

ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION  
OF AFRICAN UNITY, H.E. DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM, TO THE  
FIFTY-FIRST ORDINARY SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

ADDIS ABABA, 20 FEBRUARY 1990

MR. CHAIRMAN,

HONOURABLE MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS,

H.E. PROFESSOR ADEBAYO ADEDEJI

UNITED NATIONS UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL  
AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE ECONOMIC  
COMMISSION FOR AFRICA,

YOUR EXCELLENCIES THE AMBASSADORS,

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT IS MY PLEASURE, ON MY BEHALF AND ON BEHALF OF THE  
GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY, TO  
WELCOME YOU ALL HERE.

I ALSO WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PRESENCE OF MANY  
MINISTERS WHO HAVE SOUGHT IN THIS WAY TO DEMONSTRATE THE  
IMPORTANCE THEY ACCORD TO THIS SESSION AND TO THE WORK OF  
THE ORGANIZATION. YOUR PRESENCE WILL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT  
ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF YOUR COUNCIL. IT IS ONE MORE SOURCE OF  
ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT AND A POSITIVE  
SIGNAL THAT IS BEING SENT OUT TO AFRICAN AND WORLD OPINION  
WHICH IS USUALLY ATTENTIVE TO SUCH DEMONSTRATION OF INTEREST  
IN THE PROCEEDINGS OF OUR ORGANISATION.

SINCE THIS IS THE VERY FIRST COUNCIL OF MINISTERS THAT  
I AM ATTENDING AS SECRETARY GENERAL, ALLOW ME TO REITERATE  
MY SINCERE THANKS, THROUGH YOU, DISTINGUISHED MINISTERS AND  
HEADS OF DELEGATIONS, TO ALL HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT  
FOR THE CONFIDENCE THEY HAVE PLACED IN ME BY ELECTING ME TO  
DIRECT THE AFFAIRS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF OUR  
ORGANISATION.

I INTEND TO LIVE UP TO THIS TRUST AND TO DISCHARGE TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY THE LOFTY MISSION ENTRUSTED TO ME IN THE SUPREME INTEREST OF AFRICA. IN THIS ENDEAVOUR I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR COOPERATION, CONSTANT COUNSEL AND GUIDANCE.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

IT IS NOW FIVE MONTHS SINCE I HAVE BEEN IN OFFICE AS SECRETARY GENERAL. OVER SUCH A BRIEF PERIOD, I CANNOT GIVE AN EXHAUSTIVE REPORT. FOR ME, THE LAST MONTHS HAVE BEEN A PERIOD OF LEARNING, OF KNOWING THE PEOPLE AND OF UNDERSTANDING ISSUES. I HAVE DEVOTED TIME TO VISIT THE STAFF IN THEIR PLACES OF WORK. THEY TALKED TO ME ABOUT THEIR WORK, THEIR PROBLEMS, THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THEIR ANXIETIES. I HAVE SEEN THE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY WORK. IN THE SAME BREADTH, I WAS ABLE TO VISIT CONFLICT AREAS, ATTEND CONFERENCES AND PAY OFFICIAL AND WORKING VISITS TO A FEW COUNTRIES. IN THE COURSE OF THESE CONTACTS, I MANAGED TO FORM SOME DEFINITE VIEWS WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THIS DISTINGUISHED COUNCIL.

I EMBARKED ON THIS TWO-PRONGED APPROACH FULLY CONVINCED THAT THE EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF OUR ORGANISATION WAS TO A LARGE EXTENT DETERMINED BY THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIPS EXISTING BETWEEN THE SECRETARIAT AND THE MEMBER STATES. I PURSUED THIS LINE OF ACTION BECAUSE IT WAS MY FIRM BELIEF THAT IT IS THE INESCAPABLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO NURTURE SUCH A RELATIONSHIP AND TO ENSURE THAT THE EXECUTIVE ARM OF THE OAU IS AN EFFICIENT INSTRUMENT AT THE SERVICE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANISATION AND NOT A TOOL BLUNTED BY A BUREAUCRACY THAT OPERATES BY ITS OWN RULES.

DURING MY FAMILIARISATION TOURS TO THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT AND WORKING SESSIONS I HELD WITH STAFF MEMBERS, I WAS ABLE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH SOME OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECT PERFORMANCE AT THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT AND STAFF MEMBERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORK. THESE PROBLEMS INCLUDE THE POOR WORKING CONDITIONS OF STAFF, THE OUTDATED EQUIPMENT, THE PREMISES OF THE SECRETARIAT AND EVEN THE WAY WORK IS ORGANISED. FOR INSTANCE, THE POOR QUALITY OF THE DOCUMENTS BEFORE YOU, AT LEAST AS IT RELATES TO THE PRINTING AND PRESENTATION, IS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE INFERIOR FACILITIES WE NOW HAVE. FOR NEARLY THE LAST THREE DECADES THE PRINTING AND REPRODUCTION DEPARTMENT HAS REMAINED FROZEN OUT OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION IN THE PRINTING INDUSTRY.



WE HAVE MADE SOME COMMENDABLE PROGRESS TO CATCH UP. WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE UNDP, WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF INSTALLING MODERN MACHINERY AND TRAINING PERSONNEL TO HANDLE IT. WE HOPE TO COMPLETE THIS EXERCISE SOON AND I CAN CONFIDENTLY ASSURE YOU OF BETTER PRESENTATION OF OUR REPORTS BY THE NEXT SUMMIT. LET ME, AT THIS JUNCTURE, PAY DESERVING TRIBUTE TO THE UNDP FOR THE MONETARY AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IT HAS GIVEN US.

MR CHAIRMAN,

I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE SESSIONS TO REMIND STAFF OF THEIR DUTY TO THE ORGANISATION BY APPEALING TO THEIR SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND DISCIPLINE. I ALSO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THESE MEETINGS TO UNDERScore MY RESOLUTE DETERMINATION TO ENSURE THAT THE OBSERVANCE OF THE ESTABLISHED RULES AND REGULATIONS IS EMBEDDED INTO THE DAY TO DAY FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANIZATION. I URGED THE STAFF TO DEMONSTRATE A SPIRIT OF PANAFRICANISM IN THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR DUTIES.

IT BECAME QUITE CLEAR IN MY MIND THAT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SECRETARIAT CAN BE SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED IF STEPS ARE TAKEN TO BOOST STAFF MORALE AND ESTABLISH A MORE EFFICIENT CO-ORDINATION AMONG THE VARIOUS SERVICES OF THE SECRETARIAT. I AM SURE IT WAS ON ACCOUNT OF SIMILAR CONSIDERATIONS THAT THE COMMITTEE OF FOURTEEN ON THE STRUCTURAL REFORM OF THE ORGANISATION WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1984. THIS COMMITTEE, ABLY CHAIRED BY HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR ATEPOR OF GHANA, ADOPTED A REPORT WHICH WAS SUBMITTED TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS FOR REVIEW WITH SPECIFIC EMPHASIS ON THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS.

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAS MADE A SERIES OF OBSERVATIONS ON THAT REPORT FOR THE COUNCIL. THE REPORT CONTAINS GOOD RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH, IF CLEARED FOR IMPLEMENTATION SOON, WILL BRING ABOUT MUCH AWAITED RELIEF TO THE STAFF AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ORGANIZATION. BUT I SHARE THE VIEW OF THE COMMITTEE THAT THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF A CONTINUING PROCESS IN THE EVALUATION OF THE WORKING OF THE SECRETARIAT IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHANGING ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH IT OPERATES. TO THAT EXTENT THEREFORE, THE REPORT IS NOT CONCLUSIVE, AND THE LIST OF PROBLEMS ADDRESSED NOT EXHAUSTIVE. FOR EXAMPLE THE COMMITTEE AGREED THAT THE EVALUATION AND RECLASSIFICATION OF CERTAIN JOBS WAS CONDUCTED RATHER HASTILY AND SHOULD THEREFORE BE REVIEWED. IT RECOMMENDED THAT THE EXERCISE CONTINUE AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT EVERY PRECAUTION WOULD BE TAKEN TO AVERT ANY INADVERTENT ACTION THAT WOULD UNDERMINE THE HARMONY AND BALANCE REQUIRED OF ANY ADMINISTRATIVE SET-UP. I AM SATISFIED WITH THIS PERTINENT RECOMMENDATION WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE SECRETARIAT TO CARRY OUT THE EXERCISE IN A MORE THOROUGH MANNER AND ENSURE THAT THERE IS SUFFICIENT STAFF CO-OPERATION IN THE EXECUTION OF SUCH AN IMPORTANT PROJECT.

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT WE AWAIT THE FINDINGS OF OTHER COMMITTEES CONSIDERING MODALITIES OF ESTABLISHING THE PROPOSED AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY BEFORE ADOPTING THE NEW STRUCTURE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT. I AM OF THE VIEW THAT IF THE IDEA OF INTEGRATING THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY WITHIN THE OAU, AS PROPOSED, GAINS GENERAL ACCEPTANCE, IT WILL PROVIDE THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE STRUCTURES OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT AND PROVIDE IT WITH THE ORGANS THAT WOULD ENABLE OUR ORGANIZATION TO TACKLE ITS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIVE UP TO THE NEW CHALLENGES IT HAS TO FACE.

THE COMMITTEE HAS ALSO MADE SOME PROPOSALS AIMED AT IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF STAFF MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT. THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE DECIDED THAT IN VIEW OF THE FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS FACING THE ORGANISATION ONLY A PART OF THE PACKAGE OF PROPOSED REFORMS IS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR ADOPTION TO THIS COUNCIL UNDER THE 1990/1991 BUDGETARY YEAR. I URGE THIS COUNCIL TO DETERMINE TO WHAT EXTENT SOME ADDITIONAL EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO ADOPT A BROADER APPROACH TOWARDS THE ENTIRE SET OF PROPOSALS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OF COURSE, THE FINANCIAL SITUATION FACING THE MEMBER STATES. I AM THINKING SPECIFICALLY OF THE EDUCATION GRANT WHICH HAS BEEN RAISED BUT WHICH, ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SHOULD APPLY TO FOUR INSTEAD OF SIX CHILDREN. SUCH A MEASURE, WHICH IS DEFINITELY UNDERSTANDABLE CONSIDERING THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ALL MEMBER STATES SHOULD NOT HOWEVER APPLY TO THE OFFICERS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE PRESENTLY ENTITLED TO SUCH AN ALLOWANCE.



FROM MY EXPERIENCE IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, I AM FULLY CONSCIOUS OF THE ACUTE ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS FACING ALL OUR COUNTRIES ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION. TO THAT EXTENT I AM, THEREFORE, SENSITIVE TO THE IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASED FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS OF THE ORGANIZATION. I AM SIMILARLY SENSITIVE TO THE NEED TO RESPOND, EVEN IN A LIMITED WAY TO THE LEGITIMATE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE STAFF. FOR EVEN IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, ATTEMPTS HAVE CONSTANTLY BEEN MADE TO STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN THE ABILITY OF THE TREASURY TO PAY AND THE NEED TO MITIGATE THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF THE RISING COST OF LIVING TO THE WORKFORCE. THIS IS WHY I HOPE YOU WILL GIVE SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO THE PROPOSAL TO EFFECT INCREASES EVEN NOMINALLY OF STAFF SALARIES AND POST ADJUSTMENT ALLOWANCES WHICH HAVE REMAINED FROZEN FOR THE LAST DECADE, NOTWITHSTANDING THE RISE IN THE COST OF LIVING.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

SINCE I ASSUMED OFFICE, I HAVE ENDEAVOURED TO HAVE AS MANY CONTACTS AS POSSIBLE WITH MEMBER STATES. AS A RESULT, I HAVE HAD THE HONOUR AND OPPORTUNITY TO MEET SEVERAL HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT AND A GOOD NUMBER OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MEMBER STATES. I CONSULTED EXTENSIVELY WITH ALL OF THEM ON PROBLEMS OF CONCERN TO OUR CONTINENT AND ON THE WAYS AND MEANS OF ENHANCING THE EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS AND CREDIBILITY OF OUR ORGANISATION.

THE ADVICE I RECEIVED, WAS MOST GRATIFYING AND ENCOURAGING. TO ALL THESE LEADERS, I DID NOT FAIL TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE DISTRESSING FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE ORGANISATION AND OF MOST OF ITS SPECIALISED AGENCIES RESULTING IN PART FROM THE ACCUMULATED ARREARS OF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBER STATES. I WOULD LIKE TO RENEW THE APPEAL THAT I MADE TO MEMBER STATES TO PAY THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS. I NEED NOT OVER-STRESS THE FACT THAT THE PRECARIOUS FINANCIAL SITUATION OF OUR ORGANISATION JEOPARDISES ITS EFFECTIVENESS AND HENCE PLACES ITS CREDIBILITY IN DOUBT. I DARE HOPE THAT IN SPITE OF THEIR FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES, MEMBER STATES WILL BEAR IN MIND THE IMPERATIVE NEED TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE ORGANISATION, IN A PRACTICAL WAY. I MUST STRESS THAT IF WE WANT THE OUTSIDE WORLD TO TAKE OUR ORGANIZATION SERIOUSLY, THEN IT IS ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE THAT AFRICAN STATES THEMSELVES SHOULD SO TREAT THE ORGANIZATION. MEETING FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE ORGANIZATION IS ONE SUCH MANIFESTATION OF SERIOUSNESS.

AT THE LEVEL OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT, WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE INTRODUCTION OF GREATER STRINGENCY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BUDGETARY APPROPRIATIONS. I INTEND TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, TO ENSURE GREATER TRANSPARENCY IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT IN CONSONANCE WITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE ORGANISATION.



I SHALL COUNT ON THE CO-OPERATION AND SUPPORT OF MEMBER STATES IN ELABORATING MORE EFFICIENT PLANNING OF WORK WITHIN THE ORGANISATION. I AM ENCOURAGED IN THIS RESPECT BY THE FAVOURABLE FEEDBACK I OBTAINED WITH REGARD TO MY PROPOSAL TO SET A FIXED DATE FOR THE SUMMITS.

