



[ Home ] [ Speeches & statements ]

**Reply by the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, to the toast remarks by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, at the State Banquet, Istana Negara, Jakarta**

19 April 2005

Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Yudhoyono, Your Excellency, Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia, Mohamed Yusuf Kalla, Your Excellencies, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen:

My wife, our entire delegation and I are truly delighted to visit Indonesia during the historic commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Asia-Africa Bandung Conference. We thank you for your kind and gracious hospitality. On behalf of the Government and people of South Africa, we convey the warmest greetings to you, your wife, your Government and the wonderful people of Indonesia.

May I also offer our condolences to all the people of Indonesia for the loss of life, suffering and devastation caused by the tsunami, the recent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Your Excellency, we are here to show solidarity with the people of this country, to thank you for your steadfast solidarity and support for the liberation of South Africa and, indeed, for Africa and the developing world as well as strengthening our historical, political and economic relations.

As we know, it was in Bandung that the seeds for the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement were planted as well as laying the foundations for South-South co-operation so that developing countries can act together to end poverty and underdevelopment.

Fifty years hence, South Africa is filled with pride and joy to be free because you stood side by side with us.

Indeed, tonight we celebrate both freedom and a new strategic partnership between our two countries.

Your Excellency, we also celebrate a kinship that dates back to the early 1630s when one of South Africa's heroes and earliest freedom fighters, Autshumao, the chief of one of the indigenous people of South Africa, sailed on an English cargo ship from the Cape of Good Hope to Bantam in Java. Like many freedom fighters, Autshumao was later jailed on Robben Island and his people suffered one of the most sustained acts of extermination in our country.

This was the time when the English and the Dutch had set up a supposed refreshment station at the Cape as part of a maritime route between their countries and Batavia, now Jakarta.

Further, Batavia and the Cape became inextricably linked in the seventeenth century, when people of the Indonesian archipelago, of various descents, were transported as human cargo to the Cape to serve as slaves to the colonialists.

I speak of people such as Susanna and Catherine of Paliacatt, who were sent into exile from Batavia to serve life imprisonment on Robben Island in 1657. Others such as the Mardyckers of Amboina and Sheik Yusuf of Macassar were to follow in exile at the Cape.

As you know, Your Excellency, Sheik Yusuf was a freedom fighter who fought against Dutch colonialism. He was then captured and exiled in South Africa where he died. The area in which he was exiled in South Africa is called Macassar, named after the original place in Java in this country. Through the efforts of the local community in South Africa, a shrine was built in honour of Sheik Yusuf and others who were brought to South Africa against their will. The South African government is now in the process of inscribing this shrine as a national monument, because in reality this is the heritage of both the people of Indonesia and South Africa.

Indeed, to us as South Africans and Indonesians, Sheik Yusuf is our hero. Undoubtedly, today, the descendents of Sheik Yusuf and others are as South Africans as all of us, and their presence in our country, always remind us that Indonesia is to South Africans a second home.

Your Excellency, there are countless other Indonesians from Bougies and Sumatra and elsewhere, who were bought in Batavia and further sold at the Cape. These were later to become the artisans of Cape architecture, farm workers and indeed builders of our new nation.

Accordingly, it is surely these roots planted by our unsung heroines and heroes of the past, which we need to nurture and strengthen in our strategic partnership.

Since 1994, our bilateral trade has increased and I am confident that working together we will reach even higher levels. Clearly, the signing this afternoon of the agreement establishing a Joint Trade Committee and the Memorandum of Understanding on Agricultural Co-operation as well as the Letter of Intent between the Surabaya Zoo and the Pretoria Zoo will add impetus to our future relations.

Again, I am pleased with the progress made with relation to the Joint Commission Agreement signed in March 2004 and look forward to the outcome of its first meeting this year. This will create the possibility to further explore and strengthen co-operation in areas such as economy, trade and investment, science and technology, agriculture, education, people-to-people contact and others.

Further, we have a duty to work together to ensure that the process of United Nations reform happens faster.

Your Excellency, I will like to take this opportunity to extend an invitation to you, your wife and your government to grace our shores in the near future, where you will certainly receive a warm welcome in the land of the cheetah and perhaps take a look at your gift, the komodo dragon, amidst the magnificent splendour of our country.

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise and join me in a toast to the good health of His Excellency, President and Mrs Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and to the strong friendship between the peoples of Indonesia and South Africa. To friendship!

Thank you.

Issued by: The Presidency  
19 April 2005

[About the site](#) | [Terms & conditions](#)

Developed and maintained by [GCIS](#)

This site is best viewed using 800 x 600 resolution with [Internet Explorer 4.5](#), [Netscape Communicator 4.5](#), [Mozilla 1.x](#) or higher.

Last Modified: Wed, 20 Apr 2005 08:50:01 SAST