolism and rhetoric matters.

Despite all the negativity, deep down, that is what South Africans want.

Whilst it is so that over 50% of South Africans believe it is impossible to form a united South Africa out of the different groups in the country, more than 70% of them want a united South Africa.

In honouring that covenant made by President Mandela on 10 May 1994, let's refocus and re-energise efforts to deliver the united South Africa our people want.

It's not impossible or difficult to achieve.

It simply requires giving action to political will.

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