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**Message from President Oliver Tambo
Delivered to the National Welcome Back Rally
Johannesburg
29 October 1989**

Comrade Chairperson, leaders of the African National Congress {ANC} and the Mass Democratic Movement, compatriots all.

This is a joyful day for all of us. It is a day of celebration for all the people of our country. Those who have chosen to turn their backs on our festivities are the small minority who continue to cling to the anti-human concept and practices of racial arrogance -- white minority domination and the super-exploitation of the masses of our people. Yet they too are part of our heritage. They are part of that history and continuing reality of our country which has meant and means the imprisonment of the best representatives of our people for a quarter of a century and more; the murder of tens of thousands by the apartheid army and police and their secret murder squads; the detention of tens of thousands under the State of Emergency, including the very young who ought to be as free the wind to enjoy the pleasures of childhood; the millions who have suffered from the daily violence inherent in the apartheid system. Our continuing obligation to uproot and obliterate the apartheid system contains within it the responsibilities to release these slaves of the criminal ideology of white supremacy from the kraals of interdict in which they have incarcerated themselves. In the end, they too must learn to celebrate freedom and not oppression; life not death; our common humanity and not the separation and definition of people according to racial and ethnic groups. But as of now we meet without this story, told to celebrate a victory that truly belongs to all the people of our country, as well as the countless millions throughout the world who are engaged in struggle to help us end the apartheid system and transform South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country.

Comrades Walter, Govan, Kathy, Raymond, Elias, Andrew, Wilton and Oscar -- welcome to you all. Welcome back to the foremost ranks of the mass army that is engaged in an heroic struggle to deliver our country and our people out of the long night of apartheid tyranny. Welcome back to the service within the collective leadership of the people's movement -- the African National Congress. We extend the same welcome to Comrade

Harry Gwala who should have been with you except for the fact that he is temporarily out of the country for medical reasons.

Dear comrades and fellow leaders, your return is not only a tribute to the relentless and historic campaign to secure your immediate and unconditional release, it is also, in no small measure, due to your own steadfast refusal to be cowed by the rigours of the apartheid prison -- the inspiration you never failed to give us by your unwavering commitment to the just cause for which you were unjustly arrested, tried, sentenced and imprisoned.

As we held the fort within the National Executive Committee of your organisation and, inside the command structures of Umkhonto we Sizwe, we valued immensely the comments, observations and suggestions you were able to communicate to us even while you were in prison. Even now we continue to pay the greatest attention to the comments, observations and suggestions communicated to us by Nelson Mandela and other comrades still in prison -- all of them disciplined members of our movement whose actions are inspired exclusively by the desire to serve the people, to contribute what they can from where they are to the realisation of the noble objectives contained in the Freedom Charter, to maintain an unwavering loyalty to the movement they have served and continue to serve with such distinction.

Indeed, Comrade Leaders of our people, we welcome you today also as a result of the committed and selfless efforts of Comrade Nelson Mandela working quietly and energetically behind the scenes. This rally can also be said to be in part a tribute to that magnificent struggle by one of our longest serving political prisoners, Nelson Mandela.

Comrade Leaders of our people, compatriots who have gathered in your thousands today, our country has arrived at a crossroad. Whatever road it follows, the destination will, as surely as the sun rises in the East, be the final and total destruction of the apartheid system. Which road it takes is a matter entirely in the hands of F.W. de Klerk and the rest of the leadership of the National Party. By their actions, they will determine whether we go along the road of increasing confrontations and a bitter conflict between the forces of democracy on the one hand, and those of racial tyranny, on the other. By their deed, they will decide whether we proceed along the road of a negotiated settlement aimed at the abolition of the apartheid system of white minority domination and exploitation.

As we meet today to welcome back our leaders, we will without doubt also pledge ourselves to continue and to intensify the struggle in whatever form the situation demands, until freedom has been achieved. Of this nobody harbours any doubts, including the armed men and women who surround us as we celebrate. If F.W. de Klerk finally accepts the position the ANC and the masses of our people have upheld for decades by opting for peace with justice, he may yet earn a place among the peacemakers of our country, many of whom have had to bear arms or carry the honoured title of young lions as they prosecute the struggle whose aim is precisely the attainment of peace and justice for all our people and for the entire region of Southern Africa.

