



• Monday, 4 November 2019 •

Dear Fellow South African,

The sight of Springbok captain Siyamthanda Kolisi lifting the cup at the Yokohama Stadium on Saturday filled me with great pride. I could see the undisguised emotion on the face of his father, Fezakele Raymond Kolisi watching from the stands. There was his son, the first black captain of the Springboks, making history.

Siya Kolisi was born on a day of profound significance in our country, 16 June, when we remember the valiant students who lit the path for our freedom. Siya's captaincy not only epitomises the transformation of a sport that was once racially segregated; it is the power of a dream fulfilled. This is the dream of a young man of humble circumstances to one day wear the green and gold jersey, and of a country that has enabled him to see it realised.

At a time when South Africa is experiencing profound challenges, we have rallied around the victory in Japan. The outpouring of support for the Springboks on the road to the final once again showed the immense potential of sport to unite us as a people.

When Caster Semenya crosses the finish line, when Banyana Banyana find the back of the net, when Chad le Clos lifts his gold medal, when our national netball team, the Proteas are crowned Africa champions, all of South Africa is cheering on the sidelines. After generations of division, we have become a people with a great sense of national pride.

But we are not only united by the achievements of our sportstars or internationally acclaimed performers, like the Ndlovu Youth Choir. We are also united by a shared desire for a country where all can live in peace and comfort, where all have an equal chance to achieve their potential.

We are united by the vision of a country where the divisions of the past can be overcome, a nation of equality, dignity and respect for human rights. Over the past 25 years, we have been working together to build that nation. And while this is still very much a work in progress, we are firmly on the path to unite, renew and transform our society.

The spectre of racism, sexism, tribalism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance has on occasion taken root in our society and has blindsided us as we strive towards our national objective of creating a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, prosperous and tolerant society.

But we have always come back, even when we stood at the brink of tipping over. Saturday was a triumphant day as it confirmed what we are as a nation, firm in its resolve to find unity in its diversity, as exemplified in our national rugby team which is transforming beautifully, being presented to the world with its first black captain.

We often fail to appreciate just how far we have come since that iconic moment in 1995 when a South African first held aloft the Rugby World Cup Trophy in building a society that offers equal opportunity to all regardless of race, gender or social circumstances.

Just last week I attended a businesswomen's summit in Johannesburg and was in awe of the breadth of occupations and ventures our country's women have entered. We had among us shipping company CEOs, tech entrepreneurs, DNA specialists and production company owners. This has been made possible by the progressive policies of this government and the opportunities it has afforded its people.

We are proud of South Africa and what it has become. But there is much more that we need to do to make this a country where the black child and the white child can attain the heights they always dream of.

We must do more to foster social cohesion in our society. Our national broadcaster – indeed all broadcasters – should commission more content that reflects the values of tolerance and multiculturalism. Leaders of faith organisations, traditional bodies, political parties, cultural organisations, sports organisations and business bodies should all work together to foster a more inclusive and cohesive society.

Public sports and recreation facilities must be better resourced, especially in rural areas, so that young men and women who cherish dreams of sporting success attain their goals. The youth should be able to explore and appreciate their history, traditions and languages.

This week, South Africa will be hosting its second Investment Conference as part of our ambitious drive to set our country on a path of faster growth and to create the many jobs that our people need. As we welcome over 1,500 investors and business people to explore the many investment opportunities in our country, let us be as united and as determined as we were on Saturday in Japan.

To mobilise the investment we need requires a massive effort from us all. More than ever, we need to be single-minded in our determination to build an economy that can benefit all our people. So let each of us, wherever we find ourselves, become part of the campaign to build a better South Africa.

As we held our breath on Saturday and awaited the final whistle, we momentarily forgot our woes. And now, our sails swelled by the wind of victory, our pride must not deflate, our euphoria must not dissipate and our optimism must endure.

Let the goodwill brought by our success at Yokohama inspire us to put our collective shoulder to the wheel as we confront our economic, political and social challenges together – and overcome them.

As Siya Kolisi said: “We can achieve anything if we work together as one.”

Best wishes,



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Copyright © 2019 The Presidency, All rights reserved.

Address

The Presidency, Union Buildings, Government Avenue, Tshwane, Gt 2001, South Africa

[Click here to subscribe](#)