

**DINNER IN HONOUR OF
HIS EXCELLENCY MR FESTUS G. MOGAE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
HOSTED BY
MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI, MP
MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS
PRESIDENT OF THE INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY
TRADITIONAL PRIME MINISTER OF THE ZULU KINGDOM, AND
CHAIRMAN : THE HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS (KWAZULU NATAL)**

THE EDWARD HOTEL : DURBAN : JANUARY 16, 2004

It is a great honour for me to receive and welcome His Excellency Mr Festus G. Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana. I am particularly honoured that His Excellency took time off his schedule during his private visit to South Africa to call on me. I think that this precious gesture strengthens the ties I have always maintained with His Excellency himself, as well as the Government and the people of the Republic of Botswana.

Throughout my life, I have maintained a very strong relationship with Botswana, which goes back to my youth. I am often pleased in thinking that the first President of Botswana, Sir Seretse Khama, went to the same College as I did, Adams College, in this Province. And when I went to Fort Hare University I also followed in his footsteps. There were also many students both at Adams College and Fort Hare University who were my contemporaries. I remember Jimmy Molefhe, for instance, who was such a good pianist.

The last time I had the pleasure of visiting Botswana was on the sad occasion of the funeral of one of my mentors, Professor Zechariah Keodireleng Mathews, who was one of the great leaders of our liberation movement. He was of course Botswana's Permanent Representative at the United Nations and Botswana's Ambassador to Washington, at the time of his death.

I am delighted to know that Your Excellency paid a courtesy call to His Majesty, my King. His Majesty and the Premier wished me to join them in my capacity as the Traditional Prime Minister of the Kingdom, and the Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, when they received you, Mr President, in Ulundi. Had I not received your message Sir, that you also wished to pay a courtesy visit to me, I would have attended.

I hope that this visit by the President, even though it is a private one, may strengthen the relationship between South Africa and Botswana. I feel that South Africa and Botswana are two countries which greatly need one another, and that South Africa perhaps needs Botswana more than what is generally acknowledged. I feel that there is a lot we may learn from Botswana. In fact, whenever I travel internationally and debates develop amongst people who enjoy pointing out that within the whole black African continent there

is not a single stable and reliable democracy, I enjoy retorting by pointing out the exception of Botswana which is, indeed, the saving grace of many of our continent's evils and short comings. I of course enjoy pointing out that the founding President of the Republic of Botswana was a Traditional Leader Kgosi Seretse Khama! Botswana has been very fortunate in having such distinguished sons of Africa as her Presidents, amongst whom I include Sir Ketumile Masire and my distinguished guest at tonight's dinner. Unfortunately, ours is a continent which has suffered a lot and still labours under the legacy of many past injuries.

However, we must also acknowledge that ours is also continent which suffers because of many self-inflicted injuries, and that we have often not had the courage and serenity to accept this fact. Our democracy in South Africa may benefit from closer understandings of how Botswana's democracy works. In fact, you are visiting South Africa at a crucial juncture of our history as we are a mere three months away from elections. The election date has not yet been declared and yet the election campaign rages on, without many of the protections and guarantees of a levelled playing field, which the electoral law extends only once the election is formally proclaimed, which may cause tensions. There are many hidden tensions within our society which often makes me fear that our democracy is not yet consolidated to the level of that of Botswana. For instance, one of the major causes of frictions between myself and my Party, the Inkatha Freedom Party, on the one hand, and the ruling African National Congress on the other, was caused by the recent amendment to the Constitution passed to enable members of legislatures to cross the floor from one party to the other, even though they were elected on the basis of an electoral system which did not allow them to do so, since the election was conducted on the basis of the PR system and not on the basis of the Constituency system.

That constitutional amendment was seen by many as an expedient manner to take the control of the Province of KwaZulu Natal away from my Party, the IFP, not through an election but by means of wooing politicians with weak convictions. In spite of this having taken place, we have managed to retain control of this Province, but it is clear that the forthcoming elections will primarily be about determining who controls the Province of KwaZulu Natal. This Province has become the battlefield which will determine whether our system will continue to enjoy an even limited degree of political pluralism or, whether after elections, there will be a single political party controlling all levels of government and major centres of political power. I am very concerned about the fact that these developments suggest that our democracy is growing weaker rather than stronger.

One needs to take pride in the fact that our efforts have been successful in bringing about a substantial degree of political reconciliation within our Province after the violence which juxtaposed the IFP and the ANC, as different components of our liberation movement, in what was effectively a low intensity civil war. Even though much progress has been made in this sense, complete reconciliation has not been achieved as political assassinations, unfortunately, continue to occur and often intimidation and hate-speech prevent serene conditions for political dialogue within this Province. These are matters which I feel will benefit in their resolution from closer dialogue between Botswana and South Africa and

their respective political classes. I am also convinced that this dialogue could help South Africa in reaching a clear understanding of how the rule of law ought to take root so that it may eventually replace the rule of man.

I have dedicated my life to the cause of democracy. I have spent fifty years in the service of our people and pursuing the dream that one day South Africa may be both fully democratic, as well as equally economically prosperous and socially stable. These goals still remain elusive and I know well that the road ahead remains hard and uphill. For this reason, I feel that the dialogue amongst the friends of democracy in our region is essential. Before I end up my remarks I wish to pay special tribute to Your Excellency for being a leader in our SADC Region who has such outstanding qualities. I see you Mr President as a leader who does not believe that our black solidarity as African leaders should just be on any terms. That you are not afraid to be out of step even with a battalion, when it comes to any challenges to your commitment to democracy. I must also state Your Excellency that whenever I attend some of our SADC Council of Ministers Conferences, I always find that very often, I find myself on the same wave-length as your Ministers who attend these Conferences. I will miss my brothers, now that it is almost certain that I will no longer be a Minister after the forthcoming elections.

I therefore welcome you, not only as a most respected friend of mine and of our Province, but also as a great friend and champion of the cause of democracy. I hope that your visit to KwaZulu Natal may be both pleasant and meaningful and that our Province may extend to you the full measure of its warm hospitality.

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