

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY

**THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL, H.E. MR SALIM AHMED SALIM
BEFORE THE 52ND SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

Addis Ababa, 3 July, 1990.

MR CHAIRMAN,
HONOURABLE MINISTERS,

I WISH, ON BEHALF OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT, TO WELCOME YOUR EXCELLENCIES TO ADDIS ABABA ONCE AGAIN. I AM PARTICULARLY HAPPY TO WELCOME, AMONG OUR MIDST, HIS EXCELLENCY BEN GURIRAB, FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, AND HIS DELEGATION. NAMIBIA'S INDEPENDENCE AND MEMBERSHIP INTO THE OAU HAS PUSHED OUR ORGANIZATION CLOSER TO FULL CONTINENTAL MEMBERSHIP. WE LOOK TO FORWARD TO A NOT SO DISTANT FUTURE WHEN WE SHALL WELCOME A FREE, DEMOCRATIC AND NON-RACIAL SOUTH AFRICA IN OUR MIDST.

MR CHAIRMAN,

YOUR DISTINGUISHED COUNCIL ADJOURNED ITS LAST SESSION, IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR, AMID MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICAN AND THE WORLD. NELSON MANDELA HAD JUST REGAINED HIS FUNCTION AFTER DECADES OF INCARCERATION IN APARTHEID GAOLS. NAMIBIA STOOD AT THE THRESHOLD OF INDEPENDENCE AFTER DECADES OF A BITTER STRUGGLE AND IMMENSE SACRIFICE OF MANY. AT THAT TIME, FEELINGS OF DEEP JOY, EMOTION AND TRIUMPH FILLED OUR HEARTS. THE EUPHORIA HAS NOW SETTLED AND AFRICA HAS BEGUN TO REFLECT. ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE, THE SITUATION HAS CONTINUED TO EVOLVE AT A HECTIC PACE. PRESIDENTS BUSH AND GORBACHEV MET AGAIN AT A SUMMIT LEVEL IN WASHINGTON AND CONTINUED THE STEADY PROCESS

OF ENDING THE COLD WAR AND USHERING IN A NEW ERA OF COOPERATION. THE COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE HAVE KEPT STEADY THEIR PROGRAMS OF TRANSFORMATION AND CONVERSION TO MULTIPARTY RULE. WESTERN EUROPE HAS PUSHED AHEAD TOWARDS INTEGRATION SO AS TO MEET THE TARGET OF A SINGLE MARKET BY THE END OF 1992. ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE RELEVANT TO AFRICA AND MAY SERVE AS USEFUL REFERENCES AS YOU MEET NOW TO DELIBERATE ABOUT AFRICA'S PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE.

ON THE 21ST MARCH THIS YEAR, NAMIBIA ACCEDED TO FULL INDEPENDENCE. I WAS HAPPY TO WELCOME THE NEW REPUBLIC IN OUR MIDST AS A MEMBER OF OUR ORGANIZATION. THE INDEPENDENCE OF NAMIBIA BROUGHT TO AN END A CENTURY OF COLONIAL OCCUPATION AND OF UNREMITTING STRUGGLE OF THE NAMIBIANS. IT WAS THE TRIUMPH OF WILL AND OF RESILIENCE. BUT THIS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE SACRIFICES OF THE NAMIBIAN PEOPLE AND THE SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT OF AFRICA AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THIS COUNCIL, THEREFORE, HAS EVERY RIGHT TO TAKE PRIDE IN THIS ACCOMPLISHMENT.

INDEPENDENCE BRINGS WITH IT THE CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE. I NOTE THAT THE NEW REPUBLIC IS OFF TO A GOOD START. I WISH, IN THIS RESPECT, TO COMMEND THE SWAPO LEADERSHIP FOR SEIZING THAT CHALLENGE AND EXTENDING A HAND OF PEACE, RECONCILIATION AND PARTNERSHIP AND FORGING NATIONAL UNITY. BUT NAMIBIA IS STILL IN ITS INFANCY. IT WILL CONTINUE TO NEED AFRICA'S SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT IN THE DAYS AHEAD. WITH THE

VICTORY IN NAMIBIA, WE HAVE PUSHED THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID ACROSS A STRATEGIC THRESHOLD. WE HAVE EXTENDED AFRICA'S FRONTIERS OF FREEDOM AND WE ARE NOW FACE TO FACE WITH APARTHEID. AND THAT IS WHERE OUR FULL ATTENTION SHOULD NOW TURN.

IN SOUTH AFRICA, THE SITUATION CONTINUES TO PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES AS IT DOES CHALLENGES. SINCE YOUR LAST SESSION, THERE HAS BEEN MANY DEVELOPMENTS. PRESIDENT DE KLERK MADE AN EXTENDED TOUR OF WESTERN EUROPE ARGUING FOR THE REPUDIATION OF SANCTIONS AS RECOGNITION OF HIS SO-CALLED MAJOR REFORMS AND AS AN ENCOURAGEMENT OR INCENTIVE TO BRING ABOUT MORE. INSIDE THE COUNTRY, HE HAS DECREED A DESEGREGATION OF SOME PUBLIC FACILITIES SUCH AS SELECTED HOSPITALS, PARKS AND OTHER AMENITIES. ADDITIONAL POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED AND THE STATE OF EMERGENCY HAS BEEN LIFTED EXCEPT FOR THE NATAL PROVINCE. THESE ARE NOTEWORTHY DEVELOPMENTS WHICH MUST BE ENCOURAGED. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, WE SHOULD NOT LET THESE MEASURES, WHICH MERELY SCRATCH THE SURFACE OF APARTHEID, CLOUD OUR JUDGEMENT ON THE SYSTEM OR BE USED AS A PRETEXT FOR EMBRACING THE APARTHEID REGIME.

THE REALITY, INSIDE THE COUNTRY, REMAINS ESSENTIALLY UNALTERED. PRESIDENT DE KLERK, WITH ALL HIS PRESUMED GOODWILL, MUST ULTIMATELY BE JUDGED BY HIS ACTIONS AND THE BALANCE SHEET OF HIS ACTIONS IS CERTAINLY NOT THE MOST IMPRESSIVE. THE NATIONAL

PARTY, WHICH PRESIDENT DE KLERK LENDS, HAS NOT CONCEDED THE PRINCIPLE OF DEMOCRACY AND IS STILL EMBEDDED TO ITS BELIEF IN APARTHEID. THE BLACK MAJORITY STILL HAVE NO RIGHT TO VOTE. THE GROUP AREAS ACT AND A HOST OF OTHER DRACONISM LEGISLATION CONTINUE TO PROSCRIBE POLITICAL ACTIVITY, FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND EXPRESSION. THE LIFTING OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY MAY NOT MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE GIVEN THE EXTENSIVE POLICE POWERS. THIS IS THE REALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA. AFRICA IS FACED WITH THE CHALLENGE OF BOTH ENCOURAGING FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THE COUNTRY AND OF ENSURING THAT WE DO NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE REAL SUBSTANCE OF THE STRUGGLE.

THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA MET IN HARARE ON 20 MARCH AND UNDERLINED THAT, WHILE THERE HAS BEEN SOME MOVEMENT, THERE IS NO CREDIBLE ARGUMENT FOR CHANGE OF POSITION ON SOUTH AFRICA. WE MUST PERSIST IN OUR DEMAND FOR SANCTIONS UNTIL THERE IS IN EVIDENCE, AN IRREVERSIBLE PROCESS TOWARDS THE ERADICATION OF APARTHEID AND THE CREATION OF A UNITARY, NON-RACIAL AND DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA ON THE BASIS OF ONE MAN ONE VOTE.

THE ANC MET THE GOVERNMENT AND TALKED ABOUT FUTURE TALKS. WE WERE ENCOURAGED BY THEIR JOINT AGREEMENT ON THE NEED TO SUSTAIN DIALOGUE. WE MUST CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE THESE CONTACTS. BUT THEY CAN ONLY SUCCEED IF THE APARTHEID AUTHORITIES CREATE THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE WHICH CAN SUSTAIN THAT DIALOGUE. UNTIL THAT DIALOGUE TAKES ROOT AND THE MARCH

TOWARDS THE DISMANTLING OF APARTHEID IS WELL UNDERWAY, WE SHOULD MAINTAIN OUR UNITY AND SOLIDARITY. OUR UNITY AND COHESION WILL PLAY A PIVOTAL . ROLE IN ENSURING THAT THE INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS ON APARTHEID IS NOT UNDERMINED.

QUITE APART FROM ARGUING FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE PRESSURE OF SANCTIONS, WHICH HAS MADE THE FEW CONCESSIONS FOR DE KLERK POSSIBLE, I AM OF THE VIEW THAT NOW THERE IS NEED FOR THIS COUNCIL TO REEVALUATE OUR STRATEGY IN LIGHT OF THE NEW CIRCUMSTANCES. IN SO DOING, WE SHALL BE ABLE TO MORE READILY AND COHERENTLY, AS A GROUP, RESPOND TO THE DEVELOPMENTS INSIDE THE COUNTRY AND TO GUARD AGAINST EROSION OF OUR SUPPORT INTERNATIONALLY. THIS IS NOW MADE MORE URGENT BY THE WAVERING OF SUPPORT BY EVEN SOME OF OUR TRADITIONALLY STRONG SUPPORTERS.

THIS COUNCIL ADJOURNED ITS FEBRUARY SESSION IN THE MIDST OF AN ELECTORAL CRISIS IN THE COMOROS, FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT ABDALLAH, AND TAKING OVER OF THE COUNTRY BY A BAND OF ARMED MERCENARIES. REPORTED IRREGULATIES IN THE BALLOTING PROCESS HAD MADE NECESSARY THE SUSPENSION OF THE ELECTIONS AND THEIR RESCHEDULING TO A SUBSEQUENT DATE. THE OAU TEAM ,LED BY AMBASSADOR JOLAOSO - THEN HEAD OF THE OAU OBSERVER MISSION IN NAMIBIA - WHICH I HAD DISPATCHED TO OBSERVE THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, REPORTED ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE SUSPENSION OF THE ELECTIONS. DESPITE THE INITIAL DIFFICULTIES REPORTED BY THE TEAM, WE WERE DETERMINED TO PERSIST IN OUR

EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE THE LEADERS OF THE VARIOUS CONTENDING POLITICAL PARTIES NOT TO ABANDON THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. I AM ALSO HAPPY TO REPORT THAT NEW ELECTIONS WERE SUBSEQUENTLY HELD ON THE 1ST MARCH AND PRESIDENT DJOHAR WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED AS THE DULY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE COMOROS. I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE RETURN TO NORMALITY IN THE COUNTRY TO CONGRATULATE PRESIDENT DJOHAR ON HIS ELECTION AND TO THANK THE PEOPLE OF THE COMOROS FOR THE CONFIDENCE AND TRUST THEY HAD PLACED IN OUR ORGANIZATION. I AM NOW GLAD TO NOTE THAT, HAPPILY, THE FEDERAL ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF COMOROS HAS ONCE AGAIN REGAINED HER FEET AND IS NOW WELL ON ITS WAY TO CONSOLIDATING NATIONAL UNITY.

THE ROLE OF THE OAU, IN THE COMOROS SITUATION, IS A KEY DEMONSTRATION THAT A PARTNERSHIP OF TRUST AND CONFIDENCE BETWEEN THE ORGANIZATION AND THE MEMBER STATES CAN PRODUCE GOOD RESULTS. IT SHOWS THAT THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE FOR THE ORGANIZATION PROVIDED MEMBER STATES ARE PREPARED TO YIELD THE CHALLENGE OF DEALING WITH AFRICAN PROBLEMS WITHIN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT.

IN THE SAME SPIRIT, THE CHAD/LIBYA CONFLICT HAS CONTINUED TO PREOCCUPY ME AND THE ORGANIZATION. DURING MY VISIT TO THE LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA IN MARCH, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN, ON FIRST HAND BASIS, THE POSITION OF THAT COUNTRY AS I HAD DONE WITH RESPECT TO CHAD. WHILE THE POSITIONS OF THE TWO PARTIES REMAIN AT VARIANCE, I WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE COMMITMENT OF BOTH TO A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE TERMS

OF THE ALGIERS AGREEMENT AND THEIR CONTINUED CONFIDENCE IN THE MEDIATION ROLE OF THE OAU. SINCE THEN, THE SITUATION HAS REMAINED IN A STATE OF EQUILIBRISM EXCEPT FOR THE RECENT INCIDENT AT DARFOUR. FOLLOWING THAT INCIDENT, I SENT URGENT APPEALS TO THE LEADERS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES URGING MAXIMUM RESTRAINT AND AVOIDANCE OF ANY ACTION WHICH COULD EXCERCEBATE TENSION, UNDERMINE CONFIDENCE AND LEAD TO THE DEGENERATION OF THE SITUATION. I NOTE THAT BOTH LEADERS RESPONDED FAVOURABLY TO MY APPEAL AND CHAD AGREED, IN PRINCIPLE, TO THE LIBYAN PROPOSAL TO SEND A FACT-FINDING MISSION TO THE AREA. CONSULTATIONS ARE STILL IN PROCESS, WITH THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED, TO ELABORATE THE COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THAT MISSION. IN THE MEANTIME, I WISH TO COMMEND THE WORK BEING DONE BY THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE CHAD/LIBYA DISPUTE UNDER THE ABLE CHAIRMANSHIP OF PRESIDENT ELHADJ OMAR BONGO OF GABON.

