



The Nelson Mandela International Day is observed 11 July 2011 for the 2nd time. General Assembly President Joseph Weiss says in his message on this occasion that on this day the world celebrated a rare icon and one of the greatest moral and political leaders of our time whose opinions were more than ever relevant:

“Nelson Mandela’s philosophy demands that we make the world a better place, a just and peaceful world. His activism has touched our lives, as shown in his fight against disease, starting with HIV/AIDS, his commitment to reducing poverty, his determination to promote access to quality education, and his love for children.”

On 10 November 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution which declared 18 July, the birthday of Nelson Mandela, as the “Nelson Mandela International Day”, to be observed each year beginning in 2010.

The resolution recognised the Nobel Peace Prize laureate's contribution to resolving conflicts and promoting race relations, human rights and reconciliation.

By adopting the resolution, then General Assembly President Ali Treki said the international community was expressing its appreciation for “a great man” who suffered for the sake of people everywhere.

At a gathering of the General Assembly to mark the first celebration of the annual General Assembly in 2010 South Africa’s Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mshabane, said that the UN Millennium Development Goals paid tribute to Mr.

Mandela’s hopes and dreams by providing the international community with an opportunity to create a world built on peace, human rights and sustainable development.

Ms. Nkoana-Mshabane urged everyone to make “every day Nelson Mandela day”.

The embodiment of the highest UN values

Mandela, was among the most prominent leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) in the fight against racial discrimination in South Africa and served 27 years in prison.

The former leader of the ANC’s military wing, supported reconciliation and was a driving force behind South Africa's transition toward multi-racial democracy.

He became South Africa’s first fully democratically elected in 1994.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon observed: “He fought his oppressors for years. And then, he forgave them. Mandela is the embodiment of the highest principles of the UN.”