



LEAVE
NO ONE
BEHIND

A CALL TO ACTION FOR A BETTER WORLD

NELSON

MANDELA

FOR PEOPLE
FOR PLANET

This collection of quotes from Nelson Mandela serves as a reminder of the impact that a single individual can have on the world. Compiled by the United Nations in South Africa in cooperation with the Nelson Mandela Foundation, this booklet is dedicated to the legacy of the icon who inspired generations to fight for a more just, equal, and sustainable world. In these pages, Madiba's words are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, offering insights, inspiration, and a call to action to each one of us to make a difference in our communities and beyond.



Cover: ©Nelson Mandela Foundation/Matthew Willman

Inside cover: A snap shot from the UN Food Garden.
©UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements **4**

A special edition to celebrate the legacy of Nelson Mandela and commemorate the 10th anniversary of his passing.

Forward **5**

Message from the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the UN Resident Coordinator in South Africa.

Nelson Mandela quotes and the Sustainable Development Goals **6**

Nelson Mandela inspired generations to fight for a more just, equal, and sustainable world. In these pages, Nelson Mandela's words are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, offering insights, inspiration, and a call to action to each one of us to make a difference in our communities and beyond.

**NELSON
MANDELA
INTERNATIONAL
DAY**

TAKE ACTION! INSPIRE CHANGE!

A special edition to celebrate the legacy of Nelson Mandela and commemorate the 10th anniversary of his passing.

“COURAGE WAS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR,
BUT THE TRIUMPH OVER IT.” N. MANDELA

CONTINUATION

The United Nations Office at Geneva held an event to commemorate the International Nelson Mandela Day. Participants write messages during the event.
©UN Photo/Jean Marc Ferré

The very right to be human is denied every day to hundreds of millions of people **as a result of poverty, the unavailability of basic necessities** such as food, jobs, water and shelter, education, health care and a healthy environment.

Nelson Mandela

FOREWORD

Dear Colleagues, Friends and Fellow Changemakers,

This booklet serves as a special tribute to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, the former President of South Africa, affectionately known as Madiba, in recognition of his enduring legacy and untiring fight for the freedom and welfare of humanity. It seeks to draw parallels between his unforgettable call to action speeches and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted at the United Nations in 2015. The booklet strives to bring to life some of his sayings (before, during and after his 27 years in prison) by matching them with related SDGs as we reach the mid-point for reaching the currently off-track targets for people and planet.

Madiba was the first person to have a day dedicated to honour him by the United Nations General Assembly when it declared 18 July (his birthday) as Nelson Mandela International Day. As aptly noted by the United Nations, the commemoration of Mandela's birthday is "a moment for all to renew with the values that inspired Nelson Mandela. Absolute determination. A deep commitment to justice, human rights and fundamental freedoms. A profound belief in the equality and dignity of every woman and man. A relentless engagement for dialogue and solidarity across all lines and divisions."

The theme for previous and this year's Mandela Day commemoration, "Climate, Food and Solidarity," highlights the pressing challenges of climate change, poverty, and inequality. Through the partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the UN aims to make meaningful contributions that will leave no one behind including through poverty alleviation, inequality reduction, job creation and entrepreneurship, effective governance, sustainable consumption and production patterns, climate change adaptation and mitigation, waste management, just energy transition, and transformed food systems.

As we reflect on Nelson Mandela's words and actions before, during, and following the 2030 SDG Summit (18-19 September during the UN General Assembly in New York), let us remember the power each of us holds to make a difference, as he aptly said, "it's now in your hands". By embodying Mandela's spirit and aligning our efforts with the SDGs, we can create a more sustainable, just, equitable and inclusive world. Let us honour Nelson Mandela's legacy by translating his words into action and striving for a brighter future for all.



