



The Secretary-General

Geneva, 6 December 2013

His Excellency
Mr. Jacob Zuma
President of the Republic of South Africa

Sir,

On behalf of the International Telecommunication Union, its membership, management and staff, I extend my heartfelt condolences to the family of Nelson Mandela and to the people of South Africa. No words can express the full extent of his greatness and the legacy he has left behind as one of the most transforming personalities the world has ever seen.

Despite having been incarcerated as a political prisoner for 27 years in his long fight against apartheid, he emerged with his sense of justice remarkably intact, without any trace of bitterness. Instead, he epitomized the values of trust, goodness, optimism and forgiveness emerging as a true statesman championing the causes of truth, reconciliation and democracy.

I have personally looked up to Madiba for inspiration, as nothing in the world could ever daunt him or hold him back from his life's mission to free his compatriots from the yoke of apartheid and emerge as a world leader and statesman. His towering personality will leave a lasting impression on me, and the world will forever enjoy the legacy he has left behind in an atmosphere of peace, humility and forgiveness.

At ITU, Nelson Mandela was known for his embrace of technology as a catalyst for change and development. "We need a vast expansion of our communication and information network and ITU, as the principle driving force behind international policy, technological development, cooperation and skills transfer, is an indispensable agent in this regard," Madiba said. During ITU Telecom World 2009, he underlined that "information and communication technologies are the single most powerful tool we have for human progress" and urged participants to "support efforts to connect the world and bridge the digital divide".

ITU will forever remember Madiba's advice, and we shall continue to strive in our efforts to connect the world in the spirit of this great son of South Africa and of the world.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré'.

Dr Hamadoun I. Touré