

Speech by Ambassador Reverend MA Stofile on the occasion of a reception co-hosted by German Africa Foundation (Deutsche Afrika Stiftung e.V.) , German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Deutsche Industrie und Handelskammertag e.V.), Afrika-Verein (Afrika-Verein der Deutschen Wirtschaft e.V.) and the Siemens AG with the theme: “Tasks, Challenges and Ideas” on 28 June 2011

Introduction

From time immemorial since the evolution of societies and nation states, human relations have always been defined by access to resources for livelihood and wellbeing. The search for resources, their protection and later ownership of e.g. land, minerals, animals (for hunters), roots and fruits (for gatherers) have always defined relations. In the modern era the situation has not changed but has become more sophisticated. “National Interests” have replaced what old sociologists called “human needs”. But the essence of what defines relations remains basically the same.

The ancient world relied on might and power of the armies to resolve contestations. Modern times have seen the ascendance of the power of the pen and debating fora for resolving relations among nations. Multi-laterals, bi-nationals and a plethora of Resolutions and Protocols have become very

important tools for good neighbourliness and world peace. Force has not exactly been cancelled by these peaceful tools. But it has been immensely limited.

I have sketched this background to answer the question of why South Africa has a Mission in Germany. Such diplomatic Missions are established with the mutual consent of two states (Germany and the RSA). Our functions in Germany are largely the same with those of our counterpart in Pretoria, Dr Haller. They are:

- To represent the RSA in Germany:
- To protect in Germany the interests of the RSA, within International Law;
- Negotiating (when necessary) with the Government of Germany;
- The promotion of friendly relations between the RSA and Germany and our peoples;
- To develop and facilitate strong economic, cultural and scientific relations between our two countries.

These are the tasks I have been assigned and I mean to carry them out diligently and with great humility. Honourable Public Representatives (MPs) will be our important partners as we tackle these tasks.

As part of the large team of Ambassadors and High Commissioners that South Africa has deployed to many countries, here in Germany we must:

- Strive to consolidate the African Agenda. This means that we must promote and popularise NEPAD and its programmes. This way the economic growth and development of Africa will be enhanced. The African trade and investment must be aligned to regional and sub-regional Strategic Plans. It is also our task to support good governance and democratisation initiatives in Africa. This, in partnership with the German Government and institutions.
- Strive to strengthen our co-operation with Germany. Our two countries have cordial and dynamic relations based on mutual trust and equal partnership. Germany is our largest economic partner in Europe and our number 4 in the world. We have been instructed by President Zuma to strengthen this relationship. Of course, as we do so we shall also be contributing to a strong South – North cooperation. Minister Westerwelle correctly pointed out (15 June 2011) that Germany will strengthen existing relations whilst also forging new ones. This is normal for all countries of the world.

- Together with Germany we are confronting such challenges as poverty, underdevelopment in Africa, skills transfer, post conflict reconstruction and peace and security. As non-permanent members of the UNSC we consult regularly to develop a common approach to our endeavours to reform the UN and other Institutions of Global Governance. We work closely in promoting human rights and in promoting the global political and socio-economic stability within the multi-lateral system.

What are we going to do? (Challenges)

After centuries of colonial conquest followed by many decades of segregation, protest, resistance and brutal repression, our country is on the way to a fully functional and participatory democracy. A significant progress has been made towards making our country a more just and inclusive society. Our political institutions have been entrenched through four national and provincial and local government elections. Such institutions as an independent Judiciary, a Public Protector, Auditor General, Human Rights, a Gender and Electoral Commissions are strong bulwarks for our democracy. But much more must be done still.

Divisions of race, gender and class remain. More often than not inequality reflects these lines of division. The continued social and economic exclusion of millions of South Africans is our biggest challenge. These have a historical basis in apartheid and are driven by a poor quality of education for many blacks which leaves a lot of people unemployed, poor and unemployable. Improving the supply and relevance of skills is desperately needed at home.

So Honourable Members, we are challenged to grow the level of German investments in South Africa and vice versa. We are challenged to come up with innovative technologies that will provide more jobs and skills for our people. The agreements between Germany and South Africa on Education, Science and Technology, Skills training, Provinces/Länder and City/City co-operatives must be made to work smarter and faster. MPs could assist by organising South Africa or Africa days in their constituencies. This way our challenges can be properly and broadly explained. Potential entrepreneurs could also see how to participate in the R11 billion scheme announced by Government to boost infrastructure development and to promote innovative technology-driven industries.

Next week Germany and South Africa are hosting a very important Climate Change Conference. This is another effort to build a solid consensus as we

move to COP17 in Durban, South Africa during November/ December 2011. All agree that a global, legally binding agreement is the first prize for Durban. But all concerned, agree the journey is not going to be easy. But we must walk that road, together.

Conclusion

Honourable Members

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are cognisant of the immensity of our responsibilities. But we also know what happens when we work together. Preparations and the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup started with Germany and South Africa working together since 2004 already to prepare for the 2006 World Cup in Germany. The history of South Africa / German relations is very long. Of course it has not always been positive. But that is what diplomatic missions are for: to iron out problematic areas. Some German Companies have been in South Africa for more than 150 years. We have climbed many hills together. We dare not stop now.

Vielen dank!