HAND-OVER OF ONDINI ROYAL PALACE TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF THE ZULU NATION REMARKS BY PRINCE MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI, MP, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS [KWAZULU NATAL] INKOSI OF THE BUTHELEZI CLAN AND UNDUNANKULU KAZULU ULUNDI : JUNE 20, 2003

It is a great honour for me to officiate on this important occasion in which history is being made. Today, the Zulu nation is convened in a single body with its amaKhosi and its Monarch to officiate in the making of history. Today is a day of completion of a long process, and yet it is the commencement of a new cycle. The delivery to His Majesty, the King of the Zulu nation, of his Palace in Ondini has both historical and symbolic significance. Ulundi is the capital of the Zulu Kingdom and by taking possession of this Palace the King of the Zulu nation symbolically and historically comes back to Ulundi healing a wound which has been bleeding for a long time. Today, with this important gesture on this important occasion, many wounds are being healed and because of it our nation grows stronger and healthier.

Ondini was the place of residence of King Cetshwayo who was the last of the Zulu kings to rule over a sovereign and independent Zulu kingdom. This Palace was destroyed and burned down by the British troops on July 4, 1879 as a symbol of the subjugation which they intended to impose on the Zulu people and their Kingdom. Since that time, the quest for emancipation and redemption of the Zulu kingdom and the Zulu people has identified itself with the cause for the re-establishment and prosperity of Ulundi. In fact, King Cetshwayo sought to achieve the same purpose when he returned from his trip to England where he visited with her Brittanic Majesty, Queen Victoria, to plead for the freedom of his Kingdom and his people.

As he returned home after his incarceration in Cape Town and his long and perilous journey to the United Kingdom, his Zulu subjects built some temporary structures to signify that the King had come back and that the King was rejecting the notion that his Kingdom should be separated into 13 separate kinglets and subjected to British rule. These temporary structures were known as "Undi Oluma Hlikihlikana". However, the tragedy of the Zulu nation had to unfold into an even deeper and more sinister chapter, as the structures were destroyed by Zulu people who were opposing our Kingdom. The tragedy of the Zulu nation has always been caused by Zulus fighting Zulus under the pressure of external forces and foreign agents and powers who manipulated us.

It should not be forgotten that in the Battle of Ulundi of July 4, 1879, in which the British destroyed our Kingdom, not only British Red Jackets fought the Zulu forces. It was the beginning of the unfolding of the Zulu tragedy that in that battle the British Red Jackets enlisted about 17,000 Zulus recruited in the areas surrounding the missions who fought

side by side with the British to secure the destruction of our Kingdom. Many of them were people who for their own reasons had vowed to destroy the Kingdom or were escaping the justice administered within our Kingdom. Some turncoats from the Nongoma district destroyed the temporary structures built for King Cetshwayo upon his return from England, because they had accepted the fragmentation of our Kingdom. They went much further in their deeds. They stabbed the King himself in the thigh, in the attempt of killing of him and succeeded in killing all the amaKhosi who were then present in Ulundi. That was one of the darkest pages of our history in which Zulu people were turned against Zulu people in pursuance of the British policy of dividing and conquering, the legacy of which still bedevils the Zulu nation.

Since then the quest for the unification of the heart, soul and mind of the Zulu nation has remained intertwined with the quest to rebuild Ulundi and re-establish it to its original royal heritage and decorum. It is the role of our generation to unify the Zulu nation and heal the wounds of the past. I have pursued that mission throughout my life and dedicated to it all my efforts. When apartheid sought to establish a separate form of governance for the Zulu nation, they wanted its capital to be placed in Pietermaritzburg. I objected to it strenuously. They then tried to locate it in Eshowe. When I kept objecting to it they thought that they could agree in having the capital placed in Nongoma. However, by sheer coincidence, the two different committees set up to make recommendations both recommended that the capital of the Zulu nation be rebuilt in Ulundi. I thought that it was the ancestral spirits themselves that spoke to us through those two separate task teams, recommending that the capital be built here in Ulundi. The reasons they gave separately for this recommendation were based on the consideration of infrastructure. The main reasons were the availability of Escom's electricity in Mahlabathini, the proximity of the Imfolozi river near Ulundi as a water supply and the suitability of Ulundi's terrain for town development as the area was not mountainous. We accepted the challenge of ensuring that Ondini could rise once again from its ashes, like a Phoenix.

