

ROTARY CLUB OF CAPE OF GOOD HOPE
DINNER FUNCTION
REMARKS BY
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It gives me great pleasure to be again amongst the members of the Rotary Club. Throughout my life I have maintained a longstanding association with the Rotary Club and its members. I have always admired the activities of the Rotary Club and I am deeply aware and appreciative of the contribution that the Rotary Club has made over the decades to the growth and development of South Africa. I have always been interested in becoming a member of the Rotary Club myself and was often offered the opportunity. However, my commitments in public life and the demands on my schedule, have always been such that I could not undertake additional activities. Nonetheless, I feel at home when I am amongst Rotarians and much more so in consideration of the fact that I received a Paul Harris fellowship from the Rotary Club.

It is against this background of comfort that I feel like extending a warm welcome to our friends who are visiting us from abroad, as if I were a Rotarian myself. The Rotary Club expresses the bond of human fellowship at its best, especially as it relates to foreigners who travel to distant lands. Wherever anyone goes, one knows that as a Rotarian one will immediately find like-minded people around the world in each of the Rotary Clubs. In our age one would think that the spirit of cosmopolitan values might become less important, as the entire world is becoming a global village. However, I feel that they are as important as ever. Over the years and around the world, the Rotary Club has been the depository of an ancient aspiration of cosmopolitan values which recognise that like-minded and enlightened people are indeed members of a great fellowship which does not know, nor recognise, national boundaries, cultural differentiations or social diversities. The Rotary Club has also embodied in its history and tradition the ancient culture and practice of *xenia* which from the Greek word means the immediate acceptance and friendship with foreigners, especially when they travel to other countries. All this underpins the deep realization that the bonds of our shared humanity are much stronger than any social or economic construct which may divide or differentiate people. Unfortunately, I do not think that these values are still prevalent within our society, in spite of the age of globalization. Therefore, the role of the Rotary movement is now as important as it ever was.

For this reason, it gives me great pleasure to be able to rekindle on this occasion the

bonds of *xenia*, cosmopolitanism and universal human brotherhood with our friends. Special mention is to be made of Dr Heinz J Kronke, who has been a longtime friend of

mine and who at one time was my in-house doctor in Neunher in Germany. It is wonderful to have him with us and | hope that his visit may be both successful and enriching. | have really looked forward to remembering my friendship with him on this occasion.

We are all deeply enriched by his presence here, which reminds us how bringing people together across geographical distances, cultural divides and social disparities, is the most important way to promote human growth and individual spiritual and cultural enrichment. For somebody like me, who comes from a past of a deeply divided society, these considerations are particularly true, relevant and deeply felt. | have experienced what segregation is all about and what it does to the human mind and spirit. | have also experienced the great enrichment of liberation as a process which enables individuals to climb out of the confines of any narrow cultural, social or economic paradigm to embrace a global perspective, which makes them citizens of the world as well as members of the human fellowship with equal dignity and aspiration as anyone else. Only through this process of individual and collective liberation will mankind be able to fulfill its enormous potential and overcome the terrible evils which have cursed its history since we began recording it.

We have grown used to the notion that mankind should be at war with itself and that the greatest calamities on the lives of people are caused by the individual or collective brutality of others, either by means of criminal activities or through the organised actions of groups, one fighting against the other, from the community level all the way to the armed conflicts between countries and nations. It is when one has the pleasure of merging himself with the culture of the Rotary Club, that one realises that there is a broader and better perspective which holds the hope that one day war may be eliminated, as well as the brutality of man on man. This is undoubtedly a long-term goal which does not make it any more compelling for any of us to do what we can to provide a contribution, no matter how small, to achieve it. In my own field, especially in the past ten years, these considerations have become very germane to my own thinking.

As the Minister of Home Affairs, | have been charged with the responsibility of developing South Africa's new policy on migration control. When | took office in 1994 there were strong tendencies towards maintaining the apartheid-based system of migration control which was restrictive and discriminative. When we began our new Republic we had the benefit of a general policy framework in respect of almost all other fields of government. The Constitution on the one hand and the Reconstruction and Development Programme on the other gave direction to the various departments on how to transform society, ranging from providing many more houses to those who need them, to extending water, sewerage, electricity and new job opportunities to those who are in need. However, there was no clarity on whether the country's interests could better be served through a liberal or a restrictive system of migration control. The immediate superficial reaction was that in a country like ours with such high unemployment, one should ensure that the system of migration control is as tight as possible so as to protect the scarce available job opportunities only for South Africans.