SEVERAL HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT HAVE REPLIED FORMALLY IN SUPPORT OF THE IDEA OF HOLDING THE SUMMIT ON THE SECOND MONDAY OF JULY. SOME SUGGESTED MAY OR JUNE BUT APART FROM SUCH DIVERGENT VIEWS AS TO THE TIMING OF THE SUMMIT WHICH COULD, IN MY VIEW, BE EASILY CLEARED THROUGH CONSULTATIONS AMONGST YOURSELVES, HONOURABLE MINISTERS, I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT A UNANIMITY OF VIEWS EXISTS ON THE PRINCIPLE OF HOLDING THE SUMMIT ON A FIXED DATE.

THIS DESIRE TO STREAMLINE OUR ACTIVITIES SHOULD ALSO MAKE US TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEM OF SCHEDULING OF MEETINGS, LIMITING THEIR NUMBER, RECONSIDERING THE FREQUENCY OF SUCH MEETINGS AND RATIONALIZING THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL AND THE SUMMIT. THIS IS THE CHALLENGE THAT ALL OF US, MEMBER STATES AND SECRETARIAT ALIKE, HAVE TO FACE, IF WE ARE TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ORGANISATION.

THE REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF MEETINGS WOULD CUT DOWN ON THE VOLUME OF DOCUMENTS WITHOUT HAMPERING THE PROPER FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANISATION. GREATER EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON THE QUALITY OF THE DOCUMENTS AND THEIR CONCISENESS. AND FOR THE NEED OF PROPER RECORD TO DOCUMENT THE PROCEEDINGS OF KEY ORGANS OF THE OAU PERHAPS IT MAY BE OPPORTUNE TO RECONSIDER YOUR DECISION AGAINST THE PREPARATION OF SUMMARY RECORDS OR VERBATIM RECORDS WHERE EXPRESSLY REQUIRED.

MR CHAIRMAN,

SINCE THE FIFTIETH SESSION OF YOUR COUNCIL, AFRICA AND THE WORLD HAVE WITNESSED THE UNFOLDING OF MAJOR EVENTS IN AFRICA AND IN EUROPE. IN NAMIBIA, WE OBSERVED THE ELECTIONS WHICH CULMINATED IN A RESOUNDING VICTORY FOR SWAPO. THE VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA WAS HAILED AS THAT OF AFRICA AS A WHOLE AND THE TRIUMPH OF JUSTICE AND OF THOSE STRIVING FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD. THIS VICTORY IS FORMIDABLE EVIDENCE THAT AFRICA'S CAUSE CANNOT BUT SUCCEED IF IT ENJOYS THE UNANIMOUS SUPPORT AND UNDIVIDED COMMITMENT OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

I PAID A WORKING VISIT TO NAMIBIA TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE ELECTIONS. DURING THAT VISIT, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE COUNTRY, TALK TO THE ELECTORATE AND CONSULT WITH THE SWAPO LEADERSHIP. I USED THIS VISIT TO DEMONSTRATE OUR ORGANISATION'S COMMITMENT TO THE PEACE PROCESS AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE NAMIBIAN PEOPLE UNDER SWAPO. WHILE CONCERN EXISTED OVER CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ELECTIONS, I LEFT NAMIBIA SATISFIED THAT THE BASIC CONDITIONS EXISTED FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS AND CONFIDENT OF A COMMANDING SWAPO VICTORY.

APART FROM MY VISIT, I WISH TO UNDERLINE THE MODEST BUT EFFECTIVE ROLE PLAYED BY THE OAU DURING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN NAMIBIA. QUITE APART FROM THE GRANT OF FIVE MILLION US DOLLARS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO SWAPO, WE SET UP AN OBSERVER MISSION IN WINDHOEK. A REMARKABLE JOB WAS DONE BY OUR TEAM IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL, THE LIAISON OFFICE OF THE FRONTLINE STATES AND, OF COURSE, THE SWAPO LEADERSHIP. I WOULD LIKE TO RECALL HERE THAT THE FIVE MILLION DOLLARS WAS DRAWN, AS AN ADVANCE, FROM THE REGULAR BUDGET OF THE OAU. I THEREFORE WISH TO APPEAL TO THOSE MEMBER STATES WHO HAVE NOT PAID THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE SPECIAL FUND FOR SWAPO TO DO SO AND THUS ENABLE OUR ORGANISATION TO OFFSET THE SHORTFALL OF US \$ 1.8 MILLION STILL OUTSTANDING.

THE POST-ELECTORAL PROCESS IS MOVING AHEAD OF SCHEDULE AND INDEPENDENCE IS SET FOR MARCH 21. CELEBRATIONS ASIDE, THE NAMIBIAN LEADERSHIP HAS EXPRESSED THE WISH THAT OAU SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE PRESENT IN THE EARLY DAYS OF INDEPENDENCE. A RECOMMENDATION HAS ACCORDINGLY BEEN SUBMITTED TO YOUR COUNCIL TO OPEN AN OAU OFFICE IN WINDHOEK. THIS OFFICE, WHICH WILL HAVE A ONE YEAR TENURE - 1990/1991 FINANCIAL YEAR - WILL SERVE AS THE LIAISON BASE BETWEEN THE NAMIBIAN AUTHORITIES AND THE MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANISATION VIA THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT AND A DEMONSTRATION OF OUR CONTINUED SOLIDARITY WITH THE NAMIBIAN PEOPLE. ITS TENURE MAY BE RENEWED SUBSEQUENTLY AFTER THE FIRST YEAR DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES.



MR. CHAIRMAN,

DESPITE SUCH FAVOURABLE DEVELOPMENTS, THE NAMIBIAN SITUATION REMAINS RATHER DELICATE AND CALLS FOR VIGILANCE ON OUR PART. INDEED, WE WOULD BE ENGAGING IN WISHFUL THINKING IF WE WERE TO ASSUME THAT THE LONG AWAITED PEACE AND STABILITY WILL NOW COME TO THAT PART OF OUR CONTINENT AND TO NAMIBIA WHILE THE REPREHENSIBLE SYSTEM OF APARTHEID CONTINUES TO THRIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

THE RELEASE OF NELSON MANDELA AND OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS, THE RELAXATION OF SOME OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY MEASURES, THE UNBANNING OF THE ANC, PAC AND OTHER ANTI-APARTHEID ORGANISATIONS CONSTITUTE NO DOUBT A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION WHICH SHOULD BE WELCOMED BY THE OAU AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE. INDEED, WE IN THE SECRETARIAT ISSUED A STATEMENT WELCOMING THE RELEASE OF MR MANDELA AND COMMENDING THE BOLD ACTION OF MR.DEKLERK. IN MY MESSAGE TO MR. MANDELA, I EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT HE WILL FIND IT POSSIBLE TO PAY THE OAU A VISIT HERE IN ADDIS ABABA. I INTEND TO FOLLOW UP THIS INVITATION IN THE DAYS TO COME. I EMPHASIZED THAT THESE MEASURES WHICH WE WARMLY WELCOME ARE, MOREOVER, THE END-RESULT OF THE STRUGGLE AND SACRIFICE OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE OUTCOME OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE EXERTED ON THE PRETORIA REGIME. BUT I ALSO NOTED THAT THESE DECISIONS DO NOT ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PEOPLE.

WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO BE JUBILANT AT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE INITIAL BUT IMPORTANT CONCESSIONS FROM THE APARTHEID REGIME. WE SHOULD INDEED REJOICE AT THE LIBERATION OF NELSON MANDELA. BUT WE SHOULD EXERCISE CAUTION AND NOT ALLOW THIS SENSE OF EUPHORIA TO SIDETRACK US FROM THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE STRUGGLE. THE STRUGGLE IS ABOUT THE ELIMINATION OF APARTHEID AS SYMBOLIZED BY THE VARIOUS DRACONIAN LEGISLATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEMOCRATIC, NON-RACIAL AND UNITARY SOUTH AFRICA ON THE BASIS OF ONE MAN ONE VOTE. IT IS ONLY UNTIL THEN THAT WE WILL HAVE THE JUSTIFICATION AND BASIS TO REVIEW OUR POSITION. IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAVE THE HARARE DECLARATION, NOW UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED AS A BLUE-PRINT FOR PEACE IN THE COUNTRY. THE PACE OF MEETING THE TERMS OF THAT DECLARATION SHOULD BE THE YARDSTICK BY WHICH WE SHOULD MEASURE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE APARTHEID AUTHORITIES TO EMBRACE THE PRINCIPLE OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

CONSEQUENTLY, THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO RELAX THE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE ON THE PRETORIA REGIME. ON THE CONTRARY, WE ARE MORALLY BOUND MORE THAN EVER BEFORE TO CALL FOR CONTINUED INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE TO BE EXERTED ON THAT REGIME SO THAT IT WOULD BE COMPELLED TO MOVE RESOLUTELY TOWARDS DISMANTLING THE APARTHEID SYSTEM AND CREATING THE APPROPRIATE ATMOSPHERE FOR DIALOGUE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEMOCRATIC AND NON-RACIAL SOCIETY IN SOUTH AFRICA.



THIS WAS THE WISH EXPRESSED BY THE ANC LEADERSHIP IN REACTION TO MR. DE KLERK'S STATEMENT. IT WAS ALSO MY OWN SUMMATION AFTER THE LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS I HELD AT THE LIBERATION COMMITTEE HEADQUARTERS IN DAR-ES-SALAAM WITH THE ANC LEADERS INCLUDING WALTER SISULU, GOVAN MBEKI AND THEIR COMPANIONS WHO WERE RECENTLY RELEASED FROM DETENTION BY THE PRETORIA REGIME. ABOVE ALL IT IS THE UNEQUIVOCAL POSITION OF NELSON MANDELA HIMSELF. HE REITERATED HIS POSITION AND ARGUED NOT ONLY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF POLITICAL PRESSURE AND ECONOMIC SANCTIONS, BUT TO COMPLEMENT THEM WITH CONTINUED ARMED STRUGGLE. IN THE WORDS OF NELSON MANDELA IN CAPE TOWN ON FEBRUARY 11, I QUOTE " TO LIFT SANCTIONS NOW WOULD BE TO RUN THE RISK OF ABORTING THE PROCESS TOWARDS A COMPLETE ERADICATION'S OF APARTHEID " UNQUOTE.

IT IS THEREFORE NOW IMPERATIVE FOR THIS COUNCIL TO EXAMINE THE SITUATION MORE CLOSELY AND CHART OUT A COURSE FOR THE CONTINENT'S POLITICAL DIRECTION. ABOVE ALL, WE NEED TO COORDINATE OUR RESPONSE TO THE EVOLVING SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA. AND AT ALL TIMES WE MUST ENSURE THAT NOTHING IS DONE TO ABORT THE PROCESS OF CHANGE WHICH HAS BEGUN TO MANIFEST ITSELF IN THAT COUNTRY.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA CALLS FOR GREATER MOBILISATION AND VIGILANCE, IT CANNOT MAKE US SHIRK OUR RESPONSIBILITY WITH RESPECT TO THE NUMEROUS INTERNAL AND INTER-STATE CONFLICTS THAT SOW DEATH AND SORROW IN OUR CONTINENT. THESE FRATRICIDAL CONFLICTS, WHICH ADD ON TO THE ALREADY HUGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN AFRICA AND DEPRIVE AFRICAN COUNTRIES OF PRECIOUS MANPOWER AND MATERIAL RESOURCES, MUST CONTINUE TO BE OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO THE ORGANISATION. THE OAU OUGHT TO PLAY A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO CONFLICTS AND DISPUTES INVOLVING MEMBER STATES. IT CANNOT BE INDIFFERENT TO THE INTERNAL CONFLICTS THAT SPREAD DEATH AND SORROW AND RUIN MEMBER STATES AND SWAY THEM AWAY FROM THEIR EFFORTS TO FOSTER THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE OAU SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED, IN THIS RESPECT, BY THE TRUST PLACED IN IT BY THE MEMBER STATES AND PARTIES IN CONFLICT.

IT IS WITH THIS CONVICTION IN MIND THAT, IN THE COURSE OF THE LAST FIVE MONTHS, I HAVE UNDERTAKEN MISSIONS TO VARIOUS COUNTRIES AND CONFLICT AREAS. I HAVE USED THESE VISITS TO GET ACQUAINTED AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITH THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE CONFLICTS , HEAR THE VIEWS OF THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED AND CONSULT BROADLY WITH THE VARIOUS LEADERS ON AN AFRICAN AGENDA WHICH ADDRESSES ITSELF ON THE SEARCH FOR A COMPREHENSIVE AND LASTING SETTLEMENT TO THESE PROBLEMS. I AM GLAD TO REPORT THAT IN ALL THESE TRAVELS AND CONSULTATIONS, I HAVE FOUND ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT. THIS POSITIVE THINKING I FOUND TO BE ROOTED IN THE STRONG BELIEF THAT ULTIMATELY AFRICA SHOULD RE-SEIZE THE INITIATIVE AND PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN FINDING REALISTIC SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS. THIS CONVICTION HAS REINFORCED MY OWN AND MY DETERMINATION TO SEEK YOUR MANDATE TO GRADUALLY TO PUT THE OAU AT THE CENTRE AND IN THE SERVICE OF THE CONTINENT.

IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, I UNDERTOOK A FACT-FINDING MISSION TO SENEGAL AND MAURITANIA WHERE I WAS PRIVILEGED TO CONSULT BROADLY WITH PRESIDENTS ABDOU DIOUF AND OULD TAYA AND OTHER SENIOR LEADERS. I WAS ALSO ABLE TO VISIT THE CAMPS OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE. THE SUFFERING, IN PARTICULAR OF THE CHILDREN, SOME OF THEM ORPHANS, SENSITIZED ME TO THE NEED TO PERSIST IN OUR EFFORTS AT FINDING A SPEEDY AND PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THIS UNFORTUNATE CONFLICT. WHILE THE POLITICAL POSITIONS OF THE PARTIES REMAINED DIVERGENT, I LEFT THE COUNTRIES ENCOURAGED BY THE CONFIDENCE THAT BOTH PARTIES CONTINUE TO HAVE IN THE MEDIATION EFFORTS OF OUR ORGANIZATION AND OF ITS CURRENT CHAIRMAN. I REPORTED THESE IMPRESSIONS OF DEEP SUFFERING OF THE PEOPLE AND OPTIMISM ON MY PART TO PRESIDENT MUBARAK IN CAIRO FOLLOWING MY VISITS.

I VISITED CHAD IN JANUARY THIS YEAR AND HELD EXTENSIVE TALKS WITH PRESIDENT HISSEIN HABRE. HE BRIEFED ME ON THE SITUATION IN HIS COUNTRY AND HIS COUNTRY'S POSITION ON THE CONFLICT WITH LIBYA. I LEFT NDJAMENA, ENCOURAGED BY HIS EXPRESSIONS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE OAU AND ITS ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT. I WAS ALSO HEARTENED BY HIS ENCOURAGEMENT. SIMILARLY, THE LIBYAN AUTHORITIES, WHOM I INTEND TO MEET SOON IN TRIPOLI, HAVE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE AND WILLINGNESS TO CO-OPERATE. WITH GOODWILL ON BOTH SIDES, IT IS MY HOPE THAT A SOLUTION WOULD BE FOUND IN PURSUANCE OF THE ALGIERS AGREEMENT AND IN LINE WITH THE SEARCH FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE DISPUTE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE OAU. IN THIS RESPECT, THE ROLE OF THE OAU AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE CHAD-LIBYA DISPUTE UNDER THE WISE LEADERSHIP OF THE PRESIDENT OF GABON, AL HADJ OMAR BONGO IS PIVOTAL.



ON THE WHOLE, THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT INTENDS TO TAKE MORE SERIOUSLY AND ENHANCE OAU'S ROLE AS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE INTER-AFRICAN DISPUTES. IN THIS SPIRIT, THE OAU WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE UNITED NATIONS TO SET THE STAGE FOR A REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA IN CONFORMITY WITH THE OAU PEACE PLAN ENDORSED BY THE UNITED NATIONS. I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE WITH SECRETARY GENERAL JAVIER PEREZ DE CUELLAR DURING THE LAST REGULAR SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY. I ALSO CONSULTED THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN ON THE INSTITUTIONAL ROLE THAT OUR ORGANISATION SHOULD PLAY IN THE WESTERN SAHARA PEACE PROCESS AND ON HOW TO GUARANTEE CONTINUITY IN MONITORING THE EVOLUTION OF THE SITUATION. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE IMPENDING VISITS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL AND OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL HIMSELF TO THE REGION WOULD FACILITATE THE RESUMPTION OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN MOROCCO AND THE POLISARIO FRONT AND CREATE NEW AVENUES FOR PEACE.

ALTHOUGH NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED, THE SECRETARIAT WILL ENCOURAGE EFFORTS BY INDIVIDUAL OR A GROUP OF COUNTRIES AT FINDING SOLUTIONS TO THE VARIOUS CONFLICTS IN AFRICA. THAT IS WHY I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE EFFORTS NOW UNDERWAY TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE CONFLICTS IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE. I COMMEND ALL THOSE COUNTRIES INVOLVED. THE SECRETARIAT WILL GIVE ALL SUPPORT NECESSARY TO THE PEACE TALKS THAT HAVE BEEN INITIATED WITH A VIEW TO BRINGING THE UNFORTUNATE FRATRICIDAL CONFLICTS IN ETHIOPIA AND SUDAN TO AN END.

I WISH IN THIS CONNECTION TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION TO THE PARTIES TO THE PDRE/EPLF PEACE TALKS IN INVITING THE OAU TO TAKE PART AS AN OBSERVER. YET IT IS DISTURBING THAT AT A TIME WHEN PEACE HOPES HAVE BEEN RAISED, THERE HAS BEEN A DRAMATIC ESCALATION IN THE CONFLICT WITH THE ATTENDANT SUFFERING AND CASUALTIES. THIS SITUATION CAUSES US GREAT CONCERN. THIS IS THE TIME AND PLACE TO EXPRESS OUR FERVENT WISH AND HOPE FOR AN END TO THE FIGHTING AND THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AMONG THE PARTIES SO THAT SUBSTANTIVE TALKS CAN BEGIN WITH A VIEW TO USHERING IN PEACE AND STABILITY.

BUT QUITE APART FROM THIS PERIPHERAL INVOLVEMENT, PERHAPS TIME HAS COME TO EXPLORE WAYS BY WHICH THE OAU CAN BE ALLOWED TO BE MORE ORIGINAL AND IMAGINATIVE IN TACKLING AFRICAN PROBLEMS. I AM CONVINCED THAT WE SHOULD TAKE A FRESH LOOK INTO HOW OUR ORGANISATION CAN PLAY ITS ROLE ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELD OF CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THIS CONVICTION ON A NEW OUTLOOK WAS REINFORCED BY THE TRAGIC EVENTS IN COMOROS WHICH INVOLVED THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT ABDALLAH. AFRICA WAS FACED WITH A GRAVE SITUATION WHERE A BAND OF MERCENARIES WITH THE FORCE OF ARMS HAD TAKEN AN ENTIRE PEOPLE HOSTAGE. THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF A MEMBER STATE WAS TRANSGRESSED AND AFRICA STOOD BY AND WATCHED IN APPARENT HELPLESSNESS. WHILE THERE WERE EXPRESSIONS BY A COUPLE OF COUNTRIES OF WILLINGNESS TO TAKE SOME FIRM ACTION, AFRICA LACKED THE FRAMEWORK AND MECHANISM TO COORDINATE ITS RESPONSE IN THE FACE OF A FORMIDABLE CHALLENGE.

I CONDEMNED THE MERCENARY INTERVENTION AND CALLED FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTION TO RESTORE TO THE PEOPLE OF COMOROS THEIR FREEDOM AND DIGNITY. BUT THAT WAS NOT ENOUGH. THIS IS WHY I AM CONVINCED THAT THERE IS NEED TO ESTABLISH A MECHANISM TO COORDINATE A CONTINENTAL POSITION IN SUCH EVENTUALITIES.



DESPITE THESE UNFORTUNATE EVENTS, THE COMOROS HAS REGAINED HER FEET AND IS NOW ON COURSE TOWARDS A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE RECEIVED A REQUEST FROM THE ACTING PRESIDENT FOR THE OAU TO SEND AN OBSERVER MISSION TO OBSERVE AND CERTIFY THE VALIDITY OF THE ELECTIONS WHICH WERE HELD LAST SUNDAY. I INFORMED PRESIDENT SAID MOHAMED DJOHAR THAT SUCH A MISSION WHICH CALLED FOR SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS REQUIRED A DECISION AND GUIDANCE OF THE POLICY-MAKING BODIES OF OUR ORGANIZATION. IN THE LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THIS COUNCIL IS TAKING PLACE ONE DAY AFTER THE POLLING DAY, I, THEREFORE, SUGGESTED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO WHICH HE AGREED, THAT I SEND A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO MONITOR THE BALLOTING PROCESS. I HAVE ENTRUSTED THIS DUTY TO AMBASSADOR JOLAOSO, THE HEAD OF THE OAU OBSERVER MISSION IN NAMIBIA, ACCOMPANIED BY TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SECRETARIAT. THEY HAVE BEEN IN MORONI SINCE 15TH FEBRUARY. IN THE MEANTIME, AS MINISTERS AND DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES WILL HAVE HEARD, DUE TO REPORTED IRREGULARITIES IN THE BALLOTING PROCESS, THE ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN INDEFINITELY SUSPENDED. NEW ELECTIONS WILL REPORTEDLY BE SCHEDULED AT A LATER DATE. NATURALLY, I AM AWAITING THE REPORT OF MY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE.

