

**FOREWORD TO AFRICA DAY PAMPHLET OF INDIAN
COUNCIL ON CULTURAL RELATIONS, NEW DELHI,
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Africa Day this year is an occasion for rejoicing, as well as a reaffirmation of the pledge of solidarity with the African people in their struggle for emancipation, reconstruction and rejuvenation.

For, in the past year, Namibia has attained its independence after a century of oppression, genocide and humiliation, thanks to the determined struggle of its people, under the leadership of SWAPO, and the support of the international community.

The racist regime in South Africa has at last been obliged - after decades of escalating and inhuman repression and violence against the black majority - to recognize that their spirit of freedom is unconquerable. The transition to a non-racial democratic State will not be an easy walk, but the unbanning of people's organizations, the release of Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the freedom movement, and the beginning of negotiations between the Pretoria regime and the African National Congress have opened a new vista. All the people of South Africa, it is to be hoped, will overcome the psychological legacy of apartheid, dismantle the racist structures and join in building a just society in their common interest. They may find in their diverse origins from Africa and Europe, as well as the Asian nations of India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka - a source of pride and enrichment. South Africa, a microcosm of the world, may well prove an inspiration to all nations.

It is most gratifying, though not surprising, that Nelson Mandela declared that the ANC had entered the recent talks with the government "in the spirit that there should neither be victors nor losers", and that "at the end of these discussions, not only are we closer to one another... but we are all victors." His words echoed the teaching of Lord Gautama Buddha, the apostle of peace, often quoted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, that the only real victory is one in which all are equally victorious and there is defeat for no one. Decades in the dungeons of apartheid and in exile have not blurred the vision of the liberation movement, and their spirit of reconciliation.

Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the South African people have always recognized that their struggle was for the entire continent: their slogan was "*Mayibuye I Afrika*" (Come Back, Africa!).

With the redemption of Africa, a shameful era of human history - of imperialism and colonial domination will soon come to an end, and humanity would have confronted what the Pan African Movement defined in 1900 as the problem of the twentieth century, the problem of the "colour line".

History has now discredited those "statesmen" who had little faith in the liberation of the bastions of racism and colonialism in southern Africa, and sustained apartheid for too long.

India, for its part, has never wavered in its faith that Africa would win its freedom, whatever the odds. We have always recognized our duty to help our neighbours across the seas. That was our heritage from Gandhiji who dedicated his life to Satyagraha in the early years of this century in South Africa, and always considered himself an Indian and a South African. That was our solemn commitment at the dawn of our independence. Our hearts have always beaten in unison with those of our brothers and sisters in Africa.

The independence of India and the process of freedom in Africa have enabled our peoples to rediscover and develop anew the ancient cultural and economic ties which had been disrupted by colonialism. It is most fitting that Africa Day is observed in India with cultural troupes from African nations.

Africa will need continued solidarity not only to complete the emancipation of the continent but to heal the wounds inflicted by apartheid aggression and the inequitable international economic order, and to make its full contribution to human progress. While greeting the independent nations of Africa and the Organization of African Unity, let us reassure them that the government and people of India will not falter in continuing to fulfil their fraternal duty.