

Archie Gumede



Mr Chairman, sons and daughters of Africa - we meet on a very rare occasion and shortly after an honour has been bestowed on me which I do not feel I deserve but which will need the support of all people who were party to my election to the position - that is to being one of the three presidents of the United Democratic Front. We are all aware that this is an historical occasion. It is not often that the people who are gathered here have ever come together. There are people from the Transvaal, people from the Free State, people from the Border region, from Natal - demonstrating for all to see that South Africa is one country. We believe that South Africa is one nation and we are willing to demonstrate our belief in its nationhood. Today's happening is a true demonstration of the unity of the oppressed people of

South Africa. Being such an occasion, it is important that we show our determination not to accept oppression but to fight that oppression until we overcome, and given the determination that I have seen today, I have no doubts that we shall overcome.

This being an inaugural meeting, there is no report to be read to you. All we can say is what our goal is and how we are going to reach that goal. That goal we can reach only if we are to remain united and we are willing to work, join and link others who do not happen to be among us today. You all understand what this United Democratic Front is all about. You can see the banner there behind you - U.D.F. It is a front - it is not an organisation - it is a front and it is composed of different organisations which do not necessarily agree, ideologically in all respects with each other's points of view but who have all agreed that apartheid must be banished from the face of South Africa. It is a front - at this stage which is established for the purpose of struggling against the Constitutional Bills and the Koornhof Bills which are intended to entrench apartheid in our society. The individual organisations of this front have their own identity, but they are determined to co-operate with one another in this specific issue. You know the expression that is used in one of the bills is 'Orderly Movement', that is movement under the control of pass laws. Now many people here are feeling that they ought to co-operate in moving under the jurisdiction of the pass laws? I think today's meeting is a demonstration of the fact that it is only force that will obtain movement in terms of that Orderly Movement Bill and that when people are uprooted

from the place in which they already settled, that is called resettlement. How many of those people are to be resettled and how many are being resettled merely in order to satisfy an ideology for which they have absolutely no sympathy? We shall face this challenge by organising the people wherever they are. We have one advantage - we are able to move among our people with ease and we are able to communicate with them at will and organise and show them the road to freedom. Moses led the children out of Egypt - there is simply no reason why the people of South Africa cannot move out of the apartheid state into a state in which all shall be free and the people shall govern. However, I wish to make this quite clear that slogans are helpful but they are not the end of the road. To these slogans must be added sweat, to these slogans must be added labour and careful thought and careful action. You must be aware that the system has many ways of provoking people into rash action and that is one of the things that all of you must guard against. Whatever action you take must be action that has been fully debated and must be applied with determination. When you go back home, please go to your neighbours and tell them about what you found at Cape Town today. Tell them the experiences that you have had, the joy of living not in isolation but in association with all the people of South Africa. Please be aware of acting in isolation. It is a simple fact that we are interdependent, there is no-one who is independent and in these circumstances it is important that we should learn to co-operate with one another. We must avoid adventurism and we must act conscientiously and act with determination until we overcome.