

**Speech by Mr. Kofi Annan**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Desmond Tutu International Peace Lecture**  
**Strong and Cohesive societies: the foundations for sustainable peace**

1. It is a privilege to be here to deliver the third annual peace lecture in this prestigious series. I would like to thank the University of Western Cape and the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation for the invitation.
2. It is a particular pleasure to be able to join you on Arch's birthday, and it is wonderful to see so many friends in the audience today
3. *(Acknowledge special guests / VIPS - tbc).*
4. The goal of these lectures is to provide an opportunity to discuss how we can build societies which are cohesive and inclusive, and reduce conflict.
5. On a continent that has suffered so much from deadly violence and inter-ethnic strife, it is essential that we never lose sight of this ambition.
6. It is a goal which Archbishop Tutu has worked for all his life, with unmatched persistence and passion.
7. Desmond has always found the courage, no matter how uncomfortable or dangerous, to speak truth to power.
8. By giving voice to the excluded and persecuted, he has become a symbol for justice and reconciliation.
9. He reminds us of our common humanity and spirituality.
10. As a fellow member of the Elders, I have seen first-hand how his mischievous personality, good humour and optimism inspires hope and change.
11. And nowhere has his impact been more significant, or transformative, than in this country.
12. In two decades, South Africa has overcome apartheid to become an important regional and global player.
13. You have a reasonably healthy economy, and a young and entrepreneurial society whose influence extends far beyond your borders.

14. These remarkable changes have both mirrored and helped drive progress across our continent.
15. Not for half a century has there been so much confidence in Africa's future.
16. Sub-Saharan Africa is the world's most recent economic success story; the IMF predicts that between now and 2015, seven of the ten fastest growing economies in the world will be in this region.
17. Many countries have made significant progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
18. The spread of HIV/AIDS is in decline, and the number of deaths from tuberculosis and malaria is reduced.
19. We have also seen encouraging progress towards gender parity, and we can be proud that the continent is on track to achieve universal primary education.
20. Democracy is taking root and modern information and communications technologies have enabled citizens to become more engaged and empowered.
21. Civil society is informing debate, widening participation and helping to set the agenda.
22. But real and exciting as this progress has been, we cannot afford to become complacent. After all, Africa has endured false dawns in the past.
23. If we analyse our recent achievements more closely, we will find that serious challenges remain, and new threats are emerging.
24. Unfortunately, impressive growth has not eradicated extreme poverty, particularly in rural areas.
25. Neither has it reduced the high levels of inequality which exist across the continent; unemployment, particularly for youth, remains high.
26. Despite Africa's extraordinary wealth of natural resources, poor governance and a lack of transparency have too often led to corruption, exploitation and environmental damage.
27. We are also seeing the impact of climate change on water supplies, agricultural productivity and the environment.

28. As a result, food and nutrition insecurity is rising, while increasing tensions over dwindling resources could lead to violence.
29. The rise of organised crime, including drug trafficking, risks eroding the fragile institutions of governance and development progress throughout the continent.
30. As the recent terrorist attacks in Nigeria and Kenya have underlined, extremism and the proliferation of armed groups pose a serious threat to peace and security.
31. So how can we address these challenges and create the peaceful and cohesive societies to enable every individual to thrive and live in dignity?
32. There is, of course, no single answer.
33. The challenge is to deepen democracy and build effective and legitimate institutions grounded in the Rule of Law and respect for Human Rights.
34. Let me set out what I believe are the priorities.
35. **First**, we must turn our backs on the 'winner takes all' approach to politics which has been so damaging to our continent.
36. We have seen how this has led to abuses of power by the winner and encouraged losers to reject democracy as a peaceful means for change.
37. Too often, the individual interests of leaders have been misconstrued as interests of their country.
38. Political leaders, who derive their position and legitimacy from the people, and are elected to serve them, can never be considered above the law.
39. Genuine multiparty democracy provides mutual security to political opponents and encourages them to take part in the process rather than seek to subvert it.
40. Across Africa, the role of legitimate opposition and the need for a multiplicity of voices must be appreciated and nurtured.
41. After all, it is transparent and accountable institutions, not 'strong men' or strong leaders that safeguard democracy and create the conditions for peace and prosperity.

42. In this regard, I believe that parliaments and local authorities- the politicians in closest contact with citizens- have an important role to play.
43. **Second**, we must improve electoral integrity.
44. Elections provide citizens the opportunity to debate priorities, choose their leaders and hold them to account, without fear of repression or violence.
45. But sadly elections in Africa, as in other places around the world, can become a trigger for conflict rather than a peaceful way to regulate competition for political power.
46. The Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security, which I chaired, included a definition of electoral integrity in its final report.
47. We found that it must be based on the democratic principles of universal suffrage and political equality, and must be professional, impartial, and transparent in its preparation and throughout the electoral cycle.
48. When elections lack these characteristics, citizens lose trust in the democratic process and look to other ways to have their voices heard.
49. But taking to the streets, as we have learnt all too often, is not an alternative to the ballot box.
50. When conducted with integrity, elections bolster democracy, promote development, and produce governments which are more likely to represent their citizen's interests.
51. In doing so, they allow us to manage societal conflicts in a peaceful manner.
52. **Third**, we must do more to uphold the rule of law and combat impunity.
53. On a continent that has experienced deadly conflict, gross violations of human rights, even genocide, I am surprised to hear critics ask whether the pursuit of justice might obstruct the search for peace.
54. In countries as far apart as Rwanda, Bosnia and Timor-Leste, we have learnt that justice is not an impediment to peace but a partner. When we abandon justice to secure peace, we most likely get neither.
55. The parallel pursuit of justice and peace does present challenges, but they can be managed.