IT IS ALSO MY HOPE THAT THE OAU WOULD BE ABLE TO PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN PROMOTING ENTENTE AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA AND IN AVERTING CONFLICTS AMONG MEMBER STATES. IT IS IN THIS RESPECT THAT I HAVE FOLLOWED WITH ATTENTION THE EVENTS THAT OCCURED IN LIBERIA AND THE RESULTANT TENSION WITHIN THE REGION. IN VIEW OF THE INHERENT RISK OF ESCALATION, I TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO DESPATCH A SPECIAL ENVOY TO LIBERIA, COTE D'IVOIRE AND GUINEA TO CONVEY THE DEEP CONCERN OF OUR ORGANISATION AND APPEAL FOR RESTRAINT SO AS TO LOWER THE TENSION IN THE REGION AND PRE-EMPT ANY RISKY ESCALATION OF HOSTILITIES.

MR CHAIRMAN,

SINCE 1973, THIS COUNCIL HAS NOT FAILED TO RECOGNIZE THE COMPLEMENTARITY OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WITH THAT OF AFRICA FOR LIBERTY AND JUSTICE, SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE. THIS ATTACHMENT OF THE COUNCIL TO THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE-EAST IS ROOTED IN OUR SHARED CONVICTION THAT OUR STRUGGLES ARE LINKED AND THAT OUR BONDS OF COMMON HISTORY AND DESTINY COMPEL US TO ACT IN CONCERT. WE HAVE, WITHIN THIS CONTEXT, SALUTED THE HEROIC RESISTENCE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE UNDER "INTIFADA". WE CONTINUE TO APPLAUD THEIR UNDAUNTED SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE INSPITE OF THE IMMENSE SACRIFICE IN LIFE AND PROPERTY. THEIR STRUGGLE IS A JUST FIGHT WAGED TO RECOVER THEIR BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO EXERCISE THEIR INALIENABLE RIGHTS TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE.



WE NOTE THE CURRENT EFFORTS UNDERWAY TO FIND A JUST AND LASTING SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE-EAST QUESTION AS WE DO THOSE BEING EXPENDED BY THE PLO LEADERSHIP IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH PRESIDENT HOSNI MUBARAK TO SET THE STAGE FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS AND FOR THE CONVENING OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PEACE IN THE MIDDLE-EAST. WE SHARE THE STRONG FEARS EXPRESSED WITH REGARD TO THE ISRAELI POLICY OF RESSETTLING JEWISH IMMIGRANTS FROM THE SOVIET UNION IN OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES. THIS WILL NOT ONLY PREEMPT THE PEACE PROCESS BUT IT WILL WORSEN AN ALREADY COMPLEX SITUATION.

OVER AND ABOVE THIS PRINCIPLED SUPPORT FOR THE JUST CAUSE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND COMMITMENT TO THE SEARCH FOR A JUST AND LASTING SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT, AFRICA'S RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB WORLD IS BASED ON SHARED CONCERNS AND ASPIRATIONS. IT IS NECESSARY IN THIS RESPECT TO VIEW THE CO-OPERATION FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF THE COMMON DESTINY BINDING THE PEOPLES OF BOTH COMMUNITIES- A BOND WHICH CANNOT BE DISREGARDED BECAUSE OF TEMPORARY DIFFICULTIES ; IN OTHER WORDS, EFFORTS HAVE TO BE MADE ON BOTH SIDES TO SUSTAIN THIS BOND AND CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE THAT IS CONDUCIVE TO THE CONSOLIDATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF AFRO-ARAB CO-OPERATION, SO THAT IT CAN SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE OF SOUTH-SOUTH CO-OPERATION. WE SHOULD, ABOVE ALL, DRAW INSPIRATION FROM OUR PAST EXPERIENCE TO ENSURE A BETTER PREPARATION, COORDINATION AND ATTENDANCE AT OUR MEETINGS WITH A VIEW TO ELABORATING CONCRETE PROGRAMS OF COOPERATION. WE SHOULD ENDEAVOUR TO DEMONSTRATE REQUISITE POLITICAL WILL IF WE ARE TO TRANSLATE THE LOFTY IDEAL OF AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION INTO A LIVING REALITY.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

I NOW WISH TO TURN TO THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF OUR CONTINENT WHICH HAS DETERIORATED CONSIDERABLY IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. MUCH HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT THE CRITICAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF AFRICA. A LOT OF MEETINGS, SEMINARS AND SYMPOSIA HAVE BEEN ORGANISED TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM. MANY STRATEGIES FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT HAVE BEEN AND ARE BEING MAPPED OUT IN THE MAJOR FINANCIAL CAPITALS WHILE OUR CONTINENT IS SINKING DEEPER INTO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DOLDRUMS. THE RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR ITS RECOVERY NO LONGER FLOW INTO OUR CONTINENT AT A TIME WHEN IT IS CAUGHT IN THE GRIPS OF A VICIOUS CIRCLE FROM WHICH IT WILL NOT BE EASY TO EMERGE . INDEED SINCE 1980, WE HAVE WITNESSED A REVERSAL, DETRIMENTAL TO THE INTERESTS OF OUR CONTINENT, OF THE NET FLOW OF RESOURCES BETWEEN AFRICA AND THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. AS AN ILLUSTRATION, ACCORDING TO THE BRANDT COMMISSION REPORT, IN 1980, THERE WAS A REPORTED POSITIVE NET TRANSFER OF RESOURCES OF US \$ 50 BILLION FROM NORTH TO SOUTH. TODAY THE AMOUNT OF TRANSFER IS ALMOST THE SAME BUT IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, FROM SOUTH TO NORTH.

AFRICA HAS BEEN BY FAR THE HARDEST HIT IN THIS SITUATION. FOR NOT ONLY HAVE THERE BEEN A DISPROPORTIONATE NET OUTFLOW OF CAPITAL, OUR ABILITY TO MITIGATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS PHENOMENON IS SERIOUSLY CONSTRAINED BY THE WEAK ECONOMIC BASE OF OUR COUNTRIES' ECONOMIES. THUS AFRICA HAS BEEN DOUBLY HIT - BY THE FALL OF COMMODITY PRICES AND THE RESULTING PLUMMETING OF REAL EARNINGS AND THE OUTFLOW OF CAPITAL.

AFRICA HAS MADE SOME EFFORTS. WE HAVE PROCEEDED TO ELABORATE STRATEGIES WHICH SEEK TO DELIVER OUR COUNTRIES FROM THE ECONOMIC MORASS TO A SOUND FOOTING. IN TANDEM WITH STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS, WE HAVE PURSUED OUR OWN PROGRAMS FOR ECONOMIC REFORM. BUT THESE ARE SHORT TERM MEASURES AIMED AT CONTAINING THE DELIBITATING EFFECTS OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE INTERIM. FOR THE LONG TERM AND THE MEDIUM TERM, WE HAVE THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION. IT SETS OUT A PROGRAM AND IDENTIFIES PRIORITY AREAS UPON WHICH AFRICA MUST EMBARK, IN UNISON, IF WE ARE TO SURVIVE ECONOMICALLY AND LOOK TO THE FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION EMBODIES THE COLLECTIVE DESIRE AND DETERMINATION TO PURSUE POLICIES WHICH EMPHASIZE COLLECTIVE SELF-RELIANCE AND THE NEED TO STEER THE CONTINENT GRADUALLY AWAY FROM THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF DEPENDENCE. WHILE THE LARGER PART OF THAT HISTORIC DOCUMENT REMAINS AN IDEAL, TANGIBLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE AT THE SUB-REGIONAL LEVEL FOR A PIECEMEAL APPROACH TO THAT OBJECTIVE. THE VARIOUS SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS PTA, SADCC, ECCAS, MAGHREB UNION AND ECOWAS, SYMBOLIZE IN CONCRETE TERMS THIS DETERMINATION TO WORK TOWARDS AN AFRICAN COMMON MARKET AND COMMUNITY. BUT IN ORDER TO BE MEANINGFUL WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THAT ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE, THESE SUB-REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS SHOULD NOT BE AN END IN THEMSELVES BUT AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PROCESS TOWARDS THE OBJECTIVE.



MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA, OVER AND ABOVE ALL, NEED PEACE AND STABILITY WITHOUT WHICH DEVELOPMENT BECOMES A FUTILE ENTERPRISE. THE INTERNAL AND INTER-STATE CONFLICTS WHICH PLAGUE OUR CONTINENT TOGETHER WITH THE DESTABILISATION AND INSECURITY THAT HAUNT A LOT OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES SERIOUSLY DEplete THE HUMAN, MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED. THEY ALSO CREATE A SOCIAL SITUATION THAT IS INIMICAL TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTINENT. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT IF AFRICA'S CONFLICTS ARE RESOLVED AND A CLIMATE OF PEACE AND STABILITY IS ESTABLISHED, ALL OUR ENERGIES WOULD BE LIBERATED AND DIRECTED AT THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COUNTRIES.

MOREOVER, IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONSIDER ANY GENUINE ECONOMIC RECOVERY FOR AFRICA WITH THE PRESENT LEVEL OF INDEBTEDNESS WHICH, FOR THE MOST PART, IS DUE TO THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SITUATION THAT WORKS AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF OUR CONTINENT. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT ANY SERIOUS EFFORT TO STREAMLINE AFRICA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE AFRICA'S DEBT BURDEN AND CREATE A MORE EQUITABLE ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. THIS IS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE EFFORT AT SOLIDARITY THAT IS REQUIRED OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN ORDER THAT COMMON POSITIONS CAN BE ADOPTED SO AS TO ENABLE AFRICA EXERCISE THE MAXIMUM INFLUENCE IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS.

ABOVE ALL, AFRICA HAS TO MAKE UP ITS MIND TO ENGAGE IN A REAL PROCESS OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION WHICH IS THE ONLY ANSWER TO THE CHALLENGES NOW FACING OUR CONTINENT. WE SHOULD IN THIS RESPECT ACKNOWLEDGE, WITH PLEASURE, THE EFFORTS BEING MADE TOWARDS THIS OBJECTIVE AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL. THE OAU SECRETARIAT WILL EXTEND ITS UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT TO THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROUPINGS AND ENCOURAGE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CLOSE AND HARMONIOUS FRAMEWORK OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THEM WITHIN THE PROPOSED AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. IT IS WITHIN THIS AFRICAN EDIFICE THAT SECTORAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES HAVE TO BE FITTED IN A PRAGMATIC AND REALISTIC MANNER AND DEPENDING ON THE PRIORITIES THAT HAVE BEEN SET AT THE CONTINENTAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS.

AMONG THESE PRIORITIES, SPECIAL ATTENTION NEEDS TO BE FOCUSSED ON INTRA-AFRICAN CO-OPERATION IN TRADE AND TRANSPORT WHICH ARE BOTH MAJOR FACTORS THAT ENGINEER INTEGRATION. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WITH THE END-PURPOSE OF ACHIEVING FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY, SHOULD ALSO CONTINUE TO BE THE TOPMOST PRIORITY FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES. WE SHOULD GO THROUGH THE VITAL STAGES IN EVERY FIELD - EDUCATION, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, CULTURE AND HEALTH- IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA. WE SHOULD ALSO ENSURE THAT THE WOMEN PLAY THE ROLE THAT IS RIGHTFULLY THEIRS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COUNTRIES.

THE PROBLEM OF THE DEGRADATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IS ACQUIRING NEW URGENCY AND SHOULD INCREASINGLY BE GIVEN APPROPRIATE ATTENTION. DROUGHT, DESERTIFICATION AND TOXIC WASTES ARE THREATENING THE ECOLOGICAL BALANCE OF OUR ECO-SYSTEM.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT IN THE EARLY 1980s, MORE THAN 740 MILLION HECTARES OF LAND OR ROUGHLY 26 % OF THE CONTINENT'S LAND AREA WAS UNDERGOING DESERTIFICATION. IT IS CURRENTLY ESTIMATED THAT THE DESERT IS ENCROACHING ON OUR GREEN LAND AREAS AT THE RATE OF SIX MILLION HECTARES PER YEAR. THIS PROCESS OF DESERTIFICATION, COMPOUNDED BY DROUGHT, HAS WROUGHT HAVOC TO AGRICULTURE AND CONDEMND MILLIONS OF OUR PEOPLE TO STARVATION.

THE NEW PHENOMENON OF TOXIC WASTES MUST BE ADDRESSED WITH RENEWED URGENCY. IN THIS RESPECT, I WISH TO URGE QUICKER PROGRESS IN THE ELABORATION OF THE AFRICAN CONVENTION ON THE TRANSBOUNDARY MOVEMENT OF HAZARDOUS WASTES. SOLUTION TO ALL THESE WILL REQUIRE THAT AFRICA IS UNITED AND IS WILLING TO ACT TOGETHER. WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES AND TO OUR FUTURE GENERATION.

MR CHAIRMAN,

RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA WILL BE MOST MEANINGFUL ONLY IF THEY ARE COMPLEMENTED BY CORRESPONDING PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. SUCH PROGRESS CAN BE BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH DELIBERATE ACTION BY GOVERNMENTS TO TAKE LEGISLATIVE MEASURES AND PUT INTO PLACE STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS AIMED AT ENHANCING AND INTEGRATING THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS INTO THE FABRIC OF THE AFRICAN POLITICAL PROCESS. ONE IMPORTANT DEMONSTRATION OF SUCH RESOLVE IS THE RATIFICATION BY GOVERNMENTS OF THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS. I, THEREFORE, WISH TO COMMEND THOSE WHO HAVE RATIFIED IT AND APPEAL TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT, TO DO SO SOON.



