



Statement by

**H.E. Mr. Mohamed Kamel Amr
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**Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement at the
Ministerial Level**

Before

**The High Level Symposium on “South
Africa’s contribution to the fight against
racism, xenophobia & other related
intolerances”**

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Check against Delivery

Your Excellency Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa

**Distinguished Ministers & Heads of Delegations
Ladies & Gentlemen**

It is a pleasure to be here with you today in the presence of president Zuma & among so many eminent guests and a unique privilege to be given the opportunity to speak at this august event as the chair of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Nearly one hundred years ago, the reign of injustice & racial discrimination in South Africa gave rise to a potent force of national liberation... Its ultimate goal was to once & for all bury the hatchet of hate & oppression that for too long divided the peoples of this enchanting land... and forever unite them in their diversity. On the 8th of January 1912 the African National Congress was born... and with it the hopes & aspirations of millions of people... It is a date that will forever remain engraved in their minds & consciousness... a milestone in the history of not only South Africa's liberation movement... but of Africa's struggle against intolerance & racism.

I am deeply honored to take part in today's Symposium organized in the run up to the commemoration of the ANC's Centenary. This landmark event strikes a personal chord with me... More than 25 years ago here in the United Nations, I too participated in my own way in the struggle for Africa's freedom & independence as a young Egyptian diplomat actively engaged in the deliberations of the Council for Namibia... Since then, Namibians attained self-determination & independence & a few years later South Africans freed themselves from decades of unjustified discrimination. In doing so, they inspired millions worldwide... their message was unequivocal: hatred breeds hatred... and it is only through respect & forgiveness that intolerance can be cured... and that the humanity of stray souls can be rescued.

From early on & all along the way, the countries & leaders of the Non-Aligned movement unhesitatingly supported the ANC. The late president Gamal Abdel Nasser was one of them. He once stated that "We cannot under any circumstances remain aloof from the terrible & sanguinary conflict going on in Africa between 5 million whites & 200 million Africans". Solidarity is deeply rooted in the fertile & lush lands of Africa...

so when the 1956 war against Egypt broke out, the ANC promptly stood by us & loudly reaffirmed that the people of Africa will not allow themselves to be used against each others.

Today we reaffirm our steadfast determination to pursue the fight against the same abhorrent crimes that for too long plagued the lives of South Africans. Our approach must not be marred by politics or selectivity... and should rest on the honest & comprehensive follow up of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia & Related Intolerance, as well as the full & effective implementation of the Durban Declaration & Programme of Action. It is opportune that we're also commemorating today ten years since their adoption.

Mr. President
Ladies & gentlemen,

We cannot be gathered here today on this auspicious occasion commemorating the ANC... talking about resistance... about struggles... about humanity... without paying tribute to the man whose every footstep in his "Long Walk to Freedom" embodies these noble words... the man whose innate humility conceals genuine greatness... and whose inspiring tolerance & uncompromising sense of fairness remained unaffected by decades of solitude & merciless injustice... The man who played a historical role in the ANC's anti-Apartheid struggle & enabled it to liberate South Africa from the once heavy chains of racism. I'm of course referring to the legendary President Mandela... Madiba, today, and on behalf of the 120 countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, I wholeheartedly salute you.

I would like to seize this opportunity to also acknowledge the bravery of the remarkable men & women, all over the world, who have over the past years & decades dedicated their lives to the struggle against all forms of oppression, racism & intolerance... and allow me as a proud Egyptian to pay a special homage to those who have recently lost their lives fighting for democracy, justice & the respect of human rights in my country & in the region. They have not only moved us... but also reminded us that with faith & determination these ideals can, and do, become realities. We sincerely hope that this will also soon apply to our brothers the Palestinians & to that end I call upon you to stand united in support of their legitimate aspiration for the establishment of the independent state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Bishop Desmond Tutu once declared that “Differences are not intended to separate or alienate...we are different precisely in order to realize our need of one another”. So let’s embrace our differences... let’s celebrate our diversity... and I urge you: let’s never surrender to any form of injustice or intolerance.

I thank you.

