



CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES (ACCORD), 13 NOVEMBER 2022

Greetings to the Chair of ACCORD, Madame Graça Machel, the Founder and Executive Director of ACCORD, Dr Vasu Gounden, and all our esteemed guests on this significant milestone, the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the founding of ACCORD.

I must first express my sincere apologies for not being able to join you to commemorate, celebrate and acknowledge one of our most outstanding institutions!

On receiving the Africa Peace Award (APA) from ACCORD in 1995, our great late President Mandela said the following: *“The principles underpinning ACCORD’s operations are the very ideals for which humanity has striven for centuries – peaceful resolution of conflict, human rights, and good governance”*. Today I have no doubt that ACCORD has remained true to these principles.

In our international relations policy as a country, and as a government, we usually speak of ‘soft-power’, of ‘cultural diplomacy’, and of ‘partnership with non-state actors’. ACCORD’s work in the field of conflict resolution over the last thirty years throughout our continent, and beyond, must definitely be counted among the most important contributions by South African citizens to our international relations.

ACCORD was born here at home, back in 1992, at a time when the whole world was waiting with bated breath about what our political dialogue would bring, at a time when there were many who doubted our determination to end our violent struggle through negotiation, and compromise.

The establishment of ACCORD, at that time, was part of the complimentary, and home-grown, innovative initiatives we employed as South Africans to mitigate violent conflict, while we simultaneously pursued a negotiated future. ACCORD has remained as a complimentary social partner playing an important independent and impartial role as a trusted Institution throughout our democratic journey.

The times to celebrate should also, unfortunately, be times that remind us of a journey we are yet to travel. The world we live in, the Africa that we fought for so gallantly, the country that we call our home, has never been in such a dire need for strategic partnerships, for collaborations among peace loving individuals, groups and nations; for innovative ideas to address issues of poverty, unemployment, inequality and climate change; for urgent efforts to uplift the standards of living of our people, in particular youth and women, for complimentary efforts to fight instability, respond to natural disasters, and attend to humanitarian emergencies.

I am sure, South Africa, Africa, and the world, will continue to count on ACCORD, as a partner in finding constructive solutions to these and many other challenges.

I congratulate you for having built a formidable institution, for enabling us to celebrate, that out of this continent can emerge an Institution that can stand its own and be counted among global institutions of note in the area of peace, security and dialogue.

Once more, my sincere congratulations on your 30th Anniversary!

Yours Sincerely,


MR. MATAMELA CYRIL RAMAPHOSA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA