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ADDRESS BY THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL, H.E. MR SALIM AHMED SALIM

TO

THE FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE LIBERATION COMMITTEE

Arusha, 27 June, 1990.

MR CHAIRMAN,
YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

THIS COMMITTEE MET LAST IN CAIRO AMID AN ATMOSPHERE OF HOPE, EXPECTATION AND A SENSE OF TRIUMPH. COMRADE NELSON MANDELA HAD JUST BEEN RELEASED AFTER DECADES OF INCARCERATION AND NAMIBIA STOOD ON THE VERGE OF INDEPENDENCE. BOTH DEVELOPMENTS REPRESENTED THE TRIUMPH OF WILL OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA AND OF THE DETERMINATION OF AFRICA AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT A JUST CAUSE. BUT FOR THIS COMMITTEE, WHICH SPEARHEADS THE STRUGGLE FOR THE LIBERATION OF AFRICA, THOSE EVENTS WERE OF MONUMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE, BOTH IN THEIR OWN INTRINSIC VALUE AND IN THE VISTAS THEY OPEN UP FOR THE REMAINING TASK OF THE COMMITTEE.

IT IS, THEREFORE, IN RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT I PAY TRIBUTE TO THE LAUDABLE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE AND OF THE OAU, IN GENERAL AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO SWAPO AND THE HEROIC PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA FOR THE SURPREME SACRIFICES MADE TOWARDS THE INDEPENDENCE OF THAT COUNTRY. THE TRIBUTE WILL NOT BE COMPLETE IF I FAIL TO MENTION THE IMPORTANT ROLE PLAYED BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE UNTAG, AS WELL AS ALL THOSE COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS WHICH OBSERVED THE TRANSITION PROCESS. ULTIMATELY, IT WAS THE MASSIVE INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE WHICH MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR SOUTH AFRICA TO INTERFERE ADVERSELY IN THE INDEPENDENCE PROCESS.

EVEN THOUGH NAMIBIA IS TODAY INDEPENDENT AND SOVEREIGN, THIS YOUNG STATE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED THE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE OF ALL TO CONSOLIDATE THE HARD-WON INDEPENDENCE. IT IS NOT EASY, ESPECIALLY AT A TIME WHEN ALL MEMBER STATES ARE GOING THROUGH PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT TIMES, TO SPEAK OF ASSISTANCE. BUT THE NAMIBIAN SITUATION IS UNIQUE. WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES TO ENSURE THAT THIS YOUNG NATION, FOR WHICH WE DEDICATED SO MUCH EFFORT, IS ENABLED TO STAND ON ITS OWN FEET. FINANCIAL, MATERIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED. WE MUST ALSO REMAIN SOLIDLY BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT OF NAMIBIA IN ITS EFFORTS TO RETRIEVE PART OF ITS TERRITORY, WALVIS BAY, FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

MR CHAIRMAN,
EXCELLENCIES,

WITH THE INDEPENDENCE OF NAMIBIA, AFRICA HAS NOW COME FACE TO FACE WITH THE LAST PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE IT HAS SOLEMNLY COMMITTED ITSELF; THAT IS THE STRUGGLE FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE DIGNITY OF THE AFRICAN. I AM REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID.

WE ARE ALL WITNESSES TO THE SERIES OF MEASURES TAKEN BY THE PRETORIA REGIME, THE MOST NOTABLE OF WHICH WERE THE RELEASE OF COMRADE NELSON MANDELA AND OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS, THE LIFTING OF THE BAN ON ANC AND PAC AND, RECENTLY, THE DESEGREGATION OF SOME PUBLIC AMENITIES AND THE PARTIAL TERMINATION OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY. WE ARE ALSO AWARE OF

THE EUPHORIA GENERATED BY THESE MEASURES, BOTH IN AFRICA AND ABROAD, AND THE CALL IN SOME QUARTERS FOR THE RELAXATION OF SANCTIONS IN APPRECIATION OF AND AS ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE PRETORIA REGIME. PRESIDENT DE KLERK HAS JUST CONCLUDED A TOUR OF EUROPE TO DRUMUP SUPPORT FOR THE REMOVAL OF SANCTIONS. COMRADE NELSON MANDELA HAS ALSO GONE TO THE SAME REGION TO URGE AGAINST ANY RELAXATION IN SANCTIONS. IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, THE DEBATE IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE AND WILL COME UP AGAIN AND EACH TIME PRESIDENT DE KLERK MAKES A MOVE, HOWEVER PARTIAL AND INADEQUATE IT MAY BE.

