

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY



ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE AFRICAINE

14

ADDRESS OF OAU SECRETARY GENERAL

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AT

THE INFORMAL MEETING OF

THE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE MECHANISM
FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION

Addis Ababa, 29th July, 1993

Secretary-General Addresses Ambassadors during an Informal Meeting
on the Central Organ on Thursday, 29 July, 1993 at Africa Unity House.

We have a number of conflicts which you are aware of and the General Secretariat has prepared an informal working paper in English and French which will be sent to you. It is more or less a summary background of the various conflicts which the OAU is dealing with - in other words it is simply a background information paper for members of the Central organ.

You all know how the OAU has been involved in Somalia where we have sent several missions and worked closely with the United Nations and taken part in peace discussions which took place here in Addis Ababa culminating in the Peace Agreement among the various Somali parties.

We were hopeful that with the result of that Peace Agreement things would go in a much better way, which in fact they did initially, but then you know what happened later. The OAU issued a statement on 13 July in which it expressed its concern, on one hand, about the loss of life and the need to maintain the Peace Agreement of Addis Ababa, and on the other hand, not in anyway for any Party to say that they do not support the U.N. operation in the questions of disarmament and restoration of normalcy.

After that statement I also had a lengthy meeting with President Meles Zenawi who, as you know, was given in the last Summit a specific responsibility by his colleagues to follow closely the situation in Somalia. In addition, Admiral Sam Howe, the United Nations Special Representative sent me and President Meles a special message explaining the U.N. position. I stressed to Admiral Howe through his representative that the OAU remained supportive of the U.N. efforts and does not want to see a situation where the U.N. finds itself in a quagmire and that it was very important to live up to the Addis Ababa Agreement.

Furthermore, I told the Admirals representative that even in the context of the implementation of the process of disarmament, comprehensive and simultaneous, this can be best done with the cooperation and in dialogue with the Parties concerned, including the elders and Community leaders. So, that is where we are as far as the Somali situation is concerned, and what we need now is to determine what we can further do in Somalia in the light of what has been going on there. In this connection, I have been meeting with a number of envoys including those of Italy, France and others to discuss what is the way forward.

President Meles had sent his representatives on a mission to Somalia who are now back and have briefed me on their observations and the contacts they have had there and I do therefore believe that it would be useful at some point to look into the whole question of Somalia and see what sort of in-put the OAU can make.

Let us bear in mind that when we talk about the U.N. forces in Somalia not an insignificant number of those forces are African - we have presently forces from Botswana, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Nigeria, and in the near future we expect there forces from Uganda and Zambia. So, at least eight African countries are involved there and this means that the African contribution through UNOSOM is quite significant.

Then we have the conflict in Liberia which the OAU has been following very closely and I would like to say that our position on Liberia has always been to support the efforts made by the ECOWAS countries. The OAU was present in my own person at the very beginning in August, 1990 when the decision was made to deploy ECOMOG. We made our contribution in support of that effort and consistently we have taken the position that our role is to support the ECOWAS countries in their efforts.

We took part in many of the deliberations including in the decisions of Yamassoukrou IV, and finally pursuant to the decisions made by the leaders of West Africa we appointed former President Canaan Banana as our Eminent Person and he has done a tremendous job in that he was able to get the confidence of all the parties enabling thereby the Geneva talks to take place, and an Agreement has been signed in COTONOU among the conflicting Liberian Parties.

Implicit in that Agreement is the collective involvement of the OAU, U.N. and the ECOWAS countries. As to the question of involving forces outside the ECOWAS ford, the major problem is where will the funding, the resources and the logistical back-up come from? I believe that in the next few weeks that will be one of the areas of concentration, i.e. to what extent can you have forces outside the region who can contribute to the process but have the means to do so. The issue is not a shortage of manpower, but where do we get the financial resources to do so.

The other issue of serious concern is Angola and I do not have to go into details about the situation there since you are all aware of the violation of the Bicesse accords and of the U.N. Resolutions and the attempt to achieve by military means what was not achieved through the ballot.

You know about the statement made by the Americans, the Russians and the Portuguese observers, you know also of the latest Security Council

Resolution and the Declaration of our Heads of States which was adopted on Angola. Now, what can the OAU do? That's the critical point. What can we do in terms of responding to the call made in Cairo in support of the Government of Angola and the mobilization of that Support? What can we do also in terms of trying to restore the peace process?

Two days ago I received a call from our brother in Luanda Blondin Beye who is the United Nations Special Representative in Angola, asking me what action does the OAU contemplate taking in the light of what has happened in Cairo. I think that this is also an area we have to address in our discussions.

