

Swearing-In Ceremony Speech

His Excellency The Honourable Anand Satyanand PNZCM

A reproduction of the Governor-General's swearing-in ceremony speech, 23 August 2006.

Prime Minister Helen Clark, Chief Justice Sian Elias, Speaker of the House of Representatives Margaret Wilson, Members of the Executive Council and Members of Parliament, Dean and Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Chief of the Defence Force and Defence Representatives, Honoured Guests from the Realm of New Zealand, Distinguished Guests - including those from overseas, Ladies and Gentlemen and Student Representatives.

Tena koutou katoa, kia orana, fakalofa lahi atu, ni sambula vinaka, malo elelei, talofa lava, ni hao, namaste, namashkar, sat sri akaal, greetings to everyone.

Here on the steps of Parliament, it is a great honour to be part of this State occasion at which the Prime Minister and her government, the judiciary, the Parliament of New Zealand and the armed forces are all represented. It is also a wonderful gathering of young and old, representing so many aspects of the contemporary New Zealand community, Māori, European, Pacific Island and Asian.

I pay my respects and tribute to my many predecessors for their contributions through the years, and particularly to my judicial colleague and friend, Silvia Cartwright. She and Michael Hardie Boys before her and Catherine Tizard and Paul Reeves beyond that, have provided sterling examples of service upon which I shall be happy to draw. I resonate respects on the recent passing of the Māori Queen, Dame Te Atairangikaahu who showed us true leadership with quiet humility and who will be sorely missed for her contribution to New Zealand.

I have taken the Governor General's Oath of Office and have sworn, faithfully and impartially, to serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of New Zealand. This Oath reflects our country's history, traditions and constitutional arrangements. The Governor General's Oath is also about the people of the realm of New Zealand - in other words the people of New Zealand, the self-governing states of the Cook Islands and Niue, and Tokelau. I have sworn to serve the people faithfully and impartially, and I will be steadfast, loyal and fair as I undertake the functions of office.

My wife Susan and I are New Zealanders raised in Auckland. Whilst living in North Island centres my work has meant contact with communities and people in both North and South Islands.

Our immediate family, as well as members of our extended families, are here in good strength. We are grateful for their support and appreciate the sturdy challenge they have provided for the Government invitation process. I wish to mention, in particular, my elderly mother who through frailty is in hospital and not able to be present.

I want also to pay deference to my linkage with Fiji, where my parents were born and raised. They came to this country in the 1920s and 1930s to undertake their lives in the New Zealand community. I acknowledge also my Indian origin, with four grandparents who migrated from that country to Fiji.

Through my family, community involvement, my legal, judicial and ombudsman careers and my association with sport, I have had the opportunity

over the years to make and maintain connections with many people in different communities and locations in New Zealand. These experiences have enriched my understanding of our country. I have observed that New Zealanders have in good measure a number of characteristics – a dislike of abuse of power, an inquisitiveness associated with small societies, no significant hierarchies and a liking for individual expression.

Even more importantly, I hope to bring to my formal roles, the great love and enthusiasm that I have for New Zealand and the beauty and experiences that it offers. Images which come to mind readily are the grey, green and surging seas of the West Coast at Waimamaku near Omapere, or at Kawhia or the Whanganui Inlet near Farewell Spit; the kotuku at Okarito and the hoiho at Kaka Point; the sights, sounds and smells of the morning markets at Porirua, Avondale and Otara; the wonderful quiet of islands such as the Barrier (Aotea) and the Mayor (Tuhua); the Chinese New Year lanterns in Albert Park and Victoria Square, and the watching of movies in the heaving Arahura coming over the Cook Strait.

It will be an extraordinary privilege to serve this country as Governor-General over the next five years.

There are many families in New Zealand like mine, who share stories of journeys to reach this country. New Zealand's culture and identity is now a blend of Māori, European, Pacific Island and Asian influences. Our heritage is honoured, but new influences continue to come from those who have chosen to belong to New Zealand as the place to which they, as active citizens, will contribute.

In an address in 2005 entitled "New Zealand Dreams Pacific Destinies" Witi Ihimaera said:

Our New Zealand dreams today are the dreams of the Rope of Man. They are no longer just Māori dreams or Pākehā dreams. They are also the dreams of our other migrants, Polynesian, Asian, American and African in Aotearoa New Zealand. They have become blended, laminated. And the answer to "what may yet be seen" surely lies in the quality of the ideas that have been woven into the Rope. They are in the hope, the

optimism, the leadership and integrity of a younger generation who should not be constrained by race, nation and location but, instead be energised by them.

These evocative words express a hope which I share for the future in New Zealand. I want to see our rope (te taura tangata) strengthened and the positive aspects of our country and its identity discussed, affirmed and celebrated.

Let us with optimism affirm our future. And let us strengthen, foster and encourage trust among the various communities that make up New Zealand. That will make us strong. Our ambition should be, may I suggest, to go forward on the basis of our communities trusting each other – not blindly, but with good judgement and liberal amounts of information, insight, understanding and goodwill.

Over the next five years my wife and I will be two people making a public journey. I imagine during that time there will be some who will say "There is one of us being one of them". whilst for others it will be a case of saying "There is one of them being one of us."

With goodwill and good humour, we hope to meet, talk to and share experiences with many New Zealanders and many communities. Deeply conscious of the confidence and trust that has been placed in us, we are committed to doing our very best for New Zealand.

To end, may I paraphrase the words of Mahatma Gandhi by expressing the hope that New Zealand will be "a place where all winds can blow without us being blown over by any of them."

His Excellency The Honourable Anand Satyanand PNZCM is a former lawyer, judge and ombudsman. Born in Auckland, he is of Fijian-Indian descent and New Zealand's first Asian Governor-General. His inauguration speech has been reproduced with the permission of Government House.