THE SENEGAL/MAURITANIA DISPUTE REMAINS IN A GUARDED BUT STABLE CONDITION. THOUGH THERE HAS BEEN AN APPRECIABLE DIMINUTION OF THE STATE OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, THE CONFLICT ITSELF IS STILL TO BE RESOLVED. I, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO DRAW HOPE FROM THE CONTINUED COMMITMENT OF THE LEADERS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES TO PACIFIC SETTLEMENT AND CONFIDENCE IN THE MEDIATION EFFORTS OF THE OAU UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT MUBARAK OF EGYPT. MY HOPE WAS FURTHER REINFORCED BY THE CATEGORICAL AGREEMENT BY SENEGAL AND MAURITANIA DURING THEIR LAST MEETING, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN PARIS ON 17 JUNE 1990 WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CURRENT

CHAIRMAN, TO REAFFIRM THEIR DESIRE FOR A PACIFIC AND DEFINITIVE SETTLEMENT OF THEIR DISPUTE AS WELL AS BY THEIR EXPRESSION OF CONFIDENCE AND PLEDGE OF FULL COOPERATION WITH THE MEDIATION COMMISSION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION CM 1217 ADOPTED AT THE 25TH SUMMIT. A FURTHER MEETING OF THE COMMISSION IS TO BE HELD IN ANOTHER FEW DAYS TO BUILD ON THE ENCOURAGING PROGRESS MADE SO FAR.

I WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COMMEND THE LEADERS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES FOR THE POLITICAL COURAGE THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED IN COMMITTING THEIR COUNTRIES TO A PEACEFUL PATH. I ALSO WISH TO PLACE ON RECORD MY APPRECIATION FOR THE GOOD WORK BEING DONE BY THE COMMISSION.

MR CHAIRMAN,

AMONG THE NEW AND TRAGIC DEVELOPMENTS ON THE CONTINENT IS THE SITUATION IN LIBERIA. THAT UNFORTUNATE CONFLICT HAS ALREADY RESULTED INTO HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND DEATH OF THOUSANDS MORE. THIS CONFLICT HAS NOT ONLY INSTABILITY, SUFFERING AND DEATH TO LIBERIA, IT HAS ALSO SERIOUSLY UNDERMINED CONFIDENCE IN THE AREA. I HAVE, WITH CORRESPONDING ATTENTION, FOLLOWED THE EVOLUTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY. IN THIS CONNECTION, I DISPATCHED A MISSION TO LIBERIA, GUINEA AND COTE D'IVOIRE, IN MARCH, TO ASSESS THE SITUATION WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE HUMANITARIAN ASPECT OF REFUGEES AND TO PLACE THE SERVICE AT THOSE COUNTRIES.

AS THE SITUATION DEGENERATED, I DISPATCHED ANOTHER MISSION, LAST MONTH, TO LIBERIA, GUINEA AND SIERRA LEONE. I CONTINUE TO BE GRAVELY CONCERN AT THE SITUATION BUT ENCOURAGED BY THE AGREEMENT OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT TO COME TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. MORE SPECIFICALLY, I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE ROLE BEING PLAYED BY PRESIDENT IBRAHIM BABANGIDA OF NIGERIA IN HELPING THE PARTIES SUSTAIN DIALOGUE. IN THE MEANTIME, I HOPE BOTH PARTIES WILL EXERCISE MAXIMUM RESTRAINT SO AS TO SECURE THE LIVES OF INNOCENT CIVILIANS CAUGHT IN THE CROSS-FIRES.

AMONG THE PROBLEMS, WHICH I HAVE HAPPILY BEEN ARRESTED AND CONTAINED, IS THE BORDER DISPUTE BETWEEN SENEGAL AND GUINEA BISSAU. FOLLOWING THE THREAT OF RE-ERRUPTION OF HOSTILITIES IN APRIL THIS YEAR, I SENT MESSAGES TO BOTH PRESIDENTS ABDOU DIOUF AND JOAO BERNARDO VIEIRA URGING MAXIMUM RESTRAINT AND TO SEEK RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT WITHIN THE PRINCIPLES OF PACIFIC SETTLEMENT. I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT BOTH LEADERS RESPONDED FAVOURABLY TO MY APPEAL AND THAT THEY RECOMMITTED THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES TO THE POLITICAL PROCESS OF RESOLVING THEIR DIFFERENCES.

MR CHAIRMAN,

BESIDES THESE INTER-STATE CONFLICTS, THERE ARE THE OTHER INTERNAL CONFLICT WHICH CONTINUE TO BE A SOURCE OF MY MAJOR CONCERN. THESE CONFLICTS CONTINUE TO IMPOSE HEAVY BURDENS TO THE AFFECTED MEMBER STATES. THESE CONFLICTS BEAR HEAVY ECONOMIC COSTS, SAP THE PEOPLES' ENERGIES, WHICH COULD OTHERWISE BE TARGETTED TO DEVELOPMENT, AND THEY UNDERMINE THE PROSPECTS OF STABILITY AND NATIONAL UNITY OF THOSE COUNTRIES. FOR THE STABILITY OF OUR CONTINENT IS ONE INDIVISIBLE WHOLE. LACK OF STABILITY IN ONE COUNTRY ON THE CONTINENT HAS SERIOUS IMPLICATION TO THE STABILITY OF THE CONTINENT AS A WHOLE. THE REPERCUSSIONS OF CONFLICT IN ONE COUNTRY ARE FELT BEYOND ITS BORDERS. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT AFRICA AND, INDEED, THE OAU CAN NOT AFFORD TO REMAIN INDIFFERENT TO THESE CONFLICTS. INCREASINGLY IT IS BECOMING EVIDENT THAT WE NEED A MECHANISM WHICH CAN ENABLE US EXPRESS POSITIVELY OUR CONCERN AND PREOCCUPATION WITH INTERNAL CONFLICTS AND TO PLACE THAT MECHANISM AT THE SERVICE OF THE AFFECTED COUNTRIES. THE IDEA IS TO BE ABLE, WITHIN AN ACCEPTABLE FRAMEWORK, TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVES TO CONFLICTS. THE OAU SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROMOTE PACIFIC SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES AND NOT TO REMAIN DISTANT ON ACCOUNT OF PROCEDURES WHICH MEMBER STATES HAVE DEVISED AND WHICH CONVENIENTLY EXCLUDE POSITIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONFLICTS.

MR CHAIRMAN,

I CONTINUE TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA. THE HOPE FOR SUSTAINING THE DIALOGUE, UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF PRESIDENTS NYERERE AND CARTER, SEEM, IN THE MEANTIME, HAVE FURTHER DIMINISHED WITH THE DECISION OF THE EPLF TO OPT OUT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. I HOPE THAT THE EPLF WILL RECONSIDER ITS DECISION AND REJOIN THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE FIRM BELIEF THAT, ULTIMATELY, A PACIFIC SETTLEMENT IS IN THE SUPREME INTEREST OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF ETHIOPIA.