We must state here, that if the Pretoria regime seeks the path to a genuine political settlement of the conflict in our country, the way forward has been clearly spelt out in the Harare Declaration which you, the people of our country and your organisation, the ANC, prepared and which now has the express support of over a hundred countries.

If, on the other hand, F. W. de Klerk continues to entertain the illusion that he can perpetuate apartheid by the use of force and deceitful manoeuvres, he will need to know that thereby he condemns himself to disappear forever into the dim mists of history together with the criminal system he will have sought to defend.

We are strengthened by the knowledge that within the country we have a powerful cadre of leaders both young and old, men and women, black and white, who will, together with the tried and tested stalwarts who have now been released and those yet to be freed as well, a the patriots who are in enforced exile, work in unbreakable unity to lead our people to the deeply cherished goals of national and social emancipation.

Your glorious rally today expresses exactly that unity, dedication and common resolve. We look forward to the day which is not far from now when we shall rejoin you within the country as servants of the people to take further orders from these heroic masses as to what new task they give us to perform.

Let me, therefore, take this opportunity comrades to assure you that I am rapidly recovering my health. I am in regular contact with our headquarters in Lusaka, with our international representatives and with the comrades at home. You, the leaders of our people gave us a mission to go abroad, mobilise support for the struggle and return home to report to you on what we have done. Our mandate will not terminate until we have returned to give you that

report in person. Please do rest assured of this. Our temporary discomfort has been made so much easier to endure thanks to the great number of messages that so many of you within the country have communicated to us. I have no words to express my gratitude to you all except to say "Thank You" again and again.

Your concern has been as powerful a spur to my full recovery as the kind and close attention I have received and continued to receive from a wonderful team of doctors, nurses and other hospital staff.

To the great masses of our people so well represented at this rally today we say: You know the task facing us better than anybody else. Continue to unite in action and to act in unity. Continue to be as resolute and fearless as you have been. Nelson Mandela and other comrades are still in prison, we must free them. The State of Emergency remains; we must end it through our actions. Our organisations are still banned; we must un-ban them. The fratricidal violence in Natal continues; we must end it -- whatever obstacle some might place on our way as we seek to achieve this goal. The conference for a democratic future is ahead of us; we must make sure it succeeds as a true parliament of all our people and the point of focus to unite the millions of our people in struggle to achieve our common goal. The apartheid system remains in place; we must make the final determined drive to abolish this crime against humanity and, like the sister people of Namibia, take the final steps to our liberation.

Compatriots, the future of our country is in our hands. At this historic moment, let us act together for freedom now. Our common victory is in sight.

REVOLUTIONARY GREETINGS TO YOU ALL.

AMANDLA! MAATLA! ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE.

London

28 October 1989

Address by Comrade Walter Sisulu

National Welcome Back Rally

Johannesburg

29 October 1989

Friends, Comrades, and the people of South Africa, I extend warm fraternal greetings to you from all of us who have been released recently, from Comrade Mandela and from the hundreds of our comrades-in-arms who still languish in apartheid jails.

We salute you, the people of South Africa, for the courage, determination and sacrifices you have made under the most difficult and repressive conditions to ensure that the flag of our struggle is held high. Your efforts acted as a constant source of inspiration during our long years in prison.

We salute, in particular, the rank and file membership and the leadership of the African National Congress for earning our organisation the mantle of leader of the South African struggle. Let all gathered here send a special Get Well message to our President, Comrade Oliver Tambo.

We salute the United Democratic Front {UDF} and the mass organisations of the youth, women, students and civic. You have played a decisive role in precipitating the crisis apartheid faces today. In particular, we salute the young lions organised under the banner of SAYCO [South African Youth Congress] for taking the struggle to new heights.

We salute the Congress of South African Trade Unions {COSATU} for organising workers on a scale unequaled in the entire history of our struggle. Your meteoric rise symbolizes the centrality of the working class in our struggle.

We salute the students of our country whose heroic deeds were demonstrated in the 1976 uprising.

We pay a special tribute to the high quality of these and other mass organisations and to the tremendous skill of the new leadership that has emerged.

Today we also remember those of our comrades who are on death row. We commit ourselves to sparing no effort in order to save them from the gallows.

We pay tribute to our combatants and the thousands of unarmed protestors -- the real heroes of our struggle -- who have paid the ultimate price in the struggle. I ask you to rise in a moment's silence in remembrance of our fallen comrades.