Therefore, I knew that to complete my work as the Chief Minister of the erstwhile KwaZulu Government, it was important for me to ensure that the King's Palace burnt down in 1879 be rebuilt so that the King would have his own royal and dignified residence in his own capital. Ulundi is not only the capital of the Zulu nation but it is, indeed, the capital of the King and it is by right, his city. This was not an imposition by us as the KwaZulu Government, it is something the King, himself, discussed with me and members of my Cabinet. This was not the first time I and my government had built a palace for our King. When our King was betrothed to Princess Mantfombi, the daughter of King Sobhuza II, we faced the challenge to build a palace for the King. This was in spite of the fact that the King had inherited Royal Palaces from his late father and from his grandfather, King Solomon ka Dinuzulu. There was great eagerness for the marriage of the King to take place as soon as possible. I insisted that we needed to build a Palace before such a Royal Wedding took place. I incurred the displeasure of many for daring to delay such a joyous occasion as the blending of good relations between the two Royal families, through such a marriage.

According to our traditions and customs, from time immemorial, it had always been the duty of the nation to build the Kings' residences, to hoe the King's lands, to build the cattle byres and to do many other things for their King. This applies even in the case of any other traditional leader or Inkosi. The symbolic amounts that were paid to the King and his amaKhosi after our conquests were not salaries on which they could support themselves and their families. This was called 'a stipend" which is the same word used for the meagre amounts that are paid to clergy. The argument was always that it is the duty of the subjects of His Majesty or of any Inkosi to support and give a livelihood to their King or Inkosi. Just as it is the duty of congregations to support their priests.

As is well-known to all and sundry that the KwaZulu erstwhile government was very poorly funded by Pretoria at the time because what was seen as my recalcitrance in rejecting the balkanisation of South Africa into the so-called independent States. This was punitive, so when I did all these things there were no budgets for them. We sat down with my officials in Cabinet to take some money from various aspects of the budget to do it. This approach was endorsed by the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. When I pleaded with members of the legislature, they always unanimously accepted my proposals once I had given to them the rationale. I just explained that it was our national duty to take money even from the limited amounts that were granted to our Departments to build Palaces for our King, and to renovate and rebuild others. We did this throughout my term of office as Chief Minister of the erstwhile KwaZulu Government.

This is how even the Enyokeni Traditional Palace was built, and there was not a murmur against it. I know of only a few individuals one had to convince as they were opposed to what we were doing for our King. I argued that the Zulu people paid taxes, whether it was direct tax or VAT, and that in a modern setup this is the only way in which the nation can participate in fulfilling what was always our national duty, as a nation. I had no qualms of conscience in asking the representatives of the people to accept this approach, as I ran a very clean administration. It will be recalled that when democracy dawned on South Africa on April 27, 1994, it was only me and my Government that handed over money that was still in our coffers, of all the so-called "independent" and other self-governing non-independent States.

As the age of modernity dawns on us, fulfilling this duty may be more difficult now than it was then. Today, our people must pay taxes to the central government as well as to municipalities. They must also pay for services which they previously received for free, or at heavily subsidized rates. Therefore, it may become increasingly more difficult for our people to maintain our traditions. Yet, we as a nation must ensure that our institutions of traditional leadership and our Monarchy are nourished and protected because they are the symbol of what we are, and the major source of our unity. Therefore, I take great pride in the fact that it is our people who, with their contribution, built this Palace for the King and it is our people who, today, are delivering it to His Majesty.

However, this Palace stands tall, first and foremost to signify the solidity of our Monarchy and the fact that many wounds of our nation are now being healed. This ceremony has

been delayed for a long time to ensure that it could take place in accordance with our traditions. After last November 10th, when His Majesty and I undertook the ceremony of reconciliation, it became possible for this ceremony to take place in full compliance with our rituals and rites. In fact, attempts were made to deliver this Palace to His Majesty on prior occasions but the King, himself, stated to Premier Mdlalose first, and then to Premier Ngubane that he could not have received it unless it was delivered to him by me, who had it built. In our culture we cannot break bread until our breasts are clear from any grudge, hostility or resentment. The ceremony of reconciliation between the King and myself achieved that purpose. This has been an important stage in the process of unification of the Zulu nation. It was on that day that His Majesty stated to me what he had said to the former Premiers that he would only receive the Palace built by the erstwhile KwaZulu government from me as the former Chief Minister.

Because of the fact of the separation which took place between the King and his amaKhosi, not even the Imbizo which former President Mandela intended to have, could, in fact, take place. We now have a platform from which the Zulu nation can again play its important role towards the making of a successful and prosperous South Africa. We have had many setbacks in ensuring that the Zulu nation and its Monarchy could be adequately recognized and accommodated in the making of a free, united and prosperous South Africa. The King and I were very skeptical that the constitutional framework which gave birth to the new South Africa would, indeed, accommodate the self identity and self-determination of the Zulu nation and the recognition of our Monarchy. Together, we journeyed on two occasions to Pretoria to present our concerns to the then State President, FW de Klerk and were escorted by our amaKhosi and large masses of Zulus who gathered before the Union Building to support us and who also accompanied our King in their thousands in Durban.