THE SITUATION IN SUDAN ALSO CONTINUES TO BE WORRISOME; AS DIALOGUE HAS REMAINED FROZEN. I, THEREFORE, HOPE THAT ALL THOSE CONCERNED WILL SUMMON THE NECESSARY POLITICAL COURAGE AND RESUME DIALOGUE WITH A VIEW TO RESTORING PEACE, HARMONY AND NATIONAL UNITY OF THAT COUNTRY.

IN MOZAMBIQUE, THE FRATICIDAL CONFLICTS CONTINUES TO CLAIM MORE LIVES AND RENDERING MILLIONS MORE REFUGEES AND DISPLACED. THERE IS CERTAINLY URGENT NEED TO BRING ABOUT THIS UNFORTUNATE AND IMMENSELY DESTRUCTIVE CONFLICT TO AN END. IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT I COMMEND THE EFFORTS BEING DEPLOYED BY PRESIDENT DANIEL ARAP MOI OF KENYA AND ROBERT MUGABE OF ZIMBABWE IN BRINGING THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT TO NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. I HOPE THAT THE PRESENT DIFFICULTIES WILL BE OVERCOME SO THAT DIALOGUE MAY RESUME SOON.

LIKEWISE IN ANGOLA, THE SITUATION CONTINUES TO BE CRITICAL. THE PROSPECTS OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT, WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE GBADOLITE AGREEMENT, SEEM TO HAVE DWINDLED WITH THE INTENSIFICATION OF WAR. I ALSO WISH TO EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE GBADOLITE FRAMEWORK WILL BE RE-INVIGORATED SO AS TO PUT THE PEACE PROCESS BACK ON TRACK AND BRING TO AN END THIS WAR AND ENABLE THE COUNTRY BEGIN ON THE ARDOUS TASK OF NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION.

MR CHAIRMAN,

WHETHER DEALING WITH INTER-STATE OR INTERNAL CONFLICTS WITHIN NATIONS, WE NEED TO HAVE A MECHANISM WHICH CAN PERMIT US TO PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE AND EFFECTIVELY SO. THE MECHANISM OR FRAMEWORK SHOULD ENABLE US TO COORDINATE OUR ACTIONS IN DEALING WITH SPECIFIC SITUATIONS. THAT FRAMEWORK SHOULD ALSO BE AN ALTERNATIVE WHICH IS PUT AT THE SERVICE OF MEMBER STATES AND READILY AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO WANT TO SEEK RECOURSE TO IT. I BELIEVE PART OF THE PROBLEM IS THE VERY LACK OF SUCH MECHANISM. FOR EVEN THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH MAY BE WELL DISPOSED TO SEEK PACIFIC SETTLEMENT ARE CONSTRAINED BY THE VERY INEXISTENCE OF A FRAMEWORK. SERIOUS CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOW BE GIVEN TO THE MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION.

MR CHAIRMAN,

IN MARCH, I PAID WORKING VISITS TO ALGERIA, LIBYA AND TUNISIA WHERE I WAS ALSO PRIVILEGED TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE ARAB LEAGUE. THESE VISITS GAVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THE LEADERS OF THE COUNTRIES, PRESIDENTS CHADLI BENDJEDID, BEN ALI AND LEADER MUAMMAR GAADAFI AND TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE PROBLEMS OF THE MAGHREB REGION, THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ITS PEOPLE. I HELD EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE SUB-REGION AND OF AFRICA, AS A WHOLE, WITHIN THE CHANGES NOW TAKING PLACE IN THE WORLD. I STRONGLY APPRECIATED THE FACT THAT THE REGION'S PROXIMITY TO EUROPE GAVE IT A MUCH CLEARER VIEW OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF A UNIFIED SINGLE MARKET EUROPE OF 1992. THE LEADERS OF THE THREE COUNTRIES AND MYSELF SHARED THE VIEW THAT AFRICA NEEDS TO PREPARE HERSELF TO COPE WITH THE POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF A SINGLE MARKET EUROPE AS WELL AS TO MAKE FULL USE OF THE ADVANTAGES IT MAY PROVIDE.

AT THE COUNCIL OF THE ARAB MEETING, I WAS ABLE TO SPEAK ON THE KEY QUESTION OF AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION AND TO HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH MY COUNTERPART, MR CHEDLI KLIBI, ON COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR RESPECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS. BEFORE THE MINISTERS, I EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA AND OF THE ARAB WORLD NOT TO SUCCUMB TO TEMPTATIONS OF DIVISION BUT INSTEAD TO CLOSE RANKS AND FORGE UNITY. I, HOWEVER, SAW STRONG NEED TO HAVE FRANK AND HONEST DISCUSSIONS ON OUR DIFFERENCES, SOME REAL, SOME ARISING OUT OF MISCONCEPTIONS, SO AS TO BUILD UNITY ON THE STRENGTH OF MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE. I SPOKE ON THE IMPERATIVE TO BUILD

ON WHAT UNITES US RATHER THAN ACCENTUATING WHAT DIVIDES US AND THAT WE SHOULD FIND BOTH UNITY AND STRENGTH IN OUR DIVERSITY. ONLY THROUGH SUCH DELIBERATIONS, POLITICAL DECISIONS WE CAN FIRMLY ANCHOR AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION IN PRINCIPLES AND CONCRETE PROGRAMS. IN THIS CONTEXT, I SAW STRONG NEED TO REDYNAMIZE THE STANDING COMMISSION ON AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION AS ONE OF THE CONCRETE EXPRESSION OF COMMITMENT TO THAT CAUSE. IN ADDITION, WE SHOULD WORK TOWARDS THE CONVENING, IN THE NEAR FUTURE, OF A MEETING OF THE COMMISSION AT SUMMIT LEVEL. I AM GLAD TO REPORT TO YOUR EXCELLENCIES THAT THE NEED FOR SUCH DIRECTION AND REALISM COMMANDED GENERAL APPROVAL OF THAT ARAB LEAGUE MINISTERS'S MEETING.

