

**Madame Deputy Prime-Minister Milquet,**

**Your Excellency Ambassador Nkosi,**

**Excellencies,**

**Members of the Diplomatic Corps,**

**Distinguished guests and friends,**

**It is a privilege and honour to be here today at  
this Memorial Service to celebrate the former  
President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr  
Nelson Mandela.**

**The High Representative of the European Union  
for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine  
Ashton asked me to represent her and the  
European Union at this tribute to the life of  
former President Mandela.**

**Earlier this week President Van Rompuy and  
President Barroso attended the State Memorial  
Service in Soweto, as world gathered on South  
Africa's doorstep for the ceremonies to mourn  
and celebrate admired, respected and loved man  
in every continent.**

**Cyril Ramaphosa, the Deputy President of the African National Congress and acting master of ceremonies in Soweto the day before yesterday said that the pouring rain that afflicted the Memorial Service - served a purpose as the heavens were open for great man, father, teacher, freedom fighter and politician, who inspired so many across the globe.**

**Allow me to quote two sentences from the personal letter of condolences that HRVP Ashton addressed to the South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

**I quote**

***He is a personal hero of mine whom I had the good fortune to meet. On every occasion his gentle strength confirmed my conviction that democrats everywhere owe him a vast and lasting debt.***

***Two of his qualities particularly inspire those of us who work on international relations.***

***Firstly, his ability to find a basis for dialogue rather than confrontation.***

***And secondly, his patience to follow the principles that he knew were right.***

***He not only defeated apartheid in South Africa; he showed people everywhere that the moral force of democracy could overcome the barren might of tyranny.***

**END OF QUOTE**

**Today President Mandela is more than ever in our thoughts and prayers. We grieve his death but we want also to celebrate his unique life and memorable achievements.**

**His vision for South Africa's future - and let me add - for entire world - sharpened during the 27 years in prison, continues to be of profound inspiration to all of us - to take action, to foster change, reconciliation and transformation.**

**He paid very high price for his beliefs and principles. But those beliefs and principles where like seeds of peace who found fertile ground everywhere around the globe. Today his moral values are firmly part of the common heritage of mankind.**

**President Mandela showed us that one man's courage can move the world. He called on us to make choices that not reflect fears, but hopes in our own live and in the lives of our states.**

**Mandela's life, like the life of all those who fought to bring about a new South Africa, stand as a testimony to many generations to come, demonstrating that voices and actions of ordinary men and women can make a difference.**

**And if there is any country in the world that shows the power of human beings to bring change, this is South Africa where a political prisoner can become a President and where bitter adversaries can reconcile.**



**A lot could be said about President Mandela and his life, but I would like to end by quoting him and let those words stay as encouragement to all of us:**

**"Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to and passionate about what they do."**

**Let God's peace be with him and his soul.**