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LETTER DATED 10 DECEMBER 1981 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith a text of the statement issued on Tuesday, 8 December 1981, by His Excellency Salim Ahmed Salim, Foreign Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania, in connection with the appointment of the Secretary-General.

I shall be most grateful if this letter can be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Legwaila Joseph LEGWAILA  
Permanent Representative of Botswana  
and  
Chairman of the African Group

Annex

Statement issued on 8 December 1981 by Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim

In June this year, the Organization of African Unity Assembly of Heads of State and Government meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, unanimously proposed me as Africa's candidate for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations when the incumbent's term of office expires this 31 December.

This decision by the African Heads of State and Government was, for me personally, an extraordinary honour. It represented the collective faith and confidence of all the African States in my ability, if elected, to discharge appropriately and effectively, the onerous responsibilities of the Secretary-General.

I remain extremely grateful for this manifestation of confidence and trust reposed in me by the African States.

Subsequent to the Nairobi summit, my candidature received a growing and overwhelming support, encompassing the broadest spectrum of the Member States of the United Nations. Within the third world this support became almost total. The decision by the League of Arab States, in their meeting in Tunis in September, and later by the Foreign Ministers of the non-aligned countries in their meeting in New York, served to strengthen this support. But the breadth of my support has not been confined to the third world. Many other Member States of the United Nations have expressed their confidence in and full support of my candidature. It has, indeed, been amply demonstrated that the nature of my support cuts across the political, ideological or geographical lines. It also encompasses the South, as well as the North.

I am most grateful and highly appreciative of all this support, which has remained continuous.

Since 27 October, the Security Council has made efforts, with a view to submitting a recommendation to the General Assembly for the appointment of a Secretary-General. As part of these efforts, the Security Council has now held 16 inconclusive ballots.

Despite the support which I have received in the Council, for which I am deeply grateful, and the great support for me which has been manifested by the general membership, it has not been possible for the Council to recommend me, as such a recommendation must have the concurrence of all the permanent members of the Council. Since the results of the first round of balloting were known, I, myself, and the OAU member States have made considerable efforts to obtain the support of a permanent member whose position on my candidature has thus far made it not possible for me to be recommended. These efforts have been, and are being made, at the various African capitals, as also by the African Group at the United Nations.

The General Assembly is scheduled to conclude its work shortly, and I am one of those who firmly believe that, both in the interests of the institution and the Office of the Secretary-General itself, it would be best that a decision should be reached as soon as possible.

In the meantime, it is common knowledge that there are several potential candidates from the third world who are prepared to enter the race. Most of them, however, have made it clear that they would not do so for as long as my name is on the ballot. I very much appreciate and value this gesture of support.

I come from a country and continent which has a great stake in the United Nations. Africa's commitment to work for the effectiveness of this institution requires no elaboration.

I, as a Tanzanian, as an African and as an individual, have been very much attached to the United Nations and unequivocally committed to its principles and purposes. For many years I have been associated with the United Nations in one capacity or another. I have also had the honour and privilege of assuming different positions of responsibility within the Organization.

It is my firm conviction that at this particular time, when the world is passing through a turbulent period, the role of the United Nations is all the more relevant, and it is the duty and responsibility of all of us who believe in it to enhance its authority and prestige. In that respect, the importance of the Office of the Secretary-General cannot be overemphasized. It is important that the Organization should appoint a Secretary-General without further delay, so that he or she can assume his or her substantive responsibilities come 1 January 1982.

With these considerations in mind, and in the spirit of extending my fullest co-operation to the President and members of the Security Council in their efforts to discharge the Council's responsibilities under the Charter, I have just informed the President of the Security Council to set aside my name from subsequent ballots that the Council may hold in the present circumstances. This, in my opinion, will give real possibilities for other candidates from the third world to be considered and for the Council to make progress in its efforts. At the same time, I have assured the President of my continued availability to serve in the event that the Council is able to realize the concurrence of all the permanent members in this regard.

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