



File Sub: CF/EXD/SP/1994-0047a

Statement by Archbishop Desmond Tutu
Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town
at the
Commemoration of the
Day of the African Child

United Nations
16 June 1994

	UNICEF Alternate Inventory Label
	Rcf00072CM
Item #	CF/RAD/USAA/DB01/2002-01231
ExR/Code:	CF/EXD/SP/1994-0047A
Day of the African Child. Address by Archbishop Desmond Tu	
<i>Date Label Printed</i> 24-Sep-2002	

cover + 5pp + 0/b

File Sub: CF/EXD/SP/1994-0047a

Address by Archbishop Desmond Tutu
Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town
at the
Commemoration of the
Day of the African Child

United Nations - 16 June 1994

Very distinguished friends, I bring you very, very warm greetings from your sisters and brothers in South Africa; the new, the free South Africa. Thank you very much for your warm - very warm - welcome. It has not always been so at home - the old South Africa. They used to have quite delicious Tutu stories. One of them is of the Archbishop having died, going to heaven and being told by St. Peter: "No, you have to go to the other place, the warmer place." A fortnight later, Tutu having repaired to the warmer place, St. Peter heard frenzied knocking on the Pearly Gate and when he opened it, there, standing on the threshold, was old mate the Devil himself. And St. Peter said, "Well, what are you doing here?" And he said, "Well, you sent Bishop Tutu down there, and he's causing so much trouble; I have come to ask for political asylum".

Thank you very much for the very great privilege of being here, and as you know we are here today because eighteen years ago on this day the young people in Soweto and in other parts of South Africa rose up against the obscenity - the iniquity - of apartheid, and South Africa has never been the same ever since. And the Organization of African Unity in 1990 took up that revolt against injustice and oppression and healed it and has memorialized it as the Day to honour the African child.

UNICEF has done marvellous work concerning the survival, the education, the health, the safety, the development of children, and deserves so richly our deep appreciation for trying to make this global village we inhabit a child-friendly habitat -- because if our children do not survive, the human race is doomed to be wiped out, and if it is wiped out, then we are not going to be around. Shall we give a very, very warm hand to UNICEF, and all of those who have worked together with it!

FINAL

Cover + 5 ppt + 0b

We have seen a dream come true

I come from South Africa, and what an utterly different South Africa it is since a few years ago I was privileged to speak here addressing the Special Committee Against Apartheid! Friends, we have seen a miracle unfolding before our very eyes, a dream coming true. We have been saying to people: everywhere else perhaps in the world, voting - an election - these are political, secular things. For us it turned out to be a deeply spiritual, a deeply religious occasion. It was a mountain-top experience, a transfiguration, a transforming experience. You walked into the polling booth one person; you emerged on the other side a different person. You entered as a black person, wondering often and often whether you had not been God's stepchild, and you emerged on the other side and said: "Hey! I am free." The dignity ... the dignity ... that had been trodden underfoot for so very long had been restored and you were able to walk tall. White persons entered the polling booth lugging a very heavy burden of guilt for the many, many years of oppression and injustice of which they were such beneficiaries, and they emerged on the other side saying: "Hey! I am free, I am light." And they, too, discovered what we had kept trying to tell them: "You will never be free until all of us are free".

The very great privilege I have, dear friends, is to come to such as yourselves to express, however inadequately, our very, very profound "thank you" for the help that you have been. And I want first of all to say a very big "thank you" to African countries. Please give them a very warm hand! Many of those countries placed undue added pressure on limited resources as they welcomed South African refugees. Many of those countries, especially the frontline countries, bore the brunt of the might of South Africa's Defence Force in its destabilizing policy. We will never be able to discharge our debt to you ... Accept this hackneyed, this shop-soiled, this fly-blown "thank you", and know that it comes from a heart that wishes it could be opened for you to realize how those many mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters at home would wish they were here to say to you, "thank you, thank you, thank you; we would not have been free without you, thank you."

We have notched up a spectacular victory over injustice, oppression, evil. And so, I want now to say to the international community at large: you were tremendous in your support. We would never have succeeded, we would not have got to where we have got, without your help; and so to you here, and to the many who are not here whom you represent, I say: "thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you!" and know that it comes on behalf of millions. I know, for once, that I speak without fear of contradiction. I speak without being presumptuous when I say I know I speak on behalf of many, many millions who wish they could be here to say to you: "thank you, thank you, thank you!" And will you give to all of you and to all the others a super-duper standing ovation, please! Thank

you, thank you very much! I sometimes tell people that I have to be careful how we do these things, because I once asked a group of young people in Australia - I said to them: "We often do not celebrate who we are. How about giving ourselves", I said to them, "a warm hand?" And they did quite a superb "humdinger". And then I said, "Please give God a standing ovation!" And they nearly took the roof off and, without thinking, I said, "Thank you"!