WHILE IN NORTH AFRICA, I ALSO ADDRESSED MY ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEM OF WESTERN SAHARA. TOGETHER WITH THE LEADERS I WAS PRIVILEGED TO MEET, WE EXPLORED WAYS IN WHICH THE INSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF THE OAU, IN MONITORING THE EVOLUTION OF THE SITUATION, CAN BE ENHANCED. I CONTINUE TO BE IN TOUCH WITH THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN AND THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ON HOW BEST THE OAU CAN PERFORM THAT ROLE. AND WHILE OUR SECRETARIAT WAS NOT INVITED TO THE GENEVA MEETING BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND SOME NOTABLES FROM WESTERN SAHARA, ALSO ATTENDED BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN, I NOTE THE REPORTED PROGRESS MADE IN CONSIDERATION OF THE INITIAL STAGES ENVISAGED IN THE PROCESS OF HOLDING THE LONG AWAITED REFERENDUM.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE COUNCIL WILL RECALL ITS DECISION, LAST FEBRUARY, TO DIRECT THE SECRETARIAT TO PREPARE A STUDY ON THE CURRENT FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN THE WORLD WITH A VIEW TO EVOLVING A COMMON AFRICAN RESPONSE AND STRATEGY. PURSUANT TO THAT DIRECTIVE, I SET UP AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL TASK FORCE WHICH HAS BEEN WORKING ON THE PROJECT AND MUCH PROGRESS HAS BEEN DONE. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY AND THE NEED TO PRESENT A COMPREHENSIVE DOCUMENT, WE DEEMED IT NECESSARY TO WORK OUT THE FINAL DETAILS BEFORE ISSUING IT. WE HOPE THAT THIS STUDY, WHICH WE ARE TO PUBLISH FOR USE AS A WORKING DOCUMENT, WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE SOON. PENDING THE PUBLICATION OF THAT EXPANDED AND DETAILED STUDY, I SAW NEED FOR MYSELF, AS SECRETARY-GENERAL, TO ISSUE A REPORT ON HOW I SEE AFRICA IN THE CONTEXT OF THOSE CHANGES AND WHERE AFRICA SHOULD HEAD FROM HERE. MY REPORT, WHICH WILL HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COUNCIL, IS BUILT AROUND SOME OF THE ELEMENTS WHICH WILL BE FOUND IN THE EXPANDED STUDY PREPARED BY THE TASK FORCE. BUT IT IS A DIFFERENT REPORT.

IN PREPARING THE REPORT, I SOUGHT TO PUT AFRICA WITHIN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE SO AS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND ITS PRESENT STATE. I ALSO SOUGHT TO UNDERSTAND THE FULL CONTENT OF THE CHANGES NOW IN PROGRESS IN ORDER TO KNOW THE OPTIONS BEFORE US. I MUST ADMIT THAT, GIVEN THE FLUIDITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH THE POLITICAL

LANDSCAPE IS CHANGING, IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO PREDICT WORLD DIRECTION WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINITY. THE VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS I PUT FORWARD IN MY REPORT SHOULD, THEREFORE, BE VIEWED AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT UNCERTAIN POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT.

AS PART OF THE EXERCISE OF PREPARING THIS REPORT, I UNDERTOOK AN EXTENDED TOUR OF EUROPE IN THE EARLY PART OF THE LAST MONTH. I VISITED FRANCE, UNITED KINGDOM, BELGIUM AND SWITZERLAND. IN ALL THESE COUNTRIES, EXCEPT SWITZERLAND, I HELD EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADERS. FROM THEM, I LEARNT AT FIRST HAND THEIR VIEWS AND IMPRESSIONS OF AFRICA IN THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION. I USED THE OPPORTUNITY TO PUT INTO PROPER CONTEXT THE PREVAILING SITUATION ON OUR CONTINENT AS WELL AS TO CORRECT THE MANY MISCONCEPTIONS AND IRRONEOUS NOTIONS ABOUT AFRICA. I DO ALSO EXPRESSED OUR CONCERNS AND PREOCCUPATIONS WITH THE CURRENT CHANGES, IN PARTICULAR AS THEY RELATE TO THE NEED TO MAINTAIN AFRICAN ISSUES ON THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA.

IN GENEVA, I CONSULTED BROADLY WITH ALL THE HEADS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES AND OF MANY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS. TOGETHER WE EXPLORED WAYS IN WHICH THEIR COOPERATION WITH THE OAU COULD BE STRENGTHENED AND EXPANDED. I BRIEFED THEM ON WHAT THE OAU IS DOING AND ON OUR VIEW OF THE WORLD TODAY. WHAT I FOUND OUT TO BE THE COMMON DENOMIMATOR OF THESE AGENCIES IS THEIR TOTAL DISPOSITION TO EXPANDING

COOPERATION WITH US. WE WERE ALL AT ONE IN OUR BELIEF IN THE NEED TO CONSOLIDATE THAT COOPERATION AND TARGET IT ON CONCRETE PROGRAMS. I INTEND TO FOLLOW UP THE GENERAL UNDERSTANDINGS WE REACHED WITH A VIEW TO ELABORATING SPECIFIC PROGRAMS.

I ALSO HELD CONSULTATIONS WITH HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. I EXPRESSED THE PREOCCUPATION OF AFRICA WITH THE ENVISAGED SINGLE MARKET EUROPE AND POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS TO OUR CONTINENT; INCLUDING PROBABLE DIVERSION OF AID AND CONCESSIONARY RESOURCE FLOWS FROM AFRICA AS WELL AS THE LIKELY DIMINISHED TRADING OPPORTUNITIES. IN PARTICULAR, I EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE NEW SINGLE MARKET WILL RESULT INTO IMPROVED OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICA. I WAS GIVEN THE ASSURANCE THAT COMMITMENTS MADE BY THE COMMUNITY TO AFRICA WILL BE FULFILLED.

IN ALL THESE COUNTRIES, WHICH I VISITED, I MET THE MEDIA. I WAS APPALLED BY THE NEGATIVE PICTURE BEING PAINTED ABOUT AFRICA. THE PRESS IS HAMMERING ON THE NEW NOTION OF AFRO-PESSIMISM. THERE ARE DELIBERATE ATTEMPTS TO DISTORT THE REALITIES OF AFRICA AND BY PROJECTING AN IMAGE OF A CONTINENT WHERE ALL IS POLITICALLY GOING WRONG AND WHERE ECONOMIC RECOVERY IS A DISTANT POSSIBILITY. I ALSO USED THE OPPORTUNITY OF THESE ENCOUNTERS TO COUNTER THESE MISCONCEPTIONS AND TO ARTICULATE THE AFRICAN POSITION.

I ADDRESSED THE ISSUE OF DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN AFRICA. WHILE I FULLY AGREED WITH THE NEED TO DEMOCRATIZE OUR SOCIETIES FURTHER, PROVIDE FOR GENUINE POPULAR ~~PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE SO AS TO LIBERATE PEOPLES' ENERGIES~~

PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE SO AS TO LIBERATE PEOPLES' ENERGIES AND CREATIVITY AND APPLY THEM POSITIVELY TO DEVELOPMENT, I DECRIED THE MISPLACED NOTION THAT DEMOCRACY, AS UNDERSTOOD AND PRACTICED IN EUROPE, IS THE MAGICAL PANACEA TO OUR PRESENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. I ALSO UNDERLINED IMPERATIVE OF NURTURING THE FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA BASED ON THE EXISTING CONDITIONS. IN THIS CONNECTION, I CAUTIONED AGAINST ATTEMPTS TO IMPOSE ON AFRICA SOME DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WHICH MAY NOT HAVE RELEVANCE TO THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF OUR CONTINENT.