We congratulate our sports persons and cultural workers in our struggle against apartheid.

We pay tribute to our religious organisations. You have demonstrated the powerful force of the good Christian, the good Muslim, the good Hindu and the good Jew in the struggle against evil.

Today we also salute the international community for the invaluable role it has played in complementing the struggle of our people. The support we have received and continue to receive from the OAU and Socialist countries will be remembered by the South African people forever. We pay special tribute to the role played by the Non Aligned Movement, the member states of the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the Scandinavian countries in supporting our struggle against apartheid.

We also appreciate the contribution of the international labour movement and the World Council of Churches.

We salute the role played by the anti-apartheid movement in the United States and Europe in our struggle.

We salute the role played by the Frontline States, and in particular, the sacrifices Zambia has made, under the leadership of President Kenneth Kaunda, for housing our headquarters and thousands of our people. We salute the role that great African leader such as Comrade Samora Machel [the late president of Mozambique], President Dos Santos {Angola}, President Mugabe {Zimbabwe}, President Chissano {Mozambique} and President Masire {Botswana} have played in the unfolding liberation of our people. We salute President Fidel Castro and the people

of Cuba for the heroic role they have played in the fight against colonialism in this region.

Today we see the apartheid regime facing a deep and irreversible crisis. All its political strategies of reforming apartheid have failed dismally. Corruption and scandal plague the ruling class. The Bantustans are areas of instability. The tricameral system is in disgrace. Brutal apartheid repression under successive States of Emergency has failed to dent the spirit of resistance amongst our people.

The disastrous policies of successive Nationalist Party governments has resulted in economic chaos. Spiraling inflation is the order of the day. The crisis has been accelerated by the rejection by the international community of apartheid as a crime against humanity. Sanctions, boycotts and disinvestment have isolated apartheid South Africa as the pariah of the world.

The Labour Relations Act and other anti-worker measures have spurred the resistance of the working class. Great battles have been fought by the trade unions to defend the rights of workers. Let us not forget that there is more that unites workers than divides them. We call for the unity of all organised workers under the banner: one country, one federation.

Friends of the apartheid government argue that sanctions would result in black workers losing their jobs. We say that it is the abnormal situation in this country which produces such results. For us, the central issue is: *What is the most effective strategy to remove suffering?* We are in no doubt that sanctions are to a very large extent responsible for making the government responsive to the demands of our people. We call on the world to intensify the sanctions campaign.

As the crisis against apartheid intensifies, the ruling class is becoming more and more fragmented. They no longer have any vision of the future. Today the ANC has captured the centre stage of political life in South Africa.

More and more people, black and white, are being inspired by the ideals of the ANC. The vision of a non-racial, democratic and united South Africa is shared by all sections of South African society. These ideas are permeating even through the very organs of repression.

More and more white youth are resisting military conscription. We embrace these objectors as true patriots. In the police force, Lieutenant Rockman and other have begun to show the way. We call on policemen to resist anything that is against the people. They should become part of the people.

In recent months millions of our people have united in mass action under the banner of the Mass Democratic Movement. The sight of thousands of peaceful protestors using the streets of our cities and townships as ballot boxes should be an inspiration for us to intensify the struggle for total liberation. We call on our people to join the mass organisations under COSATU { Congress of South African Trade Unions } and the UDF.

The building of disciplined and accountable organisations of our people must remain one of our principal tasks. We salute the great efforts being made to organise women so that they may occupy their rightful place in the struggle. While we have made many strides, the carnage amongst our people in Natal is a blot on our noble struggle for liberation. It is the evil hand of apartheid that is behind the violence in Natal. Reports of police collusion in the killings abound. We know that it is the general characteristic of the ruling class to divide our people.

All who are committed to peace amongst the people must act jointly against the perpetrators of violence. We call on COSATU, UDF and Inkatha to continue their search for peace. All obstacles to the movement for peace should be removed.

We welcome the recent mass demonstrations for peace by the people of Mpumalanga, Kwa-Mashu, Richmond and Ntuzuma. Ultimately, peace lie in the hands of all the people, regardless of their political affiliation.

We call on the rank and file of all organisations to work together for peace. The ANC has consistently, throughout its history, been committed to the politics of peace and negotiations.

