

**35<sup>th</sup> WORLD SCOUT CONFERENCE**  
**International Conference Centre**  
**Durban, South Africa, July 26 1999**

**Remarks by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, MP**  
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**President of the Inkatha Freedom Party**

It is an honour for me to attend the opening of the 35<sup>th</sup> World Scout Conference. I wish to thank the organisers of this event for choosing so perspicaciously to hold this year's conference in South Africa, stirring the memories of our South African past which are so intrinsically intertwined with the life of Sir Robert Baden-Powell. This year's Conference has a particular significance as it takes place at the dawn of a new millennium, which poses great challenges for Scouts across the world. Therefore it is proper and fitting for the Scout Movement to go back to its initial roots to find inspiration to rise to the many challenges confronting it in the new millennium.

This year we celebrate ninety-two years of the Scout Movement which spread throughout the world, bearing testimony to the persisting value of the inspiration of its founder, Sir Robert Baden-Powell. I believe that Baden-Powell's initial inspiration is as modern and innovative today as it was 92 years ago and has the capacity of leading the Scout Movement into its next stage of evolution. Through his courage and leadership, his personal strength of spirit and passionate, never-ceasing work, Sir Robert Baden-Powell posed an example which generations of young boys clambered to follow. As a commanding officer in Her Majesty's army, Baden-Powell wrote an important chapter of our country's history. Yet, by offering himself and his experiences as a teacher of children everywhere, he has also written, and continues to write, an ongoing chapter in the lives of many young people throughout the world.

This year, we mark a century since the renowned siege at Mafeking which immortalised the name of Sir Robert Baden-Powell. Just as his presence in our country shaped our history, so too did South Africa imbue itself in Sir Robert Baden-Powell. He later carried into the Scout Movement countless lessons from his experiences in South Africa wars. Indeed, in 1907 at Brownsea Island, he called the very first meeting of the Boy Scouts to attention with the reverberating sound of the Kudu horn, the remarkable use of which he had observed from the Ndebele people.

Through war, the Founder of the Scout Movement learned the value of compassion and the importance of law. He turned the military discipline into a discipline of human fellowship which stresses the importance of investing in new generations to remove the evil of violence and hatred always ready to poison mankind. His philosophy was a practical one based on the axiom that by improving the moral make-up of a young generation, we can forge a better humanity. He understood that a few good rules can do away with many evils. I am always impressed by the simplicity of the "Scout Law" which embodies all the essential precepts of human respect and organised society.

He created a new concept to promote the sense of camaraderie among young people teaching them to work together, play together and grow together. The modernity of this lesson remains unchanged even in the new millennium. The commitment of the older children to helping the younger ones in a big-brother fellowship teaches the responsibility we ought all to have for taking care of one another, echoing our age-old African tradition of Ubuntu. Such responsibility promotes the sense of our shared human condition, in which we recognise that either we all stand together, or together we will fall. The roots of the Scout Movement run deep into the soil of African humanitarianism.

There is a very personal reason which always touches me whenever one talks about Sir Robert Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement. In fact the wood badge, which is such a prestigious award in the Scout Movement, is something that Baden-Powell received from my maternal grandfather, King Dinuzulu. King Dinuzulu was one of the greatest freedom fighters who straddled both the last century and this century. He was first exiled to the island of St Helena at a very young age. Two of my mother's full brothers were born on the Island of St Helena, King Solomon ka Dinuzulu and prince Mshiyeni ka Dinuzulu. My mother, Princess Constance Magogo ka Dinuzulu was born after the British Imperial authorities allowed her father to return to his Kingdom.

Only a few years later, King Dinuzulu was charged with a trumped-up charge of treason. This was merely because he sheltered the wife and daughter of Inkosi Bambatha Zondi, who was the instigator and leader of the Bambatha Rebellion, otherwise known as the Zulu Rebellion of 1906. King Dinuzulu was sentenced to life imprisonment. It was General Louis Botha, the first Prime Minister of South Africa who, when he was elected Prime Minister of South Africa, had King Dinuzulu released from Newcastle prison. King Dinuzulu was unable, however, to return to his Kingdom, but he was instead exiled to what was then the Eastern Transvaal, (present day Gauteng) where he died in 1913.

It is important that scouts realise that the wood badge, which is part of their uniform, is a memory of such great freedom fighters and wear it with the pride it deserves. I think that it is significant that this 35<sup>th</sup> World Scout Conference is being held in King Dinuzulu's Kingdom, the man who bequeathed the wood badge to the Scout Movement through Sir Robert Baden-Powell.

