

# Mandela Day celebrations at the UN in Kenya

The United Nations office in Nairobi, Kenya, was the site for hundreds of children, diplomats, government officials and business leaders to celebrate the life and legacy Nelson Mandela on the 100th anniversary of his birth.



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Led and hosted by the South African High Commissioner to Kenya, Koleka Mqukwana, the Mandela centenary events included a mass at the All Saints Cathedral Church on Sunday and a visit to New Life Children's Home where 400 learners from various primary and secondary schools, as well as university students, were hosted with the United Nations and celebrated a signing of a declaration.

The students delivered a declaration that expressed the futures that they envisioned for themselves in which they would experience safety, food security, education, peace and prosperity.

With 2018 also marking the centenary since the birth of anti-apartheid stalwart, Albertina Sisulu, the South African High Commission in Kenya also remembered and celebrated the life of the struggle stalwart who lobbied for the education and equal rights of women and children. Mama Sisulu was widely regarded as a mother of the South African nation due to her motherly role and maternal instincts as a nurse and caregiver.

Mqulwana, said: “The legacies of Nelson Mandela and Albertina Sisulu are about making a positive impact on people’s lives through selfless actions, particularly for children and those that are disadvantaged or disenfranchised. As an important East African ally to South Africa, it is fitting that we are commemorating the centenary of Nelson Mandela’s birth in Kenya, whilst also taking to heart the message of the life of Albertina Sisulu in 2018.”

## Collaboration

United Nations regional representatives that attended today’s event included UNICEF-Kenya Representative, Patrizia DiGiovanni; Jean-Pierre Ossey, deputy dean of the African Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Congo; Marek Rohr-Garztecki, chair of the Eastern European Group, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Poland; Marta Eugenia Juarez Ruiz, chair of the Latin America and the Caribbean Group, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica; Victor Conrad Ronneberg, chair of the Western European and Other States Group, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway; Ambassador Dr Monica Juma, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade from the Government of Kenya; as well as Thoko Didiza, a representative from the Government of South Africa.

The staff of the South African High Commission also took the opportunity of Nelson Mandela Day to spend 67 minutes – one minute for every year that Mandela spent in public service - with children from the New Life Children’s Home donating essential items, feeding the babies, doing laundry and gardening.

“The admirable collaboration with South African businesses operating in Kenya in celebrating the centenary has been inspiring. Ploughing back into Kenyan communities by South African companies through their corporate social responsibility initiatives planned throughout the year is in line with Nelson Mandela core values of humility, selflessness and passion,” the High Commissioner said.

The commemoration coincided with hundreds of similar events around the world.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, launched the centenary celebrations in South Africa on 11 February 2018 with the aim of celebrating the legacy of Nelson Mandela which should inspire change, unity and development for all Africans.

Brand South Africa chief marketing officer, Linda Sangaret said: “The legacy Nelson Mandela left with us is that you can have many roles as a leader beyond being in a position of power. Leaders of today can look to the Mandela legacy to understand the distinction between positional power and personal influence.”



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Additional Nelson Mandela centenary events planned for July include a Mandela Lecture at the University of Nairobi on 26 July 2018; the unveiling of Nelson Mandela and Dedan Kimathi busts at the Heroes Garden of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology; reconstruction of Zia Ra Wimbi Primary School in Kilifi; the donation of Mandela books at the Kenya National Library Services and a visit to Kakuma Refugee Camp for the benefit of young women and girls.

Brand South Africa's General Manager for Global Markets, Dr Judy Smith-Höhn, said: "It goes without saying that the African continent is central to driving positive perceptions of South Africa as a country. The activities of our Missions abroad are key to the work that we do in positioning South Africa as a competitive and attractive destination.

"We are delighted to have worked with the South African High Commission in Kenya on such a momentous occasion – that is the Centenary of Nelson Mandela."

## **AU resolution**

The Nelson Mandela Centenary celebrations are aligned with a resolution by the African Union Heads of State and Government (HOS/G) to observe 2018 as the Nelson Mandela Centenary year.

Nelson Mandela was committed to peace, negotiation and reconciliation; an attribute shared by the African continent through its aspirations contained in the strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years - the Agenda 2063.

In reaffirming their efforts to bring about lasting peace in Africa, the HOS/G also recalled the declaration of the Madiba Nelson Mandela Decade for Reconciliation in Africa 2014 – 2024.

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