56. We must be ambitious enough to pursue both, and wise enough to recognise, respect and protect the independence of justice.
57. And we must always have the courage to ask ourselves ‘who speaks for the victims?’
58. For on too many occasions, we have failed the victims of the worst crimes by neglecting to bring the perpetrators to justice.
59. Correcting this failure was the primary aim when the international community created the International Criminal Court.
60. I was there at the time and I urged delegates to act as if “...the eyes of the victims of past crimes, and of the potential victims of future ones, are fixed firmly upon us.”
61. In adopting the Rome Statute, the international community courageously tipped the balance away from impunity in favour of justice.
62. I was proud that so many African countries, where judicial systems are weak and divisions run deep, provided such strong support for the Court.
63. I am therefore concerned by recent efforts to portray the Court as targeting Africa. I know this is not the case.
64. In four of the cases on Africa before the court, African leaders themselves made the referral to the ICC.
65. In two others- Darfur and more recently Libya- it was the United Nations Security Council, and not the Court, which initiated proceedings.
66. When I meet Africans from all walks of life, they demand justice: from their national courts if possible, from international courts if no credible alternative exists.
67. Let me stress that it is the culture of impunity and individuals who are on trial at the ICC, not Africa.
68. Ladies and gentlemen, in a world that is becoming smaller and increasingly interconnected, the diversity of religious beliefs, cultural practice, and ethnicity is increasingly evident.
69. Sometimes these differences appear so great that we lose sight of our common humanity.

70. But those societies which embrace diversity as a source of strength become healthier, more stable and prosperous.
71. In those which do not, whole communities can feel marginalized and oppressed, creating conditions for conflict.
72. There is no doubt that plural societies can be challenging to govern.
73. Appropriate laws and institutions are needed to manage differing needs and interests, and to protect the rights of each individual.
74. Mechanisms at the community level can be effective by promoting dialogue and diffusing tensions.
75. And much can be achieved through our education systems, to combat fear, intolerance and extremism.
76. Violence towards those who are different from us, or with whom we disagree, is unacceptable and has no place in healthy societies.
77. We have to learn from each other, making our different traditions and cultures a source of harmony and strength.
78. There is a crucial role here for Africa's religious leaders in promoting tolerance and understanding of our common humanity.
79. We need them, at every opportunity, to denounce violence, and discrimination, including on the grounds of gender and sexuality.
80. Perhaps above all, they must welcome and safeguard the freedoms of all faiths, not just their own.
81. I don't underestimate how challenging this can be but we need look no further than Archbishop Tutu for a role model.
82. It is not just our religious leaders who have a responsibility to play their full part in building genuinely cohesive and inclusive societies. So must our continent's intellectuals and academic institutions.
83. Our universities are an important and intrinsic part of our societies.

84. They have enormous contributions to make: through research, promoting dialogue and debate, and providing policies and advice on the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges we face.
85. They must work hand in hand with governments, civil society and the private sector to promote peace and progress.
86. Finally, I'd like to underline the urgent need to empower women and promote gender equality on our continent.
87. The evidence is overwhelming that the healthiest societies are those which promote gender equality and invest in the education of girls.
88. It is simply wrong that in some parts of Africa, traditions such as child marriage and female genital circumcision are still commonplace and defended as acceptable practice.
89. I am also deeply concerned that in too many countries there remains a high level of violence, including sexual violence, against women.
90. We know that no single factor can be more effective in furthering development than the empowerment of women and girls.
91. So we must dedicate ourselves to transforming relations between men and women at all levels of society, and put the welfare of women and girls at the heart of all we do.
92. Let me end on a note of optimism.
93. Africa is a continent with tremendous natural resources, but none more than the talent of its young people.
94. As I know from my discussions with them, they care deeply about our world and are actively engaged in fostering positive changes in their local communities.
95. We need to do more to provide the conditions where their creativity and potential can flourish and where they have a voice in finding solutions.
96. And if I may speak directly to the students amongst us, let me add this plea.
97. You are the first generation of "true global citizens." We need you to step up, take responsibility, and above all, we need your leadership.

98. With courage and vision, Africa can develop the institutions and qualities of leadership that will ensure a stable, prosperous and equitable society.
99. Dear Friends, we must remember that cohesive and healthy societies rest on three pillars – peace and security, development, the rule of law and respect for human rights.
100.       There can be no long-term security without development, and there can be no long-term development without security.
101.       And no society can long remain prosperous without the rule of law and respect for human rights.
102.       Finally, let me wish both Desmond and Leah a very happy birthday
103.       Thank you

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