



“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.” – Nelson Mandela

In 1994, Nelson Mandela became the first Black head of state in South Africa — a feat which would transcend the borders of his country to resonate loudly with millions combating racial injustice in the African Diaspora. Mandela emerged quickly as a leader of the campaign against apartheid — a system which authorised racial segregation of the country’s minority white population and its overwhelming non-white majority. The South African state successfully enacted these practices through policies and legislation that separated housing and educational developments for white and non-white people, and restricted the mobility of non-

white people to areas designated for white occupation. With what can only be described as an uncompromising defiance, Mandela challenged this system on the grounds that it was a violation of the inalienable rights of South Africa's predominantly Black population.

The ethos by which Mandela lived his life is embodied in principles of equity, determination and freedom. To honour his legacy and promote community building, his birthday, July 18, is recognized annually as Nelson Mandela International Day. This year's theme is: "Climate, Food & Solidarity."

For many people today, environmental changes threaten to displace and destabilise their lives, thereby potentially compounding issues relating to poverty and access to healthy, nutritious food. To address these and other difficulties, there is greater need for a "one hand washes the other" approach. Mandela knew that no good or worthy deed is done alone, and if we hope to reduce hunger and empower communities to address these and other imminent challenges, then we must work together.

Mandela faced severe consequences for his unwavering commitment to social justice and advocacy for greater equity in society. He believed that our power rested in one belief: Every human being has intrinsic value. Throughout his lifetime, he made choices to demonstrate to us the importance of taking bold actions to create a freer, more peaceful world. On this Nelson Mandela International Day, let us choose to act in service to humanity, and relentlessly pursue a world where all can thrive.

Sources

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nelson-Mandela#ref282994>

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