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**SPEECH BY FORMER PRESIDENT FW DE KLERK  
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### **EUROPE IN THE WORLD - A PERSPECTIVE FROM AFRICA AND SOUTH AFRICA**

I wish to speak to you tonight about Africa's perception of Europe. I would also like to discuss Europe's search for greater internal integration on the one hand and its wish to play a more coherent role in the international community on the other.

First I wish to talk about my own relationship with Europe as the descendant of one of the many peoples throughout the world that trace their roots to your continent. My ancestors were Huguenots from France who came to South Africa via Holland in 1688. My language, Afrikaans, has its roots in the Dutch, Flemish and German spoken by the employees of the Dutch East India Company and by the first settlers in the Cape. It also draws richness from the Malay language that was brought to the Cape by slaves from the East Indies. My religion derives from the Dutch Reformed Testament of Dordt in 1619. My culture, like the cultures of so many peoples throughout the world, is suffused with the unparalleled literature, art and music of Europe.

And yet I am an African. For centuries my ancestors have identified themselves with Africa - from the moment more than 300 years ago when Hendrik Biebow, a Dutch settler in the Cape, proudly proclaimed "ek ben een Afrikander!" - I am an African!

One hundred and fifteen years ago my people fought one of the first and greatest anti-colonialist wars in the history of Africa. The Anglo-Boer War was the costliest of the more than 40 wars that the British fought between the Napoleonic War and the First World War. It involved the deployment of more than 430 000 British troops and ended in the destruction of our country, the burning of our farms and the death of 27 000 of our women and children in concentration camps.

So, despite my deep roots in the rich culture of your continent, I regard myself as an African. I identify with my continent; I strive to promote its interests in its relationship with other parts of the world - and I support its sports teams when they are playing teams from other continents.

I mention all this because you Europeans sometimes forget the enormous impact that you have had on the rest of the world during the past 500 years. In that period you colonised and populated three of the world's six inhabited continents - North and South America and Australasia - and conquered much of the rest of the world. Only 12 significant countries escaped European rule - and the sovereignty of the greatest of them, China, was severely limited by the imposition upon it of 62 treaty ports by the European powers and Japan.



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Southern Africa was deeply affected by the rising tide of European imperialism. Modern South Africa was forged in the wars of conquest that the British fought during the 19<sup>th</sup> century against the three dominant peoples of the sub-continent - the Xhosa, the Zulus and the Afrikaners. At the beginning of the twentieth century Britain found itself in possession of a ragbag of vexatious territories in Southern Africa - that one historian quipped it had acquired in a fit of absent-mindedness.

What to do with these troublesome and expensive possessions? The solution was to create a union or federation along the lines of the recently established British federations in Canada and Australia. And so the Union of South Africa was born - a mere 103 years ago with artificial borders encompassing widely disparate peoples with divergent interests.

Virtually all the rest of Africa suffered the same fate. The nations that now occupy the continent do not trace their genesis to common history, common language or common culture - but to the lines that were arbitrarily and cavalierly drawn by European imperialists poring over maps in Berlin in 1885.

For a relatively brief period of little more than 75 years - a single lifetime - Europe ruled its far-flung possessions in Africa. Europeans built cities and railways; they developed agriculture and trade; they brought European education and religion - nearly always to their own advantage - but often also to the advantage of the peoples that they ruled. And then, at the end of the 50s and during the 60s they left - almost as suddenly as they had come.

The withdrawing tide of European rule left country after country floundering on the beach of independence, surrounded by the flotsam and jetsam of empire. Constitutions that were not rooted in African traditions and ideas of government were hastily written - and just as hastily torn up. Institutions of governance - independent courts and electoral commissions - were often too shallowly rooted to survive the harsh African sun. Little wonder then that in so many African countries power quickly reverted to those who controlled the guns - or the leaders of the most powerful tribal factions.

In the process many African countries developed a love-hate relationship with their former colonisers - loudly criticizing them at the OAU and United Nations - but gravitating toward their capitals for shopping, for the education of their children and to recharge their cultural batteries. The former colonial powers continued to provide the bulk of their foreign investment, their foreign trade, most of their aid - and from time to time military intervention to shore up embattled regimes.

During most of the 70s and 80s many African countries were able to gain international traction by playing off their traditional European allies against the Soviet Bloc countries that saw Africa as a primary sphere of contestation in their global struggle against the West. However, all that changed with the demise of the Soviet Union. South African President Thabo Mbeki was shocked when he was informed by senior European diplomats in 2003



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that the European Union had no conception of a place for Africa in its global strategic assessment.

In the intervening decade the relationship between Europe and Africa has changed quite significantly as a result of the following developments:

- in the wake of the Euro crisis and uncertainty about the future of EU's integration project, the global prestige of Europe has waned;
- The prestige of the emerging economic giants - particularly the BRICS countries - has grown enormously - and
- Africa has once again become an arena for global strategic interest - based on its rapidly growing economy, its consumer markets and its enormous potential as a primary supplier of minerals, oil and food.

First, there is the perception that the role of Europe in the world is waning.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries - at the very time when it was conquering much of the rest of the world - Europe produced only 12% of the global GDP compared with the more than 45% generated by China and India. By 1913 - following its emergence from the industrial revolution - its share of global GDP had risen to almost 30% while the combined share of China and India had dropped to only 15%. In 2011 the Euro areas share had shrunk to 17.1% - and the OECD projects that it will decline further to 11% by 2030 and only 8.8% by 2060.

Of course, this does not necessarily mean that Europeans will become poorer: it means that the rest of the world will become richer. By 2060 China and India will once again account for more than 45% of global product and will have resumed the preeminent role in the world economy that they occupied for most of the last 2000 years.