MR CHAIRMAN,

IN MY REPORT TO THE COUNCIL IN FEBRUARY, I SPOKE OF MY FAMILIARIZATION WITH THE ORGANIZATION. I ALSO SPOKE OF MY INITIAL IMPRESSIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND THE FEELINGS OF THE STAFF - THEIR ANXIETIES AND ASPIRATIONS. SINCE THEN, I HAVE CONTINUED TO LOOK MORE CRITICALLY AT THE SET-UP OF THE ORGANIZATION. I HAVE LOOKED AT THE WHOLE STRUCTURE OF DEPARTMENTS, DIVISIONS AND SECTIONS, HOW THEY RELATE TO EACH OTHER AND HOW WORK IS COORDINATED. I NOW CAN, ALBEIT WITH GARDED CONFIDENCE, SAY THAT I HAVE BEGUN TO KNOW THE ORGANIZATION. IT IS ON THE BASIS OF THIS INITIAL KNOWLEDGE THAT WE HAVE BEGUN IN EARNEST PUTTING INTO PLACE THE KIND OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES WHICH WILL ENSURE SMOOTHER COORDINATION OF WORK AND GREATER PRODUCTIVITY OF THE STAFF.

TO ENSURE THAT PRODUCTIVITY, WE HAVE TAKEN MEASURES TO REGULARIZE MANY ISSUES WHICH HAVE UNDERMINED THE CONFIDENCE OF THE STAFF. WE HAVE MANAGED TO RESUSCITATE AND PUT ON SOUND FOOTING THE ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES OF THE ORGANIZATION. THE COMMITTEE ON RECRUITMENT AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT HAS NOW COMPLETED THE EXERCISE OF BRINGING TO-DATE NUMEROUS STAFF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS WHICH HAD LONG EXPIRED. THE COMMITTEE IS ALSO SCRUPULOUSLY FOLLOWING THE ESTABLISHED RULES AND REGULATIONS IN THE IDENTIFICATION AND RECRUITMENT OF NEW STAFF INTO THE ORGANIZATION. THIS IS EVENTUALLY THE KIND OF CONCRETE MEASURES WHICH WILL GRADUALLY ENHANCE THE MORALE AND CONFIDENCE OF STAFF AND INSTIL INTO THE ORGANIZATION A SENSE OF SYSTEM. IF WE MANAGE EVENTUALLY TO DO SO FULLY, WE WILL EASILY BE ABLE TO AUTHORITATIVELY REQUIRE, FROM THE STAFF, THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE WHICH IS COMMENSURATE WITH THE OBLIGATIONS AND COMMITMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION TO THEM.

WITHIN THE OBJECTIVE OF REDEPLOYMENT OF MANPOWER IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE EFFICIENCY, I HAVE MADE CHANGES AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE ORGANIZATION. I RE-ASSIGNED ALL THE ASSISTANT SECRETARIES-GENERAL, EXCEPT ONE, TO DIFFERENT DUTIES IN ORDER THAT WE MAY COPE WITH AND HANDLE BETTER OUR WORK PROGRAMS AND THE CHALLENGES THAT NOW FACE US.

IN FEBRUARY, I TALKED OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS WE HAD UNDER OUR COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH THE UNDP. WHILE IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO EFFECT THE MODERNIZATION OF THE PRINTING

FACILITIES, AT THE SPEED WE HAD ANTICIPATED, SATISFACTORY PROGRESS WAS MADE. THIS EXPLAINS WHY THE DOCUMENTS BEFORE YOU MAY NOT BE OF THE HIGH PRINT QUALITY WE HAD HOPED. DESPITE THIS, THE IMPROVED METHODS OF WORK MADE IT POSSIBLE, FOR THE SECRETARIAT, TO DISPATCH WORKING DOCUMENTS TO MEMBER STATES, THOSE REPRESENTED IN ADDIS ABABA AND THOSE NOT, WELL IN ADVANCE. THE SECRETARIAT MADE COMMENDABLE EFFORTS AGAINST MANY ODDS. BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH AND WE HOPE TO GRADUALLY GET DO BETTER AND BETTER IN THE YEARS TO COME.

MR CHAIRMAN,

OVER THE LAST NINE MONTHS THAT I HAVE BEEN IN OFFICE, I HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY PREOCCUPIED BY THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE ORGANIZATION. I HOPE THOSE OF YOUR EXCELLENCIES, WHOM I HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO MEET, WILL HAVE EXCUSED ME FOR MY INDISCRETION IN RAISING THE QUESTION OF MONEY ON EVERY OCCASION. MY REMINDERS HAVE BEEN BASICALLY TO SEEK YOUR EXCELLENCIES PERSONAL INTERVENTION, IN SPEEDING UP THE BUREAUCRATIC MACHINERY TO EFFECT PAYMENT. BUT IN ADDITION TO THESE REMINDERS, THERE IS THE MORE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION OF COMMITMENT TO THE ORGANIZATION WHICH NEEDS TO BE EXAMINED CLOSELY.

WE ARE ALL DESIROUS OF AN ORGANIZATION WHICH MUST RISE TO THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES. WE WANT AN OAU WHICH CAN KEEP ABREAST WITH THE RAPID CHANGES CURRENTLY UNDERWAY IN THE WORLD. WE WANT AN INSTITUTION WHICH CAN BE ACTION-ORIENTED, WHICH CAN FORMULATE AND EXECUTE CONCRETE PROGRAMMES. WE

WANT AN ORGANIZATION WHICH IS MANNED AND STAFFED BY AN EFFICIENT, DEDICATED AND HIGHLY MOTIVATED STAFF. BUT HOW CAN WE REALISTICALLY ACHIEVE ALL THESE IF WE DO NOT PLACE AT THE DISPOSAL OF THAT ORGANIZATION, THE REQUISITE RESOURCES ? HOW DO WE EXPECT THE OAU TO ARTICULATE AND PROJECT AFRICA'S IMAGE AND VIEWS WHEN ITS ABILITY TO DO SO IS CONSTRAINED BY AN INCREASINGLY CONTRACTING RESOURCE BASE ?

AS I HAVE HAD OCCASION TO STATE BEFORE THIS COUNCIL, I AM KEENLY AWARE OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING ALL OUR COUNTRIES WITHOUT EXCEPTION. WE INTEND TO REFLECT THIS AWARENESS IN OUR DETERMINATION TO INSIST ON FRUGALITY AND PRUDENT USE OF THE LIMITED RESOURCES WE HAVE, BASED ON STRINGENT FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION. IN ADDITION, WE INTEND TO EMBARK ON AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL EXERCISE TO RATIONALIZE THE BUDGETING PROCEDURE WITH A VIEW TO POSTPONING PROGRAMMING IN NON-CRITICAL SECTORS. THE EMPHASIS WILL BE IN INSTITUTING A SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT BASED ON A STREAMLINED PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES. THROUGH THIS EXERCISE, WE HOPE TO OBVIATE THE NEED FOR BUDGETARY INCREASES. IN SOME AREAS, WE DO NOT ONLY HOPE TO HOLD DOWN ANY OF THESE INCREASES BUT, IN FACT, TO EFFECT A REAL DECREASE.

