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ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

REMARKS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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TO

THE CONFERENCE ON STABILITY, SECURITY

AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA

Addis Ababa, 17 November, 1990.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I WELCOME YOU ALL AND WISH YOU A PLEASANT AND FRUITFUL  
STAY IN ADDIS ABABA.

I WELCOME, IN PARTICULAR, YOUR PRESENCE AT THIS HISTORIC  
ENCOUNTER WHICH WILL ENABLE YOU TO BRAINSTORM ON THE ISSUES  
OF STABILITY, SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA. I WISH TO  
CONGRATULATE GENERAL OBASANJO AND HIS COLLEAGUES OF THE AFRICA  
LEADERSHIP FORUM FOR THIS VERY TIMELY INITIATIVE.

THIS INITIATIVE COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A MORE PROPITIOUS  
TIME ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE MYRIAD OF PROBLEMS, WHICH NOW FACE  
OUR CONTINENT. WE NEED, THEREFORE, TO PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER  
AND SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PULL AFRICA FROM THE BRINK. WE  
SHOULD BE ABLE TO EMERGE WITH A SET OF PRINCIPLES - A BODY OF VIEWS  
WHICH, IF IMPLEMENTED, COULD ENHANCE THE SECURITY OF AFRICA.

TODAY, THE CONTINENT IS AFFECTED BY MANY PROBLEMS  
WHICH HAVE DEFIED SOLUTION OVER THE LAST THIRTY YEARS OR SO OF  
INDEPENDENCE. SOME OF THE PROBLEMS ARISE FROM THE LEGACIES OF  
COLONIALISM, SOME ARE INHERENT IN THE SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS  
WHICH AFRICA CREATED IN THE POSTCOLONIAL AREA. BUT, WHETHER  
INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY, AFRICAN COUNTRIES CONTINUE TO  
GRAPPLE WITH SOCIAL AS WELL AS POLITICAL PROBLEMS. BORDER  
DIFFERENCES, REFUGEES, ECONOMIC STAGNATION, ABUSE OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS, LACK OF POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEMOCRACY,  
ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND A HOST OF OTHER PROBLEMS HAVE  
COMBINED TO UNDERMINE THE CONFIDENCE AND SECURITY OF THE

CONTINENT. YET IT IS CLEAR THAT, IF THESE PROBLEMS PERSIST, IT IS NOT BECAUSE AFRICA HAS NOT TRIED. ON THE CONTRARY, MUCH EFFORT HAS BEEN EXPENDED BY INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES OR A GROUP OF THEM OR AFRICA COLLECTIVELY, AT THE LEVEL OF THE OAU, TO BRING THE CONTINENT TOGETHER IN A POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IN AN ATTEMPT TO FIND LASTING SOLUTIONS TO THEIR PROBLEMS.

IT IS, HOWEVER, NOW EVIDENT THAT AFRICA CAN NOT CONTINUE WITHOUT A CLEAR DIRECTION OR CLEAR PERCEPTION OF HER FUTURE AND OF HER SECURITY. AFRICA NEEDS A NEW ORDER BASED ON A DYNAMIC SECURITY ARRANGEMENT LEVEREGED UPON COMMON NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE CONTINENT. IT MUST BE AN ARRANGEMENT WHICH SEEKS FIRST AND FOREMOST TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF AFRICA AND TO PROMOTE COOPERATIVE ACTION WITHIN A BROAD AGENDA OF CONTINENTAL INTEGRATION.

DURABLE SECURITY FOR AFRICA MUST OF NECESSITY BE BUILT IN PART UPON THE STABLE FOUNDATION OF POLITICAL DEMOCRACY. A PERMITTING POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, ENSURING GENUINE PARTICIPTION OF THE PEOPLE IN THE PROCESS OF GOVERNANCE AND FULL ACCOUNTABILITY OF GOVERNMENTS UNDER THE ADJUDICATION OF AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY AND SCRUTINY OF A FREE, VIBRANT AND OBJECTIVE PRESS, WILL, BY ITSELF, ASSURE OUR SOCIETIES AGAINST ABSOLUTISM OR POLITICAL EXCESSES AND THE RESULTANT INSTABILITY WHICH SUCH EXCESSES ~~AND THE RESULTANT INSTABILITY WHICH SUCH~~ EXCESS GENERATE. A SYSTEM, SELF-POLICED THROUGH INBUILT CHECKS AND BALANCES, WILL, IN TURN, PERMIT THE EMERGENCE OF STABLE AND INDEPENDENT POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE ELABORATION OF RULES



WHICH WOULD GOVERN POLITICAL ACTIVITY. OVERTIME, WE WOULD BE ABLE TO BUILD A CULTURE OF DEMOCRATIC RULE AND REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE CONTINENT. SUCH CULTURE WOULD EMBODY THE SPIRIT OF FREE POLITICAL DEBATE AND CROSS-POLINATION OF IDEAS WITHOUT THE KIND OF POLITICAL RIGIDITIES AND PROSCRIPTIONS WHICH CONTINUE TO HAMPER FREE POLITICAL EXPRESSION. THE RESTORATION OF BALANCE TO RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY, WITHIN THE POLITICAL SYSTEMS OF OUR COUNTRIES, WILL GREATLY ENHANCE OUR SECURITY.

A SOCIETY OR COUNTRY AT PEACE WITH ITSELF WILL BE THE MOST AMENABLE TO THE PURSUIT OF PEACE OUTSIDE ITS BORDERS. IF ULTIMATELY, THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES, INDIVIDUALLY, MANAGE TO BUILD FOUNDATIONS OF DURABLE PEACE THROUGH POLITICAL REFORMS, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR THEM, COLLECTIVELY, TO WORK OUT THE MODALITIES OF PEACE AND COOPERATION ON THE CONTINENT. BUT IT WILL HAVE TO BEGIN WITH EACH COUNTRY INDIVIDUALLY. THEN, BILATERALLY OR COLLECTIVELY, THESE COUNTRIES CAN BE ABLE TO SEEK, THROUGH DIALOGUE, THE RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICTS AMONG THEM. CONVERSELY, WE CANNOT EXPECT THE AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS TO SEE THE GREATER ADVANTAGES OF DIALOGUE AND PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS UNLESS THEY, THEMSELVES, EXIST IN PEACE AND OPERATE IN HARMONY WITHIN THEIR COUNTRIES.

POLITICAL REFORM, BY ITSELF, WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENT UNLESS IT INCORPORATES MECHANISMS FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH WITHIN NATIONS. OBVIOUSLY, GIVEN THE POVERTY OF THE CONTINENT, THERE WILL NOT BE MUCH TO GO ROUND, BUT THE ESSENCE IS NOT WHETHER EACH CITIZEN BECOMES RICH OR PROSPEROUS. IT IS

WHETHER THERE IS DEMONSTRABLE EFFORT, ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENTS, TO REDUCE AND ULTIMATELY ERADICATE, ALTOGETHER, THE GLARING EXTREMES OF OPULENCE AND SQUALOR WITHIN THE SAME COUNTRY. POVERTY AND WANT DO THREATEN PEACE AND STABILITY OF THIS CONTINENT.

MR CHAIRMAN,

PERHAPS THE GREATEST ASSURANCE OF AFRICA'S SECURITY WOULD BE FOR THE CONTINENT TO SEEK A RADICAL DEPARTURE FROM THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC LINKS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND FORGE, INSTEAD, THE KIND OF RELATIONS WHICH WOULD EMPHASIZE MORE THE IMPERATIVE OF OUR OWN COLLECTIVE SELF-RELIANCE THAN CHARITY. AFRICA HAS TO RESEIZE THE INITIATIVE AND TAKE ON THE CHALLENGE OF HER OWN DEVELOPMENT. THIS TRANSFORMATION WILL, OF COURSE, REQUIRE COOPERATIVE ACTION. TEN YEARS AGO, IN LAGOS, AFRICA CHARTED FOR ITSELF A NEW COURSE TO ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE. THE ADOPTION OF THE LAGOS PLAN AND THE FINAL ACT, WAS IN THE REALIZATION THAT THE TRADITIONAL WAY OF DOING BUSINESS HAD FAILED TO HALT THE SLIDE OF AFRICA INTO DEEPER POVERTY AND THAT NO AMOUNT OF STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT OR DEBT RESCHEDULING WOULD RESTORE OUR ECONOMIES TO SOUND FOOTING. AFRICA, THEREFORE, DECIDED TO BE INWARD LOOKING AND TO MAXIMIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES OF COOPERTION ON THE BASIS OF CONTINENTAL INTEGRATION.

THE TREATY ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY WILL, HOPEFULLY, BE SIGNED AND PUT INTO OPERATION AT ABUJA NEXT JUNE. WHAT IS NEEDED IS TO SPEED UP THE

SETTING UP THE COMMUNITY AND BE ABLE TO SPEAK IN ONE VOICE WHETHER ON MATTERS OF MONEY AND FINANCE, THE DEBT QUESTION, COMMODITIES, TRADE OR TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFER.

THE IMPERATIVE OF COOPERATION ASSUMES EVEN GREATER URGENCY GIVEN WHAT IS HAPPENING IN EUROPE. THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS THERE, AND WHAT IS LIKELY TO HAPPEN AFTER 1992, HAVE CLEARLY SHOWN US THAT AFRICA SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE UNDER THE ILLUSION OF CONTINUED ECONOMIC SUPPORT FROM EUROPE. MORE AND MORE, EUROPE IS TURNING TO ITSELF AND GIVING PRIORITY TO ITS OWN PROBLEMS. THE SHIFT IN INVESTMENT PATTERNS IN FAVOUR OF EASTERN EUROPE LEAVE AFRICA WITH NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO PURSUE THE GOAL OF COLLECTIVE SELFRELIANCE.

MR CHAIRMAN,

LACK OF SECURITY FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH AFRICA CAN RESPOND TO EXTERNAL ARMED ATTACK OR SITUATIONS OF ACUTE CONFLICT HAS BEEN A MATTER OF SERIOUS CONCERN ON THE CONTINENT. PROPOSALS OF A MECHANISM FOR RESPONSE, SUCH AS SETTING UP AN AFRICAN HIGH COMMAND OR A RAPID DEPLOYMENT FORCE, HAVE BEEN MADE BUT SO FAR, NO CONSENSUS HAS EVOLVED AROUND A SINGLE PROPOSAL. TO ME, THE MAJOR PROBLEM IS NOT THAT AFRICANS CANNOT ASSEMBLE SOLDIERS OR FUND LIMITED MILITARY EXPEDITIONS. IT WAS NOT FOR LACK OF MANPOWER OR RESOURCES, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT AFRICA STOOD IN APPARENT HELPLESSNESS WHEN A BAND OF ARMED MERCENARIES TOOK OVER COMOROS LAS YEAR! WHAT IS AT THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM IS LACK OF POLITICAL CONSENSUS ON THE KIND OF RESPONSE AFRICA SHOULD HAVE TO SUCH SITUATIONS. IT IS, THEREFORE,



IMPORTANT TO BEGIN FROM A THOROUGH EXAMINATION OF THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE HAMSTRUNG EFFECTIVE ACTION ON THE CONTINENT. THIS IS IMPORTANT IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND HOW A NEW PLAN CAN BE ELABORATED BUILDING UPON THE EXPERIENCES OF THE PAST.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE CREATION OF THE NEW ORDER WHICH WE NEED AND SEEK MUST, IN MY VIEW, BE PRECEDED BY THE ELABORATION OF A COMMON AGENDA OF VALUES AND INTERESTS, WHICH AFRICAN STATES, JOINTLY, AGREE TO PROJECT AND TO PROMOTE. SUCH AN ELABORATION WILL BE THE UNDERGIRDING OF A STABLE SECURITY REGIME. FOR ONLY IF WE ARE CLEAR ABOUT THE OBJECTIVES OF THAT PLAN, CAN WE BE ABLE TO WORK OUT ITS MECHANICS. THERE ARE EXISTING EXAMPLES ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD FROM WHICH WE CAN DRAW INSPIRATION AND LESSONS. THE HELSINKI PROCESS IS ONE OF THEM.

THE HELSINKI PROCESS HAS ENABLED PARTICIPATING EUROPEAN COUNTRIES EVOLVE A BODY OF PRINCIPLES WHICH GOVERN THEIR RELATIONS AND COOPERATION IN MANY FIELDS. AS A FORUM, IT HAS ALSO PROVIDED A FRAMEWORK FOR THESE COUNTRIES TO AGREE ON THE FUNDAMENTALS WHICH BIND THEM TOGETHER DESPITE THEIR MANY DIFFERENCES. IT IS THE IMPERATIVE OF COOPERATION WHICH HAS SUSTAINED THAT PROCESS. BUT THE PROCESS HAD TO BE ERECTED ON THE SHAKY SOIL OF THE POLITICS OF COLD WAR. A EUROPE DIVIDED ON THE BASIS OF IDEOLOGY AND IN CONFLICT, YET CONDEMNED BY GEOGRAPHY AND COMMON PROBLEMS TO COOPERATE, HAD TO FIND A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCH COOPERATION. THEIR MUTUAL VULNERABILITY

- MADE BOTH PARTS OF EUROPE SENSITIVE TO THE NEED TO ASSURE THEMSELVES AGAINST MUTUAL DESTRUCTION. THE PROCESS ENDURED THE SEVERE STRAINS OF THE CONTENDING SYSTEMS IN EUROPE AND WITH THE PERMITTING CHANGES, WHICH HAVE AND ARE STILL TAKING PLACE, IT STANDS TO COMPLEMENT IN A STRONG AND POSITIVE WAY, THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS.

