

THE SOUTH AFRICA I WISH FOR YOU

[Speech delivered at the awarding of Doctor of Commerce (*Honorarius Causa*)]

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B Peter Vundla

Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, Justice Dikgang Moseneke, Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib, in *absentia*, Members of Council, Senate and the Faculties of Commerce, Law and Management, Alumni and students, graduates and graduands, members of the broader university community, ladies and gentlemen.

I feel deeply honoured to receive this award, but I must confess and declare that, as the saying goes, “I can hear the music, but I can’t see the piano!” What a wonderful fuss this is!

There are just too numerous people to thank for the abundant and fortunate life I have had. I could never have done it on my own. I owe a big debt of gratitude to my parents, family and friends; teachers; my community and the broad South African society.

Let me hasten and declare here and now for all to hear, that I do not intend to use the honorific “Dr” willy-nilly or insist on being called “Dr Vundla”!

To you the graduands and graduates awarded today, what kind of world awaits you? I have titled my contribution to you today “The South Africa I wish for you”. So here goes:-

- As far as public service is concerned, I wish for you a South Africa where appointments to the public sector are not rewards, but are based on professionalism and skills, and the readiness and commitment to serve, and that includes positions in the Cabinet! For those of you who will be in the public sector, it is my wish that you will be employed, not deployed.
- I wish for you a country where doling out grants to 17 million people becomes a shameful boast; where poverty eradication, rather than poverty alleviation, becomes the mantra of social security.
- I wish for you a future where you get to elect directly your public representatives: your mayors, your premiers, parliamentarians and more importantly your President. You just need to look at the parlous state of our country to see what mess the proportional representation system has brought us.
- I wish for you a criminal justice system in which there are consequences for wrongdoing, even for the high and mighty.
- It is my wish that you live and work in a country where basic education is exactly not that, basic, but one that has world-best practice as a benchmark.
- It is my wish that you create a country where healthcare delivers exactly that, healthcare, which will be accessible and affordable to all.
- For those of you who will be building our country in the private sector, I wish for you enterprises where good governance is sacrosanct and sexual harassment and sexual discrimination are non-existent.

- Also, on my wish list for you are cities and towns where there is no rampant graft, no mismanagement and decay.
- Now, as the TV commercial says, let's talk about the land! I wish for you a resolution of the land question, based on constitutionalism, and to the satisfaction of the dispossessed.
- Sadly, my wish list is rather long, and time does not permit. I wish for you an incorruptible system in which national projects, whether a state-run funeral or concert, do not present opportunities to steal. A system where the practice by politicians of fee based so-called facilitation of granting of loans by DFI's does not exist.

Now all of this does not mean that there is not some good happening in South Africa. But we have in our country more than just a broken window. The entire state edifice is creaking. We cannot and must not deny that we are helter-skelter, headlong, rushing towards a failed state. And the current generation of leadership just can't wait to get us there!

Now in the past weeks there has been much debate and strident noises about intra race relations amongst the black peoples of our country. I would like to call upon government, civil society, and the churches to convene a CODESA-type forum, or even a TRC-type convention for us to ventilate between and amongst ourselves, the vexing issues of race relations in South Africa. Please note I use the phrases "CODESA" and "TRC" generically without suggesting that these and other social cohesion imbizos were necessarily successful. Fact is, we will never

have a prosperous South Africa so long as we have a racially polarised country with a serious trust deficit between the races.

In conclusion, I wish for you a country where “poverty, unemployment and inequality”, the so called triple challenges, cease to be cliched political phrases.

So then, those are just the musings of a 70-year old man. Ultimately it is up to you all to make these wishes possible, which brings me to my last wish for you. I wish you what you deserve!

Thank you!

Kea leboga!