



Organization of African Unity

**STATEMENT BY
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AT THE 'RECAMP' SEMINAR**

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I wish at the outset to thank the Government of Tanzania and the Government of France for the invitation extended to me and to the OAU's Conflict Management Centre to participate in this important seminar. The fact that this Seminar is taking place in Dar-es-Salaam within the context of the French Government's initiative RECAMP, is an important statement by France on its commitment, sensitivity and understanding of the concerns which the Member States of the OAU have consistently expressed, following the introduction of many initiatives by non-African countries, to enhance African peacekeeping capabilities.

I therefore commend and whole-heartedly congratulate the French Government for its appreciation of those concerns. By so doing, the French Government has ensured that it is in a position to contribute in very concrete and specific terms, to the building of peacekeeping capacity in Africa, and to do so in a manner that not only cuts across cultural, linguistic and national divides, but also addresses the important political, military and humanitarian dimensions of our peace and security Agenda in the Continent. These are all problems that had in the past, impacted negatively on the state of health of the African Continent.

The decision of the Government of Tanzania to host this seminar in cooperation with the French Government is an eloquent testimony of the continuing commitment of Tanzania to the consolidation of peace, security and stability in the Continent, in this particular case through the building of capacities for peace-keeping. The fact that the Head of State of this country President Benjamin Mkapa himself inaugurated the seminar testifies that this commitment is total. I therefore wish to pay tribute to the Government of Tanzania for facilitating the convening of this seminar as well as the other activities planned for this exercise in the course of the next 12 months. All this augurs well for France-Africa cooperation in this vital field of our collective efforts to promote peace and security in our Continent.

I wish, at this juncture, to commend the role of the Tanzania Peoples' Defense Forces in the preparation and materialization of this Seminar and the activities that are to unfold. I am confident that, working closely with the French Defense Forces in the next months and especially in the joint and multinational military exercises in the Tanga region next February, they will be able to further enhance their capacity and expertise in this important and increasingly vital area of peacekeeping.

It is noteworthy that this year's RECAMP exercise is taking place in this region. With the benefit of the experience so far accumulated in matters of peace-keeping in Somalia, in the DRC, in Rwanda, in Burundi, in Ethiopia and Eritrea, there is no doubt that the region taken in a broader context has

had quite a challenging experience in the aspect of peace-keeping. It is, therefore, my fervent hope that by bringing RECAMP to this region and by expanding its scope to include political and humanitarian exchanges, a platform would have been provided for dealing with problems that had either undermined, continue to undermine or complicate peacekeeping deployments in the region, if not on the Continent as a whole.

This seminar is convening against a background that underscores the need for clearly addressing the linkage between the military, political and humanitarian aspects of peace-keeping. In the past decade and a half, several countries in our Continent have been subjected to a variety of military and non-military risks that were often difficult to anticipate. Indeed, while the potential for inter-state conflicts was not altogether diminishing in the period of the nineties, the same period saw the emergence of complex new risks to peace and stability, including internal conflicts, weakening of government operations and, in one case, a total collapse of the state machinery and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

In the last decade alone, our experience in Africa has pointed to the fact that when conflicts emerge, they usually contain elements that are inter- and intra-state, trans-national in nature, and, invariably, almost always involved the cross-border movement of refugees, internal displacement, migration and widespread human rights abuses. In a new and disturbing development, it became increasingly commonplace that intra-state and trans-national conflicts emerged, that were fought by non-state actors, warlords, militias, criminal and armed elements, rather than by regular armies. As a result, social cohesion and state institutions became threatened, some even collapsed, bringing about a breakdown of law and order, with banditry and chaos prevailing and a resulting flight of the civilian population, which sometimes caused the destabilization of neighbouring states and the destruction of the environment and infrastructure.

It is against such a backdrop that the connection that this Seminar has sought to underscore, between the military and political aspects of a peace and security agenda, embracing peacekeeping, must be addressed. We at the OAU, had long come to the conclusion that efforts by Africans and their partners in the international community to address or respond to crises and conflicts in Africa and to restore and create sustainable peace, through peacekeeping deployments, should of necessity, address both the underlying causes and the multifaceted manifestation of the conflict. In effect, a crisis response or peacekeeping deployment should, to the extent possible, include political, diplomatic, military and humanitarian initiatives to control and terminate the conflict, promote reconciliation and re-establish effective governance and sustainable peace, as part of the post-conflict reconstruction and development phases of the conflict.

