



ADDRESS BY ARCHBISHOP THABO MAKGOBA

My name is Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, and greetings to you all. I am very pleased to be able to speak to you virtually today.

One of the spinoffs of the terrible time of illness of death we are going through has been the rapid growth of the use of telecommunications. Although it is used on occasions such as this is a consequence of tragedy. At times like ours, we need to look even for small signs of hope and the way in which technology has improved our capacity to respond to crisis is one of those signs.

The 16th of August 2012 was a day that changed South Africa. The shocking events that took place at the koppie at Marikana lifted a mirror to the country. It challenged us to ask who were we as a country, how did we allow ourselves to get to that point, how could we have allowed conditions to arise which set off such wanton killing? More specifically we had to ask, were we so unable to speak to each other, to find common cause, that those deaths were inevitable? We must not mince our words, that fault lay everywhere, to one degree or another we were all implicated.

The legacy of Marikana was built on the blood of our fallen colleagues, who were sacrificed in a battle of ideologies. If we are to honour them, we need to continue to hold up a mirror to ourselves, to engage in self reflection and self-examination and to ask whether we have done everything we can to ensure that such suffering is never inflicted on the working people and communities of this country.

Have NGOs, churches and all in the not profit sector done all we can? Have mine owners,

managers, workers and unions? Are the courts doing all they can to bring justice? The have government and the police done all they can to prevent a repeat? We also need to use this tragedy as a blueprint for healing and restoration beginning with bringing closure and dignity to the people of Marikana.

While many of us may think we have moved on, we need to recognise that those intimately and cruelly affected will continue to need their pain acknowledged. They will continue to need help and support to move on with their lives. And to that end, all the partners in the process need to genuinely want to be part of the solution.

Marikana continues to challenge all of us to reflect deeply and honestly on our places in South Africa as it is and as we want it to be. That is the key phrase I want you to think about, South Africa as we want it to be. A country where all people live with dignity, in peace, and are able to flourish. A country where our differences are spoken about, where we address our challenges together, building side by side rather than facing each other in conflict. A country where our collective spirit and focus allows each person to travel their own path, but towards a common good.

Now, nine years after the incident at Marikana, let us reflect on where we are and where we want to be. Recent court rulings will have again highlighted our differences and our challenge. Our challenge as

a people and as a country to find common ground established on a mutual recognition of truth and justice to overcome our differences, and to work with common purpose for a common good of all of us.

It is time to look across from where we sit, at our neighbours, at our friends and at our opponents, to reach out and to begin to heal together. To begin the slow and difficult process of finding closure. To recognise each other's pain, and to help one another salve that pain.

Please reach across those chasms that separate us, to begin to build bridges and a South Africa for everyone. Find partners, find them near you and far, find people who you agree with, and importantly, those you disagree with. It will be tough at times, it will involve working through disagreement, trauma and even aggression – but our survival depends on genuinely wanting to be part of the healing and building of our country. And, it must be a country where not a single person will suffer again in a way that led to Marikana.

We can remember the past but now we have to build the future. As we approach the tenth anniversary of Marikana next year, we have to offer a new reality which reimagines the future of Marikana. A community that is united, has found healing and is working at restoring itself, and gearing itself up for greater heights.

I thank you. God bless you. More importantly, God loves you and so do I.