

ADDRESS BY THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL

H.E. MR SALIM AHMED SALIM

TO

THE FIFTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE LIBERATION COMMITTEE

Arusha, 19 February, 1992.

MR CHAIRMAN,
EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

BETWEEN ABUJA AND ARUSHA, SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS OF EPOCH-MAKING PROPORTIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN SOUTH AFRICA; DEVELOPMENTS THAT HOLD THE PROSPECTS OF BRINGING SOUTH AFRICA TO THE THRESHOLD OF DEMOCRACY AND INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTABILITY.

I REFER, IN THE MAIN, TO THE FORMAL COMMENCEMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR A NEW SOUTH AFRICA BETWEEN THE PRIVILEGED WHITE MINORITY ESTABLISHMENT AND THE DISPOSSESSED AND OPPRESSED MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA. I AM REFERRING TO THE CONVENTION FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA, COMMONLY KNOWN AS CODESA. I AM ALSO REFERRING TO THE EFFORTS OF THE BLACK MAJORITY TO FORGE A COMMON PLATFORM FOR NEGOTIATIONS AS REPRESENTED BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT.

IN ABUJA, AS YOU MAY RECALL, BOTH AT THE LEVEL OF THIS COMMITTEE AND AT THE LEVEL OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, CONSIDERABLE TIME WAS TAKEN IN THE DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTION OF SANCTIONS. THAT WAS PROBABLY NECESSARY BECAUSE IT WAS THE TOPICAL ISSUE THEN. THIS TIME AROUND, I HOPE THE FOCUS WILL BE ON WHAT HAS GENERALLY COME TO BE REGARDED AS «THE WAY FORWARD».

MR CHAIRMAN,

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST COLONIALISM, SETTLER-COLONIALISM AND APARTHEID, WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO EVOLVE NEW STRATEGIES IN RESPONSE TO CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES. THUS IT WAS THAT IN 1989, WE PRODUCED THE HARARE DECLARATION AS OUR GUIDE TO THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA. ONCE AGAIN, WE MANAGED TO SECURE INTERNATIONAL APPROVAL, THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS, FOR OUR POSITION.

FOR TWO YEARS NOW, WE HAVE WATCHED THE EFFORTS OF THE REGIME TO RESPOND TO THE STIPULATIONS CONTAINED IN THE HARARE DECLARATION. THESE EFFORTS HAVE CONSISTED LARGELY IN THE REMOVAL OF WHAT WE CONSIDERED TO BE OBSTACLES TO NEGOTIATIONS OR THE CREATION OF A CONDUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE TO NEGOTIATIONS. EFFORTS HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE TOWARDS THE REMOVAL OF THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF APARTHEID. THE EUPHORIA GENERATED BY THE COMBINED EFFECT OF THESE MEASURES AND ITS SUBSEQUENT REPERCUSSIONS ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE ARE WELL KNOWN TO ALL OF US. IN ALL FRANKNESS, WE HAVE WELCOMED THESE MEASURES AS BEING SIGNIFICANT IN THE SENSE THAT THEY HOLD THE PROMISE TOWARDS THE OBJECTIVE WE SEEK IN SOUTH AFRICA. IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, WE MAY EXPECT FURTHER MOVEMENTS FORWARD, MOVEMENTS THAT MAY, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA, PRODUCE A GOVERNMENT COMPOSED OF SOME OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM, ALBEIT ON A TRANSITIONAL BASIS.

MR CHAIRMAN,

WHAT I AM TRYING TO DO, HERE, IS TO SOUND A NOTE OF CAUTION. WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE EFFECTS PRODUCED IN AFRICA AND BEYOND OF THE MEASURES THAT HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. I HAVE OBSERVED, WITH CONSIDERABLE CONCERN, THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CERTAIN TENDENCY, A PRODUCT OF THE CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN SOUTH AFRICA, THAT SEEMS TO PORTRAY THE STRUGGLE AS BEING OVER. NO DOUBT, ALL OF US WOULD WANT TO SEE AN END TO THE STRUGGLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, EVEN TOMORROW, IF IT WERE POSSIBLE. BUT WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW OUR WISHES AND ACTIONS TO OUTFRAN ACTUAL EVENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA. THAT, I SUBMIT, WILL BE DANGEROUS JUST AS IT IS DANGEROUS TO RELAX, RELENT OR LOOSEN-UP OUR VIGILANCE EVEN BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CRUCIAL PHASE OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS. WHAT, THEREFORE, NEEDS TO BE DONE IS TO DETERMINE WHAT WE CAN DO TO GIVE MOMENTUM TO THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