These were the same considerations that influenced the proposals that I submitted to OAU Heads of State and Government in 1992 at their Summit in Dakar, Senegal, for the establishment of the Mechanism. At the time, the initiative was almost imperiled, because of old apprehensions on the place of peacekeeping in the Agenda of the OAU. There were clearly those who felt that peacekeeping was the sole responsibility of the United Nations Security Council, given its mandate to maintain international peace and security. It was, at the time, felt that it was not necessary for the OAU to be involved in the expensive business of peacekeeping and definitely not to act in a manner that implied a duplication of the efforts of the United Nations.

Fortuitously, following the extensive debates and consultations around my proposals, the Mechanism was established and for the first time, provided the OAU, with an Institutional framework to address the issues that I had earlier alluded to, in a more proactive manner as against the ad-hoc approaches of the past.

The convergence of opinion on the Cairo Declaration for a second generation peace and security agenda for the OAU, was also significantly influenced by the unfortunate and tragic genocide that took place in Rwanda, in much the same way as did the Congo crisis in the early 1960's, when the first generation peace and security agenda was formulated.

Two years after the establishment of our Mechanism, in 1995, to be precise, OAU Heads of State and Government who had earlier been hesitant about getting involved in peacekeeping, adopted my proposal to establish "*ready contingents*" within the military establishment of OAU member states. It was envisaged that those contingents, in much the same way as the UN's standby arrangements, would be available for deployment by the United Nations and, in exceptional circumstances, by the OAU.

Subsequently, Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces of African States met, first in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and later, in Harare, Zimbabwe, where they made substantive proposals on a framework for the conduct of peacekeeping operations in Africa and, in particular, for the enhancement of OAU's capacities to undertake peace support operations.

I hope that all the participants at this Seminar will have had a chance to familiarize themselves with the conclusions and the recommendations of the Chiefs of Staff, for they had carefully put together the parameters for peacekeeping in Africa. Indeed, the Chiefs of Staff were unanimous in their views on the need to strengthen the capacity of the OAU, working in tandem with the UN and sub-regional Organizations, to assume greater responsibility for solving African problems before seeking outside assistance. They stressed the need for unity of action, greater cohesiveness and enhanced cooperation between African countries, bilaterally at the national level, and also within a

multilateral framework, by regional Organizations and at the continental level. However, they were also unequivocal that all peace support operations in Africa should be conducted in tandem with the United Nations and in a manner that is consistent with the UN Charter.

Beyond these issues of complementarity, the Chiefs of Staff identified, as we at the OAU had done earlier, the two main issues that continue to constrain peacekeeping operations in Africa: logistics and funding for the sustainability of deployments.

The work done by African Chiefs of Staff took place against the backdrop that as far back as 1994, the international community and the friends of the OAU had shown considerable interest in and played a significant role in the efforts aimed at addressing Africa's challenge in the realm of peacekeeping. These partners, notably, the Americans, the British, the French, the Canadians, the Dutch and some Scandinavian countries, had introduced several initiatives aimed at enhancing Africa's capacities for peacekeeping.

These initiatives are well-known to this audience, and I believe that we are here today as a result of the consolidation of the French-led initiative, widely known by its acronym RECAMP. I am happy to note that one of the areas of concern that we at the OAU initially expressed over these external initiatives, is being addressed by ensuring regular consultation and complementarity of the initiatives, whether it is ACRI, RECAMP or the British-led and other initiatives. The fact remains that while these initiatives may not necessarily be African, they are about Africa, which explains the strong interest that we at the General Secretariat of the OAU and our member states, have taken in them. Our desire is to ensure that these important initiatives are properly coordinated and synchronized with the work and Agenda of the OAU relating to peacekeeping or, in broader terms, Africa's peace and security Agenda.