TO COMPLEMENT THIS IN-HOUSE EXERCISE OF BUDGETING AND PROGRAMMING RATIONALIZATION, I HOPE THIS COUNCIL WILL SERIOUSLY CONSIDER ITS OWN WORK PROGRAM RATIONALIZATION. AS A MAJOR COMPONENT OF THIS EXERCISE, SHOULD BE A THOROUGH RE-EVALUATION OF THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS. I AM OF THE STRONG

VIEW THAT THE PROLIFERATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED SECTORAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCES HAS OVERSTRETCHED THE RESOURCES AND TIME OF RESPECTIVELY THE MEMBER STATES AND THEIR OFFICIALS. THIS PROLIFERATION IS EVIDENCED BY THE MANY SECTORAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE WHICH ARE HELD EACH YEAR. BECAUSE OF RESOURCE, MANPOWER AND TIME CONSTRAINTS, THESE CONFERENCES ARE OFTEN INADEQUATELY PREPARED AND COINCIDE WITH MANY OTHER INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS. THE RESULT HAS BEEN UNSATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE IN NUMBERS AND LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION OF COUNTRIES. THIS HAS UNDERMINED THE ABILITIES OF THESE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCES TO ADOPT CONCRETE DECISIONS WHICH COMMAND CONTINENTAL CONSENSUS. AS AN ILLUSTRATION, I ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE OF THE MINISTERS OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS IN ARUSHA, IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, AT WHICH ONLY TWENTY-SEVEN COUNTRIES WERE REPRESENTED AND EVEN THEN, NOT ALL AT THE LEVEL OF MINISTERS. LATE IN APRIL THIS YEAR, I ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE OF THE MINISTERS OF CULTURE IN YAOUNDE AT WHICH ONLY THIRTY-TWO COUNTRIES WERE REPRESENTED - AGAIN NOT ALL WERE BY MINISTERS. THIS SEEMS TO BE THE PATTERN OF ALL SECTORAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCES. THIS CONFERENCE FATIGUE UNDERLINES A SERIOUS QUESTION OF WHETHER INDEED WE SHOULD NOT BE HAVING A SECOND LOOK AT HOW WE DO BUSINESS AND CONSIDERING A WAY TO RATIONALIZE OUR ACTIVITIES ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE CURRENT DIFFICULT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THERE ARE TWO ASPECTS TO THIS ISSUE. THERE IS THAT OF THE CONFERENCES DECIDED UPON BY THIS COUNCIL AND OF THOSE WHICH ARE PLANNED BY THE SECTORAL MINISTRIES. THE TWO NEED, IN MY VIEW, A TWO-PRONGED APPROACH.

WITH REGARD TO THE CONFERENCE DECISIONS OF THIS COUNCIL, I SEE NEED TO HAVE A FORUM WHICH COULD LOOK INTO SCHEDULED MEETINGS AND THOSE PLANNED. BY DOING SO, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO WEED OUT DUPLICATIONS OF MEETINGS WHICH HAVE SIMILAR AGENDAS AND CANCEL THOSE WHICH MAY NOT BE CRITICAL. THIS WOULD PERMIT A MORE RATIONAL UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES, STREAMLINING AND HARMONIZATION OF ACTIVITIES. I SEE STRONG MERIT IN SUCH FUNCTION BEING ENTRUSTED TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF AMBASSADORS HERE IN ADDIS ABABA, SITTING EITHER AS AN OPEN-ENDED COMMITTEE OR A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OR A SMALL ELECTED COMMITTEE. WHATEVER ITS COMPOSITION, THIS COMMITTEE WOULD BE CALLED THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES. I, THEREFORE, PROPOSE THAT THIS DISTINGUISHED COUNCIL GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THIS PROPOSAL, AT THIS SESSION.

AT THE LEVEL OF THOSE SECTORAL MINISTRIES, I BELIEVE THERE IS NEED TO HAVE A FORUM OR FORA WHICH CAN COORDINATE AND HARMONIZE THEIR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES. THIS COULD BE DONE IN A WAY THAT WOULD MAKE IT UNNECESSARY FOR EACH SECTOR TO HAVE A CONTINENTAL MINISTERIAL FORUM. ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY, IN WHICH THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED, IS TO REVERT TO CONSTITUTIONAL

PRACTICE PROVIDED FOR IN THE CHARTER OF OUR ORGANIZATION. ARTICLES XX, XXI AND XXII PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALIZED COMMISSIONS, THEIR COMPOSITIONS AND FUNCTIONS. WE COULD, THEREFORE, CONTINUE WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THESE FORA AS WE HAD BEGUN WITH THE DEFENCE COMMISSION. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AS WELL AS OF THE EDUCATION, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL AND HEALTH COMMISSION, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD CREATE MORE ENCOMPASSING FRAMEWORKS. THESE WILL BE HOLDING FORA WITHIN WHICH THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESENT SECTORAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCES COULD BE FUSED. THIS CONSOLIDATION WILL CUT COST, BRING ABOUT RATIONAL PROGRAMMING, INCREASED EFFICIENCY OF SERVICING STAFF AND ULTIMATELY PERMIT MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMISSIONS. I EQUALLY HOPE THAT THE COUNCIL WILL SERIOUSLY CONSIDER THIS PROPOSAL AT THIS SESSION.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE COUNCIL WILL RECALL ITS DECISION AUTHORIZING THE SECRETARIAT TO PROCEED WITH ARRANGEMENTS TO CONSTRUCT AN OFFICIAL RESIDENCE FOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL. I AM NOW HAPPY TO REPORT THAT THE HOST AUTHORITIES HAVE ALLOCATED A PLOT OF LAND , MEASURING APPROXIMATELY 10,000 SQUARE METERS FOR THAT PURPOSE. FORMAL HAND-OVER OF THE LAND TO THE ORGANIZATION WAS DONE AT A CEREMONY ON 25 MAY THIS YEAR. I WISH TO REITERATE MY GRATITUDE TO THE HOST GOVERNMENT FOR THIS OFFER. WE HAVE FUNDS FOR THIS PROJECT. WE, THEREFORE, HOPE THAT THE INITIAL WORKS, INCLUDING THE DRAWING OF ARCHITECTURAL PLANS, WILL BEGIN SOON.

