

OPENING ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MR. A. RAJBANSI, THE NATIONAL LEADER OF THE NATIONAL PEOPLES' PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA AT THE OPENING OF CODESA AT JOHANNESBURG ON FRIDAY, THE 20 DECEMBER 1991

EMBARGO UNTIL DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman, Our dignitaries and fellow delegates.

The National Peoples' Party is proud to be associated with this - the greatest event of political importance in the history of our beloved country.

The journey to Codesa has been a very painful one - a few years ago it would have been impossible to accept that such an event was even possible.

Tremendous sacrifices were made and much can be said about the unfortunate chapter in our country's history.

To-day the race for a truly democratic South Africa has reached the home straight - when sworn enemies are walking the last mile in a spirit of national reconciliation to reach the winning post of a truly non-racial South Africa, free of apartheid and the shackles of the past - In a South Africa where there can be mutual co-existence in our divergent societies similar to that of the Soviet Union.

This is not the time to reflect on the past although there can be full justification for being bitter. The future beckons all of us.

To-day we thank the Almighty that Codesa is a reality - for the representatives of the international community to witness that this last part of the race is irreversible. We also thank the Almighty for blessing us with National Leaders who have the moral courage to become the force of reason, reconciliation and compromise.

For the past 20 days this building has seen the post-apartheid South Africa in the making - the beginning of the end of an era - the dawning of a new, bright period in our country. We see the political head of the South African Defence Force with the South African Community Party, - people who, once, could not be reconciled with each other - talking, discussing and deciding - negotiating by compromise - in a process of give and take - so that in this togetherness Codesa is, to-day, being launched.

We witness to-day the beginning of the formation of the pattern of a carpet - which will be the new or the post-apartheid South Africa.

Our regret to-day, Mr. Chairman, is that there are empty chairs. Codesa is being boycotted and denigrated as sell outs. South Africa is a country of divergent people. It is our task to accept this is a reality and mediate so that the empty chairs can be filled with people from, the PAC, Azapo, the A.W.B., the C.P. and others. They should know that Codesa hasn't a closed agenda. Self-determination can form part of this discussion as will be the question of an interim Government and a constituent assembly.

In laying the first bricks for the new South Africa we are not unmindful of the factors that led to the disintegration of the mighty Soviet Union and also what has happened in India and Yugoslavia.

We are also much conscious of the fact that we all want to avoid South Africa being another "killing field" for conflicts like Renamo, Unita, Punjab or the Tamil Tigers of Shri Lanka.

There is also no time for point-scoring exercises. Many individuals and organisations - some in big and others in a small way - have made Codesa possible.

Representatives of the international community are also here to witness, first hand, the bearing of the fruits of their actions *also*.

Change has a price. National political reconciliation and nation-building go side-by-side with each other. We call upon all, internally and in the international community, to assist in the building of our economy, improving our growth and also the foreign confidence.

Codesa's achievements will be meaningless if the benefits are not going to yield in the direction of our long-suffering masses.

Being involved in the heart of Codesa we say that Codesa dare not fail, ~~it~~ will not fail because all participants are willing.

Reference to legal and constitutional issues must not be misinterpreted as unwillingness to find *of* point out the way.

Nobody should be here concerned about take over or handover. Codesa has so far has shown that the givers and the takers are becoming part of the new order.

The N.P.P. dedicates itself to ensure that Codesa marches forward.

Thank You