



Organization of African Unity

**"The Frontline States: A New Alliance for
Peace and Development in Southern Africa"**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY H.E. DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM,
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TO THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY
OF THE FRONTLINE STATES**

**Your Excellency, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi,
Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Ministers of Defence, Security and
Home Affairs,
Chief of Defence, Security and Police,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am happy to have been invited to this historic gathering and to renew my association with this forum and friendship with those of you with whom I worked in my former capacity as Minister of Defence and National Service of Tanzania. I am honoured to have been requested to give a keynote address. It is a very difficult task to perform after such an eloquent and powerful address of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania which has raised some of the very key issues I liked to focus in my statement.

Like yourselves, I am keenly aware of the enormity of the task before the defence and security establishments as they seek to adjust to the fundamental changes which have taken place in Southern Africa. That process of adjustment will mean some fundamental changes in the way countries of this region relate to each other and how they perceive of security. This reorientation will have consequences to political and strategic thinking as well as to institutional set up in each individual country. The new political realignment in the region will give rise to new priorities and new challenges. It is therefore timely that, you have chosen to meet now to chart a course into the future as a region.

The Frontline Group of Countries was born out of conflict between colonial and racial oppression and the forces of freedom and justice. The colonial settler regimes and Apartheid South Africa constituted an affront to human dignity and a sinister denial of the basic rights of the people of Southern Africa.

The political leaders of the time found it an inescapable responsibility and duty to stand up against injustice and oppression and in solidarity with their compatriots in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. The Frontline States working closely with the National Liberation Movements, coordinated strategy and efforts at dislodging the regimes in these countries. They spearheaded international diplomacy in opposition of colonialism and Apartheid and mobilized resources for the combatants of the Liberation Movements.

All this was done in an unprecedented solidarity built out of the shared determination to triumph over the forces of oppression. It was also done with the full support of free Africa and our continental Organization, the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Chairman,

When the countries comprising the Frontline were engaged in the struggle against colonialism and racism in Southern Africa, the role of the defense and security forces was quite naturally different. To everyone, the enemies were clear. It were the settler colonial regimes and the

propagators of apartheid. There was therefore never any doubt as to how these countries responded towards these defined enemies. The strategy was equally quite straight forward - that is to isolate these enemies internationally in every way possible and internally to engage them either in campaigns of civil defiance or in armed combat. In the prosecution of this strategy, the defense and security establishments, provided the rear guard to the Liberation Movements. They coordinated military strategy and channeled arms and materiel for the military campaigns against the enemies and trained the fighting liberation forces. More centrally, these establishments were key to the definition of the defence doctrine of the countries of the Frontline, within the context of the overall imperative of fighting colonialism and Apartheid.

Naturally, to the extent that the borders of freedom have been extended to reach the Cape of Good Hope, to the extent that the ranks of the Frontline Group now include Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa is a testament to the success of the strategy against colonialism and Apartheid. We were able to universalize and galvanize support. Today, these countries are free and by and large enjoying the fruits of that freedom. Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa are nations reborn to the glory of democracy and sustained by a common determination of their peoples - black and white, to rise to the challenge of national unity and reconciliation. These countries, instead of being theatres of war, are now sources of inspiration not only to the region but

to other parts of Africa where similar challenges of building nations founded on diversity, mutual tolerance and accommodation, need to be met.

Of course, the victory we now celebrate did not come easily. You Ministers know all too well, the horrendous sacrifices which had to be paid. It is estimated that the war and in particular the damage suffered by the Frontline countries in terms of destruction of plant, infrastructure and Apartheid destabilization generally, cost over \$62 billion and caused 1.5 million deaths. But behind these astronomical sums of money and numbers of lost lives, is the hidden social destruction of our societies and the environment. Today, we have over four million people displaced and over 1.5 million refugees in the region. The compounding effects of this war - the suffering, malnutrition, lost opportunities of education and the impact on the region's ecology, cannot be fully assessed. Economists say that the Military cost of the wars of liberation is three times the combined foreign debt of the Southern African region.

Apart from the task of combatting colonial domination and racism, the Frontline group of countries, at the time, did also exist in a very different context. At home, they had the engaging task of building their own national institutions and systems. Most of them, emerging from colonialism barely a decade earlier, these countries still also had to face the task of consolidating their own independence in a polarized international political atmosphere. The ideological conflict within the general framework of the cold war between the then Soviet Union and

the Western alliance demanded dexterous diplomatic management. Cold war had its own complications even though it had its own facilitating aspects in terms of support to the liberation struggle.