At the level of the regions, we continue to welcome the fact that many of the Regional Organizations that were established as economic groupings, have since assumed peace and security Agendas and mandates. I believe that this has been the result of the natural convergence between the military, economic and political challenges that all the regions of our Continent are confronted with. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is perhaps the best known of the African Regional Organizations that gained international respectability, through its massive peacekeeping efforts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and now in the Mano River Basin Union Region. No matter how people have perceived and analyzed the role of ECOMOG in West Africa, the fact is incontestable, that by deploying peacemaking missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, ECOWAS had succeeded in saving lives and minimizing the destabilization of the region.[†] Additionally, ECOWAS was also able to prove the fact that, in Africa, the dominance of security issues and concerns in regional

politics, make it all the more imperative that economic relations are rooted in a sound political and security foundation, as the collapse of law and order, render the pursuit of the objectives of economic integration extremely difficult if not impossible.

In Southern Africa, SADC, acting under the mandate of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security, was also able to intervene early in Lesotho, to end the crisis in that country and as you all would recall, the crisis in that Kingdom, threatened to undermine democracy and development not only within Lesotho itself, but also in the Southern African Region as a whole.

I have thus far attempted to highlight the efforts that are being made in Africa, to strengthen the capacity of the Continent to pursue its peace and security Agenda and to engage in peacekeeping. This has not been an exhaustive exercise because of limitations of time. I am also acutely aware of the fact that peacekeeping remains a universal concept, which is why we at the OAU, are devoting considerable time to reviewing the recent Brahimi Report in order to contextualize it in the African setting.

As you would be aware, the Brahimi Panel of Experts assessed the shortcomings of the existing UN System and made frank and specific recommendations for changes. It is our intention to ensure that the OAU works closely with the UN to make arrangements for a coordinated African response and position on the implementation of the Brahimi recommendations, in order to make them responsive and effective in advancing the cause of peacekeeping in Africa.

Already, there are a few areas that we need to pay attention to if we are to correct the obvious mistakes of the past. These include the whole issue of imprecise, ambiguous and often confusing mandates that have contributed to undermining peacekeeping deployments in Africa. I am sure that you are all aware of the fact that many peacekeeping efforts in Africa had floundered in the past because of mutual distrust between the Peacekeeping Force and the Parties on the one hand and between the Parties themselves, on the other. Additionally, the absence of a viable political process that is acceptable to all the protagonists to a given conflict, had in the past, created serious problems for many peacekeeping deployments in Africa, and nowhere was this more evident, than in Somalia, which until to-date, continues to pay the price and nurse the wounds of years of anarchy and instability.

As we reflect on the nature of peacekeeping deployments in Africa, it is an incontestable fact that most of these missions, were in the past, badly under-staffed, under-funded and often, as was the case in Rwanda, ill-equipped to oversee the implementation of their Mandates or Agreements. I remain concerned over the current modest proposals for the deployment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a vast country with complex and

multifaceted problems and a myriad of actors, including non-state actors who are supposed to be the interlocutors of the Force.

I wish also to draw attention to another problem that has contributed to complicating peace keeping in Africa. It is not uncommon to find that Force Commanders are often given Missions impossible, because they were neither consulted nor involved during the negotiations that gave rise to Agreements and Mandates for Peacekeeping deployments. It is my view that those who are to be responsible for implementing Agreements should be involved early enough and throughout all the stages of negotiations, so that they can extend their professional advice before negotiations are concluded.

Having spoken at length on the issue of peacekeeping in Africa and why we need to continue to justify or sustain the deployment of peacekeeping forces on the Continent, I should like to end my address by briefly looking at the converse side of the argument. I remain persuaded by our principled and consistent view that the need for expensive, time-consuming and resource-wasting peacekeeping deployments would have, by this new century, been reduced to the minimum, had it not been for the incessant and complex situations of conflicts that continue to plague the African Continent.

We have since come to the realization that prevention is not only better than cure, but also far more cheaper than the costly peacekeeping ventures for which the OAU lacks the resources and the expertise to undertake. The other reality is that increasingly, we are loosing the universal character of peacekeeping, especially, given the new concept of the willing and the able whereby, peacekeeping is contracted to those who have the capacity and the resources to mount it. There seems to be some kind of fatigue in the international community, at a time when Africans are increasingly being asked to assume more and more responsibility for dealing with the many crises on the Continent, sometimes, without the extension of a commensurate level of support that is required to sustain such initiatives. Sometimes, we are faced with the question of what happens in regions where there is an absence of the able and the willing. This explains our continuing concerns that the focus of many external initiatives in peacekeeping, continues to be on training, as against discussing and addressing the more important and critical aspects of logistics and funding.