MR. CHAIRMAN,

AFRICA HAS THE SAD DISTINCTION OF HAVING THE LARGEST NUMBER OF REFUGEES OF ANY CONTINENT. WE SHOULD ENDEAVOUR TO REVERSE THIS CONTINUING HUMAN SAGA AND SHIRK OFF THE UNFORTUNATE IMAGE OF AFRICA AS A CONTINENT WHERE HUMAN SUFFERING IS ENDEMIC . IT IS INACCEPTABLE THAT MORE THAN FIVE MILLION AFRICANS SHOULD CONTINUE TO LANGUISH IN CAMPS AS REFUGEES AND TWELVE MILLION MORE AS DISPLACED PERSONS. AT A TIME WHEN AFRICA HAS ADOPTED ITS CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS, IT DOES NOT REFLECT WELL ON OUR COMMITMENT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE IF WE FAIL TO TAKE CONCRETE MEASURES TO PUT AN END TO SUCH SUFFERING. THE ROOT CAUSES OF THIS PROBLEM ARE VERY WELL KNOWN. WE ONLY NEED TO DEMONSTRATE THE NECESSARY POLITICAL WILL AND TAKE FIRM ACTION. AS WE SEEK TO STEM THE TIDE OF REFUGEES, WE SHOULD ENDEAVOUR TO CARE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FORCED TO FLEE FROM THEIR HOMES AND CREATE CONDITIONS FOR THEIR VOLUNTARY RETURN.

I WISH TO PAY TRIBUTE TO INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS ESPECIALLY THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR ALL THE EFFORTS THEY HAVE DEPLOYED TO ALLEVIATE THE SUFFERING OF AFRICA'S REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS. BUT QUITE CLEARLY GIVEN THE MAGNITUDE OF AFRICA'S REFUGEE PROBLEM, MORE INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED. AND IN ALLOCATING RESOURCES FOR THE WORLD'S UPROOTED COMMUNITIES, WE EARNESTLY APPEAL TO THESE ORGANIZATIONS TO **APPLY THE TWO-FOLD PRINCIPLE OF EQUITY AND FAIRNESS** BETWEEN THE REGIONS OF THE WORLD, BE IT IN TERMS OF FUNDING OR STAFFING. BUT CLEARLY THE WORK OF THESE INSTITUTIONS WOULD BE EASIER AND THE REFUGEES THEMSELVES INFINITELY THANKFUL IF MEMBER STATES WERE TO SUMMON THE NECESSARY POLITICAL COURAGE TO PUT A DECISIVE END TO THIS SCOURGE.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE WORLD IS GOING THROUGH A PHASE OF FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE. THE RAPID CHANGES IN EASTERN EUROPE HAVE RADICALLY ALTERED THE POLITICAL THINKING AND STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS OF THE WEST. THESE TWO MUTUAL PROTAGONISTS ARE NO LONGER STANDING TALL, FACE TO FACE WITH EACH OTHER, POISED FOR MUTUAL DESTRUCTION. NOW THEY ARE REACHING OUT FOR COOPERATION. THE OLD RELATIONS OF IDEOLOGICAL CONFRONTATION AND NON-COMPATIBILITY ARE GIVING WAY TO DIALOGUE AND PARTNERSHIP. THE DEBATE IN EUROPE IS NOT ANY LONGER WHETHER TO INTEGRATE BUT WHEN AND WHAT FORM OF INTEGRATION WOULD BE MOST SUITED FOR A NEW EUROPE.

THE GOAL OF EUROPEAN UNITY AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IS INCREASINGLY BECOMING A REALITY. IN TWO YEARS, WESTERN EUROPE IS EXPECTED TO BE UNITED IN A SINGLE MARKET. ALL THIS IS PARTLY A RESULT OF A REALISATION IN EUROPE THAT IT IS ONLY THE LARGER AND ECONOMICALLY STRONG WHO WILL IMPACT ON THE AFFAIRS OF THE NEXT CENTURY. IF THOSE RICHER AND POWERFUL COUNTRIES IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD FIND IT IMPERATIVE TO REGROUP AND POOL THEIR RESOURCES, WHAT ABOUT OUR CONTINENT ?

THE NEED FOR OUR ECONOMIC UNITY IS MADE ALL THE MORE URGENT IN THE FACE OF THE SHIFT OF PRIORITY BY THE WEST TO EASTERN EUROPE AND THE CORRESPONDING FURTHER CONTRACTION OF CONCESSIONARY RESOURCE FLOW TO AFRICA. WE WILL HAVE TO FACE THE FUTURE WITH LESS RESOURCES AND FEWER EXTERNAL PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT. WE WILL HAVE TO ADJUST TO A EUROPE MORE INWARD LOOKING, MORE RESPONSIVE TO ITS OWN NEEDS FIRST.

YOU ARE ALSO CONVENING AT A TIME WHEN MAJOR GEO-STRATEGIC DESIGNS ARE BEING MAPPED OUT IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE WITH THE COUNTRIES OF THE SOUTH, PARTICULARLY AFRICA, BEING EXCLUDED. ARE WE ONCE MORE DOOMED TO YIELD TO A FRAMEWORK OF RELATIONS THAT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN OUR ABSENCE ? WILL AFRICA BE AN ACTOR IN THE NEW WORLD OR SHALL IT BE SIDELINED LIKE IN THE PAST ? WILL AFRICA BE A PARTNER IN THE NEW CONCERT OF NATIONS OR WILL IT BE TOO PREOCCUPIED BY ITS POVERTY, BACKWARDNESS AND INTERNAL CONFLICTS TO BE OF ANY CONSEQUENCE ? THESE ARE PERTINENT QUESTIONS. BUT AFRICA, WHICH ENCOMPASSES A SIZEABLE PROPORTION OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY, SHOULD DEFINITELY BE INVOLVED IN THE SETTING UP OF THE STRUCTURE WHICH WILL TOMORROW GOVERN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE WORLD FAMILY. IT SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DERIVE MAXIMUM BENEFIT FROM THE NEW ATMOSPHERE PREVAILING AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.



WE WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO UNDERTAKE A COMPREHENSIVE AND GLOBAL EVALUATION OF THE POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF OUR CONTINENT BEFORE AFRICA'S ANSWER TO THESE NEW CHALLENGES IS FORMULATED. SUCH AN ANSWER WHICH IS URGENTLY REQUIRED, SHOULD BE CONSISTENT CONTINENT-WIDE, FORWARD-LOOKING IN ITS FORMULATION, REALISTIC AND PROGRESSIVE IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION AND SHOULD INCORPORATE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EFFORTS. IT SHOULD BE EQUAL TO THE CHALLENGES FACING OUR CONTINENT AND MEASURE UP TO THE HOPES OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLES WHO EXPECT THE OAU TO MAP OUT A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR AFRICA.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.