UNLIKE THE COLD WAR EUROPE WITHIN WHICH THE HELSINKI PROCESS EMERGED, AFRICA IS LESS CONSTAINED BY THE FACTORS OF IDEOLOGY AND LACK OF INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS. AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE COMMON PROBLEMS AND COMMON ASPIRATIONS. EXPERIENCE HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT, EVEN DURING THE DAYS OF IDEOLOGICAL EXCLUSIVITY AT THE HEIGHT OF THE COLD WAR, AFRICA REMAINED GENERALLY A VICTIM OF THE SAME ELEMENTS NOTWITHSTANDING THE IDEOLOGICAL AFFILIATIONS. OBVIOUSLY, WE CAN LEARN A LOT FROM THE HELSINKI SYSTEM AND DRAW FROM EUROPE'S EXPERIENCE. YET, GIVEN THE DIFFERENT POLITICAL CONTEXT IN WHICH A SIMILAR SYSTEM WOULD OPERATE IN AFRICA, IT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY, OR INDEED, PRACTICAL TO PATTERN STRICTLY THE AFRICAN SECURITY PLAN ALONG THE HELSINKI SYSTEM.

AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL, AFRICA, UNLIKE EUROPE, HAS HAD AN-ALL EMBRASSING FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION. THE OAU EMBODIES THE COLLECTIVE POLITICAL WILL OF THE COUNTRIES OF AFRICA TO WORK TOGETHER IN FURTHERANCE OF THEIR COMMON OBJECTIVES. THIS POLITICAL CONTEXT APART, THERE IS AN INSTITUTIONAL EXPRESSION OF THAT WILL IN THE FORUM OF THE OAU GENERAL SECRETARIAT. ONE MAY ARGUE AND CORRECTLY SO THAT, DESPITE THE POLITICAL CONSENSUS EXPRESSED IN THE OAU CHARTER AND THE EXISTENCE OF THE GENERAL



SECRETARIAT, AFRICA REMAINS FRACTITIOUS, IN CONFLICT AND IN MASSIVE POVERTY. THERE IS OBVIOUSLY, INSTITUTIONAL WEAKNESS DERIVING PARTLY FROM THE DISCORDANT POLITICAL VOICES OF AFRICA AND PARTLY FROM DEFFICIENCY OF RESOURCES AND CORRESPONDINGLY OF MANPOWER. BUT THESE POLITICAL DIVERGENCIES AND SYSTEMIC WEAKNESS CAN CERTAINLY BE CORRECTED. IT IS WITHIN THE EASY ABILITIES OF MEMBER STATES. WHAT IS OF ESSENCE IS THAT WE HAVE A SYSTEM AND INSTITUTION ALREADY IN EXISTENCE AND WHICH HAS THE POLITICAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE ENTIRE CONTINENT. IT WOULD, THEREFORE, IN MY VIEW, BE A DUPLICATION OF EFFORT AND RESOURCES IF, IN THE GOOD DESIRE TO RADICALLY AND QUICKLY TRANSFORM OUR CONTINENT, WE SEEK TO CREATE PARALLEL INSTITUTIONS WITH THE SAME OBJECTIVES.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SECURITY ARE INTERLINKED AND MUST, THEREFORE, BE CONSIDERED AS ONE INTEGRATED WHOLE AND HANDLED WITHIN A SINGLE FRAMEWORK. WHETHER THE ISSUES ARE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN OR POLITICAL, THEY MUST BE SEEN WITHIN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THEIR INTER-RELATIONSHIP AND THEIR INEVITABLE CONVERGENCE. IN EUROPE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY STARTED AS AN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION ENTERPRISE, THOUGH OVERTIME IT HAS BEEN REALIZED THAT ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND EVENTUAL UNION, HAS TO BE UNDERWRITTEN BY POLITICAL UNDERSTANDINGS. GRADUALLY, POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE BEING GIVEN PROMINENCE ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT, ULTIMATELY, AN INTEGRATION AGENDA CAN EFFECTIVELY BE GUARANTEED ONLY BY POLITICAL UNDERTAKINGS. LIKewise IN AFRICA, THE APPROACH IN THE ELABORATION OF SUCH A PLAN MUST BE BASED ON THE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING ON THE INTEGRATED NATURE OF THE SECURITY DETERMINANTS AND THE NEED TO HAVE A SINGLE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK TO MANAGE IT. WE CANNOT SEPARATE THE ISSUES AND APPORTION RESPONSIBILITIES TO DIFFERENT FRAMEWORKS.