

Regional peace after SA settlement — Mandela

By Esmaré van der Merwe,
Political Reporter

BEIRA — Nelson Mandela vowed yesterday that a political settlement in South Africa would bring lasting peace and prosperity to the entire southern African region, particularly war torn Mozambique and Angola.

Addressing a rally in the northern province of Sofala on the last day of his state visit to Mozambique, the ANC deputy president said the political conflict and economic suffering in the region made the speedy eradication of apartheid even more urgent.

Destabilising

South Africa, a destabilising force in its neighbouring countries for many years, owed it to the region to find a negotiated settlement soon.

The ANC leader, who celebrates his 72nd birthday today, spoke to hundreds of admirers on the last day of a six-week international tour. His delegation paid a day-long visit to the north to enable residents here to listen to the legendary ANC leader.

They also visited Beira harbour and attended a presentation on the Beira Corridor transport system.

Mr Mandela, who was accompanied by scores of journalists on a special LAM flight to Beira, received the freedom of the city.

Despite of an active day in hot weather, he looked fit and energetic. But it is clear that the gruelling tour has taken its toll.

Mr Mandela will speak on the success of his tour at Jan Smuts airport this afternoon. Yesterday he told the rally the tour had been tremendously successful.

"To achieve a final and just solution (in SA) we are duty-bound to keep up the pressure on apartheid. In this regard our tour has been tremendously successful. We cannot fail, because the world has been with us."

Speaking through a Portuguese interpreter, he said he had wanted to thank personally the residents of the north for their role in the liberation of Mozambique and South Africa.

He congratulated the Frelimo government for taking the initiative in current peace talks with Renamo to end a 14-year civil war.

He said the ANC was confident that the death of apartheid was no longer a distant dream. However, a long battle still lay ahead to build a non-racial, united, democratic and prosperous future.

"The coming months will test the patience and will of all South Africans, black and white. As the world holds its breath we must make sure that we save ourselves, our future and our country. For our part we are ready and willing to take the last step for that which we have sacrificed so much."