



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

26 June 2018

Excellency,

Further to my letter dated 12 January 2018, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/243, which decided to hold a high-level plenary meeting of the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit in 2018, a day before the start of the general debate, in honour of the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela.

I have the honour to enclose herewith a letter dated 26 June 2018 from H.E Mr. Jerry Matthews Matjila, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations and H.E Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, the co-facilitators for the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit, sharing for consideration of Member States the draft political declaration which will be considered on Thursday, 28 June 2018, at 3 p.m. in the Trusteeship Council.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Lajčák', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Miroslav Lajčák

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York



**PERMANENT MISSION OF  
SOUTH AFRICA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



**Buan-Ionad na hÉireann  
chun na Náisiún Aontaithe**

**Permanent Mission of Ireland  
to the United Nations**

26 June 2018

Excellencies,

We are pleased to share with you, for your consideration, a draft political declaration to be adopted at the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit.

The draft builds on the informal consultations held. We found your comments and insights extremely useful during our meetings and are grateful to you for your continued engagement.

We wish to inform you that we will be introducing the draft political declaration on Thursday, 28 June, at 3 pm in the Trusteeship Council, for your consideration and comment.

We are looking forward to continued engagement with you on this important subject.

Please accept the assurance of our highest consideration

Jerry M. Matjila  
Co-facilitator  
Permanent Representative  
of the Republic of South Africa  
to the United Nations

Geraldine Byrne Nason  
Co-facilitator  
Permanent Representative  
of Ireland  
to the United Nations

**To: All Permanent Missions and Permanent Observer Missions to the United Nations  
New York**

## **First Draft of the Nelson Mandela Political Declaration**

1. We, Heads of State and Government and representatives of States and Governments, meet at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 24 September 2018, at the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit to reflect on the life and struggle of Nelson Mandela. We salute his qualities of humility, forgiveness and compassion, his values and his dedication to the service of humanity, as a humanitarian, in the fields of conflict resolution, disarmament, race relations, promotion and protection of human rights, reconciliation, gender equality and the rights of children and other vulnerable groups as well as the upliftment of poor and underdeveloped communities. We acknowledge his contribution to the struggle for democracy internationally and the promotion of the culture of peace throughout the world.
2. We commit to redouble our efforts to build a just, peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and fair world, and revive the values for which Nelson Mandela stood by placing human dignity at the centre of our actions. We commit to demonstrating mutual respect, tolerance, understanding and reconciliation in our relations.
3. We recognize that the world has changed significantly since the founding of the United Nations, and acknowledge that global peace eludes us to this day. We, the leaders of the world today, assume a special responsibility for our words and actions in shaping a world free of want and fear. Conflict is born out of the minds of men and women, and we are the men and women who can find creative solutions to bring a lasting peace, today and for future generations.
4. We reaffirm the purposes and principles of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that serve as our common and universal vision. As we observe the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we recall its foundational principle that all men and women are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of common humanity.
5. We need to support parties to take immediate, concrete measures to end the cycles of violence and prevent relapse. We recognise the role of multiple actors in conflict, including non-state actors, and urge those with influence over parties to conflict to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. We declare our good offices available to those who need them.
6. A comprehensive approach to sustaining peace requires us to address the root causes of conflict, to confront oppression, end foreign occupation, promote good governance, human rights for all and the rule of law, eradicate poverty, promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development and to improve intercultural understanding on the basis of respect.

7. We will mobilise our collective wisdom, capabilities and political will to prevent genocide, mass atrocities, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and to promote harmonious relations among and between peoples and nations worldwide.
8. We need to strengthen our early warning capacities, and acknowledge that early warning is only effective if there is a focus on early action. We recognise the need for credible independent enquiries into violations of international law. We welcome the example set by South Africa in dismantling its nuclear weapon programme, recognise that disarmament is an essential part of conflict prevention and paramount to the achievement of sustainable peace, recall the firm plea by Nelson Mandela in favour of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and underscore our commitment towards that goal.
9. We recognise that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. The United Nations is built on the three interlinked and mutually reinforcing pillars of peace and security, development and human rights which are the foundations for our collective security and well-being, and emphasize that there can be no peace without sustainable development and no sustainable development without peace and without full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. We reaffirm our commitment to the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
10. We declare that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all forms of intolerance represent the very opposite of the noble purposes of the United Nations. We recognise that tolerance of cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversities are essential for lasting peace, understanding and friendship among peoples, nations, cultures and individuals. We all constitute one human family. We therefore commit to not let our differences limit our common purpose and universal vision, to build on what unites us and explore creative ways to bridge what divides us.
11. We recognise the contribution that women have made to the advancement of societies, and are committed to the protection of the human rights of women and girls, to ensuring full gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women as well as empowering them to realize their full potential.
12. We resolve to do everything in our power to protect all our children, especially in conflict situations, so they can realise their dreams and grow up without fear, discrimination and exclusion.
13. We resolve to move beyond words in the promotion of peaceful, just, inclusive and non-discriminatory societies, stressing the importance of the equal participation and full involvement of women and youth in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace

