

National Day of South Africa

PUBLICITY

South Africa consolidating democratic gains made since 1994

By **Lulama Smuts Ngonyama**
Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa

The first democratic elections on April 27, 1994, gave birth to South Africa's constitutional democracy. For the majority of South Africans who had never voted before, their dignity was restored, and the country transformed into a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. This was underscored by the country's first democratically elected President, Mr. Nelson Mandela, in his inaugural State of the Nation Address on May 10, 1994.



Lulama Smuts Ngonyama

Through the power of the vote, South Africans made their stand against social, political and economic injustice and changed the course of the nation. The freedom of all South Africans was entrenched with the adoption of the Constitution of South Africa in 1996, which ushered in a new social order of constitutionalism.

South Africa celebrates its 28th Freedom Day under the theme: "Consolidate our Democratic Gains."

The Freedom Day celebration accords us the opportunity to reflect on the progress made thus far to transform South African society. South Africa has made remarkable progress since 1994, but some challenges persist. Inequality, poverty and unemployment remain impedi-

ments to South Africa's goal of national unity and social cohesion. The South African Government however remains committed to serving all the people of South Africa and ensuring that everyone's right to freedom and democracy is respected.

South Africa's freedom was not free, and in celebrating this day, it is important that we not forget the path we have traversed; nor should we forget the selfless sacrifices made by countless South Africans to ensure democracy and freedom for all. It is therefore incumbent upon all South Africans to safeguard these democratic freedoms for generations to come.

Our history of division, injustice and suffering has inspired all South Africans to build a better and more united nation. The values of human dignity, non-racialism, non-sexism, and the rule of law therefore remain paramount. As a nation, we are stronger together and have more in common than that which seeks to divide us.

South Africa celebrates its National Day with all its international partners, not least of which the government and citizens of Japan with whom South Africa enjoys well-established ties in many economic, social and technical areas of cooperation, including a consistent flow of new Japanese investments into its economy, for which South Africa is deeply grateful.

Through the platform accorded to us by the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), South Africa is further certain that by working together as partners, with Japan and the African continent,

it will be possible to achieve the common goal of building an equitable world order and ensuring the fair distribution of the world's resources.

As the world begins to emerge from under the weight of COVID-19, South Africa calls upon the international community to continue to work together across the various multilateral platforms in order to strengthen global collaboration. This will better position the international community to overcome the challenges before us and achieve the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, thus ensuring that no global citizen is left behind.

In celebrating its 28th Freedom Day, South Africa reiterates its commitment to building a better South Africa and realizing a better Africa and a better world.

Congratulations
to the People of the Republic of South Africa
on the 28th Anniversary of Freedom Day



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