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ADDRESS BY JACOB ZUMA TO A MEETING OF SENIOR
EXECUTIVES OF THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK HELD IN CAPE
TOWN ON 23 OCTOBER 1992

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First and foremost, allow me to express my personal gratitude to the First National Bank for giving me this opportunity to address your meeting on the political scenario in South Africa. It is my sincere belief that business, like labour, the civil society and the international community, is a critical audience for any South African political party or organisation; the ANC therefore takes a keen interest in the activities of, and matters of interest to, business.

It is generally accepted today that South Africa faces three interrelated challenges: the transition to a sustainable democracy; the rapid expansion of economic growth; and the delivery of improved living conditions and opportunities for all South Africans. However, the greatest challenge facing us, politicians and non-politicians alike, is the need to forge and develop a formidable partnership of political organisations, business, labour and organs of civil society which will help us extricate our country from the quagmire of the consequences of the moribund system of apartheid. In short, the immediate challenge facing us is to speedily mount a national rescue operation to save our country.

My task today is limited to briefly sketching the political scenario in South Africa. My colleagues will deal with the other aspects of the briefing, namely the economic, financial and international relations issues.

The Political Scenario

In order for all of us to be in a position to contribute towards the creation of this partnership, it is critical for all of us to act together and end once and for all the system of minority rule which is the fundamental cause of all our woes. In this regard, the process of negotiations, which the ANC initiated in the mid-1980s while it was still a proscribed organisation, has achieved quite a lot already, despite the numerous problems it is confronted with.

For one thing, the process of negotiations succeeded in bringing together most of the political players in South Africa. Together, they established the Convention for a Democratic South Africa and, despite gross disparities in their sizes, nature and political orientation, demonstrated the existence of a good degree of goodwill and political tolerance amongst them. Together, they adopted a Declaration of Intent which provided a common Vision of the South Africa that the masses of our people are struggling for. It is indeed on the foundation laid at CODESA that we should strive to build a new South Africa.

In this regard, it is important for us to remember some of the greatest achievements of CODESA. The parties to the process agreed, first and foremost, that apartheid, which was by all accounts bad for our country and its economy, had to go in its entirety. On the ruins of apartheid South Africa shall be constructed a united, non-racial and democratic country. The bantustan creations of the apartheid state, as well as all other organs of minority rule, would go. The so-called independent states, the TBVC territories, would be re-incorporated. The new constitution would be made and adopted by a democratically elected constituent assembly, and the country would, during the transitional period, be governed by an interim government of national unity to prevent any party from playing the role of player and referee at the same time. The parties undertook to work together to level the political playing field and create a climate conducive to free political activity, within which democratic, free and fair elections can take place.

Despite all these agreements, however, it is important to note that at CODESA Two we could not reach finality in respect of some critical aspects. While the ANC had expected that at CODESA Two we would all be ready to announce this broad agreement and an implementation plan, it soon became clear that, as we approached CODESA Two, the National Party government realising that the end of minority rule, for which it did not seem to be ready, had come. Its representatives began to suggest that the CODESA process was moving rather too fast and that CODESA Two should only review progress thus far made, and not go beyond that. As far as the government was concerned, there could still be many more CODESAs beyond CODESA Two; it did not seem to regard the end of minority rule as a matter of extreme urgency, especially after the whites-only referendum held in March, the success of which it had erroneously arrogated to itself. Underlying this was the fact that the two major players, the ANC and the

National Party government, were most of the time talking at cross purposes with regard to the need for change in South Africa. While the ANC, on the one hand, saw (and continues to see) change as being represented by the emergence of majority rule, the essence of democracy, the National Party government, on the other, was striving for power-sharing. President De Klerk, in his eagerness to avoid ANC majoritarianism, defined his notion of power-sharing as a transitional dispensation that will ensure that all political parties that "may be capable of demonstrating substantial support in a democratic election must not merely be present in the decision-making process, but must also have a meaningful influence under a transitional constitution. "

The incidence of politically motivated violence, which has continued to stalk the process of negotiations, was a further complicating factor. The perception that this violence is being used by some elements in the security organs of the state as well as by those allies of the National Party government who have always benefitted from minority rule to undermine the ANC and its allies continues to live with us today. In some parts of the country the ANC still has no guaranteed right to exist and operate and all means, legal and illegal, are used to ensure that we are not allowed to enjoy freedom of political activity.

