

POLITICAL TOLERANCE: The Experience of Mozambique

Presented at the IEC National Symposium with political parties “Towards the South African 2009 Elections”
Durban (Kwazulu-Natal), 25th November, 2008

by Rev. Dinis Matsolo

Email: matsoloccm@virconn.com

matsolodw@hotmail.com

Website: www.ccm.co.mz

Being Tolerant:

What does it mean?

- To be able (allow oneself) to accept
 - Opinions
 - Ideas
 - Customs
 - Practices
 - Religion
 - Race
 - nationality
 - etcthat are different from ours
- To be able to allow other people to behave in a way that we may not like
- It's what we need to be able to live together peacefully
- It's open-mindedness, capacity to be permissive and overcome prejudice
- As UNESCO puts it "Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and way of being human" >>> HARMONY IN DIFFERENCE
- This means that TOLERANCE is much more than just a way of thinking and feeling... It's above all, and more importantly a way of ACTING

WE NEED NOT TO BE EQUAL/THINK THE SAME IN ORDER TO LEAVE TOGETHER

➤ The beauty of difference

- Without it there would be no Multi-party systems
- Without it we wouldn't be talking about unity
- Just imagine that we all looked the same in this room...
 - No beauty
 - No creativity
 - No progress

So, we need diversity in order to compliment each other in building our Nation

➤ Just look and enjoy the beauty of my hand...

➤ It is the workshop of various/different ideas that build a Nation

➤ We need to understand that we are not alone/not in an Island

- We must accept others if we expect to be accepted
- We must respect others' ideas
- We must discover and consolidate that which unites us

The Mozambican Experience

- Victory without loser
 - We must learn to understand that if things go well with our Nation, we all gain
 - Why should we be destroying each other?
- The end of the war that devastated Mozambique was a gain for all Mozambicans and not only for those who won the first elections
- This is what I call “Nationalist spirit”

...The Mozambican Experience

➤ Birth of the Electoral Observatory (OE)

The signing of the Peace Accord on October the 4th, 1992 opened doors for each and every Mozambican to work for Peace
(With the Rule of Law principle “Estado de Direito”)

- OE, an initiative that brought together Peace loving forces in the our country:
 - Faith Based Organizations
 - Human Rights Institutions/Organizations
 - Research/Academic Institutions/Organizations
- Aims at:
 - Monitoring and observe Electoral processes
 - Mitigating occurrence of localized tensions (conflicts)
 - Conducting permanent and continuous civic education
 - Enhancing confidence, trust, credibility and integrity of Electoral Institutions as well as Electoral processes
 - Promote mutual and positive coexistence in the community and between political parties in particular

Conclusion

➤ A call to political tolerance in South Africa, our beautiful country

- Easily said than done
- Let us move from theory to practice
- Lets us move from words/declarations to action
 - We need to transform elections into moments of joy. It's possible... (we just need to exercise tolerance and positive coexistence, act with civism "become self-police", respect differences and above all, be proud of being South Africans which (in my opinion) ought to be above your political differences
 - We need to involve each other and thus, complement each other (you need not to be arguing on "how ugly your brother's house is, to prove how beautiful is yours..." We have to learn to find a way of placing our candidate's poster without having to remove the one which has been put there by the other already
 - We need to value the citizen... (people aren't just "subjects" in the process). Think about that... who is the citizen who would like to have an arrogant, intolerant, disrespectful, nonsense and so forth somebody to become his/her leader?
 - We need to fight electoral apathy and fatigue by showing respect to the electorate and by delivering what we promise during campaigning

Yes... we are call to move from intentions to results
Because "a smallest action is better than a biggest intention"

...Conclusion

- Let me end by emphasizing that the worst thing a person can do is to respond to provocations... and unfortunately, it seems that we often spend more time and efforts responding to provocations than being proactive and move on. And politicians are not any exception on this... we often hear people saying: “We did ‘x’ because they did ‘y’ and ‘z’ first”... I am saying: please stop responding to provocations
- There is a beautiful African saying from which I believe we all ought to learn a great deal: “if a donkey kicks you... and in turn you say to yourself: ‘I really want to show this donkey that I once did play football’ and kick it back, what will those who watch the scene say? Think about it...”

For
Free,
Fair/just,
Transparent,
peaceful and above all,
clean elections

siyabonga

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

OBRIGADO

KHANIMAMBU