All this has gone hand in hand with rising levels of Euro-scepticism. According to the European Council on Foreign Relations trust in the European Union has fallen from +10 to -22% in France; from +20 to -29% in Germany; from +50 to +6% in Poland and from -13 to -49% in the United Kingdom. In effect, the core Euro countries are now more sceptical about the European Union than the British were in 2007.

The root of the problem lies in the divisions created by the Euro crisis. Northern countries cannot see why they should bail out the southern periphery countries without being able to control their spending. Southern countries, in turn, feel that they have been forced into an economic straight jacket that has seriously compromised their national sovereignty. There is also a perception that the EU apparatus in Brussels is too bureaucratic, too remote and too unaccountable to the citizens of its member countries.

British Euro-sceptics argue that the maths of EU membership no longer make sense. Britain now exports slightly more to the rest of the world than it does to Europe. 15% of its economy is geared to European exports; exports to the rest of the world account for another 15% while the remaining 70% serves its own economy. However, although only 15%



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of its economy is directed toward Europe 100% of the economy is subject to what Euro-sceptics regard as onerous and constricting EU regulations.

The reality is that the European single market just is not functioning as effectively as it should. According to the OECD, trade integration in the EU is still significantly lower than it is in the United States' large federal economy. The EU's internal market remains fragmented in terms of trade and financial integration. This means that companies in the EU are generally smaller and less efficient than they are in the United States. The EU Commission is trying to address this problem with the Single Market project that it launched in 2011 - but once again the challenge is to get 28 sovereign countries to amend their national legislation and to pull in the same direction.

The EU is aware of these challenges and of the need for structural reforms. It has set itself ambitious targets with its Europe 2020 Strategy - but once again success will depend on its ability to persuade member states to change their own national policies and institutions.

And therein lies the essence of the problem: the EU is like a giant tanker with 28 captains on the bridge - each of whom must agree to make changes in the tanker's course to avoid the icebergs that they all can see ahead of them.

One of the icebergs lying ahead of the EU is its looming demographic crisis. Birth rates in key countries have dropped far below the levels of sustainability. In Germany and Poland they are 1.3; in Italy and Spain they are 1.4. Sustainability requires birth rates exceeding 2.1. At birth rates of less than 1.5 populations will diminish by more than 75% by the end of this century. Populations will become older with fewer and fewer young people to support them.

The only solution to plummeting birth rates would be massive immigration from other parts of the world. However, such immigration would create problems of its own - and would fundamentally change the present character of Europe.

So, undoubtedly the European Union faces serious challenges. However, none of this detracts from the worthiness of the ideals that established the European Union in the first place. The world needs a strong Europe to counterbalance the influence of the United States on the one hand and the growing influence of China and India on the other.

A strong Europe is also in the best interests of Africa. Africa still receives most of its investment from Europe and conducts most of its trade with the continent. Despite the much-publicized expansion of Chinese interest in Africa, it is still only the sixth largest investor in the continent - following the United States, France, Britain, Malaysia and South Africa. There are also strong historic and cultural ties between the two continents.

However, Africans sometimes get the impression that they continue to occupy only a peripheral position in Europe's worldview. Trade negotiations between Africa and Europe seem to have stalled. After 10 years of negotiations over economic partnership agreements



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with the 77 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, only 36 have been concluded - and only 18 of these are with African countries.

In the wake of its current crisis Europeans are calling for ambitious, proactive and constructive trade engagements with its strategic partners. However, these partners are in the Americas and in the emerging Asian economies. In a letter earlier this year, Jose Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, urged Herman van Rompuy to develop such trade relationships. But, he made no mention of Africa or of the need to make progress with the stalled economic partnership agreements.

Once again, Africa is getting the impression that it does not occupy a significant place in Europe's strategic planning. This is a mistake. Europe would do well to reconsider Africa's enormous potential and its growing strategic importance.

According to the World Bank economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa is likely to exceed 5% on average between 2013-2015 because of high commodity prices worldwide and strong consumer spending on the continent.

Total African GDP is expected to reach US \$2.6 trillion by 2020;

The region will remain one of the fastest growing in the world. In 2012 about a quarter of African countries grew at 7% or higher;

Rapid urbanisation on the continent is increasing demands for infrastructure investment in power, transportation, hospitals and schools. Current infrastructure expenditure of about US \$45 billion a year is less than half the amount that will be required to fund these projects.

The central reality is that sub-Saharan Africa constitutes the largest area of under-developed real estate in the world. There are about the same number of people in its 24 million square kilometers as there are in the 3.3 million square kilometers of India. The continent is endowed with enormous mineral resources in a commodity hungry world - and it has virtually untapped agricultural potential.

So, Africa presents Europe with enormous opportunities.

However, there is another important reason why Europe should be interested in the future success of Africa. It is because, Europe, much more than any other continent needs a prosperous Africa. Crop failures, economic or political crises on the continent, could turn the present trickle of African refugees across the Mediterranean Sea into an unstoppable torrent.

For all of these reasons Europe needs to focus more attention on Africa.

But Africa also needs a strong Europe that will be able to play its proper role in the world. But to achieve this, Europe will need to resolve its current challenges:



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It must make progress with its integration project - or it must develop some other design; it must restore confidence in its guiding vision and convince the Euro-sceptics to rejoin the project; and it must address its potentially catastrophic demographic crisis.

Whatever happens, events in Europe will continue to play an important role in the future of Africa. However, what happens in Africa's will also have a significant impact on Europe. Inevitably, Europe is going to have to give Africa much more attention in its strategic worldview.