Sir Robert Baden-Powell's concepts are still relevant to the present situation in South Africa and now more than ever the Scout Movement has a major contribution to make towards the shaping of a better future. Undoubtedly the challenges confronting mankind are multi-faceted and diverse and yet most of them are underpinned by a common question. We need the re-birth of a new sense of humanism which reinstates the centrality of the human experience over the compelling and often oppressing forces which are mounted by our diverse societies across the world. Especially as we approach an ever-increasing age of globalisation we need to stress the need to recognise the centrality of individuals, regarded both in isolation and as members of their communities. I firmly believe that within its essential ethos and pathos, the Scout Movement has the capacity to create a common platform for worldwide goodwill, which can support the emergence of humanitarianism for the third millennium.

In South Africa, we are committed to the notion of an African Renaissance, which bind social progress and economic upliftment to the re-birth of humanitarianism in accordance with our African traditions of Ubuntu. One of the pillars of our culture of Ubuntu is the responsibility of our communities for the progressive training and education of young men and women. This is an important feature of the Scout culture, which unfortunately is becoming less present in the evolution of modern society. It is understandable that under the pressure of modern society that the nuclear family can often not fulfil by itself the responsibility of raising children and expect the educational system to perform this function. However, new generations cannot be raised by schools alone and somehow the old gage proverb that it takes a community to raise a child must find a new form of application within the challenges of the future. I firmly believe that the Scout Movement offers a tested answer for this problem which holds great promise for the future which each government across the world should help to promote and nourish.

I have always been surprised how the culture of the Scout Movement reflects the very culture, which for over 40 years I have preached in my own communities. The notion of self-help and self-reliance, individual responsibility acquired through collective activities and human growth stimulated through character building, are indeed the precepts which I have applied for more than 40 years in my philosophy of development and social upliftment for the poorest of the poor of my country. I think that within the method of the Scout Movement there are lessons of universal application, which must apply in the microcosm of individual growth as in the macrocosm of growth and upliftment of developing countries. Developing countries need the qualities of individual and collective leadership, competence and self-reliance, which are at the foundation of the organisation and activities of the Scout Movement.

Throughout South Africa our government is committed to instilling within our civil service and the whole of our society many of the cornerstones which have long constituted the characterising features of the Scout Movement. A culture of service and dedication to others and a pride in the feeling of achievement, which drives each Scout, should become the features of South African society and of many other societies of developing countries. The challenge of the Scout Movement in developing countries is especially important to overcome cultural and historical factors, which hinder individual and collective growth and prevent our people from capturing the many opportunities available to them. Especially in South Africa there is a great need for a greater expansion of the Scout Movement.

We are experiencing a stage of rapid transformation in which opportunities are presented to people often without the required framework of ethics and morality necessary to capture them in a correct way. The Scout Movement's philosophy teaches people how to distinguish between greed and the pride of achievement; between an entitlement and dependability; between desperation and hope, between dependence and self-reliance. The Scout law gives the cornerstones without which life of men would indeed be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short and no society could be organised. If the Scout law became the ethical law of each individual perhaps other laws might become less necessary and the organization of society could be simplified. We build some much government with so many regulations in our society because we often fail to teach our children the most basic rules of life, which each Scout is brought up to treasure. It is important that we work together to reinstate the basic ethics contained in the Scout law, both in developed as well as in highly developed countries.

In South Africa we are faced with the task of building a new country and must now turn our efforts to building a nation, which is finally united in pursuing this common goal. It is just such patriotism and camaraderie which the Scouts of Sir Robert Baden-Powell have expressed throughout the world for ninety-two years.

We want to build a new country by drawing on the unexplored wealth of our people but also by discovering for the first time the enormous wealth of culture and information in which our country never participated. This is the essence of our pursuit of an African Renaissance. The Scout Movement has long established a commonality of vision, which transcends boundaries and cultures and brings together people from all over the world to share goodwill and personal growth.

I welcome the Scout Movement in South Africa because I know that your Conference is also part of our African Renaissance. Such a Renaissance offers the opportunity for all our people to rediscover the wealth of cultural knowledge, which has touched South Africa throughout the years, among which Sir Robert Baden-Powell must be noted as an example of excellence. This Renaissance also offers the opportunity to identify the many contributions made by the African continent to the shaping of the world in which we live, amongst which contributions I dare to mention the initial inspiration which led to the formation of the Scout Movement.

Your presence in South Africa enriches all of us and enriches our country. I sincerely hope that our country can also enrich you during your stay here. I hope that the message of international brotherhood emerging out of this Conference will remain on our national agenda long after all our guests have departed. I wish for all of you a successful Conference and a pleasant stay in South Africa.