Today however, we live in a world free from cold war. The old enemies of the east and west, have now joined hands in a partnership for peace. Trade and investment are now the engine which power their relations. We see more and more convergence of view and cooperation between them in determining issues which affect the world. The liberation of Africa and the world from the complicating factors of the cold war, has its own implications. One which is very obvious is that Africa no longer has the strategic importance it had, as an intermediary in the ideological conflict of the Super Powers. We see disengagement from Africa. Of course this disengagement is not necessarily bad. It at least gives Africa the chance to emerge out of patronage and mature as a continent.

Within Southern Africa, the circumstances have dramatically changed. Colonialism is gone and so is Apartheid. Today, South Africa is a free nation and a member of the Frontline States. What all this means is that the region ought to reassess its priorities, direction and find a new political and security equilibrium in the new environment. In the days gone by the Frontline States had the clear objective of fighting colonialism and Apartheid. It had clear enemies and clear supporters.

In security terms, the objective was to defend against colonial aggression and apartheid destabilization. Now that circumstances have so radically changed, the first task must be to rethink security, to redefine the security needs and to elaborate a new defence doctrine. While in the past, the views and efforts of the Frontline States found common ground in the task of liberation, we should now find a new basis for common security moving from confrontation to cooperation in Southern Africa. This common security must be one in which all find relevance and which is holistic in scope-embracing the non-traditional areas such as social and economic domains.

As this region prepares to take up the challenge of consolidating peace, democracy and development, it must address the most immediate tasks. Peace and democracy in South Africa needs to be nurtured and consolidated. The people of South Africa still need the help and understanding of the region and indeed the International Community to persist along the path of national reconciliation and unity. It is not for the sake of the people of South Africa alone, that this region should make it its business to see to it that all is done to support the course of peace and unity there. It is rather for the sake of the future of the region - its security, stability and development.

A South Africa reconciled with itself, liberated from the shackles of racism and embraced in the larger community of the nations of this region will impact positively to the future of every one. A South Africa, irrevocably

committed to equity and justice, to dialogue and unity, will in addition serve as an example to be emulated in the region, where the same problems of diversity are a fact of life.

South Africa is not alone in its yearning for democracy and stability. Mozambique which is just emerging from years of a destructive war and which has just gone through a process of multiparty elections, also needs the continuing solidarity and support of the entire region. Likewise, the challenge of ending war in Angola and restoring that country on the path of peace, must form a continuing priority element in the whole challenge of strengthening democracy in the countries of the Frontline. Whether in Lesotho, Malawi or elsewhere, this objective must be pursued with collective determination of all our countries.

At this juncture, I will be less than honest if I do not express my great concern and the concern of the OAU at the recent and continuation of fighting in Angola and especially Huambo. This escalation coming at a time when the people of Angola, Africa and the World Community had breathed a sigh of relief at the initialing of the Lusaka Agreement and have been joyously waiting for the formal signing of the Lusaka Protocol next Tuesday, November 15th is a particularly disturbing development.

The OAU sincerely and fervently appeals to the Government of Angola and to UNITA, to end the fighting and for all efforts to be made to ensure the materialization of the signing of the Lusaka Agreement, thus paving the way for peace, stability, national reconciliation, rehanilitation and reconstruction in that country.

Mr. Chairman,

Apart from this political challenge of consolidating peace and building democracy, I see the agenda of the defence and security institutions assuming three other dimensions.

Victory over colonialism and racism has removed the single most potent threat to the security of Southern Africa. Of course exigencies of other security needs must still be met. Yet, I believe, that the changed circumstances in this region will necessitate not only a re-examination of doctrine, but of the structures of the security and defence establishments as well. This may require restructuring or downsizing of these institutions where necessary, as well as cutting back on Military expenditures where appropriate. The region must now be prepared to deal with new security related problems and do so collectively.

This region is slowly emerging from years of war and civil strife. Additional to the many negative effects of the prolonged period of conflict, has been the militarization of the region and the spread of armaments. As the logic of peace takes hold, there is great likelihood that those guns will be redirected to random or organized criminal activities such as

drug trafficking and even poaching. The tasks of disarmament and pacification of society, therefore assume critical importance. In tandem with the removal of arms and munitions from society, it will be equally necessary to re-educate for peace. Naturally, the logic of peace, will eventually also include demobilization of combatants who will require new means sustenance. Of course this will be a monumental task as it will have to take place alongside structural adjustment and economic reform generally with all the stringent austerity measures that this entails. The question of access to opportunity, to jobs and the means of sustenance, is likely to breed tension, which, if not defused, can contribute to insecurity and instability. Here it is possible to reinvest the peace dividend into society - creating jobs and generating income. What I am trying to say is that, educating for peace and curbing the spread of arms in the region is a new imperative which will have to be met. And this will require joint action of the entire region.

