

ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY



ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE

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**BRIEF STATEMENT BY DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF  
AFRICAN UNITY**

10 July 2001

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**Mr. Chairman,**

**Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,**

**Heads of Delegations,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We have just come to the end of a very important debate on the African Union. The views that you have collectively expressed have been profound and substantive and will definitely provide the General Secretariat and our experts the much needed framework for implementing the decisions relating to the establishment of the African Union and its Organs. I wish to thank all the Leaders who contributed to the debate.

At a personal level, I wish to thank all of you for the sentiments that you have expressed towards me since the beginning of this session of the Assembly. I wish also, to thank the Head of the Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs Jakaya Kikwete, for the very moving statement that he made here yesterday. I wish in particular to thank other Heads of State and Government and Heads of Delegation for their kind and generous remarks directed at my person. My colleagues and I at the General Secretariat are deeply appreciative of your words of encouragement with respect to the preparation of this Summit. From Sirte to Lusaka, we have strived to meet the expectations of this Assembly and to lay the foundation for the transformation of the OAU to the African Union.

The presence of so many Heads of State and Government during this debate on the African Union, provides me with a good opportunity before your departure from Lusaka, to thank all of you once again, for the confidence that you had reposed in me over the period of the last 12 years when I had the singular honour and privilege to serve as Secretary General of our Continental Organization.

I wish to reiterate once again, my humble and sincere gratitude for this extra-ordinary opportunity of serving at the helm of the Continental Organization continuously for three unprecedented mandates. In discharging my duties as the Secretary General of our Continental Organization I have always been guided by the Pan-African ethos of serving Africa irrespective of regional, linguistic, racial, ethnic, and geographic considerations. Indeed, my memorable encounter as a young diplomat in the historic OAU Summit, in Cairo 1964, left an indelible mark in my self-perception and in how I view my place in this Continent. My exposure to the legendary Pan-Africanist figures like Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, Modibo Keita, Ben Bella, Nasser, Haile Selasie, Leopold Senghor, Mwalimu Nyerere and many other towering sons of this Continent has remained not only pedagogical in its impact, but it has been a noble guide to my lifelong journey of service to our people.

I have always considered this Continent in its wholeness. Whether at the service to my beloved country, Tanzania or when working for our pre-eminent institution the OAU, the diversities for me are a source of strength and never a cause for differences. No part of Africa and no African brother or sister has ever been a foreigner to me throughout my public career.

I believe it is this perspective of our Continent that has enabled me to win your trust and confidence and also granting me the extra-ordinary honour of serving for 12 years. By the end of my last term, I decided that as a way of cherishing and valuing this honour I should not seek for another term. I made my position clear in every occasion and in every African capital that I visited –most recently in Brazzaville, Bamako, and here in Lusaka. I have stuck to this position.

Mr. Chairman  
Excellencies

Throughout my tenure as Secretary General of the Organization, I have strived to live up to the highest ideals of this Organization in a manner that reflected its pan-African nature. In so doing, I have consistently put the interest of this Continent and its Organization, beyond my personal, regional, linguistic, ethnic and any other narrow or selfish interest. I have always seen my role as a bridge builder and passionate advocate of the principles and objectives of our Continental Organization throughout my twelve years of service I never considered my service to Africa as a career but a commitment. I am proud that I am leaving the Organization at a time that the foundations for achieving the cherished dream of the African people for greater unity and cohesiveness have been attained. I am gratified that I will be leaving the Organization with the firm conviction that I have used all my energies and modest talents in the service of my Continent and its people.

In the course of executing my duties, I might have committed some errors. I sincerely hope that for this, I shall be judged by my motive – which has always been to further the ideals of unity, solidarity, peace and the well-being of our people.

In September, I shall be leaving the OAU but will not be leaving Africa. As, in the past 12 years and indeed as it has been the case in most of my life, I will continue to leave no stone unturned in the service of our Continent in whatever responsibilities I may have in the future.

Once again early this morning our Organization rose up to a challenge and prevailed triumphantly, reasserting our solidarity and commitment to the higher ideals of shaping our collective future. You the Leaders demonstrated collective wisdom and with the characteristic goodwill, consensus, and African brotherhood, elected a new Secretary General to steer the affairs of our Organization during this critical period with all the formidable challenges that lie ahead.

I wish to extend my whole-hearted congratulation to my brother and friend of long standing Amara Essy, for the honour and confidence that the Leaders have reposed in him. I am also confident that given his vast experience, diplomatic skills and exemplary commitment to the promotion of the well being and unity of our Continent, he will provide the necessary leadership that will be required during this transitional period. I wish on my personal behalf, and on behalf of all my colleagues, to assure him of the maximum cooperation of the entire staff of the General Secretariat in the days, weeks and months ahead.

I thank you.