

**Address by President Nelson Mandela at the opening session of the South Centre's  
Council of Representatives, New York, 21 September 1998**

Mr Chairman;

Mr Secretary-General;

Distinguished Representatives and Guests,

Thank you for honouring me with your invitation to this important gathering. Fresh from the Twelfth Non-Aligned Summit in Durban, I bring warm greetings from the Movement's membership from all corners of the world.

As the premier source of research on issues affecting the South, and growing out of the work and experience of the South Commission, the Centre plays a role whose value for the developing world cannot be underestimated.

You also have the enormous advantage of being guided by one of Africa's finest sons. I would like to take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, first of all as a friend, and also in my capacity as Chair of NAM. He has made an immense contribution, through the Commission and the South Centre, in guiding developing countries in their complex negotiations in the United Nations and other fora.

The outcome of the Twelfth Summit, embodied in its Final Document and the Durban Declaration for the New Millennium, confirms the supreme relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement to the resolution of all the major issues that face humanity.

The decisions we arrived at in Durban will guide us into the next century as we seek, in a constantly changing world, to realise the principles laid down by the visionaries of Bandung.

The NAM and the Group of 77 and China represent the aspirations of a diverse spectrum of developing countries. The value to them and their member countries of research on new developments in world politics and economics is unquestionable.

Together with other south-based research bodies the South Centre can assist us to deliver on the very legitimate expectations of the peoples of the South.

We need independent and relevant research and analysis as well as recommendations and suggestions so that we can find innovative and lasting solutions to the challenges of a turbulent world.

We have spoken for a long time about South-South Co-operation but have not done enough through concrete programs to promote such co-operation.

If South-South Co-operation is also about sharing of expertise, then it also requires that we build a Southern knowledge and resource base. Ideas born out of our direct experience are more likely to be appropriate in helping us to overcome our unique problems.

The South Centre can serve as a catalyst to pool and disseminate ongoing research being carried out in other centres in the South. By pooling our collective knowledge we can identify gaps in our research and provide a useful central resource base that modern communications technology can make globally available. It can also provide ready access to reports of international organisations and institutions as well as analysis of such reports.

The South Centre is uniquely placed to provide the kind of co-ordination and resource base that promotes interaction between all levels of society at all levels of development.

We know that the South Centre is aware of its responsibilities, and that in seeking to provide a permanent resource base for the South, it took the important step to establish a Council with states as members.

This second meeting of the Council should ensure that we co-operate to develop the South Centre into a valuable institution that can initiate, co-ordinate and disseminate timely research and analysis, so that we can focus on priorities and develop an action-orientated program with realistic objectives.

In conclusion, it is indeed a great privilege for me to express our gratitude to Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and all the other pioneers of the South Centre. I hope that we in the NAM and G77 plus China will redouble our efforts to support the South Centre so that it in turn helps us achieve our objective of over coming poverty and promoting peace.

I thank you.

Issued by: Office of the President

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