ADMITTEDLY, WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING IN SOUTH AFRICA, TODAY, IS FAR DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING WE HAVE WITNESSED BEFORE. THERE IS NO LANCASTER HOUSE BLUE PRINT NOR SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 435 BY WHICH PROGRESS COULD BE MEASURED AGAINST TIME-FRAMES AND NO BRITAIN OR SECURITY COUNCIL TO PRESSURIZE. EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND THE BLACK MAJORITY. AND WE HAVE APPLAUDED EVERY STEP ON THE WAY, EVEN IF WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY STEPS THERE ARE AND HOW LONG

IT WOULD TAKE TO REACH THE LAST STEP. THIS UNCERTAINTY WILL HOPEFULLY BE CLEARED BY THE CONVENTION FOR DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA (CODESA) WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, ESPECIALLY AS THE COMMITTEES SET UP COMPLETE THE WORK AND SUBMIT RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO PROCEED TOWARDS TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.

MR CHAIRMAN,

PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF CODESA, AN EVENT OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE TOOK PLACE IN SOUTH AFRICA IN OCTOBER 1991. I AM REFERRING TO THE FORMATION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT EMBRACING THE TWO NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND A HOST OF OTHER POLITICAL FORMATIONS OF THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE. AS YOU ARE ALL AWARE, THE OAU HAS, FOR MANY YEARS NOW, BEEN URGING OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS TO FORGE A COMMON FRONT TO FACE THE COMMON ENEMY INSTEAD OF DISSIPATING THEIR ENERGIES AND RESOURCES CONFRONTING EACH OTHER. THE FORMATION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, THEREFORE, EVEN AT THIS STAGE, WAS A GREAT VICTORY FOR THE OPPRESSED AND FOR AFRICA. WE HAPPILY WELCOMED THIS HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND URGED OUR BROTHERS WITHIN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO SPARE NO EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT THE FRONT IS AS BROADLY BASED AS POSSIBLE BRINGING TOGETHER ALL THE ANTI-APARTHEID FORCES. THIS MAXIMIZATION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IS CRUCIAL IN THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THERE REMAINS PROBLEMS OF DISUNITY AND DIFFERENCES OF VIEW AMONG THE ANTI-APARTHEID FORCES EVEN WITHIN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. I AM SURE, HOWEVER, THAT GIVEN POLITICAL WILL, THE FRONT CAN AND IS ABLE TO RESOLVE THESE DIFFERENCES AND GET ON WITH THE MORE DAUNTING TASK OF NEGOTIATIONS. THIS COMMITTEE CAN, IN VIEW OF ITS PAST EXPERIENCES, HELP OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA FORGE UNITY AND COHESION.

I PARTICULARLY THINK THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS TO FORGE BETTER WORKING RELATIONS AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE IN THE STRUGGLE. THIS NEED ACQUIRES GREATER URGENCY OF MAXIMIZING THE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH A COMBINED ANC/PAC OFFENSIVE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS CAN PRESENT. OBVIOUSLY, ANY FURTHER SPLIT WILL NOT ONLY PLAY IN THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO ADVOCATE THE MAINTENANCE OF THE STATUS QUO BUT WILL, IN A VERY REAL SENSE, IMPACT NEGATIVELY ON THE STRUGGLE. YOUR COMMITTEE, THEREFORE, MUST DO ALL NECESSARY TO SET IN MOTION A MECHANISM TO ATTEND TO THIS PROBLEM.

CLOSELY LINKED TO THE PROBLEM OF DISUNITY IS THE SCOURGE OF VIOLENCE WHICH CONTINUE TO GRIP THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA. VIOLENCE HAS NOT ONLY BROUGHT DEATH, IMMENSE SUFFERING AND TRAUMA TO THE BLACK COMMUNITY, IT IS INCREASINGLY PROVING TO BE AN IMPEDIMENT TO THE PROGRESS OF THE STRUGGLE. IT IS ONLY

