



8

MR. CHAIRMAN,

YOUR EXCELLENCIES HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT,

HONOURABLE MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS,

EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is with a great sense of humility, appreciation and profound gratitude, that I accept this immense responsibility you have placed upon me by electing me the next Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity. I am, indeed proud, and deeply moved by the confidence you have reposed in me. I take this decision to be also a tribute and honour to my country, the United Republic of Tanzania.

-/2 ...



- 3 -

MR. CHAIRMAN,

I am proud to be following the footsteps of my predecessors in Office. These illustrious sons of Africa made tremendous contribution to the struggles of our Continent and to the strengthening of our Organization. I hope to build upon the foundations they have laid in the discharge of my responsibilities. At this point I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the outgoing Secretary General, Mr. Ide Oumarou for the efforts he exerted in the service of this Organization. As a friend and colleague of long-standing I know fully-well how deeply he has felt and continues to feel about the needs and aspirations of our Continent.

Excellencies,

I am keenly aware of the particularly difficult economic circumstances in which I assume Office. We are nearing the end of the second most difficult decade for Africa. These have been decades of near economic disintegration; of disasters and of acute human suffering. And

-/4 ...



- 4 -

a respite in the debilitating effects of the economic disfunctions is not in sight. The burdens of the foreign debt, falling commodity prices, expensive imports, run-away inflation and other associated problems have nearly crippled the economies of most of our countries.

Many countries have, as a response to these problems, entered into arrangements with the IMF and the World Bank. We are all invariably struggling with some kind of structural adjustment programs. But we have said that these are interim measures, aimed at providing temporary relief. We recognise that in the long run, Africa's development, is Africa's own responsibility. We made resolve to redirect our priorities towards home-grown economic solutions, towards inward looking strategies of development.

We have committed our countries to create preferential trade areas and an African Economic Community by the year 2000 and accelerate African Economic integration. The 1985 Special Economic Summit following the wide-spread famine resulted

-/5 ...



in greater investment in the agricultural sector. Yet Africa still depends on food imports! Africa has a crushing debt of well above \$200 billion and despite the 1987 Debt Summit, we have yet to evolve a common negotiating strategy.

Notwithstanding this gloomy picture, Africa has made some efforts, only that more needs to be done. We should work harder to shake off Africa's unfortunate image of a continent where poverty is endemic, where human suffering is taken for granted and where the people are almost defenceless victims of natural disasters. There is an urgent need to chart out a development agenda aimed at realising the objectives set out in the Lagos Plan of Action.

Africa has the sad distinction of having the largest refugee population. This is a tragedy which needs to be tackled urgently and conclusively. It befalls us to undertake to stem the tide of refugees and care for those who have gone into forced exile as well as work for conditions which would ensure their eventual voluntary repatriation. We have a convention which lays out the modalities for such joint action.



All we need is the courage and determination to make the necessary political choice of making the convention work.

The need for the preservation of the Environment is acquiring new urgency. Desertification is threatening farmlands and animal pastures in vast areas, the dumping of toxic waste on our continent and the resulting contamination of our soils and drinking water, all call for urgent environmental management and control programs.

But whatever change we desire will make meaning only if it has a direct bearing to the welfare of the people. Africa would serve itself well by ensuring that the social, economic and political changes being sought translate into greater good for its general citizenry. As the OAU seeks to promote the rights of the Member States, the States themselves do in turn have the obligation to preserve and defend the human rights of their peoples. In this field we can feel encouraged by the adoption of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.



There is the need to consolidate this first but key step in the process of building a culture of institutionalised regard for human rights in Africa. But equally this will produce the desired results if it is reinforced with corresponding political decisions which are geared towards the strengthening of human rights related national institutions in countries where they exist and creating them where they do not.

Despite the achievements made in the field of liberation, the struggle is far from being over. In South Africa the situation has shown no significant improvement. The African masses continue to stand firm in their struggle to extricate themselves from the crushing grip of the apartheid state machinery. And they have scored significant victories.

Recent events have demonstrated that notwithstanding the age-old propaganda of the invincibility of the white redoubt, the apartheid armour is showing visible cracks. The effects of the resistance of the people complemented



- 8 -

by international political and limited economic pressure are taking root. As a result, what we are now witnessing - the power struggle, the various propaganda gimmicks of the white establishment, manifests a state of panic. We are winning! But this is not the time to be complacent. Instead Africa should unmask these propaganda plays which are aimed at dividing the black majority in South Africa and confusing the external opponents of Apartheid. We should persist in our demands.

Excellencies,

Following the initial hitches, the independence process in Namibia is cautiously inching forward. The situation remains fluid but we nonetheless have a basis for guarded optimism. Allow me to join you in paying tribute to the Angolan people and Government who made such immense sacrifice in lives and property in defence of African freedom. Indeed, we would not - at least not this soon - have been looking forward to a SWAPO victory and leadership of independent Namibia, had it not been for the Angolan gallant struggle, its people's selfless sacrifice. Angola's decisive victory at Cuito Cunavale will live in African revolutionary fame forever..

-/9 ...



- 9 -

I will be remiss if I did not congratulate all who played a mediation role and brockering the Brazzaville agreement. But the job is not yet concluded.

I hope they will live up to their responsibilities and ensure that South Africa does not undermine or torpedo the independence process or in any manner stand in the way of free and fair elections in the territory. Above all, the United Nations Security Council including especially its Permanent Members must remain vigilant and work to ensure the scrupulous implementation of Security Council Resolution 435 (1978).