Regrettably also, even though it is a fact that our own OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, leans more on prevention, the reality is that preventive diplomacy does not make much news these days. Support to preventive initiatives are always slow in coming. Often, it is too little and too late. In today's world of the global village and information technology, news of disasters and anarchy travel fast. With the CNN factor, it is often the case that it is the bad news that makes the headlines. By the same token, the reaction and response time of the international community is always

more rapid and visible when there is a breakdown of law and order, the killings of the innocent, the massive exodus of refugees, and the destruction of infrastructure.

In order to address the kind of problems that I have just referred to, and out of a realization that as Africans, we had to address the root and fundamental causes of conflicts, several political initiatives were launched by the OAU in the areas of governance, democratization, respect for human rights and socio-economic development and integration.

These include, the adoption of a Declaration against Unconstitutional Changes in Government, which is aimed at promoting democracy and the rule of law in Africa. To give further credence to the essence of peace and stability, the first Ministerial Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) took place in Abuja, Nigeria in May 2000.

Subsequently, African Leaders adopted the CSSDCA Solemn Declaration in Lome in July 2000, in which they acknowledged the symbiotic linkages between security, stability, development and cooperation in Africa. In effect, the CSSDCA initiative is expected to complement our Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, in providing an invaluable tool for the pursuit of the Agenda of the OAU in the new millennium, in the areas of security, stability, development and cooperation in Africa.

Consequently, Africa's future Agenda and, by extension, the desirability for peacekeeping on the Continent will continue to be informed by the principle that without peace and security, Africa cannot achieve the development that is so desperately needed. Of course, the corollary is equally valid, that is, without development, cooperation and integration, the peace and security that the Continent so badly needs, will remain elusive.

As I have tried to highlight in this address, these hard truths have not always been lost on the OAU, which is why we have not shied away from addressing them. Recently, we were able to secure the required two-thirds ratification for the Constitutive Act of the African Union to come into effect.

I recommend the Act for your information and reflection. At the OAU, we are excited about the new momentum for greater cohesiveness and unity of action in Africa, brought about by the establishment of the new Union. In spite of the provisions for the respect of the territorial integrity of states, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, clearly provides for and emphasizes community and shared values issues such as respect for human rights, good governance, democratization and collective action in respect of grave circumstances, namely, war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. In short, no longer shall we sit back quietly and indifferently, while people are being abused and slaughtered, as during the catastrophe that we witnessed in

Rwanda in 1994. Neither, shall we sit back and wait for salvation to come from outside.

The Constitutive Act provides an unambiguous framework for collective action to promote peace and stability in Africa, in order to minimize or avoid costly peacekeeping deployments for which neither the international community seem eager to be involved, nor Africans can afford.

Before concluding, let me underscore the need for continued collaboration and partnership between Africa and the wider international community. Indeed, we have never understood the African determination and international calls for the peoples of the Continent to assume more responsibility for dealing with African problems, as a signal for the rest of the world to wash its hands off Africa. By the same token, we do not understand the fact that our partners having worked so hard to enhance the capacity of Africa, particularly in peacekeeping training, will not follow-up these initiatives with other complementary initiatives to address all the outstanding problems in a comprehensive manner, including the problematic questions of funding and logistics, not to mention addressing political sensitivities that are critical for the success of peacekeeping deployments.

In conclusion, it would have been remiss of me not to acknowledge the continuing support, assistance and contribution that our various partners have provided towards the promotion of the African peace Agenda. In particular, I wish to place on record OAU's appreciation for the assistance of the French Government through the framework of RECAMP, and other initiatives, as well as for the support that our member states are receiving from other partners in the international community through a variety of other initiatives in the area of peacekeeping.

We look forward to working closely with France and with all our partners to ensure that Africa benefits from the increasingly global and integrated approaches to the issues of peace, security and development. We cannot afford to do otherwise, for inherent in the whole concept of a village (which, by the way, is an African concept), is the fact that actions revolve around caring and sharing. Indeed, Africa has every right to expect international support and solidarity in this interdependent world.

Thank you.