and security, and redouble our efforts to ensure that vulnerable group such as women and youth are free from all forms of violence, fear, discrimination and abuse.

14. It is an incontrovertible truth that conflict is in all ways more costly than preventative diplomacy. No effort should be spared to settle conflicts through peaceful means. We therefore declare our full support for the United Nation's mandates across the peace continuum, and strive to commit adequate resources where necessary to support peace processes, conflict resolution efforts, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development.
15. We recognise that there is no single template for peace, but there is a long and varied history of successful and unsuccessful resolution of conflicts that can serve as best practice for the negotiated settlement and peaceful resolution of conflicts. We commit to avail our best practice to those who seek different models for peace. It is clear that dialogue may not be the easy or popular option and thus requires the continued and sustained support of the international community to build trust and gain momentum. We therefore declare our full support to good faith negotiations.
16. In this regard, we note that the United Nations, regional and sub-regional organisations have a multitude of tools and mechanisms to support the peace continuum, and express our desire to continue to review the effectiveness of the tools at our disposal to the conflicts at hand. We commit to ensuring lines of communication are maintained between parties during conflict resolution efforts to prevent unnecessary escalation and loss of trust. We commit to finding credible interlocutors to engage with all the parties to the conflict to ensure a just and lasting peace. We also recognise that intractable conflicts require innovative solutions.
17. We acknowledge that civil society can play an important role in preventing conflicts, contributing to peacebuilding and advancing efforts to sustain peace. We recognise further that a wide range of good offices exist that can play in role across the peace continuum depending on the nature of the conflict, including current and former Heads of State and Government, mediation groups such as the Elders and Council of Eminent Persons, traditional leaders, religious leaders, cultural leaders, community leaders, business leaders, gender and youth representatives, academics, sports personalities, and celebrities. Sports and the arts, in particular, have the power to change perceptions, prejudices and behaviours, as well as to inspire people, to break down racial and political barriers, combat discrimination and defuse conflict.
18. It is clear that sustainable peace is not realized just by the absence of conflict, but is achieved through a continuing positive, dynamic, inclusive, participatory process of dialogue that resolves all outstanding issues in a spirit of mutual understanding,

cooperation and long-term vision. Transitional justice and reconciliation are key to post-conflict nation building and development.

19. We recognise that sustainable peace requires significant post-conflict support for moving towards recovery, reconstruction, peacebuilding and development. The cycle of violence must not be allowed to continue by the unintended consequences of the premature withdrawal of support and international attention. Sustainable peace requires sustained attention and investment.

**Our common humanity demands that we must make the impossible possible. We seek the conversion of heart and mind that can make a difference. We therefore,**

20. Decide to recognize the period 2019 to 2028 as the Nelson Mandela Decade of Peace and call on all Member States to redouble efforts to pursue peace, development and human rights internationally;
21. Welcome the establishment of the High Level Advisory Board on Mediation and encourage it to work in the pursuit and maintenance of international peace and security, including through the use of its good offices;
22. Recommend the consolidation of United Nation's prizes in the interrelated areas of human rights, development, and peace and security, including the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize and the United Nations Prize in the field of Human Rights, in order to strengthen the United Nation's recognition and celebration of its values, purposes and principles;

As we rise from the General Assembly Chamber here today, we collectively hold ourselves accountable to the values and principles of this Declaration, to strive for a just, peaceful, prosperous, democratic and fair world, and call on our people to celebrate the richness of our diversity, the collective creativity and wisdom of our elders, the wellbeing and survival of mother earth, and call on our youth, artists, sports personalities, musicians and poets to breathe life into the values and principles of the United Nations.