As we are eagerly awaiting Namibia's independence - and here let me pay tribute to President Dennis Sessou Nguesso for his own role in facilitating the success of the Brazzaville Agreements - I am encouraged by the progress made in the internal reconciliation process in Angola. I commend the wisdom of President Mobutu and of those other African leaders who delicately worked out the compromise of the historic agreement at Gbadollite. No efforts should therefore be spared in facilitating faster conclusion of the process of reconciliation and subsequent national reconstruction.

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Peace in Angola and victory in Namibia will push us across a strategic threshold in the struggle against apartheid. But, we need to redouble our efforts especially now when South Africa is escalating its campaigns of destabilization and direct military attacks against the frontline and the neighbouring states. It is these countries which have suffered the brunt of the struggle. I wish, therefore, to commend the resilience of these countries and the immense sacrifices they continue to make daily in the struggle.

While welcoming these positive developments in respect of Angola we must reiterate our concern for the continued acts of banditry and destabilisation perpetrated against Mozambique. We note with appreciation the great efforts of President Chissano and the FRELIMO Government to bring about peace in that brotherly country. We must continue to urge the International Community to intensify its support for and assistance to the Government and people of Mozambique. In this context I wish to pay deserving tribute to President Moi for his continued effort to bring about peace in that country.

-/11 ...



- 11 -

Additionally we must make full use of the present spirit of global detente to search for peace and political stability in our continent through peaceful resolution of conflict situations. Experience has demonstrated that no obstacle is insurmountable, no problem is beyond solution given the necessary political will. To this end. I wish to commend the collective efforts of both the outgoing Chairman of the OAU President Traore of Mali and President Bongo of Gabon in the search for peaceful and lasting solution to the Chad-Libyan Conflict. I wish also to recognize with appreciation the efforts of President Traore with respect to the issue of Western Sahara as well as his initiative aimed at resolving the Mauritania-Senegal crisis.

Excellencies,

Africa's success in the liberation struggle was made possible in large measure by its oneness of view and unity of action on the issue. We are united in our resolve to rid our continent of colonialism and racialism. And while we have occasionally debated strategy, never has there been the slightest doubt as to our unity of purpose. We should therefore ensure that this unity is preserved and strengthened as we tackle the economic challenges facing us.

-/12 ...



Some sceptics and detractors of Africa have continually cast aspersions at Africa's ability to sustain unity in economic matters. Indeed this assertion is based on the misplaced notion that Africa necessarily disagrees on all other issues except liberation. We have to fight this erroneous belief. Africa has demonstrated strong unity. We have joint - negotiating platforms, a common development strategy. We have come to recognize the inherent vulnerability of a fragmented continent - a continent which speaks in a multiplicity of voices. Africa needs unity, for only in unity are we strong and can our collective voice be heard. Africa needs to get itself organised - at the national, regional and continental levels, to give strength to the reality of our commitment and action for intra-african co-operation.

We need cooperation among ourselves and with those with whom we have shared problems and aspirations. Africa is linked with the Arab world by geography, history, culture, common problems and hopes and an abiding faith in this bond. We have therefore to pool our energies and build a common platform from which our people can forge a common front in their struggle for their rights to self-determination,



independence and economic well-being. In this context, I wish to echo the call of President Mubarak to promote Afro-Arab cooperation, and to develop it until it becomes a reality that is felt by our peoples who are struggling for the same objectives.

In dealing with the varied problems I have mentioned, it is inescapable to adopt a wholistic view. For, whether tackling the economic issues, the environment, refugees, human rights or any other, experience and good judgement has shown that no country can single-handedly provide solutions. These are shared problems. They transcend national boundaries and as such do not lend themselves to individual national solution.

Cooperation is the key to a fully integrated and centrally coordinated strategy to deal with them. We should build on the progress made under sub-regional arrangements like ECOWAS, SADCC, PTA, the Maghreb Union and the like. This is an area where our organization - the OAU can play a leading role - being the focal



point. But its ability to excel will depend on whether there is a renewed desire and greater will to build it, to strengthen it politically and materially and put it to use as an instrument for fostering constructive change in intra-african cooperation.

This is a challenge to the Member States as it will be mine and my colleagues in the Secretariat. I am confident that together we can constitute a partnership for change and we can reach for the higher ground and ensure a worthwhile future for Africa's coming generations.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

But for me and my colleagues in the OAU General Secretariat to be able to respond effectively to the great challenge that lie ahead, we shall need your guidance, understanding and maximum cooperation. In addition the Organization needs the requisite resources. I know that your Excellencies are fully conversant with the financial state of our Organization. I am confident that I can count on your understanding and support in overcoming the prevailing difficult financial situation facing the Organization.



Excellencies,

We cannot meaningfully go forward unless we take a look back at where we are coming from. We must diagnose the pitfalls and setbacks of the last two and half decades, whether in the realm of political changes or in the domain of economic problems so as to face the challenges of the next decade with confidence. We have reason to be proud at our quite advanced journey to Africa's political liberation. Indeed our destination is just on the horizon and we can look forward with certainty at the final rendezvous with our destiny. But our journey to economic emancipation has yet to begin in earnest. We have taken the first faltering but crucial steps. We need to firm our legs and begin to walk quickly. It will be a long and more difficult journey. But we have to persevere - we-have-no-choice. I pledge to apply all the energies of the OAU to the sustenance of that journey.

I thank you very much.