Mr. Chairman,

When I speak of common regional security, I have in mind a set of understandings, procedures including those of building confidence and systems which will regulate and govern cooperation in the region. I have in mind cooperation and joint action to meet common threat to peace and stability and to coordinate economic development. In this new relationship in which the region must find security, it will nonetheless still be necessary to remain on guard, so that the peace which

is now slowly consolidating is not undermined in any way. For this reason, the first priority must be the putting in place mechanisms and arrangements to maintain peace and security.

This is a gathering of Ministers of Defence and Security who are also politicians. To that extent, the duality of initiative potentially at your disposal must be creatively harnessed and put to the service of peace in this region. As politicians, you will be involved in the elaboration of a regional mechanism to monitor potential conflicts and assist in their resolution. In circumstances where it will become necessary, you, as heads of Military and Security establishments, you will be called upon to undertake peace observation, or peace keeping.

But this continuum of peace-making, peace-building and peace-keeping, will have to be based on steady consultations in the region. To that extent therefore, you will have to have an institutional or political framework, within which these consultations can take place and joint action undertaken. It will require resources as well, which this region must be prepared to muster.

If I am speaking of arrangements for conflict resolution and maintenance of peace at regional level, I am not oblivious to the fact that the OAU has a continental mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution now in place. In Cairo, last year, the Heads of State and Government of the OAU, decided to re-seize the initiative and face the challenge of getting the Continent involved and providing leadership in all efforts at resolving African

problems. The establishment of the Mechanism was an act of historical significance and of self-empowerment. What Africa said to the world is that yes, we may continue to need outside help in dealing with our problems, but we will certainly be centrally involved and provide leadership in any efforts at conflict resolution. We said, we can no longer fold our hands and wait for foreigners to come and resolve our problems. Quite apart from the progress we have made in terms of operationalizing the Mechanism and actually applying it to potential and existing conflicts, that act of self-empowerment was a watershed in the history of our Continent. It was a statement and an act in the belief in ourselves and our ability, if we are determined, to make a difference. So far, we have been successful in diffusing potential conflicts such as in Congo and Gabon and we are working very closely in collaboration with the people of Burundi to find solution to their problem. We have also made efforts in Rwanda, Liberia, Angola, Mozambique and we even in Somalia. I wish to thank those countries of the Frontline who have sacrificed and contributed troops to serve either with the OAU or United Nations Missions in Conflict areas in Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

Of course the mechanism I am speaking of is a Continental one, and it must assume the overall responsibility in dealing with Africa's conflicts. Yet, I also recognize the critical role which the sub-regional and regional organizations can play in handling conflicts. Sometimes, and I wish to underline that it is sometimes, regional efforts or sub-regional initiatives, address the issues which may be

unique to the region details of which may be unknown to the Continent at large. Where there has been determined sub-regional effort, we have seen progress. Despite the difficulties that are now facing ECOMOG, the fact remains that some progress have been made. The ECOWAS efforts in Liberia, the Southern Africa efforts in Lesotho, are also cases in point.

I therefore see any possible sub-regional arrangements as being complementary to the OAU Conflict Mechanism. The challenge we will have to face together is to see how the efforts undertaken at regional and those at continental level can interface and be mutually re-enforcing. This is necessary so as to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts and that we are not working at cross purposes. This will also ensure more rational utilization of the very meagre resources that we have at our disposal.

Mr. Chairman,

I have so far spoken of the military and political aspects of the common regional security. You, Mr. President together with the Minister here present, more than anyone else recognize that in the modern times we live in, security is more diverse embracing many areas of human activity. Today, this region cannot speak of durable peace and security, it cannot talk of consolidating democracy, without addressing the overriding question of development. Poverty breeds instability and it forments social disintegration. This is why, I believe that even if Ministers of Defence and Security

may not be development experts they will still nonetheless have to integrate development into a new strategy for peace in this region.

