

Hypocrisy

BRAZIL's decision to maintain economic and diplomatic sanctions against South Africa demonstrates the hypocrisy from which South Africa suffers.

ANC president Nelson Mandela, in his six-day trip to Brazil, received Brazil's highest award, the Grand Cross of the Order of Rio Branco.

Brazilian President Fernando Collor de Mello said he hoped to see Mr Mandela become "the symbol of a stronger, involved and racially integrated South Africa."

He reaffirmed Brazil's support for "all those working for the cause of democracy in South Africa."

And Mr Collor hailed Mr Mandela as "one of the highest expressions of human courage and perseverance of our time."

In turn, Mr Mandela described Brazil as a "great ally in the cause against racism."

"The voice of the Brazilian people always encouraged us in our fight against apartheid, crossing even the prison walls."

The reality in Brazil suggests this praise is misplaced.

The news agency report conveying Mr Mandela's pledge, "We are fighting for justice and human dignity not just in our country but the whole world," states:

"Blacks and people of mixed race make up 45 percent of the 150 million population in Brazil, which projects an image abroad of peaceful racial harmony that belies the harsh realities.

"Brazil was one of the last countries to outlaw slavery, which was finally abolished in 1888.

"The country has no Black Cabinet Ministers and only one Black State governor out of 27.

"Senior businessmen, diplomats and lawyers are almost exclusively White."

Shortly before Mr Mandela's arrival, the Brazilian Government announced it would normalise relations with Pretoria by appointing a full ambassador there.

To ameliorate any confusion or misunderstanding, a presidential statement announced that the ambassador would be a Black Brazil-

ian.

But then it was shamefacedly admitted that Brazil does not have a single Black or mixed-race ambassador.

When Mr Mandela arrived in Brazil, he told the crowd outside Rio de Janeiro's Guanabara Palace, which houses the State governor's office, that because Brazil was ahead of South Africa in building a non-racial society, it must act as a guide for his country.

Mr Mandeira's remarks were received in silence, the news report stressing that "racism is a sensitive issue in Brazil."

Earlier, on his arrival in Brazil, he was greeted at the airport with chants of "Down with camouflaged racism in Brazil."

No, Mr Mandela, you chose the wrong country in which to sing your praises and point lessons for South Africa.

No, Brazil, your president has a damn cheek to talk of a racially integrated South Africa when people of colour in your country suffer from racial discrimination.

As for continuing sanctions against South Africa as a protest against our racial policies, what hypocrisy.

South Africa has repealed all apartheid laws and the country is moving into a non-racial era.

It will not be a non-racial country in name only, but will be fully non-racial, with everyone having the vote and Mr Mandela's ANC vying for power.

No, Mr Collor, you should be worrying about your own country and your own society rather than about South Africa.

If you are prepared to be honest in your assessment, you will accept that State President De Klerk has placed South Africa irreversibly on the road to a non-racial democracy.

You will then lift sanctions and help him to introduce his new South Africa as a healthy and prosperous country.

He, rather than Mr Mandela, deserves to be acknowledged as a great democrat and a "symbol of a stronger, involved and racially integrated South Africa."

If anyone deserves a medal, it is President De Klerk.