THROUGH UNITY THAT THE BLACK MAJORITY CAN COMPREHENSIVELY AND EFFECTIVELY TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE. THIS COMMON AGENDA TO STEM THE TIDE OF VIOLENCE AND EVENTUALLY ELIMINATING IT ALTOGETHER IS NOW REQUIRED. THIS IS ALL THE MORE URGENT CONSIDERING THAT THERE IS INCREASING EVIDENCE OF COLLUSION BY ELEMENTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SECURITY ORGANS WITH THE PERPETRATORS OF THE VIOLENCE. THIS HAVOC OF TERROR, MURDER AND DESTRUCTION MUST BE EFFECTIVELY COMBATTED BY THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SINCERITY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED AHEAD WITH THE PROCESS OF CHANGE REMAINS SERIOUSLY INDICTED FOR AS LONG AS IT ALLOWS ELEMENTS OF ITS SECURITY FORCES TO PERPETRATE THIS SCOURGE OF VIOLENCE. INDEED, UNLESS THE PRETORIA REGIME TAKES PROMPT AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO END THE VIOLENCE, ITS MOTIVES MUST REMAIN SUSPECT AT THE VERY LEAST.

MR CHAIRMAN,

BY FAR, THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA, AS OF NOW, IS THE COMMENCEMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA. ALL THAT HAVE BEEN DONE SO FAR WERE ONLY MEANT TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR A MORE MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE WHITE ESTABLISHMENT AND THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA ON THE FUTURE OF THAT COUNTRY. WITH THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, THEREFORE, IT CAN BE SAID THAT WE HAVE NOW ARRIVED AT THE MOST IMPORTANT AND DELICATE PHASE

OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN SOUTH AFRICA. FROM NOW ON, THE WHOLE OF AFRICA AND INDEED THE FRIENDS OF AFRICA WILL BE SITTING ON TENDER-HOOKS. WE CAN BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF ONLY WHEN, AT THE END OF THAT PHASE, POWER IS TRANSFERRED TO THE PEOPLE. UNTIL THEN, WE MUST KEEP ALL OUR OPTIONS OPEN.

MR CHAIRMAN,

WHILE WE HAVE NOW ENTERED A NEW PHASE OF NEGOTIATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA, THE ISSUE OF WHAT SUPPORTIVE ACTION, INCLUDING PRESSURE, IS NEEDED TO AUGMENT THAT SUPPORT, CONTINUE TO BE AREAS OF PRIORITY TO THE OAU. AT YOUR LAST MEETING, IN ABUJA, THIS COMMITTEE WAS UNEQUIVOCAL IN ITS DETERMINATION THAT THE SANCTIONS REGIME FORMS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE STRATEGY TO ELIMINATE APARTHEID. THE ABUJA SUMMIT ENDORSED THAT VIEW. WE ARE, HOWEVER, ALL FAMILIAR WITH SUBSEQUENT EVENTS ESPECIALLY THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA OF THE COMMONWEALTH AT ITS MEETING IN NEW DELHI, INDIA, AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE COMMONWEALTH SUMMIT WHICH MET IN HARARE, LAST YEAR. THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE SINCE BEEN ENDORSED BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND MANY COUNTRIES HAVE MODIFIED THEIR POSITIONS IN ALIGNMENT WITH THOSE DECISIONS.

THE DECISIONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH REPRESENT A NEW AND IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN HOW AFRICA INTENDS TO MANAGE THE REGIME OF SANCTIONS. CONSISTENT WITH THE POSITION OF FLEXIBILITY,

RECOGNIZING AND REWARDING POSITIVE MEASURES IN SOUTH AFRICA, AFRICA IS NOW WILLING TO ADJUST ITS POLICY OF SANCTIONS ACCORDINGLY. WHAT IS CRUCIAL, HOWEVER, IS NOT WHETHER WE NOW HAVE AGREED TO PROGRESSIVELY REMOVE THE SO CALLED «PEOPLE TO PEOPLE» SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, BUT RATHER WHETHER AFRICA CAN TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND LEAD TO THE WAY FORWARD IN MANAGING SANCTIONS. SANCTIONS REMAIN A POTENT WEAPON IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID. I NEED NOT RECALL THAT IT IS THE COMBINATION OF ARMED STRUGGLE AND ALL-ROUND INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR SANCTIONS WHICH HAS BROUGHT US THIS FAR. EVIDENTLY, INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE MUST CONTINUE IN ORDER TO COMPEL THE REGIME TO PURSUE THE PROCESS OF CHANGE. THE NATURE AND CONTENT OF THIS PRESSURE CAN BE A SUBJECT OF LEGITIMATE DEBATE. BUT A WHOLESALE ABANDONMENT OF INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE, INCLUDING THAT OF SANCTIONS, RUN THE SERIOUS RISK OF UNDERMINING OUR COMMON STRUGGLE. BOTH THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE PAN-AFRICANIST CONGRESS HAVE STRONGLY AND CONSISTENTLY WARNED AGAINST SUCH A RELAXATION OF INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE.

