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OPENING REMARKS BY THE LEADER OF  
THE UNITED PEOPLE'S FRONT  
THE HONOURABLE M.N.N. RAMODIKE  
DURING THE CONVENTION FOR A DEMOCRATIC  
SOUTH AFRICA (CODESA) ON 20/12/91  
AT WORLD TRADE CENTRE.

HIS LORDSHIP CHIEF JUSTICE CORBETT, CHAIRPERSONS  
JUSTICE SCHABORT AND JUSTICE MOHAMED, DELEGATES OF  
POLITICAL PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS PRESENT HERE,  
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AT  
VARIOUS LEVELS, MY COUNTRYMEN, IT IS MY PLEASURE  
TO ADDRESS YOU ON THIS VERY HISTORIC OCCASION.

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MR. CHAIRPERSON THIS IS THE DAY THAT WE AS SOUTH AFRICANS,  
SHOULD MARK AS A TURNING POINT IN THE HISTORY OF OUR  
COUNTRY. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIS COUNTRY POLITICAL  
REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR PEOPLE ARE IN A POSITION TO  
SIT AROUND THE TABLE AND DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THEIR  
LAND. FOR A LONG TIME, THE HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY  
WAS DOMINATED BY THE SEEMINGLY IRRECONCILABLE  
DIFFERENCES OF OPINIONS AS REGARDS THE SOLUTION TO  
THE HETEROGENEOUS NATURE OF OUR SOCIETY. WE KNOW  
FOR A FACT THAT HETEROGENEITY IS NOTHING NEW IN OUR  
FAMILY OF NATIONS; SOLUTIONS WERE SOUGHT AND FOUND  
BEFORE, BUT WE CANNOT REMAIN OBLIVIOUS TO THE MAJOR  
EVENTS IN THE WORLD AROUND US, IN AFRICA, EUROPE AND

ELSEWHERE MOST OF WHICH HAVE SOME DEGREE OF INFLUENCE ON DEVELOPMENTS HERE. THE ONUS IS OF COURSE ON US AS SOUTH AFRICANS TO READ THESE LESSONS AND READ THEM WELL WITHOUT ANY SECTORAL BIAS FAR AS OUR COMMUNITY IS CONCERNED. I CANNOT AGREE MORE WITH THE STATEMENT "HISTORY IS THE BEST TEACHER BUT ITS LESSONS ARE NOT ON THE SURFACE AND IT IS A PITY THAT IT IS THE SURFACE LESSONS WHICH ARE LEARNED MORE QUICKLY AND EASILY". WE ARE GATHERED IN HERE ARMED WITH EXPERIENCE OF OUR OWN IN THE COUNTRY AND THAT OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE AND THE RESULTANT BALANCE BETWEEN THE TWO. I MAINTAIN, SHOULD BE THE AREA OF OUR SOLUTION.

KE NYAKA GO TŠEA SEBAKA SE GO L'EBOGA L'E GO L'EBOGIŠA MEKGAILO KA MOKA YEO E PHUTHEGILEGO MO L'EHONO KA PONELO PELE YEO BA BILEGO L'E YONA MABAPI L'E BOKAMOSO BJA NAGA YE. TSELA YA CODESA E BE E TLETŠE MATHATA L'E DITSIKITL'ANO TŠA MEENO GO FIHL'A L'EHONO; EMPA MAFEL'ELONG GO BONAL'A E KA RE TL'A KGONA GOTŠWEL'ELA PELE KA L'ERATO L'E KHUTŠO, E SENG KA KGOHL'AGANO L'E L'ERETHA.

WE HAVE NOT COME HERE TO COMPROMISE OR CAPITULATE AS OUR CRITICS SOMETIMES PUT IT; NOR ARE WE HERE TO REMAIN FIXED TO POSITIONS UNMOVED AND UNDETERRED BY SOMETIMES SO REASONABLE OUTCRIES

OF OUR COUNTERPARTS WHO ARE IN ANY CASE OUR OWN COUNTRY-  
MEN AND FELLOW CITIZENS. WE HAVE COME HERE TO MEASURE  
THE ACTUAL LENGTHS OF BOTH OUR DIFFERENCES AND AGREE-  
MENTS. WE HAVE COME TO LAY FOUNDATIONS FOR FUTURE  
DISCUSSIONS ON THE DIFFERENCES WE HAVE AND TO BE GUIDED BY  
THE NATIONAL INTEREST IN THE COUNTRY IN WHATEVER SOLUTIONS  
WE MAY REACH.

