



Organization of African Unity .

MOTION OF THANKS DELIVERED BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL,  
DR. SALIM A. SALIM ON THE OCCASION OF THE SPECIAL SESSION  
OF THE OAU COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE LIBERATION OF  
AFRICA TO FORMALLY CONCLUDE ITS WORK

Arusha, Tanzania

15 August 1994

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,  
Esteemed Mwalimu Julius Nyerere,  
Honourable Ministers and Ambassadors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Of all the tasks I have had to perform in my capacity as Secretary General of our Organization, very few have indeed been more pleasant than the singular honour of delivering this Motion of Thanks from a grateful Continent to its leadership and peoples following the completion of a noble task.

Many years ago, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere was invited to open one of the Sessions of the Committee. I recall him stating then, that it would have been a singular honour to the Government and the People of Tanzania if he had been invited to give a speech to wind up the Liberation Committee after it had accomplished its mission - that is - to have a liberated Africa. He said that would be Africa's finest honour. For many years, I too have looked forward to that day and this hour. I feel elated that it has finally come.

After many years of struggle to end colonialism and racial oppression on the Continent, we feel privileged to have not only so many distinguished Heads of State and Government as well as Mwalimu Julius Nyerere whose personal role in the liberation struggle was critical, join us in celebration, but also a similarly distinguished presence of leaders of the liberation struggle who are now at the helm of affairs in their respective countries. I equally justifiably feel proud and share in the fulfillment which the liberation of the

Continent has brought to the Founding Fathers of the OAU for notwithstanding the setbacks of one kind or another which tend to dominate the African scene these days, the accomplishments of the liberation struggle remain promising signs on our Continent's horizon.

In proposing this Motion of Thanks therefore, it is only fitting and proper that I should begin by paying glowing tribute to the Founding Fathers of our Organization who, at their historic meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 22 - 25 May 1963 had the vision and courage of conviction to initiate the establishment of the Liberation Committee, thereby launching the long and protracted struggle which reached finality with the defeat of Apartheid and the election of a non-racial and democratic Government of National Unity in South Africa.

**Distinguished Heads of State and Government,**

From 1963 to 1994, this Continent acted in concert and unity of purpose. By sheer determination and political goodwill, this collective action and the support of all African leaders ensured that the question of liberating African territories under colonialism settler, colonial rule and Apartheid remained at the centre stage both in domestic decision-making and on the platform of international organizations and other multilateral fora. Indeed, the support extended by you and your peoples to the liberation struggle was unqualified, ranging from moral, diplomatic and

political, financial and material, to providing logistical support to the Nationalists fighting against racism and colonialism in their countries.

That we are gathered here in Arusha today is the greatest testimony to the heroism and sacrifices made by leaders and combatants of National Liberation Movements. Indeed, during the thirty-one years life span of this Committee, we and the world have witnessed some of the finest examples of heroism and nobility of the human spirit, as individuals were willing to pay even the ultimate price and supreme sacrifice, if necessary, to secure the freedom of future generations of Africans. Today, we salute all those who were involved in that struggle against one of this century's worst example of man's inhumanity to man. Today, our Continent remembers with the deepest gratitude and respect, and pays homage to the courage of those who gave their lives so that we all can now live in freedom from Cape to Cairo.

Almost thirty years ago, the Liberation Committee Meeting in Dar es Salaam from 24 - 25 November 1964, adopted special Resolution No.1. That Resolution declared that the African Independent States were determined to embark on a firm and continual struggle until Africa was totally freed from the colonial yoke. Today, our meeting in Arusha is an acknowledgement that we have remained unwavering in our objective of prosecuting the liberation struggle, and have achieved the tasks we set for ourselves in that special Resolution. Obviously, without total commitment and support of all Member States of our Organization, it may have taken much longer to arrive at where we are today.

