

In pursuit of global collaboration for a more equal world
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Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to thank the university and our consulate for creating this opportunity for an exchange of ideas. I serve as a public representative in the Republic of South Africa and have learnt over the twenty five years of democracy that the most intractable challenge confronting any society seeking fundamental change is equality. While there is much to be admired and appreciated in the socio economic transitions humanity has experience in the course of the first industrial revolution to the current immersion in the ever evolving fourth industrial evolution, it is the worsening scourge of inequality.

Inequality assumes many diverse forms, race, gender, disability, geography and class. In the most severe forms individuals and communities may find an intersection between these inequalities as defined in the triple oppression often ascribed to African women in South Africa who bear the burden of being black, female and working class.

I have chosen to focus on this striving for equality today as I hoped I would be addressing a youthful audience. Our global communities hope for better outcomes for humanity.

Many years ago, a great African American freedom fighter and thinker WEB Du Bois wrote of what he saw as the next great challenge to be overcome by humanity given that slavery had been abolished in America. He said addressing race and racism would be the twentieth century challenge and that humanity would be led these higher values through the leadership that would be provided by the talented tenth of young educated ethical young leaders. His aspirations have not been realised as yet so I am hopeful some of the anticipated talented tenth are present here and will take on some of the tasks I hope to elaborate in this lecture.

The world is a much better place than the post slavery era of 18th century America or colonial Africa, but as all here are aware many challenges confront humanity. Millions of people have no access to education despite the significant achievements of the Education for all campaign that was led by UNESCO. Many more children access primary schooling and too few proceed to secondary schooling and even fewer to university. In our country South Africa, more young people from poor and black families have access to higher education than ever before, but they do not access critical disciplines such as science engineering technology and complex economics in numbers that reflect a critical mass and so emerge with humanities and social science degrees that leave them unemployed and without a livelihood. I know that millions in Brazil face similar outcomes.

The world is also confronted by the even more complex challenges posed by global change and more specifically climate change. Scientists hold the view

that we as governments and communities are resistant to the urgent requirement for effective responses to the known and presumed effects of climate change. While research suggests there is still time to adapt and mitigate some of the worst effects, there is also visible evidence of the impact of climate change. Subsistence farmers have droughts for long periods and suffer hunger and starvation, their children lack nutrition are stunted and experience learning difficulties at school. Masses of communities are moving from their lands in search of fertile areas, land invasion, conflicts over water, animals and scarce economic resources confront many communities. Sadly some political leaders use subterfuge and mythology to obscure the reality of climate change and trick community leaders into assisting the falsities.

Other world challenges are gender based violence, an extremely serious problem in my country, drugs alcohol and gangsterism and their impact on young people and the deeply troubling challenge of creating a world that embraces diversity and rejects xenophobia and ethnic chauvinism. In Africa, our continent has decided to address its most challenging problems and has agreed that the most important task is to silence the guns as war and conflict are the biggest impediments to human development.

Africa has called for global collaboration in addressing it's difficult challenges. After all, its conflicts are fueled by arms from outside Africa, and derive from external forces that make Africa and the Middle East the site for international ideological battles.

So, what posture should we as communities, university youth academics and progressive forces for good adopt in compelling the world to concretely address these fundamental world problems that act as a barrier to the modernisation of

developing countries? Is it possible for us all to become a united force for positive change?

One of the elements of promise we do have is the existence of an agreed multilateral system of governance that creates a framework of international organisations that have the mandate to practically pursue international collaboration in addressing global problems. As you are aware the epicenter of this global governance architecture is the United Nations (UN). Despite its many limitations and in our opinion unreformed structures the UN remains a vital resource for advancing a more humane global agenda.

Recently, the United Nations has been facing vicious attacks that emphatically signal the intent to diminish its global value and push the world toward an almost uni-polar world in which individual countries and regions will direct world affairs and dictate the path of human development. There has been inadequate intellectual and political scrutiny of this threat to global governance and even in the face of a UN body stressed to near poverty the world quietly watches. In the African Union we have expressed our belief in the United Nations global governance role and while arguing for real reform of the Security Council and its decision making structures, we believe there is no institution or country better suited to playing the role the United Nations plays.

Our own progressive formation of BRICS(Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) has taken on the need to affirm our belief in multilateralism and a rules based world order that affirms the needs of the weakest while ensuring the more able provide support where needed. It is our view that BRICS can be a powerful force for good as it is made up of almost 25% of the world's GDP and over 40% of the world's population. BRICS countries believe that some of the world's rules and institutions require radical reform for a vastly changed world

seven decades after the Second World War. It is for this reason that we have created the BRICS New Development Bank as a loan bank to fund development infrastructure such as roads, dams and railways in the most challenged environments. Brazil as the current chair of BRICS has led discussions in expansion of shareholding in the bank beyond its founding members to cement the existence of a modern new funding institution.

The key thrust of this lecture is to argue that the changes still needed to eradicate inequality and enhance human development and human security require active appropriation of multilateralism and a world based on cooperation and collaboration rather than negative hegemonic dominance. A world in which religion engenders hatred, in which race determines class and opportunity and in which gender or sexual orientation imply violence needs joined up progressive world activism to create peace and stability.

Many countries and communities do not regard unilateralism as a present threat, all of us enjoy the security of a global architecture that can still protect and support development objectives.

The world has set ambitious development through the 2015 SDGs all must promote and support actions to achieve. University students are the future leaders of our nations, are in a very unique position of acquiring accurate perspectives on world affairs and the knowledge and skills on how to use these capacities to alter the world for the better. I am hopeful that the academic programmes you undertake provide you with an international perspective on our world and an analyses on how and what might make a difference. The opportunity to achieve the radical change of attitude du Bois hoped for at the end of slavery in America over 400 years ago next year confronts all today as

a compelling call to action, I hope you will use your youthfulness and new ideas to respond to that call.

Thank you.