THE CHALLENGE OF DIVERSITY: CO-EXISTING IN A GLOBALISED WORLD
FORMER PRESIDENT F W DE KLERK

First, allow me to congratulate Her Majesty, the Queen, and the British people on the Jubilee that you are celebrating this week. The pageant that we have witnessed during the past few days is an excellent manifestation of the cultural diversity that so greatly enriches our world.

The ceremonies, the pomp and splendour of the Jubilee embody many of the myths, traditions and collective national memories that give you your identity as Britons. For the rest of us, who are not Britons, they make the world a more interesting place.

The first challenge of diversity in a globalising world is to ensure its continued existence. How we will be able to nurture and preserve cultural diversity against the onslaught of globalisation? The forces that drive globalisation are technological, commercial, materialistic and tend toward uniformity. Globalisation poses a threat to the traditions, ceremonies, myths and languages of cultures all over the world. It is estimated that half of the world's 6 000 languages will disappear within this century.

However, our cultural diversity is not only a rich asset: it also presents us with a second global challenge that we cannot ignore.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union eleven years ago there were great hopes that a new era of peace had arrived. However, it was short lived. A new spectre has begun to haunt the international community: it is the spectre of inter-communal or inter-group conflict.

By this I mean conflict between ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic communities, usually within the same countries. It is fast becoming clear that such conflict poses the greatest single threat to peace and security. Simultaneously it constitutes the greatest single challenge in the world of today:

• The challenge of finding a meaningful way in which diverse communities will be able to co-exist peacefully and harmoniously in our globalising world.

Throughout most of history the main source of warfare has been rivalry between nations; between alliances and between ideologies. It was such rivalries that spawned the first and second world wars and that lay at the root of the cold war. However, since the collapse of global communism the threat of international and inter-alliance warfare has receded. Another form of conflict has come to the fore – growing conflict between people living together within the same territory. It has its roots in the inability of diverse communities to coexist within the same constitutional units.

In 1999 only two of the 27 serious conflicts in the world were between countries: the rest were within countries - primarily between ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious communities.

The present and recent violence in the former Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Azerbaijan, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia are examples of this kind of conflict. They are often characterised by extraordinary brutality - involving ethnic cleansing and massacres of

whole communities - and by the implacable hatred that develops between the contending communities.

Inter-communal conflicts also lie at the root of two of the most serious current threats to international peace:
• the unresolved problem of Kashmir - which is one of the main causes of the present very serious confrontation between India and Pakistan; and
• the escalating violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians, which is creating dangerous instability in the Middle East and which has helped to spawn the fanaticism that struck at the heart of America on 11 September last year.

There will be those who argue that this is a typical problem of the developing countries of the world. I believe that such an approach would be a grave mistake. There are clear warning signs that Europe itself is falling prey to the consequences of the mismanagement of the challenges posed by diversity. Are we not seeing this in:
• the recent devastating ethnic conflicts in the Balkans?
• the on-going terrorism of ETA in Spain?
• the problems with which you have had to contend in Northern Ireland?

The recent electoral successes of Jean-Marie Le Pen in France; of the Pim Fortuyn List in the Netherlands and Georg Haider in Austria are all indications that even traditionally liberal European societies are not immune. The spectre of inter-communal conflict also haunts Europe - and it is not going to disappear.

The reality is that we are moving away from the old norm of fairly homogeneous nation states. Increasingly, national borders encompass growing diversity and countries are becoming more cosmopolitan. Globalisation is stimulating greater mobility of people and nothing can stop this. If this is the problem, the question is how should we deal with it.

Clearly, we can no longer ignore the spectre of inter-ethnic conflict:
• it is responsible for horrendous human suffering and unacceptable abuses of fundamental human rights;
• it is a primary cause of violence and instability in a number of countries throughout the world;
• as we are witnessing in the Middle East and southern Asia, it poses a serious threat to international peace.

I firmly believe that the time has arrived for the international community to give serious attention to devising principles, approaches and mechanisms to deal with the challenge to manage diversity in a way which can defuse and prevent inter-communal conflict.

One solution to ethnic tensions and conflict is the creation of new states through partitioning - usually at the insistence of communities that constitute majorities in clearly defined geographic areas.

