



Organization of African Unity

**Address to the Staff by H.E. Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim,
Secretary General of the Organization of
African Unity**

Congo Hall
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**Your Excellencies the Assistant
Secretaries General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We have just returned from Harare, where we had a very successful Summit. I deemed it necessary to seize the earliest opportunity to meet the entire staff of the General Secretariat.

First, I would like on my own behalf and on behalf of the Assistant Secretaries General to thank all the staff members both those who went to Harare and those who remained behind, for their contribution in the preparation process of the Summit and during the Summit itself. I wish in particular, to put on record my appreciation to all those who worked hard.

Secondly, I thought we should use this opportunity to draw lessons from the recent Summit and reflect together on how best the General Secretariat could live up to the great expectations by our Member States. Those of you who attended the Summit must have noted that it was a Summit with a difference. Indeed, the spirit which prevailed during the meeting, the kind of discussions and the far reaching decisions taken by our leaders were seen as a new departure in the way our Organization is doing its business.

As you are aware, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government met, for the first time, in its capacity as the Assembly of the African Economic Community. It has thus given a new impetus to the integration process of the Continent. We should keep this momentum. The discussions on conflicts, particularly on the on-going crisis in Sierra Leone was also a great moment. The Leaders were unanimous in unequivocally condemning the coup d'etat in that country. The discussions on the situation in the Great Lakes Region with particular focus on Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo also proved the maturity of our Organization and proved that a new and responsible Africa is emerging. The Summit was perceived by the media and by all those from outside the Continent who attended it as an important Summit where the African leaders had frank, serious and constructive discussions on issues of common concern to them and of concern to our people.

I thought, it was important to organize this meeting to share impressions on the recent Harare Summit with those of us who remained at Headquarters.

As you are well aware, the Summit also re-elected me as Secretary General of the Organization for another term. I was of course, delighted, gratified and moved by the decision of our Leaders which was taken through secret ballot, in a transparent manner.

This election was not a proforma one. In giving me the honour and privilege of serving our Continent for the third time, our Leaders did so on the basis of a vision that I share with them. I have articulated that vision in the Introductory Note to my report to Council and Summit and in the statements I made on the two occasions in Harare. That vision basically evolves around the need to build a strong Organization which can play a central role in addressing the challenges facing our Continent: the challenge of peace, security and stability; the challenge of economic cooperation and integration; the challenge of democracy and respect of human rights and above all the challenge of maintaining the unity and cohesion of our Continent and its peoples.

In renewing me their confidence therefore, our Leaders asked me to lead the General Secretariat towards meeting those challenges. In my acceptance speech to the Summit, I stated that I was conscious of the challenges facing me in ensuring that no stone is left unturned in our collective efforts to make our Organization more relevant and more responsive to the needs and demands of our peoples and Continent as we approach the threshold of the new millennium. I pledged to defend the interests of our Organization and Continent to the best of my ability to continue to work hard towards strengthening further our Organization for the advancement of peace, democracy and development of our Continent. I also pledged to promote the ideals and objectives of our Organization and

preserve its integrity. Finally, I stated that I shall continue to be guided by the ideals of unity, solidarity and Pan-Africanism and to be inspired by the vision of the Founding Fathers of our Organization.

Furthermore, when I took oath, I solemnly undertook to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience, the functions and responsibilities entrusted to me as Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity and to discharge my functions and to regulate my conduct with only the interests of the OAU in view, and not to seek or accept instructions from the government of any Member State or authority external to the Organization.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If I took some time to recall what I pledged to do before the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, it is just to share with you the weight of the responsibility entrusted to me and the seriousness with which I take it.

Over the last years, we have worked together. I have endeavoured to promote and encourage team spirit and Pan-Africanism. Together, we have been able to achieve progress. Now, we should be able to do more. We have to translate into reality the expectation of our Member

States. The message of Harare is clear: we know what we want, we should, now, do it more effectively and more efficiently. In other words, the ball is in the camp of the General Secretariat to build its capacity to meet the challenges. Together, we need to build a new Secretariat. A more performing one.

To be able to do so, we need to review our methods of work. We need to work in a more rigorous and disciplined manner. We should no more tolerate the attitude of "laissez - faire - laissez aller". We should inculcate the sense of responsibility and professionalism. The rules and regulations should be strictly adhered to. We are all here to work. Those who work hard shall be recognized and whenever possible duly rewarded. Those who are not ready to work will assume their responsibilities and the rules and regulations will be strictly applied to them.

During a Policy Cabinet meeting we held on Tuesday, I shared with the Assistant Secretaries General views on how to build a new spirit and a new Secretariat. We all agreed that we should conduct our business differently. We shall do it more rationally.

We need more rigor and discipline in our work. I want to make it clear that indiscipline and lackadaisicalism will not be tolerated. We should all endeavour to work as professionals.

We have to respect the rules and regulations which organize the functioning of our Institution. We should respect hierarchy. One of these basic rules is to be punctual and to do our job to the best of our ability.

The last comment I would like to make is on the loyalty we all should have to the Organization. I, as Secretary General took the oath to be loyal only to the Organization. This oath, I took it on my own behalf as Secretary General, but also on behalf of the entire General Secretariat I am leading. I therefore urge you all, as we embark on a new phase to recommit yourselves to the Organization and its objectives and be loyal to it.

Some of you would recall that in 1989, soon after I took over as Secretary General of the Organization, I had an opportunity to address the staff in this very hall. My message to you then as it is now was to emphasize that we are at the service of our Pan-African Organization. We are Africa's civil servants. Our loyalty is to our continental Organization. We may come from different countries and different geographical regions. We may speak different languages. We are, however, first and foremost Africans. We should, by our actions, demonstrate our attachment and commitment to Africa as a whole. We serve the Continent. We serve its people. Through our actions, we should demonstrate in no uncertain terms that our first priority is to serve our Continent. We belong to the OAU.

I therefore expect every staff member to take this commitment in the service of Africa seriously and to take his or her loyalty to the OAU as a central guiding directive.

In conclusion, I wish to invite you all to join me in working seriously to make this Secretariat a different and a better one. With the good will of each and all of us, I have no doubt that we shall succeed.