I would like to speak from my personal experience. In 1952, I, as Secretary-General of the ANC, together with Dr. Moroka, the then President of the ANC, wrote to Prime Minister Malan, calling on him to negotiate.

In 1955 we invited all organisations including the National Party to the Congress of the People. They did not come.

In 1958 Chief Luthuli, the then President of the ANC, wrote to Prime Minister Strydom, urging him to negotiate.

In 1960, the ANC was banned and thousands of leaders and members were jailed or forced into exile.

In 1961, Comrade Nelson Mandela who was underground at the time, wrote to Prime Minister Verwoerd and urged him to call a National Convention.

Our pleas fell on deaf ears.

That is why we formed Umkhonto we Sizwe, the Spear of the Nation. To defend our people and to fight for freedom.

We stood for peace in 1912 when we were formed, we stood for peace in our long struggle of resistance, we stand for peace today and we will stand for peace tomorrow.

In spite of countless bitter experiences, we will not allow the past to stop us from constantly searching for the shortest possible path to freedom. We are in agreement with the recently adopted Harare Declaration which says:

"We believe that a conjuncture of circumstances exist which, if there is a demonstrable readiness on the part of the Pretoria regime to engage in negotiations genuinely and seriously, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations.

Such an eventuality would be an expression of the long-standing preference of the majority of the people of South Africa to arrive at a political settlement.

Together with the rest of the world, we believe that it is essential, before any negotiations can take place, that the necessary climate for negotiations be created."

We call on the regime to:

- **release all political prisoners and detainees unconditionally,**
- **lift all bans and restrictions on all proscribed and restricted organisations and persons,**
- **remove all troops from the townships,**
- **end the State of Emergency and repeal all repressive legislation,**
- **cease all political trials and political execution.**

If such a climate is created the ANC is prepared, as the Harare Declaration says, to discuss the suspension of hostilities on both sides. There can be no question of us unilaterally abandoning the armed struggle.

To date, we see no clear indication that the government is serious about negotiations. All their utterances are vague.

Now the government talks about ethnic elections to choose the leaders of the black people. This is unacceptable to us. We are looking forward to the election of a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise. This is where the true representatives of the people will discuss the future.

If the government is serious about a permanent and lasting solution, they will agree to this logical step.

In the meantime, our duty is to intensify the struggle until we are able to get the regime to discuss the issue of the normalisation of the situation in South Africa. At this stage we cannot relax on the basis of mere statements.

We must concentrate on building mass organisations and working class leadership in our struggle for freedom.

We must unite in action with the broadest range of apartheid's opponents. We should not allow ideological and other differences to stand in the path of our unity against apartheid.

Education is a vital part of our struggle against apartheid. Parents, students and teachers are objective partners in education. We call on you to work together in promoting the education of our youth, which is inseparable from our liberation struggle.

The Defiance Campaign must continue. We cannot wait on the government to make changes at its own pace.

We call on traditional leaders to join us in our struggle. You must continue to resist apartheid in the proud traditions of Cetshwayo and Sekhukhuni and Hintsa.

We call on those people who are in government-created structures to seize the moment and join the great struggle for freedom.

Let us also strengthen our solidarity with SWAPO and the people of Namibia. A victory for SWAPO will be a victory for Southern Africa as a whole.

We call on our white brothers and sisters to join us in the struggle for democracy so that we may shape the future together.

Let all of us who love this country engage in the task of building a new South Africa, one which will be truly democratic, in which a new People's Culture shall flourish, in which People's Education will develop the human potential of our people, in which access to People's Health will be a right and not a privilege and in which our environment will be protected for the generations which come after us.

The vision of the ANC has been shaped by the struggles of million of our people against injustice. The struggle against apartheid is a struggle of all humanity. At

the same time we recognise the interdependence between ourselves and the peoples of the world. We share the ideals of peace loving people the world-over. We are interested in the new phase of political openness and peace that is unfolding all over the world. By eradicating apartheid we will be contributing to peace at home and to world peace. We dedicate our lives to this end.

In conclusion we reiterate that the stage we have reached in the struggle is irreversible. Hence the need for unity, consolidation and discipline in order to intensify the struggle for liberation.

FORWARD TO PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

LONG LIVE THE ANC

**LONG LIVE OUR ALLIANCE WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN
COMMUNIST PARTY**

LONG LIVE THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT