

CLOSING REMARKS BY H.E. MR. SALIM AHMED SALIM  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAU AT THE  
OAU INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ASSISTANCE TO  
AFRICAN CHILDREN

Dakar, Senegal  
27 Nov. 92

MADAM MINISTER,  
YOUR EXCELLENCIES,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

WE HAVE NOW COME TO THE END OF OUR DELIBERATIONS. BEFORE YOU CLOSE OUR SESSION, MADAM MINISTER, ALLOW ME TO MAKE A FEW REMARKS WHICH I HOPE WILL REFLECT THE SENTIMENTS OF ALL THE PARTICIPANTS, AS WELL AS THE FEELINGS OF THE OAU GENERAL SECRETARIAT AND, OF COURSE, OF OUR PARTNERS IN ACTION, UNICEF.

IT WOULD BE RECALLED THAT THIS CONFERENCE WAS CONVENED IN RESPONSE TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WHICH WAS ENDORSED BY THE 27TH ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE OAU IN ABUJA, NIGERIA.

MADAM MINISTER,

THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE CONFERENCE WERE GUIDED BY THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS OF H.E. ABDOU DIOUF, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL AND CURRENT CHAIRMAN OF THE OAU. THE CONFERENCE ALSO DREW INSPIRATION FROM THE IMPORTANT STATEMENT OF H.E. ROBERT GABRIEL MUGABE, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE.

WE CAME TO DAKAR WITH CLEAR OBJECTIVES IN MIND AND GREAT EXPECTATIONS THAT THIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WILL GALVANISE INTERNATIONAL COALITION AROUND A CONSENSUS. A CONSENSUS THAT WILL HENCEFORTH, CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS OF AFRICAN CHILDREN AND THEIR MOTHERS.

FOR THE PAST THREE DAYS, WE DISCUSSED IN A CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER, AND IN A TRUE SENSE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND IN A CARING SPIRIT THE QUESTION OF THE WELFARE OF THE AFRICAN CHILD, HE/HIS SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT.

IN THIS REGARD, WE WOULD LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO H.E. PRESIDENT ABDOU DIOUF, THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF SENEGAL FOR HAVING FACILITATED THE HOSTING OF SUCH AN IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, THE FIRST OF ITS NATURE IN AFRICA. THIS WAS MADE POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE CONDUCIVE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, STABILITY AND HOSPITALITY IN THE HOST COUNTRY. THE FUTURE GENERATIONS OF THE ENTIRE CONTINENT WILL REMAIN INDEBTED TO THEM FOR EVER FOR THIS HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT.

THE SUCCESS OF THIS CONFERENCE WOULD ALSO NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE INTENSIVE COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN THE OAU AND THE UNICEF IN ITS PREPARATION AND SERVICING. WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP AND TO BUILD THE CAPACITY FOR THIS PURPOSE.

THE RESPONSE OF AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS OF THE NORTH, UN AGENCIES, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, AS WELL AS THE PRESENCE OF THE MEDIA WHICH COVERED THIS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN POSITIVE AND ENCOURAGING.

AFRICA REMAINS COMMITTED TO FULFIL THE OBJECTIVE OF THE DAKAR CONSENSUS AND TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESPECTIVE NATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF ACTION FOR THE WELFARE, PROTECTION AND SURVIVAL OF AFRICAN CHILDREN. AND IN SO DOING, WE ARE FULLY COGNISANT OF THE TREMENDOUS ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES FACING THE CONTINENT ESPECIALLY THOSE RELATING TO THE DEBT AND DEBT SERVICING OVERHANG, THE DETERIORATION OF THE TERMS OF TRADE, MAN-MADE AND NATURAL CALAMITIES.

IN SPITE OF THESE PROBLEMS, WE ARE RESOLVED TO CREATE A CONDUCTIVE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, TO TACKLE, PREVENT AND RESOLVE CONFLICTS, TO DEMOCRATISE OUR SOCIETIES AND INSTITUTIONS AND TO PUT IN PLACE SOUND ECONOMIC POLICIES IN ORDER TO GIVE HOPE FOR A BRIGHT AND MEANINGFUL FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN. THEY DESERVE NOTHING LESS.

WE ARE INDEED DETERMINED TO TAKE, ON THE BASIS OF THE CONSENSUS OF DAKAR WHICH WE HAVE JUST ADOPTED, THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL MEASURES NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT THE CHILDREN WHO WELCOMED US WITH SONGS AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF OUR CONFERENCE, WERE JUSTIFIED IN THEIR WELCOME.



AFRICA HAS THE DETERMINATION TO DECISIVELY DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF HER CHILDREN: AND SHE INDEED, RECOGNIZES THAT THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS REGARD IS HERS.

WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE COMMITMENTS MADE HERE BY AFRICAN COUNTRIES WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A RECIPROCAL MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES ON THE PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WHICH WILL LEAD TO THE BUILDING OF A BROAD INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN COALITION FOR THE ALLEVIATION OF THE PROBLEMS OF AFRICAN CHILDREN.

MADAM MINISTER,

WE REQUEST YOU TO CONVEY TO THE PRESIDENT OF SENEGAL, AND THROUGH HIM TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF SENEGAL, OUR PROFOUND APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE FOR SENEGAL'S CONTRIBUTION IN ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF THIS IMPORTANT AND, IN MANY WAYS, HISTORIC CONFERENCE LET ME ALSO IN THIS CONNECTION, SAY HOW MUCH WE HAVE ADMIRERD AND APPRECIATED THE EFFECTIVE MANNER IN WHICH YOU, MADAM CHAIRMAN, HAVE GUIDED OUR DELIBERATIONS. YOUR POLITE BUT FIRM HANDLING OF OUR PROCEEDINGS HAVE IN NO SMALL MEASURE CONTRIBUTED TO THE HAPPY STAGE THAT WE HAVE NOW REACHED. YOU HAVE OUR THANKS AND APPRECIATION.

FINALLY, MAY I WISH ALL THOSE CONCERNED A SAFE JOURNEY HOME.

BON VOYAGE ET MERCI!