We have been trying to get in touch with UNITA but it is not easy. However, I want it known that there was a mission which was specifically entrusted by the Heads of States of the Ad Hoc Committee comprising the Presidents of Zimbabwe and Cape Verde and myself. We have said to UNITA that we are prepared to meet with their president; in fact invitations have been sent to him to come to Harare or to meet him anywhere in an African Country, preferably in Capital cities of the region. We have received no response yet from UNITA.

I suggest therefore that we should look into other possibilities or what other actions can be taken over and above those of supporting the Angolan Government.

There is also in Angola a more or less international consensus in support of the Government, and although the degree of support varies from one country to another, the consensus is still there. So, how do we build on this consensus in order to achieve our required objectives?

And now to Mozambique. You know of the delay and problems we had in the implementation of the Peace Plan. We have a special Representative there at the request of the Government and in accordance with the provisions of the Rome Accord, we are members of the Supreme Commission which is jointly supervising the cease-fire. We intend to strengthen our office there in addition to our military officer, who also used to be our officer in Lusaka before that office was closed.

This exercise of strengthening our presence in Maputo will clearly cost us a lot of money being unbudgeted for as it is in nature, but we have no other option. This is something we have to discuss here.

In Rwanda, I think we are reaching a stage where very soon an Agreement will be signed in Arusha, tentatively mentioned is the 4th of August. Literally all the substantive outstanding issues have now been

agreed upon by the parties concerned. The Foreign Minister of Tanzania in his capacity as the Representative of the Facilitator, working together with my own Liaison Officer who is there, Mr. FELLI, have been shuttling between places in Rwanda, having meetings and have spent seven days in the process. The latest information that I have is that literally they have agreed on almost everything such as on the allocation of responsibilities as far as the army is concerned; they have agreed on the little sensitive issue of the impeachment of the President and what majorities are required; they have agreed on the setting up of the Transitional Government which is to be located now in KIGALI; they have agreed on the choice of a Prime Minister. So, nearly all the points that were outstanding have been agreed upon, and in the next few days, they will be finalizing the text.

If all goes well, definitely the expectation is by the first week of August, there will be a peace agreement signed. There is genuine hope that the Agreement will be signed.

There are two levels of immediate concern to the OAU on Rwanda, namely, that we had a neutral observer group comprising 55 or so officers who did a tremendous job despite the odds. They were from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Senegal and Mali. Now, their mandate is expiring on the 31st of July. But, we have been given the responsibility of putting together an expanded ENMOG, and our original idea was to have some 500 officers and men, but we dropped that idea because of logistical limitations and the evolution of the situation itself.

What we want to do now is to put in place a sufficiently decent number of officers who will be doing the job until such time when there is hopefully, an international force in Kigali to supervise the implementation of the Peace Agreement. This is what we hope to do by the end of July or latest by the first week of August.

I approached at one time Congo, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Tunisia, Mali, Senegal, Nigeria and recently Egypt. Gabon said it was not possible because of elections. But, I have received positive responses from Congo offering 25 officers, notwithstanding local difficulties there, but I am very appreciative of this and we hope that a Congolese contingent will be in Kigali either end of this month or early August.

We have a definite response from Senegal and the officers will transit Addis Ababa to-morrow, 30 July en route to Kigali.

We are having 20 officers to begin with and later 10, bringing the number to 30. Egypt has agreed to my request of sending 40 officers and hope that they will be there by the end of July.

We have approached Mali for 10 officers and we have not received a response, but the Foreign Minister has assured me that these people will be replaced. We have requested Zimbabwe to give us 25 officers and we are waiting for a response from Harare.

The major problem is Nigeria. Originally I had approached Nigeria to provide 120 officers, a full composite company which could have done a number of things including logistical back-up, food and so on, but you know the developments there, it is not possible for us to get any response and now we no longer need 120 officers but only 25 from Nigeria and we are waiting.

We had asked Tunisia to provide 40 officers and 90 men, that is three platoons of 30 men each plus 40 officers, we are still waiting.

So, we are operating on the assumption that by the first week of August we should have in Rwanda something to the tune of more than a 110 or 120 officers. The terms of service of these officers, after consulting with the U.N., listening to the inputs of donors and after a lot of soul-searching, so to say, we devised a method which is that of the OAU which is as reasonable as it can be in the circumstances. For example when the U.N. sends troops to a given country it provides them with facilities such as food, accommodation and related matters and then every officer and other ranks is paid 1.20 US dollars per day as pocket expenses. But, at the same time the U.N. reimburses to the countries contributing. We are not reimbursing anything to anybody.

We will do what the U.N. does in terms of ensuring that the people who are in the field should be provided with food and accommodation, but also give officers 20 dollars and men 15 dollars, as pocket expenses per day.