This tendency has given birth to at least 26 new countries since the Second World War - not including the decolonisation process. It was the route followed
• by India and Pakistan - subsequently by Bangladesh when it separated from Pakistan;
• by the constituent states of the old Soviet Union and Yugoslavia;
• by Slovakia and the Czech Republic;

- by Eritrea and Ethiopia;
- it is the de facto situation in Cyprus;
- it lies at the heart of various peace plans for the Israelis and the Palestinians;
- it is the central demand of most of the groups throughout the world that are currently fighting, or agitating, for self-determination.

Should communities, which constitute clear majorities in definable geographic areas, have a right to secede?   Does a state have any legal or moral right to continue to rule a geographic area, in which a clear and distinct ethnic majority wants self-determination and independence?

There is no generally accepted international norm that governs these crucial questions. It would appear that each case would have to be judged on its merits, within the framework of economic and political viability and the political forces involved. In some cases it can be the solution.

However, it is clear that partition is not always the answer since it often creates as many problems as it seeks to solve:
- Regions that secede generally contain their own minorities, which, in turn have to be accommodated. This is particularly the case with many of the states that were formerly part of the Soviet Union and the old Yugoslavia.
- Partition runs counter to economically driven regionalisation and globalisation. In the world of today there are compelling reasons for states to move economically and politically closer together, rather than to move further apart.
- In many countries ethnic communities are so dispersed that partition is not an option. There is no possibility of a black state in America; or a Moslem state in France; or a Pakistani/Indian/West Indian state in the United Kingdom; or an Afrikaner state in South Africa. The demographic realities, the fact of interdependence and the economic interests of all individuals simply make it impossible.

We, in South Africa, have a lot of experience in this regard. After all, apartheid meant 'separation'. At its heart it was an attempt to partition South Africa between its different ethnic groups. It failed, not only because of the injustice of racial discrimination involved. Also for other reasons it simply could not work. We found that all the demographic and economic forces were moving in the opposite direction - in the direction of closer integration.

We learned, at great cost, that the challenge facing different ethnic communities living in the same area is not how they should live apart, but how they should live together. I have no doubt that the international community will learn the same lesson:
- It is overwhelmingly in the interest of the successor states of the old Soviet Union and of the old Yugoslavia that they should work together in economic and political harmony.
- At the end of the day, the Israelis and the Palestinians are going to have to learn to co-exist. Neither population is going to disappear. Even after partitioning there will be Palestinians living in Israel and Israelis living in Palestine. It is manifestly in their economic, political and security interests that they should reach a just and mutually acceptable solution.
- As we are discovering in South Africa and as the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland are discovering, peace, co-operation and coexistence are infinitely preferable to mindless violence and the creation of no-go areas through partitioning.

The fact is that inter-ethnic conflict is not inevitable. There are examples throughout the world and throughout history where diverse communities have lived together in peace and

harmony. In nearly all such cases the communities concerned felt secure because their basic interests were not threatened.

What is the recipe? We can identify the following basic principles and approaches from the examples of successful multi-ethnic states:

• In complex societies communities should be given maximum "breathing space" to promote their identities and to cherish their traditions. In particular, they should have the right, where practicable, to education in the language and culture of their choice and to use their language and practise their culture.

• Toleration and pride in diversity should be fostered through the education system, through the teaching of national languages and through the media. Any effort to impose one language and one culture on important minorities should be avoided at all costs.

• Multi-communal societies should strive for political inclusivity. Simple majoritarianism, where significant minorities can be excluded from important processes of decision-making should be avoided.

• Communities should have maximum autonomy, consistent with national laws, in managing their own affairs. They should be adequately represented in all the institutions through which they are governed - particularly with regard to issues that directly affect their communities. Their concerns should receive adequate and sympathetic consideration by those in power. Special care should be taken that no community feels isolated or alienated from the governmental process.

• Provisions prohibiting discrimination of any form should be strictly enforced. No community should feel victimised or excluded from any aspect of national life because of its cultural or ethnic identity.

• Diverse communities should simultaneously be accommodated in a broader cultural and constitutional identity of the state. There should be a concerted effort to establish an inclusive, overarching national identity that can unite all communities, irrespective of their differences - an over-arching identity that does not seek to destroy the cultural identity of important minorities. Common basic values and common goals, from which all can benefit, should form the framework for such a national identity. In this process, common symbols and pride in over-arching national achievements should be propagated.

