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Culture of peace

Note verbale dated 15 July 2010 from the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to enclose herewith a copy of a letter from former President of the Republic of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, to the President of the General Assembly (see annex).



Annex to the note verbale dated 15 July 2010 from the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

We are grateful to the United Nations for the inspiration it provides and for its continuing commitment to the deepening of freedom in South Africa and elsewhere. As I said to the General Assembly in 1998:

For those who had to fight for their emancipation, such as ourselves who, with your help, had to free ourselves from the criminal apartheid system, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights served as the vindication of the justice of our cause. At the same time, it constituted a challenge to us that our freedom, once achieved, should be dedicated to the implementation of the perspectives contained in the Declaration.

We are humbled by the decision of the United Nations to recognize 18 July as Nelson Mandela International Day. It is our wish that the day be used not to honour an individual, but rather to remember the millions who have contributed to the struggle for freedom throughout the world. The best way to commemorate these struggles is for people everywhere to work with and within communities to make this a better world.

Let us remember that freedom from poverty, hunger and disease, that access to quality education, are as much human rights challenges as political oppression.

May Nelson Mandela International Day contribute to those challenges being met.

(Signed) N. R. Mandela
