

Dear President, Mr FW de Klerk,

Dear Premier, Mrs Helen Zille,

Dear Excellency, Lord Renwick, who took the long flight to be here with us today,

Distinguished friends and partners of the FW de Klerk Foundation,

Excellencies,

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you. I also would like to take the opportunity to send President de Klerk and all the staff of the FW de Klerk Foundation warmest regards from the chairman of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and former President of the German Bundestag, Prof Dr Norbert Lammert.

Today's event is not only a celebration of 20 years of the successful and important work of the FW de Klerk Foundation. We also take the opportunity to reflect on the state of South Africa's democracy and to commemorate the path of transformation this country has walked – a process initiated by President de Klerk. Obviously there are other people more eligible to speak on South Africa's present and past than I am. Therefore I would like to give you some thoughts from an outside perspective.

70 years ago, in 1949, the democratic constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany came into effect. After the horrific outcome of the Second World War, the free part of Germany gave itself a constitution which was meant to remove the underlying causes of one of the biggest manmade catastrophes. "Never again", was the motto, which gave inspiration to the constitutional authors: Never again shall an event like the Holocaust take place. Never again shall there be torture, repression and other human right violations on German soil. Never again shall European brothers and sisters fight each other to the death. Hence, it was no surprise that article 1 of the German constitution stipulates: "Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar". In English: "Human dignity is inviolable". From now on, politics should serve the good of the people, should strive for human dignity as the goal of any political action. By cleaving to the ideals and content of its constitution, Germany enjoyed a high level of political stability and followed a path of growing economic and social prosperity.

By adopting the vision of the new German constitution, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer unknowingly laid a stepping stone to South Africa's own transformation. Adenauer provided peace and stability, but he also knew that Germany's reunification could only take place if the Federal Republic stood by the principles of the German constitution in its foreign affairs. Protecting human dignity meant standing on the side of freedom against the communist threat of the Soviet Union.

In 1989, 40 years after the inauguration of the German constitution, the Berlin wall fell. After so many decades of separation, Germany celebrated its reunification. This event had a major impact on world history by marking the end of the cold war and the bipolar world-order.

Freedom had won.

The South African transformation took place in this time of global change. Brave leaders like Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk realized that the time of hostility and separation had come to an end and that both sides had more to gain than lose if they cooperated. Not without risk, President de Klerk initiated a peaceful transition and it was our good fortune that he had Nelson Mandela as his counterpart. Together, they achieved what had been unimaginable before: the peaceful transition of South Africa from Apartheid to a democratic system. They managed to remove the dam of oppression without drowning the country in chaos. Rightfully both won the Nobel Peace Prize for their outstanding historical accomplishment.

After the end of Apartheid was announced, South Africa went into the complex period of drafting a constitution. In those days the constitutional authors got inspiration from all different parts of the world. The German experience of drafting the 1949 constitution also had an impact on the South African constitutional process. South African constitutionalists, like Johann Kriegler and Albie Sachs, visited Germany and dozens of visits from German experts to South Africa contributed to a lively exchange about different constitutional aspects. To a certain extent, the German experience of drafting a constitution after World War II was comparable to the situation in South Africa, as both countries shared the history of transforming an undemocratic and unjust society. Leaders such as President de Klerk, President Mandela and Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi provided stability while a new democratic constitution was drafted. I should mention Roelf Meyer and President Cyril Ramaphosa, who were chief negotiators for their respective parties and played a crucial role in the success of the constitutional process.

The preference for a representative parliamentary system over a presidential system and the introduction of federalism were elements derived from the exchange with German constitutional experts. The German political foundations, especially the christian-democratic Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the social-democratic Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the liberal Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung supported the drafting of the democratic constitution with great joy. Nowadays we celebrate 25 years of South African democracy with a brilliant constitution at its heart and of which every South African should be proud of. Representing one of the assisting Foundations today, I can assure you that we are equally delighted that we made a small contribution to the successful South African transformation from Apartheid to democracy.

After being isolated in international diplomacy, both countries – Germany after World War II and South Africa after Apartheid – found their way back into the international community. Nowadays both countries are respected voices in international affairs. Like Germany, South Africa currently holds a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. While we sometimes take different positions in international affairs, our objectives are the same: to provide space for mutual understanding, to find a

way of overcoming differences and to let diplomacy rule over the use of force. The valuable South African experience of how former enemies come together and find a way to peace and prosperity is desperately needed in current world affairs. Regional powers like our countries should play a constructive international role by mediating between parties in conflict and by strengthening multilateral institutions. Due to our nations' histories we know that democracy is the only way forward and this guides us in our decisions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

South Africa recently held its sixth free and fair elections after the end of Apartheid and showed that it is a stable democracy. This does not mean that there are no challenges. The need to foster the constitutional order and to provide political education remains a crucial task. In this regard the FW de Klerk Foundation did an excellent job over the last two decades and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is delighted to support the efforts of the Foundation. I would like to thank you for the good partnership we had over the years. With these words I conclude my remarks and wish you all an interesting event with such distinguished speakers to follow.

Thank you very much for your attention.