Nelson Muffuh,
Resident Coordinator
United Nations in
South Africa



Verne Harris,
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Nelson Mandela Foundation

END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE



Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome [...] **overcoming poverty** is not a gesture of charity. It is **an act of justice.**

Nelson Mandela



HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Donate what you don't use. Local charities will give your gently used clothes, books, and furniture a new life.**
- **Find a charity you want to support. Any donation, big or small, can make a difference.**
- **Poverty still persists in every country. Over 8% of the world's population lives in extreme poverty. Lend your voice to the fight against extreme poverty.**
- **Support local businesses and entrepreneurs. By choosing to buy from local businesses you can contribute to economic empowerment and poverty reduction.**

Underprivileged living area with zinc shacks in South Africa.
©Lucian Coman



END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

2 ZERO
HUNGER



Freedom is meaningless if people cannot **put food in their stomachs.**

Nelson Mandela



HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Try to grow some of your own food or start a food garden at home, at school or in the community.**
- **Don't waste food. Freeze fresh produce and leftovers.**
- **Give edible leftover food to the needy and people in vulnerable situations.**
- **Have a balanced diet. The meat production industry has a huge impact on the environment.**
- **Buy local and in-season food.**



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



2 ZERO
HUNGER



8 DECENT WORK
AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



14 LIFE
BELOW WATER



I have always believed **exercise is key** not only to **physical health** but to **peace of mind**.

Nelson Mandela



HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- Eat fruits and vegetables and exercise regularly to stay healthy.
- Vaccinate yourself and your kids. Protecting your family from disease also aids public health.
- Donate your blood to save lives.
- Place yourself on the organ and tissue donors' registry in your country.
- Keep active! Try to exercise or be involved with sports activities regularly.
- Find a charity you want to support. Every little bit makes a difference.

Empowering Communities: Learners from Kwadukathole Comprehensive School in Kattlehong Township, Johannesburg, rally for SDG 3 on World Refugee Day showcasing unity and talent at Freedom Park, South Africa.

©UN South Africa/Ropafadzo Chiradza

ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.

Nelson Mandela





HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Mentor young people.** You can provide tutoring and homework assistance, teach a language or deliver a lesson on Global Goals.
- **Visit your local school and ask what school supplies they need.** Start a school supply drive in your community.
- **If you have the means, sponsor a child's education.**
- **Donate your used books.** The easiest way to give access to knowledge is to donate your used books to someone.

School girls at the Yomelela Primary School in Khayelitsha, the largest informal township in Cape Town South Africa.
©UN Women/Karin Schermbrucker

ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

5

GENDER
EQUALITY



Freedom cannot be achieved unless
the **women have been emancipated
from all forms of oppression.**

Nelson Mandela





HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Be aware of gender stereotypes. Recognize them, avoid them and educate others about them.**
- **Find female mentors/leaders. Ensure that some of your role models or mentors are women.**
- **End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls by treating all people equally regardless of their gender.**
- **Stand up against harassment. Whenever you see or become aware of harassment, whether in the workplace, streets, home or online space, raise your voice against it.**

South African female peacekeepers actively engage in gathering vital information and fostering security during a patrol in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, contributing to UN Peacekeeping and advancing SDG 5: Gender Equality.
©UN Photo/Michael Ali

ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



All over the world, water is regarded
as precious as life itself.

Nelson Mandela



HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- Harvest rainwater by using a water tank.
- Engage your whole community to clean up a local river, seaside or ocean.
- Raise awareness about hygiene issues in your community through social media or word of mouth.
- Don't overuse water.
- Make sure to close the tap when washing dishes, and take short showers.
- Bathtubs require more water than a 5–10 minute shower.
- Protect your water sources by reducing pollution and eliminating dumping.

Nelson Muffuh, UN Resident Coordinator in South Africa, at a UNICEF handwashing station during a UN field visit to the Kanana Field hospital in Hammanskraal, South Africa, during the cholera outbreak. ©UN South Africa/Ropafadzo Chiradza



ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL

7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



Though the world has made much progress in the twentieth century, the **lives of much of humanity** is still blighted by **poverty, violence, hunger, disease and environmental damage.**

Nelson Mandela



HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Switch off lights that aren't in use – save electricity.**
- **Buy rechargeable electronics. Don't buy or use one-use batteries.**
- **Use solar energy sources. Install solar panels in your home for your heating and electricity.**

A wind-solar hybrid mini-grid in the Upper Blinkwater community (Eastern Cape) established by UNDP through its South African Wind Energy Programme.
©UNDP South Africa

**PROMOTE SUSTAINED
INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE
ECONOMIC GROWTH,
FULL AND PRODUCTIVE
EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT
WORK FOR ALL**

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



It is **in your hands** to **create a better world**
for all who live in it.