Unfortunately, the promises which were made to us on that occasion were broken. I was ready to give away my entire political career and obliterate my own political party in order to protect and entrench the Monarchy. I was ready not to participate in the April 1994 elections and allow my party to be obliterated because the constitutional framework finalized at the World Trade Centre did not provide for the recognition and entrenchment of our Monarchy. I participated only at the last moment when I received a formal promise that the unresolved and outstanding issues relating to the Monarchy and our King would be settled by means of international mediation to begin immediately after the April 1994 elections. It will be recalled that I signed this pledge with the then President of South Africa, President de Klerk and Mr Mandela on the 19th of April, 1994. This promise was dishonoured and since then we are still seeking adequate recognition for our Monarchy.

It will be recalled that I insisted that Parliament be called for one day in order to amend the interim Constitution to include the recognition of our Monarchy in the interim Constitution. But when the final Constitution was passed later, that was not included. There was a lot that was in the media that there was no need for international mediation and that the position of our Monarchy would be secured by the South African Government. And that has not happened to this day.

However, in spite of that, we have missed no opportunity to promote the struggle to have our Monarchy adequately recognised and to ensure that our King and his traditional leaders can work hand in hand to unify our nation and provide to it development, stability and prosperity. We have fought battles within the process of formulation and the establishment of a new system of local government. We have fought battles within the constitution-making process both at a national and provincial level. We fought battles in the provincial legislature of KwaZulu Natal as well as in Parliament in Cape Town. It is important that these battles will continue to be fought by His Majesty and his amaKhosi working in unity. It is important that through their unity the unity of the Zulu nation is secured once and for all so that our old wounds can be finally healed.

Because of this Palace the status of this town is enhanced. Ulundi is growing as a capital because of today's events. It is very saddening that some people in our province look down on Ulundi merely because it has not yet achieved the same level of development and modernity as other towns in our province. We are proud of having planned and built Ulundi from scratch. Our history overcomes any shortcomings Ulundi may now have and gives us confidence that this place may develop into what the Zulu nation want it to be. A mere 30 years ago this place was nothing but bush and scrub. In a mere 30 years, Ulundi has grown into what it now is and for that it should be admired and respected. It is very painful when ignoramuses refer to Ulundi with the pejorative of a "Bantustan" when, in fact, Ulundi was never the capital of a nominally independent state and the Zulus never accepted KwaZulu being made a "Bantustan".

People who do not know should not talk. Unfortunately, we live in an age in which ignorance seems to be a source of authority. People who refer to Ulundi as a "Bantustan" capital obliterate the value of our contribution to the liberation struggle which was readily admitted by former State President FW de Klerk, when he testified before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He confirmed that they had to abandon their grandiose scheme of apartheid and accept that apartheid had failed specifically because I refused to accept a "Bantustan" for the Zulu nation, and ensured that all Zulus remained South Africans. Even people from Transkei, Ciskei and from other so-called "independent states" a la' Pretoria approached me to obtain South African passports, because we always remained part of South Africa. We rejected having our territory, or the portion which remained under our control, declared "independent". This is now history. That was also a path which involved many sacrifices. It was not an easy path, as my opposition to apartheid led to the Zulu people becoming the most under-funded and neglected amongst all the Black people of South Africa. However, we took strength from our sacrifices and from our culture of self-help and self-reliance we learned to do by ourselves, and for ourselves, that which our oppressors were not willing to provide. This Palace is a fulgid example of what we have been able to do in spite of our chronic under-funding. We, however, watched former capitals of the so-called "independent states" being taken over as capitals of some provinces under our democratic dispensation without so much as a murmur.

We must build on our past to create a better future. A new chapter opens for our Monarch

and the Zulu Kingdom. We must ensure that our unity is pursued at all cost and in all directions. The Zulu nation is committed to development and growth and to applying its energies to promote social stability and economic prosperity. Ours is a Kingdom with a mission. Ours is a Monarchy with a mission. Ours is a nation with a mission. Our mission is that of serving our people and promoting their prosperity. We are committed to a culture of service. Our greatness and glory lies in the measure of the services which we can provide to all the members of our nation. Service is our mission. May this Palace be a symbol to that mission and may it become a place through which the genuine culture of service springs out.