MR CHAIRMAN,

WE HAVE DISCUSSED THIS ISSUE IN THIS COMMITTEE AND IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. THE AD HOC COMMITTEE OF HEADS OF STATE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA HAS ENDORSED THE CONCLUSIONS OF OUR DISCUSSIONS AND ISSUED A STATEMENT WHICH I STRONGLY COMMEND TO ALL MEMBER STATES.

IF WE HAVE TO REPEAT OURSELVES TIME AND AGAIN IN ORDER TO BRING THE MESSAGE HOME, WE WILL DO IT. AND LET THERE BE NO MISUNDERSTANDING; WE ALL ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MEASURES PRESIDENT DE KLERK HAS TAKEN. THE SUM TOTAL OF ALL THE MEASURES TAKEN IS AN ATTEMPT TO MEET THE CONDITIONS THAT HAVE BEEN SET BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOR SERIOUS AND GENUINE NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO THE ELIMINATION OF APARTHEID AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNITED, NON-RACIAL AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. IN OTHER WORDS, BY THESE MEASURES, SOUTH AFRICA IS

ATTEMPTING TO DEMONSTRATE ITS SERIOUSNESS, GENUINENESS AND SINCERITY ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS. BUT THESE MEASURES, ENCOURAGING AS THEY ARE, ARE ONLY PARTIAL; THERE ARE STILL MORE POLITICAL PRISONERS IN JAIL, THERE ARE STILL TROOPS IN THE TOWNSHIPS, NATAL IS UNDER A STATE OF EMERGENCY AND THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT, WHICH CIRCUMSCRIBES POLITICAL ACTIVITY, IS STILL IN FORCE.

MR CHAIRMAN,

EVEN IF THE PRETORIA REGIME HAD MET ALL THE CONDITIONS IN FULL, IT WOULD BE PREMATURE AND, INDEED, IRRATIONAL TO RELAX OR LIFT SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA WHEN THERE HAS BEEN NO ATTEMPT AT ALL TO ELIMINATE APARTHEID. MANDELA IS NOT A FREE PERSONS AS IT WOULD SEEM TO BE. HE RE-EMERGED INTO A SOCIETY PRETTY MUCH LIKE THE ONE HE LEFT BEHIND TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO. HE LEFT ROBEN ISLAND PRISON TO REJOIN THE MILLIONS NON-WHITES WHO REMAIN IMPRISONED BY APARTHEID. THE PILLARS OF APARTHEID, SUCH AS THE GROUP AREAS ACT, THE LAND ACT, THE POPULATION REGISTRATION ACT AND A HOST OF OTHER SECURITY LEGISLATIONS, WHICH HOLD APARTHEID TOGETHER, HAVE NOT BEEN TOUCHED. HOW FREE IS MANDELA IF HE CAN NOT CHOSE HIS PLACE OF RESIDENCE OR ASSOCIATE WITH PEOPLE OF HIS CHOICE ? HOW FREE IS THE ANC TO OPERATE WHEN ITS PEOPLE CANNOT MOVE FREELY ?

MR CHAIRMAN,

WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENSURE THAT PRETORIA IS NOT ALLOWED TO BREAK OUT OF ITS ISOLATION INTO INTERNATIONAL

ACCEPTABILITY SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THE PRESUMED GOOD INTENTIONS OF DE KLERK. THERE HAS TO BE A CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT PROFOUND CHANGES ARE TAKING PLACE AND THAT AN IRREVERSIBLE PROCESS, TOWARDS THE TOTAL ERADICATION OF APARTHEID, IS WELL UNDERWAY. FOR THE MOMENT, WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT WE MUST GET TO THE BOTTOM OF DE KLERK'S PRONOUNCEMENTS AND LOOK AT THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS MEASURES SO FAR. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO BE SURE ABOUT EXACTLY WHAT HAS ACTUALLY CHANGED AND WHAT HAS NOT.

MR CHAIRMAN,

ADMITTEDLY, THE MEASURES ALREADY TAKEN BY PRESIDENT DE KLERK ARE SIGNIFICANT AND THEY NEED TO BE ENCOURAGED. BUT THESE DID NOT COME ABOUT BECAUSE OF HIS BENEVOLENCE OR CHANGE OF HEART. THE PRESSURE OF POLICING APARTHEID INTERNALLY AND THAT OF SANCTIONS AND DIVESTMENT HAVE RAISED THE COST OF SUSTAINING APARTHEID. THIS IS WHAT HAS BROUGHT THE PRETORIA REGIME THIS FAR. OBVIOUSLY, TO SUSTAIN THE MOMENTUM AND TO ENSURE THAT THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION IS NOT HALTED, WE NEED TO MAINTAIN THESE PRESSURES. IN OTHER WORDS, THE VERY COMBINATION OF PRESSURES, WHICH MADE POSSIBLE THE CONCESSION BY DE KLERK AND HIS NATIONAL PARTY OF THESE PARTIAL MEASURES, IS NEEDED MORE THAN BEFORE TO ENSURE THAT GENUINE NEGOTIATIONS TO DISMANTLE APARTHEID BEGIN AND HOLD.

INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS AGAINST RHODESIA WERE NOT LIFTED WHEN THE NATIONALIST LEADERS WERE RELEASED FROM PRISON IN 1974 NOR WERE THEY, IN THE CASE OF NAMIBIA, WHEN TOIVO YA TOIVO WAS FREED IN 1984. IT WAS ONLY UNTIL THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

WAS SATISFIED THAT THERE WAS CONCRETE EVIDENCE, IN BOTH CASES, OF AN IRREVERSIBLE MARCH TOWARDS GENUINE POLITICAL REFORMS. WHY THEN SHOULD THERE BE SO MUCH ANXIETY TO APPLY DIFFERENT STANDARDS IN THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA ?

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE CHALLENGE AND EXACTING TASK BEFORE THIS COMMITTEE IS FIRST TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS NO EROSION IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS ON APARTHEID. SANCTIONS MUST BE KEPT IN PLACE. THE SECOND IS TO CONTINUE ENCOURAGING THE PROCESS OF CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE TALKS ABOUT TALKS WHICH THE ANC HELD WITH THE APARTHEID GOVERNMENT MUST BE ENCOURAGED BUT BEING, AT THE SAME TIME, CAREFUL THAT THESE TALKS ARE NOT DRAGGED ON TO BUY MORE TIME FOR THE APARTHEID SYSTEM. WE CANNOT IGNORE THE CHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE AND THOSE WHICH ARE LIKELY. AND DUE TO THE PERVESE NATURE OF APARTHEID IN THE LIVES OF SOUTH AFRICANS, DE KLERK STILL HAS A LOT MORE PETTY CONCESSIONS TO MAKE BEFORE TOUCHING THE EDIFICE OF APARTHEID ITSELF. HE HAS MANY PETTY LEGISLATIONS TO PLAY POLITICS WITH. WE MUST, THEREFORE, BE PREPARED FOR MORE PLEAS FROM THE FRIENDS OF PRETORIA TO RECIPROCATATE DE KLERK'S DISPENSATIONS. SO WE MUST NOT FALL PREY TO THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND WE SHOULD INSIST THAT MR DE KLERK'S SINCERITY AND COMMITMENT TO GENUINE CHANGE BE JUDGED BY THE MEASURES HE TAKES TO BRING TO AN END TO THE SYSTEM OF APARTHEID. THIS HAS BEEN THE WISH AND POSITION OF NELSON MANDELA AND IT WAS THE POSITION TAKEN BY THIS COMMITTEE IN CAIRO. I URGE YOU TO PROCEED ALONG THE SAME COURSE.

MR CHAIRMAN,

AS THE STRUGGLE GRADUALLY DRAWS TO A CLOSE, WE MUST TAKE ALL MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT THE BOOKS ARE PROPERLY BALANCED. THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE BEFORE YOU DOES NOT SHOW MUCH IMPROVEMENT COMPARED TO THE SITUATION THAT OBTAINED IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR. TRUE, NAMIBIA IS INDEPENDENT AND THERE ARE HOPEFUL SIGNS IN SOUTH AFRICA, BUT WE MUST REMAIN TRUE TO OUR COMMITMENTS. LET IT NOT EVER BE SAID THAT, IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE REDEMPTION OF AFRICA, THERE WERE STATES THAT FAILED TO MEET THEIR ASSESSED FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION FOR THE REALIZATION OF THE NOBLE CAUSE.

MR CHAIRMAN,
EXCELLENCIES,

THE STRUGGLE HAS BEEN LONG AND ARDOUS. AS WE GIRD OURSELVES FOR THE FINAL ASSAULT, LET US GUARD AGAINST COMPLACENCY AND LAXITY. LET US, WITH RENEWED ENERGY AND FORTITUDE, REDOUBLE OUR EFFORTS UNTIL FINAL VICTORY IS ACHIEVED. WE ALSO URGE THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND, INDEED, ALL THE MASS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS, IN SOUTH AFRICA, TO CLOSE THEIR RANKS FOR A CONCERTED ASSAULT AT THEIR COMMON ENEMY.

I WISH YOU FRUITFUL DELIBERATIONS.