



**Message from
HE Jacob Zuma
President of the
Republic of South Africa**

My forthcoming State Visit to the United Kingdom is the third such visit by a President of South Africa since the country gained its freedom on 27th April 1994 in the first democratic and non-racial elections in its 358-year history.

With the attainment of dominion status in the Union of South Africa in 1910, and the establishment of the Republic of South Africa in 1960, black South Africans were disenfranchised on the grounds of their skin colour.

This year, at the joint sitting of Parliament, we were fortunate to mark the 20th anniversary of the release of President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela with the founding President of our democratic nation present in the public gallery of the second Parliament of the fourth government since our freedom in 1994.

Since his release in 1990, our country has changed fundamentally. President Mandela united South Africans behind the ideal of a democratic society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities and we have recommitted ourselves to that ideal.

I am looking forward to the visit as an opportunity to consolidate the strong ties that bind the people of the United Kingdom and the people of South Africa. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the British people for standing at the forefront of the global anti-apartheid movement which contributed significantly to bringing apartheid to an end and ushering in an era of democracy in South Africa.

Indeed, London became a centre for the anti-apartheid movement which later spread across Europe to the United States in what became one of the most dramatic demonstrations of international solidarity and action against an unjust system which denied the majority of its citizens their basic human dignity and rights.

South Africa is today a bridge not only to Africa, the last frontier of the global economy, but also between old and emerging powers

and between old and new ways of seeing and doing things.

South Africa has a strong, stable and growing economy with major domestic resources and the ability to exploit them. As a responsible member of the international community, South Africa has consistently strived for peace and development throughout the world and highlighted the blight of poverty and the debilitating imbalance between the industrialised countries and the developing world.

South Africa plays a key role in the fast-changing global governance landscape and is committed to a fairer global trade dispensation, and a more just allocation of global resources to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. It will also be at the centre of a global deal on climate change which compensates the developing countries for the sacrifices necessary to prevent environmental disaster.

We acknowledge the support of the UK for Africa to occupy a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and for institutional reform of the UN and its agencies as well as the multilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

The United Kingdom can rely on South Africa's support to meet the challenges and opportunities of an interdependent world by bringing the global architecture in alignment with the new realities.

Through the G20 group of nations, South Africa is already working with the UK to deal with global issues impacting people across the developing world. More recently, the G20 summits have served as forum for co-ordinating the international response to the global economic and financial crises.

We look forward to closer collaboration between our countries in dealing with the global challenges of rural development, health and education which are also top priorities for the nation-building challenges in my country, South Africa.

We are grateful for the bilateral collaboration which already exists in addressing these vital challenges and we look to ways of unlocking further knowledge exchange, partnerships, mentoring and training between our two countries for their mutual benefit.

We look to Britain as a cultural and historical partner which has huge reserves of accumulated knowledge and expertise which is much needed in South Africa as we pursue our national goals.

We are pleased to note that UK Trade & Investment has identified South Africa as a high-growth market and that the UK remains one of South Africa's most significant trading partners with more than R100 billion (£7 billion) in goods and services passing between our countries each year.

The UK has invested substantially in recent years in the mining, financial services, mobile phone, rail transport, telecommunications, gas and oil and aviation industries. And we are mindful that the UK remains the largest investor in South Africa as well as the largest market for South African tourism in the industrialised world.

The people-to-people contacts between the two countries in the tourism, business, sporting and social spheres are a vital contribution towards consolidating the relationship between our countries.

In addition to the binational commission between our countries there have been several important bilateral agreements signed in recent years to promote knowledge exchange and mentoring. These include agreements in the fields of education, agriculture, science and film, and there is a constant collaboration in the area of trade, investment and tourism.

South Africa prides itself on its strong regulatory framework, good infrastructure, robust private sector, a sound macro-economic management and resilient institutions of democracy.

The Global Agreement on Tariffs and Trade that was signed by South Africa in 1994 and our membership of the World Trade

organisation have assisted our integration in the global economy following the isolation of the apartheid era. And market access has been enhanced by the free-trade agreements between the European Union and the Southern Africa Development Community.

Our membership of the African Union and role in African peacekeeping and conflict resolution, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Peer Review Mechanism offer further channels of collaboration with the UK in Africa. They underpin South Africa's growing role as a major investor in Southern Africa and the African continent.

One of the less enviable challenges our countries both face is how best to respond to the deepest global recession in 70 years. Exchanging notes is a mutually beneficial process. After declining by 0.8 per cent in 2009, the global economy is expected to grow by 3.9 per cent this year driven largely by the momentum of China's industrial expansion, urbanisation and modernisation.

After five years of sustained growth at around 5 per cent, the South African economy shrank by an estimated 1.8 per cent last year. Mining output fell by 7 per cent and manufacturing by 12 per cent and 900,000 jobs were lost. However, as our Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan, noted in his recent budget, things are looking slightly better and South Africa is headed back into modest growth estimated at 2.3 per cent this year, rising to 3.6 per cent in 2012.

As is the case with the UK, we are under no illusions that the recovery will be either quick or easy and that it could even prove to be temporary. But we are comforted by our ongoing dialogue and collaboration within the G20 framework to ensure that we learn from each other in responding to the financial challenges and contribute to the creation of a more sustainable global system.

We also have some commonality in facing the challenges of energy production capability in the medium to long-term with

the necessary use of nuclear energy and finding the right balance between fossil fuels and renewable energy such as solar, wind power and nuclear power. We are keen to learn from the UK experience.

Just as Britain is gearing up for hosting the Olympics in 2012 on the theme of inspiring and building youth worldwide, so we are looking forward to hosting the first 2010 FIFA World Cup in Africa which promises to be an extraordinary event and will change the way that the world looks both at South Africa and the African continent.

The frenetic activity in creating the stadiums and transport and security infrastructure necessary to deliver a successful World Cup has already ensured many benefits that will improve the lives of ordinary South Africans. We are working hard to ensure that the legacy of the World Cup in relation to investment and tourism will mean even greater benefits in the future in terms of job creation and better facilities.

We look to welcoming the English Football team and supporters in South Africa and welcome the UK's support for South Africa as host for such a major global event. I am confident that the World Cup experience will consolidate the close sporting ties between our countries in the future, including the 2012 Olympics and in Britain's impressive bid to host the FIFA World Cup in 2018.

I am confident that my State Visit will highlight the very special nature of the UK-South Africa relationship.

Nowhere is that relationship more poignantly symbolised than in Britain's own Parliament Square where in amongst a line-up of statues of British Prime Ministers are not one but two South African leaders: Prime Minister General Jan Smuts, co-founder of the League of Nations (later the United Nations) and President Nelson Mandela, President of the first democratic and non-racial government in South Africa.

I welcome the initiative by FIRST to bring out a special issue to mark my visit. **F**