

NELSON MANDELA

Speech at the Unveiling of his Statue Parliament Square, London, 29 August 2007

It is an honour for us to be with you on the occasion of the unveiling of this statue today. From the moment Donald Woods initiated the project, to when Ian Walters came to my home to begin the statue, we never dreamt we would all be here today.

Though the statue is of one man, it should, in actual fact, symbolise all those who have resisted oppression, especially in my country. The history of the struggle in South Africa is rich with histories of heroes and heroines, some of them leaders, some of them followers. All of them desired to be remembered.

When Oliver Tambo and I visited Westminster Abbey in Parliament Square in 1962, we half joked that we hoped that one day a statue of a black person would be erected here alongside that of General Smuts. Oliver would have been proud today if he were here.

We thank the British people once again for their relentless efforts in supporting us during the dark years. We remember the Free Mandela campaign and the time we gathered in 1990 at Wembley Stadium following our release from prison.

We are proud to announce that in celebration of my ninetieth birthday next year, my international AIDS campaign, called 46664, will once again call on you as a British

nation to gather. On the 27th of June 2008, 46664 will host a concert in Hyde Park. I want very much to be back in London to attend this concert and I hope to see you there.

It remains for me to acknowledge my gratitude to all who have made this day possible. We trust that the statue will be a reminder of heroes and heroines past, as well as an inspiration for continuing struggle against injustice.

I thank you.

