

VII. KEYNOTE ADDRESS

ADDRESS BY DR. DLAMINI ZUMA,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SOUTH AFRICA
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
"THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT"
CANADA, 22 MARCH 2002

Your Honour The Lt. Governor of Alberta
President and Vice Chancellor
Friends of Africa
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour and pleasure for us to address this august gathering today. It was indeed the citizens of Canada and the rest of the world who pledged solidarity and supported decolonisation struggles in Africa. The struggle against apartheid, which took the longest, and was the most protracted, saw the biggest mobilization by the anti-apartheid movement. It is thanks to all of you that today I can stand before you as the democratically elected representative of the people of South Africa. For it occurred to you that as long as the system of apartheid crime against humanity existed and was practiced in South Africa, your own humanity was violated.

Kwame Nkrumah one of the finest sons of Africa happily proclaimed on the 6th of March 1959 to the whole world that "the Independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked with the total liberation of the African continent". Immediately, the beating of drums sent this message across rivers, mountains, forests and plains. The people heard and acted. One after another, new African states came into being, and above the world horizon loomed the African Personality. African statesmen went to the United Nations; Africans proudly wore the ancient regalia of their ancestral land; Africans stood and spoke for Africans".

This spirit of optimism in the continent quickly gave way to the gloomy Cold War era, with the emergence of military coups and dictatorships and one party states. Resources that were supposed to feed the children of Africa were plundered and pillaged, some diverted to foreign banks by the selfish African elite. The continent was gripped by the depressing state of conflicts, poverty and disease. Women were treated as beasts of burden, with wood on head, child on the back and a bucket of water in hand. Children died of malnutrition and preventable diseases, malaria, tuberculosis, measles, AIDS/HIV to name but a few. It was dubbed the hopeless continent.

Fortunately as the century was coming to a close there was a critical core of progressive leadership on the continent who refused to accept these conditions as the defining feature of our continent. They know and are backed by history and