One of the first things that happened when Mr. Mandela spoke as President of South Africa addressing Parliament was to announce that his government was going to provide free health care for children up to the age of six and also to expectant mothers. He also announced that there would be free school feeding for all who needed it. So we can see already freedom having an incredible impact on the life, the education, the health of children. We have a tremendous experiment in democracy happening in South Africa. It is an experiment that deserves to succeed. We say "thank you" to the United States for doubling its aid package to South Africa. But a former British Premier, Lord Callaghan, said: "You know, the West provided a substantial package to Russia because they said it was important for democracy to succeed there." And he said - and I want to endorse this: "A very good case can be made out for a similar package to be made available to South Africa because it is important that democracy succeeds there". But we do not, in fact, want charity. South Africa has a sound economy, and we are saying: you listened to us when we said divest; now we are saying the conditions are just right - return, invest, reinvest massively in South Africa, and maybe give our country the same trading status that you give to Egypt, to Israel, to Mexico. ...I used to be called Mr. Sanctions; I now want to be called Mr. Investment.

What's happened to our children?

The election brought a drop in the violence. Up to then our children were traumatized. Our children were displaced. Our children lost parents, were orphaned. Their schooling was disrupted. Family life was subverted and many times our children were brutalized. You saw for yourselves a ghastly picture of some of our children dancing round victims of the "necklace" killings, where you put a tyre around the neck of a person, fill the tyre with gasoline and set that alight, and you said: What's happened - what's happened to our children that they should be able to dance round someone dying so gruesomely?

And now that violence has subsided, and we are aware of what happened to the children in Angola - maimed by land mines. We have seen children turned into orphans, displaced children no longer able to be educated, children turned into child soldiers when they ought still to be playing with their toys, and we long for peace for them. We pray that the peace that we are seeing in South Africa, which is providing such a dividend, must be one that can be available to children everywhere. I ask on behalf of the children

of Africa three things: I ask, "please, can those of you who own so much of Africa because of this debt - would you be willing to consider a six-month moratorium on debt repayment? The point of that is that I am not asking at this stage for you to cancel the debt, but to say: "Let us see what they do in six months." If in six months there is democratization in a country where the people participate in decisions about their lives, when the money that is saved over that six-month period is used for the benefit of the people so that schools can be built, clean water can be made available, that the people benefit and that human rights are respected; if in six months those conditions have been observed, then we say: "Cancel the debt. Give Africa a second chance when we enter this period of the second liberation."

Second, I appeal to Africa: let us demilitarize. Let us reduce our armies, for far too frequently - let us be honest - those armies have not been used against external aggression. They have been used against their own citizens. Our armies have usually been used to maintain in power those who were not chosen by the people. These armies have been an elite gobbling up resources that ought to be used in social spending. We want to say to all of Africa: freedom is cheaper than repression; freedom is cheaper than repression.

Genocide is being committed

And then I want to make a special plea, thirdly, for Rwanda. Friends, we can't sit and pretend we don't know what is happening: genocide is being committed. We pray, please, that those countries that have the resources make them available to the United Nations so that at the very least the children can be protected. Sixty children only recently were abducted from the parish of Ste Famille. Sixty children who could have been saved were massacred only a few days ago. If the United Nations had had the resources, they would have been able to protect, to secure the refuges where these children and others have been seeking sanctuary. For the sake of the children of Rwanda, for the sake of our children, for the sake of our humanity, please, for goodness sake, let us do something urgently to end that carnage! But I want to say to the people of Rwanda, in South Africa we are seeing an incredible thing, we are seeing a Government that has at the head a Nelson Mandela, and then there is an F.W. de Klerk; and I would hope the world will always be wanting to recognize the courage of F.W. de Klerk, and maybe we should give him a hand! A Government that has a Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi as a member! Now just a few weeks ago they were all at one another's throats! Today they are a government of national unity working for accommodation, working at seeking consensus, working for healing.

The Minister of Justice of South Africa was detained several times. He suffers from a heart condition. The security forces tried to kill him by swapping his tablets. Today he is writing,

drafting the legislation for an amnesty to forgive the security forces that wanted to kill him! If it can happen in a South Africa where we said the problem was so intractable, no country in the world can ever again have an excuse for not being able to resolve its problems. God is saying: *I set before you South Africa which by right should be torn apart; I am setting before you South Africa as a paradigm. This is how it can be done.* There is hope for the world when South Africa can become as it has become. Friends, there we began to celebrate our diversity, and we appeal to you in Rwanda and say: it is possible for you, too, to be reconciled. We say to you friends: it is not easy - it's never been easy. But why can't you celebrate your diversity, and, as with us, say no longer: We will be free - all of us - black and white together - the rainbow people of God. But say with us - as we said on May the 9th: We are free, all of us - black and white together - the rainbow people of God! What a wonderful country it will be!

Thank you.