I want to state from the very beginning of this mechanism that if you don't have your own resources you are not in a position to determine what to do sometimes. Even on the question of transportation, for example, initially the French Government said it would provide transportation, but we have no guarantee. I am not going to wait until we have a guarantee, so I have decided that we shall provide transport to all the officers who are coming to Rwanda by sending PTA's to them in their respective countries as long as we have information. I just want to give you an idea that these things are costly.

After the peace Agreement has been signed in Rwanda you are supposed to have an international force of not less than 2000 troops, I say not less, because the work involved is enormous; it involves for instance the supervision of the demobilization of the former fighting forces, the integration of the new Rwanda national army, the provision of security, the creation of confidence, the question of encampment and so on.

We envisage that the OAU force will not be in Rwanda for more than three months and the minute we have there an international force the mandate of ENMOG will have expired, and the responsibility of the OAU vis-à-vis Rwanda in terms of military matters will have finished. It is quite possible that some of the officers and men who may go to Rwanda now may eventually be integrated into the proposed international force. But, that will be after consultations with the countries concerned and with the position of the U.N. in consultation with the OAU.

So, I want to make clear two things: one, the enlarged ENMOG which is our responsibility and which we shall service until it ends, and then secondly the international force. But, we will also have the responsibility, in my opinion to mobilize for that force. We will have to work on the U.N., there must be a common position to insist on having an international force in Rwanda.

In spite of that common position, it is not going to be easy. My information right now, is that the French are supportive, the Americans are supporters but not to any degree of enthusiasm; the Chinese we have to work on, I think they are likely to support if they know that Africa is supporting this, because the Chinese are always reluctant about involving U.N. troops in what they consider to be an internal situation. The British we will try to work on and the Russians are going to be the most difficult, because they count every penny these days and so the issue of money becomes very important.

So, what I am saying is that it is not going to be easy to have an international force in Kigali, and yet we must have that force there. After Rwanda we have other conflicts elsewhere, let me give you these briefly.

We have Togo which we have been dealing with actively and fortunately now there has been an agreement which has been negotiated under the auspices of President Compaore of Burkina Faso and the two parties have agreed to have Presidential elections which are scheduled for 25 August. Inherent in that agreement, there will be some military observers from Burkina Faso and France for example and I received a letter from the Foreign Minister of Togo inviting the OAU to send 3 observers.

I have responded that I shall send the observers and it is not unlikely, that they may need more observers, but for the time being we are committed to send 3 observers.

And then we have Zaire. You will recall in my report to the Council and Summit in Cairo. I reported about my visit to Zaire, but, I also reported on the need for the OAU to be actively involved in the situation in Zaire. The situation there is potentially very explosive, but we need to ensure that the process of democratization in Zaire goes on, that dialogue is resumed and that the climate of confidence is created between the principal parties, because if some things go wrong there the effect will be very traumatic not only for Zaire and its neighbours, but for all our countries. So, we have a vested interest in seeing what we can do in Zaire and I believe that when we have a formal meeting that is the one area we must discuss seriously. In the meantime the U.N. has appointed the former Foreign Minister of Algeria to look into that and I am in touch, with the U.N. Secretary-General.

You are also familiar with the situation in the Congo; it is very worrying after the last elections and we are very concerned and for this reason we are in touch with the Congolese authorities and I have received a personal communication from President Lissouba and on the basis of this I have decided to appoint a special mission led by the former Assistant Secretary-General Ambassador Sahnoun. The mission has already met the President and the Prime Minister in Brazzaville and is expected to meet with all the other political parties.

In addition, I have sent a message to President BONGO because I know his own personal concern in the situation and I also know his particular influence. I have therefore asked Ambassador Sahnoun to go to Libreville to meet with President Bongo to see what can be done about the situation in the Congo. I have sent a message to the former chairman of our organization President Diouf because again I know his own concern; I have also asked him to do what he can. I have also sent a message to President Houphet Boigny to see what he can do to help.

I think again that Congo is a test case for the OAU. The conflict has not yet erupted to serious proportions but if it is not handled properly, it can have far-reaching repercussions. The latest information we have from Congo is a bit encouraging and two things have impressed me, first, the fact that the President of the Republic himself has found that it is desirable for the OAU to do something, and secondly, having done something, the cooperation which my special Representative is enjoying so far in the Congo.

Let me stop here, but I should add that these are the conflicts which we know. But, you know that there are many other countries in Africa which have potential situations. We will have to discuss that also in terms of at what point can we quietly, discreetly, either through the utilization of the General Secretariat or the Current Chairman or through the utilization of the MECHANISM as a whole or through individuals intervening, and I say intervening very cautiously, in other words try and see what we can do to pre-empt the farther deterioration of the situation, because it is better to prevent a disease than to try and cure it, the former being cheaper naturally.

TAPE ENDS

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