



NELSON
MANDELA
INTERNATIONAL DAY



Take action
Inspire change
18 July

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations to honour Nelson Mandela on 18 July

General Assembly meeting and community service to mark Nelson Mandela International Day

UNITED NATIONS, New York, 17 July 2012 --- The UN General Assembly will mark Nelson Mandela International Day with an informal meeting tomorrow, honouring the leader's contributions to democracy, racial justice and reconciliation.

Speakers at the meeting, "Building a Caring World – Nelson Mandela's Vision," will include Mr. Jeff Radebe, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development of South Africa; Professor Ibrahim Gambari, last Chair of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid; Dr. Enuga Reddy, former Principal Secretary of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid; and Ms. Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand and former member of the anti-apartheid movement.

Two South African graduate students of the University of Cape Town Opera School, Mr. Thesele Kemane, a bass baritone, and Ms. Bongiwe Nakani, a mezzo soprano, will perform during the General Assembly meeting. The Opera School, under the direction of the American Kamal Khan, has made major efforts to cultivate gifted singers and introduce them to the international stage. As a result, some of the world's greatest new classical opera talents over the past few years have emerged from the townships of South Africa.

The meeting on 18 July – Mr. Mandela's 94th birthday – is part of a series of events to take place in New York and around the world that day.

"Nelson Mandela gave 67 years of his life to bring change to the people of South Africa. Our gift to him can – and must – be to change our world for the better," said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message for the day.

Every year on 18 July, individuals around the world are encouraged to devote 67 minutes to helping others – by volunteering in a hospital, tutoring a child, providing food for the homeless, or any other community service. The 67-minute campaign – "Take Action – Inspire Change" – is based on people devoting one minute of their time for every year that Nelson Mandela devoted to public service, as a human rights lawyer, a prisoner of conscience, an international peacemaker and the first democratically elected President of South Africa.

A group of staff from the United Nations Secretariat, the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations and the South African Consulate General will volunteer at the Bowery Mission tomorrow, helping to serve meals for the homeless and destitute. The Bowery Mission has provided men and women with warm meals, shelter, clothing and medical care since 1879.

Other events include an interactive evening at the Queens Museum of Art, organized with the Queens Chapter of the United Nations Association of the United States, and a film screening and performance

at the Immigrant Movement International community centre in Queens – both part of the United Nations Academic Impact’s “7/18 for Mandela” initiative.

Madiba Restaurant in Brooklyn, another UN Academic Impact partner, will donate 7.18 per cent of its day’s revenue on 18 July as a tax-deductible donation to two local schools, and is encouraging other businesses in the Fort Greene neighbourhood to do the same.

Around the world, UN Information Centres in Accra, Bujumbura, Pretoria, Tehran, Yaoundé and other places are organizing events in honour of Nelson Mandela.

In India, Young Changemakers, a non-profit youth group, is arranging 67 scholarships for children at the Shree Ganesh Vidya Mandir primary school in the Dharavi Slum in Mumbai who need to finance their own education after the seventh grade. The scholarships will be announced on 18 July at an event in Mumbai, organized in association with the United Nations Academic Impact initiative.

Background on Nelson Mandela International Day

In November 2009, the UN General Assembly declared 18 July “Nelson Mandela International Day” in recognition of the former South African President’s contribution to the culture of peace and freedom. General Assembly resolution A/RES/64/13 recognizes Mr. Mandela’s values and his dedication to the service of humanity, in the fields of conflict resolution, race relations, the promotion and protection of human rights, reconciliation, gender equality and the rights of children and other vulnerable groups.

For further information, photos, videos and other resources:

www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay

To view the live webcast of the General Assembly meeting at 10 a.m.:

www.un.org/webcast

Journalists who would like to attend the General Assembly meeting, but don’t have UN press accreditation, please contact the Media and Accreditation Liaison Unit:

<http://www.un.org/en/media/accreditation>; +1 212-963-6934 or 212-963-6937

Media contact:

Martina Donlon, UN Department of Public Information, Tel +1 212 963 6816, Email donlon@un.org