In this connection, we pay special tribute to the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Zambia, the Republic of Angola and the Republic of Mozambique which hosted the Offices of the Liberation Committee as well as the other countries in Southern, Central and Western Africa which provided dependable rear bases to National Liberation Movements during the critical and most difficult hours of the struggle. It is impossible for me to single out Member States individually for the different roles they played in support of that struggle, but suffice it to state that all over the Continent, assistance was extended which was varied in nature, ranging from training in educational institutions, and military establishments to training in many other institutions and in the professions aimed at preparing the emerging Nationalists for leadership roles in their respective countries. From West to Central and East Africa, from North to Southern Africa, the response was overwhelming and unequivocal.

It is also appropriate, while congratulating ourselves for a job well done, that we also place on record our indebtedness to the international community which remained steadfast and supportive of the struggle for the liberation of Africa. It is in recognition of this support that we pay special tribute to the United Nations, especially its Special Committee of 24 on Decolonization; the Council for Namibia, the Special Committee Against Apartheid and the various Specialized Agencies and Programmes in the UN System, for the assistance they extended to Liberation Movements during their struggle. Not to be left out is the Non-Aligned Movement, the League of Arab States and the Commonwealth whose role throughout the period was exemplary and critical in ensuring

that the world attention remained focussed, to the imperative of fighting against racism and colonialism in our Continent and elsewhere. We would also wish to take this opportunity to thank our Nordic and Scandinavian friends, as well as those in other parts of Western Europe including those in the former Eastern Europe, Asia and the Americans for their invaluable assistance in the fight to end colonialism and Apartheid in Africa.

I have deliberately highlighted these linkages and the bonds which emerged during the liberation struggle between us and our friends outside the Continent in order to use our appreciation of the past to build bridges for the future. As we celebrate these achievements in the area of decolonization and the end of apartheid, I remain optimistic and convinced that these happy developments will lay the firm foundations of democracy and prosperity on the Continent. Those bonds of friendship which served our Continent so well in the past, must now be refocussed to deal with the challenges of managing conflicts and improving the lives of our peoples. Indeed, apart from our well known and publicly expressed willingness to continue to work with friends of Africa in the consolidation of our hard won freedom, we must pursue with greater vigour, the onerous task of empowering Africans economically and democratically.

The horrors we are witnessing in Rwanda today, the tragic conditions in Somalia, Angola and Liberia as well as the conflicts in Burundi and Sudan, all need the undivided attention and determination of our countries. Today we

rejoice at Africa's attainment of political liberation. But we must ensure that, this liberation we are celebrating, is not undermined by the conflicts and economic want, which now confront our countries and people.

The triple challenge of ending conflicts and building enduring peace and stability on the Continent; of promoting economic development and of fostering the cause of democracy and human rights will be met only if we mount the kind of unity and solidarity which was manifested during the struggle for decolonization and against Apartheid.

During that struggle, Africa stood as one and spoke with one voice. Today that spirit of unity and common purpose is all the more needed. The experience of cooperation which our countries have gathered during decolonization, as well as those bonds of solidarity which were built spanning across continents and peoples must now be redirected and targeted to meeting the challenges we now face.

Of course the task of decolonization would have been constrained without the dedication of the staff of the Liberation Committee. Let me therefore commend Brigadier Hashim I. Mbita, the Executive Secretary of the Liberation Committee as well as his illustrious predecessors, the late Ambassadors Sebastian Chale and George Magombe and their staff at the Executive Secretariat both past and present for the outstandingly successful manner they have implemented the decisions of the Liberation Committee over the years. Not

only have they been extremely industrious, but have distinguished themselves for good quality, conscientious and dependable performance.

I would like to single for particular mention the corps of drivers who kept the lifeline between the frontlines and the rear bases open - often braving war, to deliver supplies and material to the combatants. Our Organization remains indebted to them all for the many years of dedicated and loyal service to the cause of African liberation and to the OAU in particular.

In conclusion, let me add my voice to all those who have expressed special gratitude to the government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania, for the excellent cooperation they have always extended to the OAU, as well as the facilities they placed at the disposal of the Liberation Committee and National Liberation Movements. It is my earnest hope that when the history of the liberation struggle in Africa is written, this country will have a pride of place for its contribution.