UNLIKE THE CASE OF THE RESIDENCE, THE HOPE OF CONSTRUCTING A MAJOR CONFERENCE FACILITY SEEMS TO BE GRADUALLY FADING WITH THE STEADY DEGENERATION OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN MOST OF OUR COUNTRIES. TO-DATE, WE HAVE A TOTAL CONTRIBUTION OF ONLY US\$ 282,970.11 FROM SIX COUNTRIES OUT OF THE PROJECTED US\$ 36 MILLION. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT AN AVERAGE 10 % ANNUAL INFLATION RATE, THE PROJECT IS CURRENTLY ESTIMATED AT US\$ 45 MILLION. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, I AM STRONGLY PERSUADED THAT PERHAPS TIME HAS COME TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT THE PROJECT AS IT IS NOW FORMULATED. THIS COUNCIL, IN ITS WISDOM, MAY WISH TO REFLECT ON BOTH THE FEASIBILITY OF THE PROJECT AND THE RATIONALITY OF ITS SIZE. I RAISE THE ISSUE OF RATIONALITY BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA IS TO COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION OF A MAJOR CONFERENCE FACILITY HERE IN ADDIS ABABA. THE DECISION FOR THIS FACILITY WAS STRONGLY ARGUED, SUPPORTED AND DEFENDED BY AFRICAN DELEGATIONS AT THE UNITED NATIONS. THE ARGUMENT AND JUSTIFICATION FOR ITS SIZE WAS THAT, IT WAS TO CATER, AS WELL FOR THE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT. QUITE APART FROM OUR UNPERMITTING FINANCIAL SITUATION, WOULD IT NOT BE RATHER IMPRUDENT TO EMBARK ON A PARALLEL PROJECT ? WOULD IT NOT BE A DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS? PERHAPS, THIS COUNCIL WOULD WISH TO MANDATE THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO RE-EVALUATE THE PROJECT UNDER THE PREVAILING CIRCUMSTANCES INCLUDING INDEED THE CONTEMPLATION OF A MORE MANAGEABLE AND PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE SECRETARIAT, WE NEED, INSTEAD, A

MEDIUM BUT FUNCTIONAL CONFERENCE ROOM FACILITY WHICH COULD CATER FOR THE DAY TO DAY MEETINGS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND WHICH CAN ACCOMMODATE A FULL GATHERING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. IN ADDITION, THE CONFERENCE ROOM COULD HAVE SECRETARIAT FACILITIES.

IN MY REPORT TO THIS COUNCIL IN FEBRUARY, I SPOKE OF THE CONSULTATIONS I HAD UNDERTAKEN ON MY PROPOSAL FOR A FIXED DATE FOR THE ANNUAL SUMMITS OF OUR HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT. IN THE INTERVENING PERIOD SINCE THEN, I HAVE CONTINUED THESE CONSULTATIONS ON THE FIRM BASIS OF A GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THE PRINCIPLE OF A FIXED DATE. THE LEADERS AND MINISTERS, WHOM I HAVE MET, CONTINUE TO SEE STRONG MERIT IN THE PROPOSAL. THEY SEE THE ADVANTAGES WHICH A FIXED DATE WOULD PROVIDE ESPECIALLY IN THE PLANNING AND PREPARATION OF THE CALENDAR OF ENGAGEMENTS OF OUR LEADERS AND MINISTERS.

IT IS NOW MY SUMMATION THAT THERE SEEMS TO BE GENERAL CONSENSUS EVOLVING AROUND THE DATE OF FIRST MONDAY OF JUNE INSTEAD OF THE EARLIER DATE OF SECOND MONDAY OF JULY FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SUMMITS - IT IS BEING UNDERSTOOD, OF COURSE, THAT, CONSISTENT TO EXISTING PRACTICE, THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING WOULD BE HELD A WEEK EARLIER. THIS DATE HAS ATTRACTED CONSENSUS ESSENTIALLY BECAUSE, APART FROM THE PRACTICALITY OF PROGRAMMING, WEATHERWISE THE MONTH OF JUNE, IN ADDIS ABABA, IS THE MOST FAVOURABLE. AS AN ADDED ADVANTAGE, IF THE SUMMITS ARE HELD DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF JUNE, THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WOULD INVARIABLY COINCIDE WITH THE OAU DAY ON THE 25TH OF MAY. I NOW DARE EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THIS DISTINGUISHED COUNCIL WILL

FORMALLY RECOMMEND THIS PROPOSAL FOR ADOPTION BY THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT AT THIS SESSION.

IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, I HAVE ALSO TRIED TO INSTITUTE A MECHANISM OF CONSTANT CONSULTATIONS WITH THE COMMITTEE OF AMBASSADORS RESIDENT HERE IN ADDIS ABABA. I HAVE FOUND THESE CONTACTS QUITE USEFUL IN KEEPING ALIVE THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN MEMBER STATES AND THE SECRETARIAT ON MANY ISSUES. BUT DUE TO THE PHYSICAL CONSTRAINT OF THE LACK OF RESIDENT REPRESENTATION OF SOME MEMBER STATES IN ADDIS ABABA, IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO EXTEND THIS DIALOGUE TO ALL. BUT I BELIEVE THAT, IN ORDER TO FUNCTION SMOOTHLY, WE NEED TO SUSTAIN THIS MECHANISM OF CONSULTATIONS. I WISH, THEREFORE, TO REITERATE MY STRONG RECOMMENDATION THAT THOSE MEMBER STATES, WHICH DO NOT HAVE RESIDENT EMBASSIES IN ADDIS ABABA, CONSIDER ESTABLISHING THEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, I WISH TO THANK THOSE WHICH HAVE PROMISED TO DO SO IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

ADDIS ABABA IS NOT PURELY A BILATERAL STATION. EMBASSIES HAVE, IN ADDITION TO BILATERAL WORK, TO FOLLOW THE ACTIVITIES OF BOTH THE OAU AND THE ECA. AND AS THE WORLD INCREASINGLY GRAVITATES TOWARDS GLOBALIZATION THROUGH INTEGRATION, THE WORK OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WILL ASSUME GREATER IMPORTANCE. CORRESPONDINGLY, MEMBER STATES, WHICH CONSTITUTE THESE ORGANIZATIONS, WILL HAVE TO DEPLOY THE NECESSARY MANPOWER AND RESOURCES TO COORDINATE THE WORK OF THESE INSTITUTIONS. IT IS, IN THIS CONTEXT, THAT I HOPE, IN STAFFING THEIR EMBASSIES IN ADDIS ABABA, MEMBER STATES WILL TAKE INTO

ACCOUNT THE DEMANDS ON THEM AND THE MULTILATERAL CHARACTER OF THE STATION.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS FACING AFRICA AND THE CHALLENGES BEFORE US ARE ENORMOUS BUT NOT UNMANAGEABLE IF WE MAKE THE RESOLUTION TO APPLY OUR FULL ENERGIES TO THEM. TOGETHER, WE CAN CHART A COURSE FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OUR CONTINENT. TO DO SO, WE MUST BEGIN WITH A CRITICAL INTROSPECTIVE EXAMINATION SO AS TO SEE WHERE WE BEGAN TO FLOUNDER. WE MUST BUILD ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS WITHOUT LETTING OURSELVES BE DETRACTED INTO LAMENTING OUR FAILURES. WE MUST SHAKE OFF SELF-DOUBT WHICH IS BEING IMPOSED UPON US BY THE PURVEYORS OF THE AFROPESSIMISM SYNDROME. WE MUST RE-SEIZE THE INITIATIVE AND DIRECT OUR DESTINY.

I THANK YOU.