



Nelson Mandelas tale i Folketinget

Taler

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela
Sydafrikas præsident

Dato

16. marts 1999

Sted

Folketingets talerstol,
Christiansborg

Mr Speaker;
Members of the Presidium;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I regret very much that we can spend so little time together today. There are so many things that could have been discussed between ourselves and you - on the one hand those who belong to a democracy soon to celebrate the 150th anniversary of its Constitution, and on the other the representative of a democracy in its very infancy, indeed barely 5 years old!

Such an encounter is all the more moving because we know we are in the presence of the representatives of a people who did not rest content with their own freedom, but fought for ours as if it was their own.

In the few years since our liberation it has not been possible to visit all those countries which responded to the call for a world-wide campaign to isolate the apartheid regime. Denmark was in the forefront of that legion. For that reason it was important to us, in the last months of our first democratic government, and on the eve of my own retirement from public life, to come and express our gratitude

Only those who were in apartheid's prisons, in the underground, in exile or in communities resisting oppression, can know how much that support meant.

It was not only the practical assistance and training, or the abundant humanitarian aid, but also the knowledge that the principles for which we were struggling were not silenced because you shared them.

It was especially inspiring to know when governments supported us, as the Danish Government did, it reflected the active involvement of millions of men and women, who insisted that we too should enjoy fundamental human rights.

I would therefore like to use this occasion to pay tribute to all those organisations and groups - the NGOs, trade unions, students and churches, and especially DanChurchAid - who worked with the anti-apartheid movement to mobilise the people and government of your country.

Denmark's example reminds us that however old or young a democracy may be, what counts is the extent to which ordinary people participate in the affairs of their country, how far they work together to achieve common goals and to create a better life for all citizens, and how far they go to ensure that the rights they prize can be enjoyed by all people everywhere.

These principles helped bring us our freedom. They are our guide now as we face even greater challenges, in rebuilding our country and overcoming the legacy of colonialism and apartheid.

As we strive to eradicate the consequences of that past, in our own country and elsewhere, as we seek to entrench and extend our young democracy, we do so with greater confidence knowing that we have tried and trusted friends and partners like the Danes.

I thank you.

Kilde

South African Government Information Website

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