YET, WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING NOW IS A GRADUAL MOVE TO ELIMINATE ALTOGETHER THE REGIME OF SANCTIONS ON THE SELF-SERVING PRETEXT THAT EITHER APARTHEID IS DEAD OR THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATING IT HAS REACHED THE POINT OF IRREVERSIBILITY. NEITHER OF THESE SUGGESTIONS IS SUPPORTED BY THE REALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA. TRUE, SIGNIFICANT CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE AND, TODAY, WE CAN

EVEN CONTEMPLATE THE PROSPECTS OF A NON-RACIAL, DEMOCRATIC AND UNITED SOUTH AFRICA. BUT TO REACH THAT STAGE, WE HAVE TO CROSS THE HURDDLE OF NEGOTIATIONS. TODAY, CODESA HAS SET IN MOTION THE PROCESS, BUT IT IS STILL A LONG WAY FROM THAT PROCESS TAKING ROOT AND MUCH FURTHER FROM ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVE. SANCTIONS ARE, THEREFORE, NEEDED, EVEN IN THEIR REMAINING FORM, TO BACKSTOP THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS. THAT IS WHY I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THIS COMMITTEE, WHILE AGREEING THAT IN RECOGNITION OF THE CHANGES WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE, THE «PEOPLE TO PEOPLE» SANCTIONS SHOULD BE GRADUALLY EASED, IT SHOULD ALSO BE UNEQUIVOCAL IN EMPHASIZING THAT THE REMAINING SANCTIONS, ESPECIALLY FINANCIAL AND MILITARY, SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AS AN INSURANCE AGAINST BACK-PEDDLING FROM THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS.

TO DO SO EFFECTIVELY, THIS COMMITTEE MUST BE CLEAR OF WHAT IT SEEKS TO ACHIEVE AND BE PREPARED TOGETHER TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TO THE WORLD INSTEAD OF REACHING TO FAIT ACCOMPLI. THIS COMMITTEE HAS BEFORE IT THREE MAJOR CHALLENGES. ONE IS HOW INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE FOR CHANGE CAN CONTINUE TO BE EXERTED UPON SOUTH AFRICA AND HOW THE REMAINING ASPECTS OF THE SANCTIONS REGIME SHOULD BE MANAGED. THE OTHER IS HOW TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS WHICH HAS BEEN STARTED IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE THIRD IS HOW UNITY AND COHESION, AMONG THE BLACK MAJORITY, CAN BE FORGED AND CONSOLIDATED SO AS TO PRESENT A TRULY UNITED FRONT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE APARTHEID REGIME.

MR CHAIRMAN,

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

I HAVE REFERRED TO PREVIOUS STRATEGIES AND PLANS OF ACTION. AT THIS CRUCIAL PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FORMULATE SOME KIND OF GUIDANCE TO OUR COLLECTIVE ACTION. I AM AWARE THAT CODESA ITSELF WILL BE DETERMINING THE NATURE OF THE ROLE TO BE PLAYED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DURING THIS PHASE OF THE PROCESS, BUT THAT DOES NOT PREVENT US FROM DOING OUR HOMEWORK. WHAT READILY COMES TO MIND IS THE NATURE OF ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND THE ANTI-APARTHEID FORCES IN GENERAL AND ALSO POSSIBLY DETERMINE THE MECHANISM AND THE MODALITIES TO ENABLE THE OAU TO CLOSELY MONITOR THE PROCESS. WE MAY ALSO CONSIDER WHAT THE OAU COULD DO TO ASSIST THE PROCESS.

MR CHAIRMAN,

WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY TO THE LAST PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE. COMPLACENCY CAN BE OUR GREATEST FOE. LET US, THEREFORE, MAKE THE LAST SACRIFICE AND WALK THE LAST MILE TOGETHER FOR THE GLORY OF AFRICA.

I THANK YOU.