Moreover, the pressures coming from the security apparatus always push in the direction of restricted access to a country. This became increasingly more so after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. However, because of my intrinsically cosmopolitan and open-minded culture, I realized that the picture was much more complex. I conducted research and opened the doors of my Department to scientific and academic inputs from role players, not only within our country, but also internationally. From that exercise it became clear that a liberal immigration policy adds enormous value to economic growth and human development of a country. There is a growing body of evidence that on the average each immigrant creates greater job opportunities than he or she consumes. The reform of migration control has not been easy and it has indeed been the most complex and challenging reform we have had in the country. However, I am satisfied that in the end it has reflected the liberal approach which I have advocated and is in line with the type of cosmopolitan and enlightened culture which I have over the years absorbed from my association with the Rotary Club.

Our country is filled with challenges which require the deep sense of humanity of the Rotarian philosophy in order for them to be overcome. Too many men and women are regarded by others as lesser human beings on account of their social and economic status, race or level of education. It is difficult to change social and economic conditions overnight but it is indeed much simpler to change the hearts and minds of those who have not yet realised our shared bond of humanity and that we are all equally deserving children of the same loving God. I tried to provide a small contribution to making South African politics a better place by reasserting the primacy of morality of politics and the need of acting with integrity. I am aware that somehow a revolution is taking place in our country in the past ten years and that, like in all revolutionary contexts, what rises to the top is not always the best that the country has to offer. I would like to see the Rotary Club becoming more engaged in the positive transformation of our country and participating more actively in the formation of new generations. I have often expressed that positive transformation has empowered and given jobs to a first wave of previously disadvantaged people who are not necessarily the most suited, or most deserving. There is a second wave waiting in the wings which is emerging through our Universities and through the discipline of productivity, efficiency and competition. It is important to open opportunities for this second wave, which accounts for the fact that I have often advocated the need of providing our labour market with maximum flexibility. There is also the need of ensuring that this second wave can bring to the fore a greater degree of morality and integrity than the one which has characterised certain aspects of the conduct of the first wave. I feel that crime and corruption are real problems in our country, which have not sufficiently been attended to by our Government in the past ten years, and which require a collegial effort of all South Africans of goodwill in order to be redressed. We have created a new South Africa but we are far from having created the conditions which may produce new South Africans. I know that the Rotary Club will have an important role in this process and I am glad that on this occasion I may have the opportunity to rekindle my support for this noble institution. I hope that our dialogue may continue in the future with greater intensity than it did in the past.

The next elections are going to be crucial and will define the future of our Country and I

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hope that they will be able to provide a clear direction on how we can pave a better future for our children and grandchildren. I have always admired the fact that it is within the culture of the Rotary Club to make long-term investments in building a better future and I hope that, as we emerge from the next elections, we may celebrate a new beginning of hope for our Republic in which the grave problems now threatening it, ranging from HIV/AIDS to poverty, unemployment, crime and corruption may finally find a solution. None of these problems is beyond the capacity of Government to deal with them. What is required is the necessary goodwill and political determination. As a worldwide reservoir of goodwill, the Rotary Club may help in this process. We continue to need the solidarity and support of our many international friends, who were so instrumental in ensuring a successful and peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy. The struggle for the true liberation of our people from the bonds of poverty, ignorance and underdevelopment is far from being completed and by no stretch of the imagination has democracy taken roots in our Country. We will for many years to come, continue to need the helping hand of our Rotary Clubs, in our efforts to transform our society. Our society still needs transformation from what it is, to one in which the majority of our people will not be as demeaned so much by poverty, as is still the case today.

Therefore, I urge our foreign friends to continue to be committed to the growth and prosperity of South Africa as they used to be ten and twenty years ago. South Africa continues to need long-term investments in friendship and support, because such investments hold the potential of yielding great dividends, not only in terms of our own democracy and prosperity, but also in respect of the growth and development of an entire continent. For this reason, the network of people of goodwill provided by the Rotary Club

is an essential component to our Country's final success. It is a great privilege for me to be part of this network today and I wish the Rotary Club and our friends, the best possible success in their important endeavours and in pursuance of the great mission the Club has undertaken to foster the growth and progress of mankind.

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