Nelson Mandela



HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Know your rights at work.** In order to access justice, knowing what you are entitled to will go a long way.
- **Buy from local producers.** Support local economic growth by choosing to buy from local producers and businesses.
- **Organize a mentoring programme.** Invite people with experience in a certain field to create a mentoring group that will help young people better prepare for their future jobs.



BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



We need help to **build infrastructure** so that Africa can take advantage of trading opportunities and be given a fair chance to **compete in the world economy**.

Nelson Mandela





HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Invest in clean and resilient infrastructure. It's the only way to keep workers safe and protect the environment.**
- **Organize or participate in a Think Tank contest. You can foster your and your colleagues' entrepreneurial spirit by organizing a local idea contest and inviting companies or startups to mentor the winners.**
- **Create a hotspot map. There are a variety of public spaces with free Wi-Fi access. By mapping them out in your neighborhood and spreading awareness through social media, flyers or announcements you can help more people access the internet and help bridge the digital divide.**

REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AN AMONG COUNTRIES



As long as **poverty, injustice, and gross inequality** persist in our world, none of us can truly rest.

Nelson Mandela





HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Visit local shelters, orphanages or minority community centres and organize a conversation space to discuss the importance of these rights or volunteer there regularly.**
- **Favour companies that are inclusive. Check the lists of the companies that are inclusive for different minorities through employment there or their products.**
- **Support migrants and refugees in your communities. Volunteer at a local refugee camp. Gather or donate the appliances, food, and clothes needed.**

Children see beyond race and gender.
©UN Photo

MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



A **fundamental concern for others in our individual and community** lives would go a long way in making the world the better place we so passionately dreamt of.

Nelson Mandela





HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Shop, eat, and drink locally. Supporting neighbourhood businesses keeps people employed and circulates money back into your community.**
- **Take advantage of your right to elect the leaders in your local community.**
- **Take care of public spaces. Start with yourself and inspire others to contribute to better public spaces – water the greenery, trim, and plant trees, renovate sports areas and playgrounds, organize a clean-up.**



Top: Empowering Communities: A vibrant skyline showcasing the inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable city development around the Union Buildings in Pretoria, South Africa.

©UN South Africa Photo/Nombulelo Malinga

Bottom: UN South Africa visits Mamelodi Township in Pretoria to assess the community damage and provide relief supplies to communities affected by the floods.

©UN South Africa Photo/Eunice Namugwe

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



A **sustainable future for humankind** depends on a caring **partnership with nature** as much as anything else.

Nelson Mandela





HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Choose reusable products. Use an eco-bag for shopping, a reusable water bottle or a cup to reduce your plastic waste.**
- **Be conscious of packaging – the less the better!**
- **Do some research and buy from companies you know have sustainable practices and don't harm the environment.**
- **Buy second-hand whenever you can.**

TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



Let us stand together to make of our world a **sustainable source for our future** as humanity on this planet.

Nelson Mandela





HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

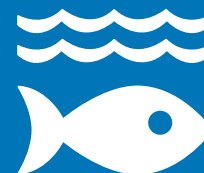
- **Recycle paper, glass, plastic, metal, and old electronics.**
- **Buy eco-friendly products. Read the packaging to see if products are produced in an eco-friendly way.**
- **Recycle paper, glass, plastic, metal, and old electronics.**
- **Bike, walk or take public transport. Save the car trips for when you've got a big group.**
- **Offset your carbon emissions. You can calculate your carbon footprint and purchase climate credits from [Climate Neutral Now](#).**

A NFI Project worker inspects a forest and collects ant specimens to combat climate change.

