

**TALKING POINTS FOR ARCHBISHOP THABO MAKGOBA
SECOND ANNUAL SOCIAL JUSTICE SUMMIT, 4 NOVEMBER 2020**

My dear friends,

I send you my warmest wishes and I am sorry I cannot be with you in person – or at least, in a virtual format – as you gather today.

Your mission today is an important one. And I hope that your deliberations today will bear fruit.

I want to send a special message of support for Professor Madonsela, and thank her and the organising team of the Summit, for the honour they have bestowed on me by asking that I be a part of today's program.

I am sure you will hear several speakers today that will refer to the importance of social justice, and why this ideal has become even more important in these scary times we live in.

The Makgoba Development Trust has set for itself a very clear aim – an aim that I know Professor Madonsela and her team share.

In the face of global inequality, poverty and discord, the promotion of human development and fostering common goals in society is key.

These are pursued through our support of education, health and the development of entrepreneurial skills, as well as mentoring and encouraging dialogue in communities.

We have to keep talking my dear friends, and we have to keep the dialogue flowing, and this is why today's event is so important.

Each of us today represent our own community or our own section of society. But all of us have a common identity at the end of it all – we are all South African, and our nation needs us. Now more than ever before.

Speaking for the community I represent - the interfaith community has a major impact on the functioning of society and ultimately on peace.

In 2020, government has called for social cohesion and peace, underpinned by social justice. The aim is to mobilise the faith community to be a potent force for the advancement of social justice.

Whether we are directly aware of it or not our civilisation is experiencing a critical time, especially during this pandemic.

Persons in the faith community in all of our cultures wield great power. We do not appreciate fully enough their power in shaping communities and in achieving social cohesion.

Being at the forefront of where people from different cultures and faiths meet and cooperate, the faith community has the capacity to harness resources towards remedying inequality and poverty and to diffuse conflict in society.

The Sustainable Development Goals identify where we have to be in 2030 to create a sustainable world.

With these goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

Unity among religions is of paramount importance to live in harmony among different religions and to promote peace and tolerance to human kind, all faiths have common stances of upholding unity, love, compassion peace and cooperation.

Hence, religious institutions and their leaders should enhance mutual understanding and need to foster intra and inter-religious harmony through creating open dialogue platforms.

Against the backdrop of the problems we face – may I perhaps in closing leave you some questions to consider.

To what extent can the faith community contribute to plug the gap in the disparity between the rich and the poor globally and at home?

To what extent can the faith community work toward equality among peoples?

My dear friends.

I thank you for listening to me, and I hope I have given you some crumbs of inspiration as you continue your important deliberations today, as you work towards the realisation a world in which social justice is a reality and where no one is left behind.

The task ahead of you is a hard one, but an important one.

I know our country will be proud of what you do today.

Thank you, and good luck.