I wish before concluding to recall that just before "KwaZulu" as it was then, folded up before the 1994 elections, I piloted the last piece of legislation in the KwaZulu Legislature titled the "Ingonyama Trust Act". Apartheid had left but remnants of the King's true Kingdom under our control and such areas were previously known as 'Reserves'. These areas were already under our control as the government, and we had ordered that they be surveyed. The intention of my then government was to have title deeds for each traditional area passed onto each Traditional Authority once the survey was completed. As we were overtaken by events, and because the new constitutional dispensation moved all the power of land affairs and land ownership to the central Government, I piloted the Ingonyama Trust Act to create a separate trust where I placed all the land of our traditional areas under amaKhosi. I made our King the Trustee on behalf of all his amaKhosi. I did so to make it possible for the land not to be regarded as just government land, owned and administered by the central government, as even during the colonial period and under the apartheid regime this land was protected. My intention was that the present provincial Government would carry out our plan to pass the title deeds to each traditional area onto its Traditional Authority so as enable each Traditional Authority to provide its subjects with security of tenure. That was our plan.

You all know of the abuse and insults which have been poured on my head for creating the Ingonyama Trust. All sorts of motives were attributed to me and I had to endure a lot of opprobrium from all quarters. It was alleged that I did this in cahoots with President FW de Klerk, as some kind of quid pro quo. This law was, however, amended by the national Parliament which gave certain powers to the national Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs. It was, however, not dismantled. The King still remains the Trustee under this law holding the land in trust.

Now that there is the proposal to pass the Communal Land Bill, which would repeal the Ingonyama Trust Act, and make the land under our amaKhosi which I had placed under the King as a Trustee, fall under the Government and become part of central government owned land, as is the case in other Provinces. I will not go into details of this Bill as these are known to all of you since it has been circulated. That is why on the 1th of November, 2002, amaKhosi were called by the King to an Imbizo at KwaGqikazi College of Education to tease out some of the issues involved in the Bill. The King expected the Minister of Land Affairs to attend. Instead, she sent her Deputy, the Deputy Minister of Land Affairs, Professor Dirk du Toit. The King

commanded me and the Deputy Minister to request the Minister to find a suitable date to visit KwaZulu Natal to meet with him and amaKhosi. I wrote to the Minister more than once to convey the King's message. I spoke to the Deputy Minister who also informed me that not only did he inform the Minister of Land Affairs about the King's visit but that he even wrote to her to remind her of the King's request. It is now 8 months ago that this request was made by the King. And there has been no response from the Minister to date. The King also instructed us to request the Minister of Land Affairs to set up an appointment for him with the President of the Republic of South Africa. We are yet to hear a response from the Minister even on that one.

I mention this at this function as the Communal Land Bill is seen by the King and amaKhosi as the final destruction of the institution of the Monarchy and that of Traditional Leadership. It is almost as big a challenge to these institutions as that which was posed to our nation by the efforts of colonial powers to destroy our Kingdom in 1879. The institution of the Monarchy and of the Traditional leadership of his amaKhosi is based on land. One of the titles of the King is "Isilo Somhlabathi" ("The Leopard of the Land"). If the Ingonyama Trust Act is ever repealed, that title will be meaningless. When any King joins his ancestors the question that is whispered is "Ngubani ozophathizwe?" ("Who is going to control the land?"). When a Traditional Leader or Inkosi dies, people ask the same question. So any efforts of taking away the control of traditional land, from the King, and his amaKhosi, amounts to destroying the whole structure of the Kingdom, and of the Monarchy and of the institution of Traditional Leadership.

I think it is only my duty as the Traditional Prime Minister of the King and as Traditional Prime Minister of the Zulu nation to warn about what I consider to be quite ominous, as something I see as a threat to the very existence of the King, the Kingdom and the institution of traditional leadership. This is one of the immediate challenges looming before us from which we cannot run away. Every generation of traditional leaders before us faced challenges of one sort or another. This is the challenge I see that faces our King and traditional leaders today.

I have dedicated my life to the service of my people. So much has been done and yet so much more remains to be done. Many more sacrifices will need to be endured. Our struggle for liberation has yet but begun, and must be conducted today with the same culture of service and dedication which inspired it in the past. We have not given up the struggle for liberation and on this occasion we are proud to recommit ourselves to it with all our heart and soul. We pledge our loyalty to the Monarchy because of its loyalty to the nation and its underlying culture of service. With this spirit and in the name of the unity of the Zulu nation it is for me a great pleasure to formally hand over the Ondini Palace to His Majesty the King of the Zulu nation. May the King live in it and enjoy it for a long, and prosperous time and may his prosperity reflect the prosperity and success of the Zulu nation.