

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Statement on Nelson Mandela International Day
July 17, 2011

As the people of the world celebrate Nelson Mandela's 93d birthday on July 18, Madiba continues to be a beacon for the global community and for all who work for democracy, justice, and reconciliation. On behalf of the people of the United States, we congratulate Nelson Mandela and honor his vision for a better world.

Nelson Mandela said, "There is no passion to be found playing small, in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living." A man who devoted 67 years of his life to public service, Madiba sets the standard for service worldwide, whether we are students, shopkeepers, or farmers, Cabinet Ministers or Presidents. He calls on us to serve our fellow human beings and better our communities.

Michelle and my daughters Sasha and Malia recently met Madiba during an official visit to South Africa that focused on service, youth leadership, education, and healthy living. Their time with Madiba was the most moving part of their trip. Mandela's legacy exemplifies wisdom, strength, and grace, and on the anniversary of his birth, we salute the example of his life.

In 2009, the United States was honored to join 192 other United Nations member states in the creation of Nelson Mandela International Day. As the global community honors Madiba on July 18 through individual and collective acts of service, we honor the man who showed his own people and the world the path to justice, reconciliation, and democracy.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

Categories: Statements by the President : Nelson Mandela International Day.

Names: Mandela, Nelson R.; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha".

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