

A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination, Nelson Mandela



It is almost seven years since the passing of Nelson Mandela, on December 5th, 2013, but his memory vividly remains with millions around the world, simply because his commitment to peace and justice were exceptional, and he impacted and inspired through both his words, and the way he lived. Following 21 years in prison, he emerged as an iconic figure and led his nation without the bloodbath most people

had predicted. Here is an extract from one of Nelson Mandela interviews where he said,

“You have a limited time to stay on earth

You must try and use that period for the purpose of transforming your country into what you desire it to be”

This year’s celebrations in July marking the Nelson Mandela International Day featured a theme “Take action, inspire change”. The world paid tribute to an extraordinary global advocate for equality, dignity and solidarity. It highlighted the importance of working together, from governments to citizens, to build a peaceful, sustainable and equitable world. This year the world marked Mandela Day at a time when the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic endangers everyone, everywhere, and especially the most vulnerable.

In the face of these challenges, world leaders at the recently concluded 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, recognized the vital importance of **unity and solidarity**. In previous years at the United Nations, countries pledged to be guided by Mandela’s legacy in working for a better world. In 2018, the Member States of the United Nations at the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit, held in New York, adopted the first resolution of the General Assembly’s 73rd session, “committing to demonstrate mutual respect, tolerance, understanding and reconciliation in [their] relations.”

“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 the meaningful participation of youth in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security,” read the resolution.

Member States, many represented by their heads of State and government, also reiterated the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and said that they remain committed to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions - economic, social and environmental - in a balanced and integrated manner.

We are reminded that the world leaders reaffirmed and pledged that sustainable development cannot be realized without **peace and security**, and peace and security will be at risk without **sustainable development**, and that **no one will be left behind**.

As we try to continue with our daily lives, we realise we have found that our limited choices seem to have vanished for many of us. We can’t choose where we go and when to go.

Here in London we work from home, and we have a rule of six (6) as to how many we could celebrate with as friends, and as families. While some of our choices and freedoms have been temporarily cut held, we have not lost what we thought was our life. And so we can still make some important choices to reprioritise, reset, rebuild our daily lives, our homes, our transportation, our shopping, our walks and rides to schools, our visits to clinics and

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hospitals, and the list continues. We realise that as we reset our daily lives, **business is not as usual** and we must adjust to the “new normal” and we realise we are **exposed to greater challenges and deeper inequalities**.

There are days where all one need is a simple hello or a hug from family or our neighbour, or a cheer of appreciation for our services, only to reassure us that we will get out of this together, that everything will be alright.

The media has been flooded with calls for the need to fight this pandemic of inequality through renewed commitments to a new era, and that “we are in this together” and only together can we fend off the common threat of COVID and recover better. We frequently think of the bigger picture - of what the authorities, the Governments are doing to help us and what if?

Another quote from Mandela, **“It is so easy to break down and destroy. The heroes are those who make peace and build”**

Once again, we are reminded by Mandela’s words that we have a limited time on earth. We must use our time “now” and do our best, focus on the positive things to reconcile our challenges, our conflicts and talk with everyone whether they are friends or enemies. As Mandela said, “We must let the brain always dominate our emotions. We must reject all negative fissures in our own soul, in our blood system, and focus our attention on the positive things for democracy, non-racial, non-sexist country”.

Using more possible the brain and not emotions! Great Memory to a Great Man!

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