©UN-REDD

CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEA AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

14 LIFE BELOW WATER



The **wealth of the oceans** is part of the common heritage of humanity [...] without a regulatory authority or enforceable law, alarming threats to the oceans face us because of such practices as the dumping of toxic wastes, over-fishing or transnational crime like drug trafficking. The **efforts to establish a workable legal order for the oceans must not fail.**

Nelson Mandela



HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Reduce waste – much of the waste that we produce on land ends up in the oceans.**
- **Stop using plastic bags: Usage and wrong disposal of plastic is a major cause of marine pollution.**
- **Engage your whole community to clean up a local river, seaside or ocean.**

Plastic waste found in the ocean causing water pollution.
©UNEP

PROTECT RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLE MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND BIODIVERSITY



The **trees and forests were destroyed** exactly because our people were **so dependent upon them as sources of energy**. And in turn, people are today cold and in want of energy for cooking, cleaning and basic comforts because the trees and forests are destroyed.

Nelson Mandela

HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Don't use pesticides. To protect and sustain the quality of soil, don't use chemicals while growing plants.**
- **Composting food scraps can reduce climate impact while also recycling nutrients.**
- **Do not use products tested on animals.**
- **Organise your own or join an existing clean-up event to sustain the ecosystem of your local green space.**

UNIC Pretoria on an Educational Outreach Programme on environmental sustainability with learners from Limpopo Province, South Africa.
©UNIC Pretoria/2019/Scotch Mabhena



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABLE INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Peace is not just the absence of conflict; peace is the creation of **an environment where all can flourish**, regardless of race, colour, creed, religion, gender, class, caste, or any other social markers of difference.

Nelson Mandela





HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Vote!** Take advantage of your right to elect the leaders in your country and the local community.
- **Know your rights at work.** In order to access justice, knowing what you are entitled to will go a long way.
- **Speak up!** Ask your local and national authorities to engage in initiatives that don't harm people or the planet.

Newly-elected President Nelson Mandela delivering his inaugural address from a balcony of the Townhall.
©UN Photo/Chris Sattlberger

STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



It is easy to break down and destroy.
The **heroes** are those who **make
peace and build.**

Nelson Mandela



HOW TO PLAY YOUR PART:

- **Invest in start-ups, small and medium sized enterprises, and cooperations adhering to high economic, social and governance (ESG) standards.**
- **Support export by buying products from developing countries. Pay attention to the Fair-Trade label on products helps to indicate products from local producers in developing countries.**
- **Support organisations or projects that work towards global partnerships, such as those that facilitate cross-border collaborations, knowledge sharing, or promote technology transfer.**
- **Campaign for development countries to receive adequate technology, capacity, investment, and financial support for sustainable development interventions.**
- **Work or volunteer in NGOs that are working towards the Global Goals. You can contribute through various projects to achieve the Goals by 2030.**

Secretary-General António Guterres delivers the Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture in 2020.
©Nelson Mandela Foundation





Inside back cover: H.E Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa (left), President of the Republic of South Africa, share a laugh with María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés (third from right), President of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, Secretary-General António Guterres (second from right), and Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, after unveiling the Nelson Mandela Statue at UN headquarters in New York. ©UN Photo

Back cover: Nelson Mandela, President of the Republic of South Africa, addressing the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. ©UN Photo/Greg Kinch



Published by:

The United Nations in South Africa | 2023

Researched and designed by:

