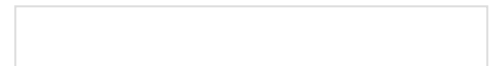




Republic of South Africa



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# Statement by President Zuma at the announcement of South African Bank notes to bear Madiba's image, South African Reserve Bank, Pretoria, South Africa

13 Feb 2012

The Minister of Finance, Mr Pravin Gordhan,  
The Governor of the Reserve Bank, Ms Gill Marcus,  
Ladies and gentlemen of the media,

Today is a very important day in the history of the democratic South Africa.

On 27 April 1994, South Africans from all walks of life came together and voted for the first time to bring about a free and democratic South Africa.

Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, an icon of our struggle, was elected as the first President of this new democracy, and began leading government and the people of South Africa towards a free, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society.

It was a difficult period. It was an era of uncertainty for all South Africans. At the same time it was a period of great expectations. They wanted to see all their problems of centuries disappearing overnight.

They wanted to see their political freedom translating to tangible socio-economic freedom without delay.

Madiba and the first democratic government brought the nation together, managing the expectations and fears to build one nation.

It needed a president like Madiba to lead a bruised nation like ours on a journey of forgiveness and reconciliation, and he acquitted himself exceptionally well, as he has always done, in every aspect of his life.

Our country has done extremely well in building this young democracy and ensuring stability, because of the foundation that was laid by President Mandela.

Before 1994, President Mandela had led his organisation the African National Congress, which has just celebrated a centenary, in a selfless, committed, dedicated struggle, to free all the people of our country.

This outstanding leader and patriot represents a group of exceptional men and women in our country who demonstrated their unflinching love for this country and its people, even in the face of repression and possible death.

Today, on behalf of Government and the people of South Africa, it is my honour and pleasure, to announce that new South African bank notes will bear the image of President Mandela, the first President of a free, democratic South Africa.

We are happy to make this announcement on the anniversary date of his release from prison, which marked the beginning of a new era of hope for our country and the world.

The South African Reserve Bank is in the process of producing the new bank notes. It is a befitting tribute to a man who became a symbol of this country's struggle for freedom, human rights and democracy.

With this humble gesture, we are expressing our deep gratitude as the South African people, to a life spent in service of the people of this country and in the cause of humanity worldwide.

The banknotes will make us remember and appreciate our achievements in order to continue the journey towards a more prosperous society.

The Mandela family is today burying the sister of Madiba, Makhulu Nokuthamba Mandela in Mqanduli in the Eastern Cape. We extend our deepest condolences on this loss, and wish the family strength.

As we mark this historic day, let us remember Madiba's words in his inauguration address in 1994;

"We understand it still, that there is no easy road to freedom.

We know it well, that none of us acting alone can achieve success.

We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world".

We thank Madiba for his love, guidance and leadership at all times.

I thank you.

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