FOR MANY YEARS THIS COUNTRY HAS BEEN TORN APART  
POLITICALLY AND SOCIALLY IN PURSUIT OF A POLICY THAT  
NEARLY DESTROYED US ALL AND I WANT TO THANK VARIOUS  
INSTITUTIONS IN THE POLITICAL FIELD OR ELSEWHERE  
INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY, AND THE INTERNATIONAL

COMMUNITY AS WELL, FOR THE CONTRIBUTION THAT THEY  
HAVE ALL MADE, THE COMBINED EFFECT OF WHICH HAS ULTI-  
MATELY MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO BE AT THIS CONVENTION.  
WE ARE FINALLY GATHERED HERE TODAY BOUND TOGETHER  
NOT ONLY BY THE NEED TO NEGOTIATE BUT BY OUR COMMON  
BASIC BELIEF IN ONE UNITED AND SOVEREIGN COUNTRY GOVERNED  
BY A CONSTITUTION THAT IS TO BE UNDERPINNED BY DEMOCRACY  
AND THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY OF ALL CITIZENS. WE  
ARE AWARE MR. CHAIRPERSON, AS MUCH AS YOU YOURSELF  
ARE, OF THOSE OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO COULD  
NOT SEE THEIR WAY CLEAR IN PARTICIPATING AT THIS  
CONVENTION. WE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE IN THE INTEREST  
OF THE COUNTRY, FOR THOSE OF US IN HERE, INDIVIDUALLY

AND COLLECTIVELY TO INTENSIFY COMMUNICATION WITH THEM RATHER THAN BREAK IT. WE SHOULD DO SO WITH A COMMON AND LOGICAL DESIRE TO BUILD A NEW COUNTRY IN WHICH MOST IF NOT ALL OF US HAD A HAND IN ITS BIRTH AND UPBRINGING. IT IS OUR WISH THAT NO-ONE IS LEFT BEHIND IN THIS TASK - IF WE CAN HELP IT.

MR. CHAIRPERSON, SOUTH AFRICA HAS AT LAST BROKEN THE ICE ON THE LONG AND HARD ROAD TO DEMOCRACY AND WE WISH THAT THE COURAGE AND VISION WHICH PULLED PARTICIPANTS OF VARIOUS POLITICAL PERSUASIONS TOGETHER, SHOULD KEEP US JOINED UP AND CARRY US THROUGH TO THE NEXT STAGES OF DISCUSSIONS.

WE HAVE TO CONCEDE THAT IT WILL ABSOLUTELY SERVE NO PURPOSE TO LOOK BACK IN THE PAST IN OUR PURSUIT TO SHAPE A NEW POLITICAL DISPENSATION. THE FUTURE IS IN THE FUTURE AND NOT IN THE PAST. THE PAST IS EMPTY OF THE FUTURE.

I BELIEVE THAT CODESA IS HERE TO UNITE AND NOT TO ENDORSE OR PERPETUATE SEPARATION OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY.

IN REFERRING TO OUR COUNTRY I MEAN THE WHOLE OF SOUTH AFRICA INCLUDING THE SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES AND THE INDEPENDENT HOMELANDS. THIS BODY MUST, THEREFORE, FIND WAYS AND MEANS OF BRINGING ALL OF US TOGETHER AS A NATION THAT HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO LIVE TOGETHER, TO SURVIVE TOGETHER AND TO SHARE THE RICHES AND THE BURDENS TOGETHER IN A NEW SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION AND RECONSTRUCTION. THE REALITY OF THE MOMENT IS THAT THE SITUATION IS IRREVERSIBLE. CHANGE IS BOUND TO COME AND THOSE WHO RESIST IT WILL BE BLOWN OFF BY THE DEVASTATING WINDS THAT ARE BLOWING IN OUR COUNTRY.

MAY GOD THE ALMIGHTY GUIDE US DURING OUR DELIBERATIONS AND GIVE US THE WISDOM, TO TAKE RIGHT DECISIONS.

ALUA CONTINUA: CODESA.

RAMODIKE M.N.N.

LEADER - UNITED PEOPLE'S FRONT