Some of these principles have already been included in a number of international treaties and conventions - most notably

• the 1992 UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities;

• the 1994 Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;

• the various agreements of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

I believe that the international community can best meet the challenge of diversity by strengthening and promoting this growing body of agreements and treaties on the rights of communities and minorities. In short, we need to create a culture for the promotion of community, group or minority rights. I prefer to call it collective human rights, similar to the growing culture for the protection of individual human rights.

The 1990 Document of the Copenhagen meeting of the Conference for Security and Co-operation summed up the importance of collective rights very concisely. It reaffirmed that:

• "respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as part of universally recognised human rights is an essential factor for peace, justice, stability and democracy in participating states."

I wish to stress that in calling for the development of a culture of collective human rights, I do not have in mind retrogression to discriminating exclusive institutions and to renewed forms of racialisation. The basis of the new culture I advocate must be toleration, non-discrimination, conformity with generally accepted norms, and the right of individuals to choose freely to which groups they wish to belong - or not to belong.

Our challenge is to make the world safe for diversity, not only for the sake of international peace, but also because, at the deepest level, we need diversity.

Globalisation is imposing a new cultural uniformity on the world:
• Generations are growing up all around the world who watch the same TV shows as children, who listen to the same pop music as teenagers and follow the same soap operas as adults.
• Their understanding of the world is increasingly influenced by the same global news networks and commentators.
• They follow the same fashions and buy the same globally marketed products.
• They shop in the same malls and work in the same shiny office buildings.

The result is the development of a new generation of bland global citizens whose attitudes, tastes and aspirations are increasingly uniform. This new all-pervasive, uniform and materialist culture is eliciting an increasingly negative response from important communities all around the world:
• it lies at the root of recent vehement demonstrations against globalisation;
• together with the unresolved conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians, it is the primary cause of the growing alienation between Islam and the West;
• it is generating growing resentment in all parts of the world against the cultural dominance of the West in general and the United States in particular.
• We cannot ignore these attitudes. Globalisation is inevitable and necessary – but it requires us to take special action to protect the diversity.

We derive much of our identity, meaning and purpose from our regional and national cultures; from our traditions and above all from our religion. These factors have inspired our art, our music and our literature and left us with a treasure house of meaning and beauty. Does the globalised materialistic culture have the capacity to generate the meaning, the pride, the individuality, the art, the literature and the beauty for which we all long? I don't think so.

We need to look at diversity, not as a problem but as an enriching factor in life. We need a world in which there are Britons and Zulus, Croats and Punjabis; Christians, Moslems, Hindus and Jews. We need a world in which people can still speak Welsh, Swahili and Finnish; where they can hand down the myths and celebrate the traditions they learned at their mothers' knees.

Our challenge will be to ensure that all the nations of the world and all the cultural, linguistic and religious communities feel secure in the globalised world. We need to strike a balance between

• the advantages and opportunities, the technological wonders and material comforts offered by a globalising world;
• the sense of pride, purpose and belonging which is generated by one's ties to an unique culture, by one's love for the language of your birth and by the religion of your belief.

The way to end inter-communal conflict does not lie in the destruction or suppression of diversity, but in its meaningful accommodation.

The growing gap between rich and poor in the world; The gap between the poorest and richest fifths of the world's nations has widened from 30 to 1 in 1960 to 78 to 1 in 1994.

We cannot consign non-performing economies to a basket-case category outside of the mainstream of the world economy. The reason is that many of the conflicts that contribute to global instability have their roots in poverty and under-development. Eleven of the thirty poorest countries - including Rwanda, Burundi, Afghanistan, Sudan, Liberia, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo - have in recent years been wracked by devastating wars.

The United States and its first world allies can help to address this situation by promoting economic growth in the least developed societies by helping to remove some of the obstacles which at present hobble their economies.

• In particular, further attention should be given to the alleviation of the debt burden of the world's 41 highly indebted poor countries - 34 of which are in Africa. Fortunately, significant steps are now being taken by the IMF to address this problem.
• Steps should also be taken to increase the third world's share in global trade. For example, Africa, with almost one sixth the world's population accounts for only one fiftieth of global trade.
• Third World exports need more favourable access to first world markets. Consideration should be given to countering the increasingly negative terms of trade which many less developed countries experience.

These countries also require higher levels of foreign and domestic investment. They have to achieve at least 5% per annum growth levels if they are to break out of the grip of poverty.