Prospects of Change

In the aftermath of a very successful Summit the President of the AN C had with the State President at the end of September, the ANC and the government have begun the process of implementing the agreements enshrined in the Record of Understanding that was adopted by both parties. This process is fraught with difficulties, especially in the light of the unwarranted resistance by some of the CODESA participants. The Summit was never intended to exclude or upstage any political player; it was an important landmark in the negotiations process, without which the prospects of an early resumption of negotiations were very limited. The agreements reached were, if anything, a reaffirmation of positions adopted earlier on either in the CODESA process itself or in the National Peace Accord process. A successful implementation of such agreements as well as the conclusion of discussion on the outstanding issues will enable us to move speedily back to sorely needed bi-lateral discussions between the ANC and the government, and eventually to multi-lateral negotiations. With more parties joining the

negotiations process, and with the participants being more than ever before prepared to demonstrate their intention to end minority rule, agreement on issues such as decision-making within the constituent assembly, constitutional principles that should underpin a future political order, as well as on a transitional constitution and a democratic electoral law, should be easy to reach.

The ANC believes that it should be possible now to indicate when the elections to a constituent assembly and an interim parliament, from which shall derive an interim government of national unity, shall be held. This the ANC believes will transform the national psyche tremendously; people will have the first truly national and democratic elections to focus on. Once this happens, once people see us establish the Transitional Executive Council and its substructures, once people see us establish an Independent Electoral Commission that will earnestly prepare for the elections, the level of politically motivated violence will be drastically reduced.

On the other hand, continued minority rule on any pretext will perpetuate the conflict, fan the flames of politically motivated violence and, most of all, alienate the investor and exacerbate the plight of the masses of our people, black and white. The challenge facing us all is to help steer the country in the direction of the first phase of interim governmental arrangements, the phase of the Transitional Executive Council, which is the critical entry-point in terms of the process of effectively ending minority rule. This is the minimum the country expects of all of us, including business.

The decisive intervention of business in matters which are essentially political has become unavoidable. As the political crisis deepens, the economy and the vested interests of business cannot but be harmed. Not a single investor will be keen to invest in this crisis ridden country of ours till an interim government of national unity has been established. But the fires of violence currently raging in some parts of the country have the capacity to undermine whatever agreements we may reach unless all political leaders honour their undertakings in public and in private.

It is imperative for business to point out to all political organisations and leaders, for instance, that liberal civil and political rights and freedoms, such as the right to free political activity, to which they have committed themselves cannot survive unless they tone down on their political intolerance of ideas which are at variance with theirs.

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Business should also point to all political leaders that the public carrying and display of dangerous weapons, including firearms, particularly in the current volatile climate, will not help the process of reconciliation, no matter who indulges in, or insists upon, this practice. The ANCis demand that this practice should be proscribed by law should not be understood to be targeting certain political leaders, organisations or ethnic groups. All signatories to the National Peace Accord committed themselves to this, besides.

Business should insist upon a thorough investigation of all cases of political violence and the arrest and prosecution of all culprits. No one should be given the impression that if they do the bidding of certain organisations, especially that of the state s security organs, they can kill and maim with impunity.

Last but not least, business has to make a contribution towards social upliftment programmes to assist particularly those unfortunate members of our society who are trapped in conditions of depression and squalor and who are therefore vulnerable to manipulation by those who fan violence. This will help reduce the number of people who can be used as cannon fodder by unscrupulous elements.

Thank you.