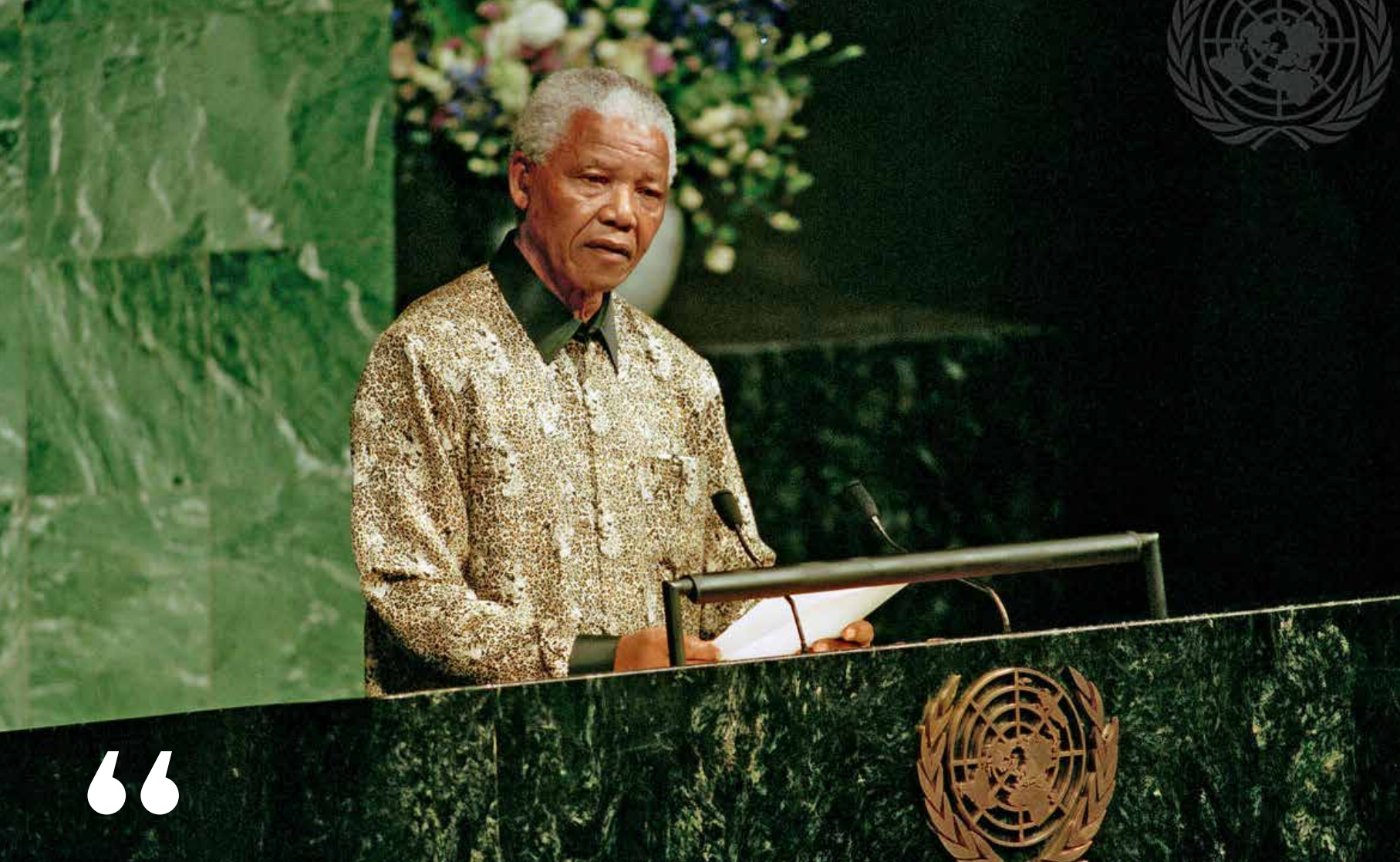
United Nations Information Centre (UNIC),
Pretoria.

CONTACT US:

United Nations South Africa,
UN House, Metro Park Building,
351 Francis Baard Street, Pretoria, South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 354 8504
Email: unic-pretoria@un.org

Follow Us:

Facebook: [@UNinSouthAfrica](https://www.facebook.com/UNinSouthAfrica)
Twitter: [@UNinSouthAfrica](https://twitter.com/UNinSouthAfrica)
Instagram: [@UNinSouthAfrica](https://www.instagram.com/UNinSouthAfrica)
Website: <https://southafrica.un.org/>



“

**Do not look the other way; do not hesitate.
Recognise that the world is hungry for action,
not words. Act with courage and vision.**

Nelson Mandela



**UNITED NATIONS
SOUTH AFRICA**



**NELSON MANDELA
FOUNDATION**

Living the legacy