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04 July 2011

In 1995 Nelson Mandela welcomed the participants of the first All-African Human Rights Moot Court Competition to Pretoria, calling them “the leaders, judges and teachers of tomorrow”. In its 19 years, the Moot Competition has traversed Africa with the message of human rights, from Dakar to Asmara, from Mitchell’s Plain in the Cape Flats to the Mediterranean Shores of Sharm el Sheikh. In that time, 974 teams from 136 universities representing 48 African countries have taken part directly, with approximately 10,000 taking part indirectly. This constitutes an entire generation of young men and women who have had to envisage a new and better Africa: one that is founded on the respect for all human rights; that celebrates and harnesses its many diversities; and that values the dignity and humanity in each person above all else.

By taking part in the 20th African Human Rights Moot Court Competition in Pretoria this July 2011, you are joining the ranks of this generation in whose hands the realisation of human rights in Africa ultimately rests. 2011 marks a triple celebration: the 20th anniversary of the Moot Competition, the 25th anniversary of the Centre for Human Rights and the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the African Charter on Human and Peoples. It is an honour for South Africa to host these events and a fitting tribute to the Centre for Human Rights, which won the prestigious UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education in 2006.

As you enjoy the privilege of the anniversary competition I challenge you, as future African human rights professionals, to become bearers of *ubuntu* – the essence of being human - as Africa’s gift to the world. *Ubuntu* embraces diversity, hospitality, empathy and care. We believe that a person is a person through another person; that my humanity is caught up and indeed inextricably bound to yours. When I dehumanise you, I inexorably dehumanise myself. The solitary human being is a contradiction in terms and it is in working for the common good that your humanity is realised.

Because freedom cannot be enjoyed amidst oppression and because there can be no peace without justice, I hope that you will return to your home country, empowered with knowledge and inspired by the friendships you have made with people from all over Africa, to finish your studies and go on to change our continent with the instrument of human rights. Welcome to South Africa, your home away from home, where I trust you will feel welcome and from which you will take away many happy memories.

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu