



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

A warm welcome and many thanks to all of you South African Legends and Heroes here today supporting SARDA, as it moves towards its 50th anniversary in 2023. What a truly remarkable milestone you have achieved.

Since joining Riding for the Disabled Association as Patron in 1971 and President in 1985, I have been privileged to champion its work and visit RDA centers around the world. Some 28 years ago, I visited SARDA in Cape Town, and was impressed at the beauty of its setting, and the flourishing, well-run organization and what it had achieved. You have clearly continued this approach as you reach this anniversary. I am though aware that SARDA is now facing a challenge to the continued use of the land and facilities. This is a concern and the reason for holding this awareness raising and support generating event. It is vital that we are able to sustain SARDA's future and continue the benefit it has brought to thousands.

During my visits to RDA centers over many years, I have seen at first-hand, the life-changing impact of our activities. This has been brought about by the unique connection between the environment, participants, horses and volunteers that united, bring psychological and physical benefits to as many disabled people as possible. One of the great strengths of our RDA community is our ability to have a national influence on the world of disability's therapy and sport, while maintaining a local network that reaches deep into the heart of our rural and urban communities.

I welcome SARDA's ambitious efforts and intentions to raise funds to cement its future. Your intention to make even more of a difference to communities through Lighting up Africa at large, through a long ride awareness campaign, is indeed an example of innovative thinking and ambition. SARDA's longevity is due to all of you. Together you have set an example of excellence, discipline, integrity, respecting everyone and encouraging inclusion in society. We must all look to strengthen our RDA Groups and find new ways for people to benefit – with education, schools and horses at the heart of everything we do.

Looking ahead, as President of RDA and in recognition of the importance and continuity of SARDA in Africa, I encourage more support for SARDA. Your record speaks for itself which is what will assist you on your path to achieve independence, and that it will enable you to continue your priceless work for the next 50 years. To all of you and your volunteers, staff, schools and supporters who are embarking on a new chapter in your history, I would like to encourage you and say thank you for everything you do, to sustain and promote RDA in Africa, and to inspire others to do the same.