Southern Africa, more than most of Africa, perhaps has great potential for rapid development. It has a market population of over 120 million inhabitants, and a land area of almost 7 million square kilometers. It has adequate arable land, vast reserves of mineral wealth, adequate water and other natural resources. Its rail, road, air and port links have vast potential for improvement and expansion. Above all, it has experience at cooperation within the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference and now the Southern Africa Development Community and the Preferential Trade Area.

This experience, and the complementarity which exist in the region, are catalysts for rapid transformation and development, and they should be capitalized on. Regional integration through the regional organizations, trade and investment, agriculture and industry, as well as science and technology must be developed cooperatively so as to lift the region from the anarchy of poverty. Of course even in this task of economic cooperation, it will be necessary to ensure that equity prevails. The new alliance I am speaking of goes beyond the simple factors of economic cooperation where the market forces are left to determine the trends and patterns of that cooperation. Without creative management, this will only perpetuate the strong and undermine confidence of those less powerful. If this happens, it will also undermine regional cooperation and create potential for conflict. As our countries must address imbalances in society, the region must

seek to promote mutually beneficial cooperation. It is only when a new partnership for economic equality is grasped, that the region will proceed smoothly.

Economic confidence building measures will be needed to reinforce regional cooperation. Cooperation in areas such as ensuring food security, preventing the spread of AIDS, fighting the scourge of drug trafficking, managing shared resources such as water, protecting the environment, as well as of endangered species, will have to be regional if its potential is to be maximized.

Within the Military, there exists a wealth of knowledge, scientific and technological know-how, which will have to be harnessed and targeted to development. As the region seeks ways and means of consolidating cooperation and pursuing development, the Military should be involved and bring its contribution to the efforts. Elaboration of peacetime development projects, and where capacity exists, reorienting industry away from armaments to civilian production.

Mr. Chairman,

In peacetime, there are still major challenges which require the kind of capacity, training, discipline and organizational capability available only in military establishments. I have here in mind, the humanitarian role which the army could play in disaster management, relief and rehabilitation. We all saw what the Army could do in Somalia

and Rwanda in delivering relief assistance. Likewise, I think it is possible to develop capacity within this region to respond to emergencies of natural disasters.

Mr. Chairman,

I have dealt at length with the political, military, economic and humanitarian dimensions of the common regional security which I think is now needed. It will be an engaging task to convert from confrontation and years of mistrust and conflict to sustained regional cooperation. Yet it is a task which must be fulfilled.

In the days gone by, this region's major preoccupation were colonialism and apartheid. It devoted immense resources, time and energy to the war against those twin evils. The region defined security partly in terms of both combatting Apartheid and defending against Apartheid destabilization. The region armed itself for that purpose. Even when economic cooperation was undertaken it was partly to extricate the region from dependence on Apartheid South Africa. In a real sense therefore, the region found common security also in their common fight against Apartheid. But now Apartheid has been defeated. There is therefore need to find a new common basis for cooperation and for common security. We all know of the strong bonds of cooperation and solidarity which the fight against Apartheid engendered in the region. That solidarity and those common bonds of cooperation must now be drawn upon to deal with the new challenge such as consolidating peace and democracy and bringing about economic

development. The region needs to pull together, to liberate itself from the oppression of poverty and the potential for conflict which economic hopelessness and want present.

At the same time, we know that it will not be possible to address these issues without peace and stability. The new challenge is also to evolve a collective approach to security through cooperation and shared economic prosperity. We will need a new alliance, founded on shared objectives and common security, to consolidate peace and stability in the region. A key element to the safeguarding of peace, will have to be arrangements for monitoring and defusing potential conflicts or managing and resolving existing ones. In peace-making, peace-building and peace-keeping, the defense and security establishments will have to play an important role.

But Southern Africa is not an island unto itself. It is part of Africa and must therefore be concerned at what happens in the entire Continent. It will hence be inevitable that this region will increasingly be called upon to respond to the needs of the rest of the Continent in matters of peace and security. This part of Africa which more than any other, benefitted the most from Africa's Continental solidarity must now be prepared to give something back. In the spirit of rekindling continental solidarity and common action, the Frontline States will be expected to contribute and increasingly get involved in peace efforts in Africa, including participation in peace-keeping Missions.

Mr. Chairman,

You have a heavy responsibility at hand. Opportunities and challenges now present themselves for the Frontline States and indeed the rest of Southern Africa to foster closer cooperation and build a new alliance for peace and development. You should seize this new opportunity to move the region to a peaceful and prosperous future.

I thank you.