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(15)
«THE 1990 GUARDIAN LECTURE»

THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION

SCHEDULED FOR 1992

AND

ITS LIKELY IMPACT ON AFRICA

DELIVERED BY H.E. MR SALIM AHMED SALIM

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OAU

Lagos, 21 June, 1990.

MR CHAIRMAN,
HONOURABLE GUESTS,
EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I AM GRATEFUL TO THE GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER FOR THE HONOUR THEY HAVE ACCORDED ME BY REQUESTING ME TO DELIVER THIS YEAR'S GUARDIAN LECTURE. I MUST CONFESS NONETHELESS, THAT WHEN MR ALEX IBRU CAME TO ADDIS ABABA, EARLY THIS YEAR, TO FOLLOW UP THE GUARDIAN'S INVITATION AND IT BECAME CLEAR THAT I WAS TO SPEAK ON THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION AND ITS LIKELY IMPACT ON AFRICA, I WAS RATHER HESITANT TO ACCEPT THE HONOUR THOUGH I WAS CLEARLY PLEASED BY IT. MY HESITANCY LAY IN THE UNCERTAINTY OR RATHER FLUIDITY OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION NOW OBTAINING IN THE WORLD AND ESPECIALLY IN EUROPE.

IF DESPITE THESE CONCERNS I HAVE OPTED TO ADDRESS YOU ON THE SUBJECT, IT IS BECAUSE OF MY AWARENESS AND CONVICTION THAT NO PLACE IS BETTER SUITED AS A FORUM TO DISCUSS THE FORTUNES OF OUR CONTINENT. FOR NIGERIA'S PREEMINENT ROLE IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS NEED NO JUSTIFICATION OR ELUCIDATION. AND IT WAS IN LAGOS THAT, TEN YEARS AGO, AFRICAN LEADERS DECIDED TO MAP OUT A PATH TOWARDS AFRICAN COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION THROUGH THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION AND THE FINAL ACT - A PATH WHICH - HAD IT BEEN PURSUED SERIOUSLY, OUR CONTINENT, TODAY, WOULD HAVE BEEN IN A MUCH BETTER SHAPE AND CERTAINLY BETTER EQUIPPED TO CONFRONT THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUNDAMENTAL GLOBAL CHANGES TAKING PLACE INCLUDING THE CHALLENGES, PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF A UNIFIED WESTERN EUROPE.

FIVE YEARS AGO, WHEN EUROPE DECIDED TO EMBARK TOWARDS A SINGLE MARKET BY 1992, EASTERN EUROPE WAS A SUCH QUIETER PLACE. APART FROM THE NOVELTY OF GLASNOT AND PERESTROIKA, THE SOVIET UNION WAS LARGELY ALSO NONCHALANTLY QUIET. NO ONE COULD HAVE ANTICIPATED THE DRAMATIC TURN OF EVENTS WHICH HAVE NOW COMPLETELY ALTERED THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF EASTERN EUROPE AND PLACED THE SOVIET UNION IN FLUX. I DARE BELIEVE THAT THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH THE OLD ORDER IN EASTERN EUROPE CRUMBLED, CAUGHT EVERY ONE BY SURPRISE INCLUDING THOSE WHO WERE PLANNING THE UNIFIED WESTERN EUROPE BY 1992.

I ALSO DARE BELIEVE THAT THE EASTERN EUROPE FACTOR WEIGHED LEAST ON THE MINDS OF THE ARCHITECTS OF THE NEW EUROPE. CERTAINLY NOW IT IS NO LONGER THE CASE. ADJUSTMENTS ARE BEING MADE TO PROVIDE MECHANISMS FOR INTEGRATING THE EAST EUROPE FACTOR IN THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR THE FUTURE EUROPE. IT WAS THEN AND IT IS NOW MY VIEW THAT THE SITUATION IS STILL EVOLVING AND CONSEQUENTLY ANY ATTEMPT TO SUBJECT IT TO STATIC ANALYSIS CAN NOT BE DEFINITIVE.

I HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT YOU WILL CONSIDER MY REMARKS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A FLUID AND QUICKLY CHANGING SITUATION AND THAT MR IBRU AND HIS COLLEAGUES OF THE FOURTH ESTATE WILL NOT, AS YOU SAY IN NIGERIA, MAKE IT A FEDERAL CASE IF WHAT I SAY TONIGHT MAY CONFLICT WITH WHAT TAKES PLACE TOMORROW OR THE FEARS I EXPRESS MAY TURN OUT TO BE MISPLACED AFTERALL.

MR CHAIRMAN,
HONOURABLE GUESTS,
EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THE GOAL OF ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION IS AN ASPECT OF THE SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT OF 1992. THE ACT ITSELF IS A POLITICAL CHARTER, ENCOMPASSING MANY OTHER AREAS IN WHICH UNION IS ALSO ENVISAGED. BEFORE PROCEEDING INTO THE ISSUE, HOWEVER, I WISH TO POINT OUT AT ASSUMPTIONS ON WHICH I PROPOSE TO BASE MY REMARKS.

THE PRIMARY ASSUMPTION IS THAT THE END RESULT OF WHOLE ISSUE OF THE SINGLE ACT WILL BE CONTINENTAL STANDARDIZATION. IT MEANS THAT THE NEW EUROPE WILL HAVE UNIFORM STANDARDS WHICH WILL BE APPLIED ACROSS THE BOARD TO DEALINGS AMONGST THEMSELVES AND WITH AFRICA. TODAY, INDIVIDUAL OR A GROUP OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES MAINTAIN SPECIAL RELATIONS WITH INDIVIDUAL EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COUNTRIES. THESE SPECIAL OR CONCESSIONARY RELATIONSHIPS, WHETHER IN MATTERS OF FINANCE, MONEY, TRADE OR IMMIGRATION, WILL HAVE TO BE REVIEWED TO CONFORM TO THE STANDARDIZED EUROPE. WITHIN THE COMMUNITY ITSELF, IT MEANS THAT THESE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS WILL BE SUBJECTED TO SCRUTINY. THE END PRODUCT OF THIS SCRUTINY SHALL BE A POLICY OF CONSENSUS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF COMMON DENOMINATORS. IT MEANS IT WILL BE WHAT IS MINIMALY OBJECTIONABLE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND CORRESPONDINGLY LEAST FAVOURABLE TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES WHICH MAINTAIN THESE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS. WHICH EVER WAY YOU LOOK AT IT, THE LAW OF AVERAGES WILL NOT WORK TO INCREASE OR MULTIPLY THE ADVANTAGES FOR AFRICA.

THE SECOND PREMISE IS THAT, INSPITE OF ALL WHAT MAY HAPPEN, AFRICA WILL CONTINUE TO BE INTERESTED IN, IF NOT OBLIGED, TO MAINTAIN THE STRONG LINKS IT HAS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF THE COMMUNITY. TO THAT EXTENT, THEREFORE, AFRICA WILL ENDEAVOUR TO ADJUST IN THE NEW ENVIRONMENT. IT MEANS THAT IF AFRICA IS TO COPE WITH THE RIGOURS OF THE NEW ENVIRONMENT, SHE WILL HAVE TO TAKE THE NECESSARY MEASURES TO EQUIP HERSELF. I ASSUME IN THIS CASE THAT AFRICA WILL BE READY TO STAY WITH THE NEW EUROPE AND EFFECTIVELY COMPETE IN IT AND NOT COPE OUT OR WASTE VALUABLE TIME IN LAMENTATION AND SELF-PITY.

MY THIRD ASSUMPTION IS THAT SINCE AFRICA WILL BE DEALING WITH AN INCREASINGLY MONOLITHIC EUROPE, SHE CAN NOT AFFORD TO CONTINUE TO SPEAK IN A MULTIPLICITY OF VOICES. RATHER, THE SIMPLE LOGIC OF ECONOMIC SELF-PRESERVATION WILL AWAKEN THE CONTINENT TO THE NEED FOR GREATER UNITY AND COLLECTIVE ACTION.

EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THE RELEVANCE OF MY TALK TODAY LIES IN THE DETERMINATION THAT AFRICA WILL STAY THE COURSE AND THUS THE NEED TO KNOW THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ENVISAGED MONETARY AND ECONOMIC UNION OF EUROPE SO AS TO DETERMINE THE KIND OF DECISIONS THAT NEED TO BE TAKEN. IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO LOOK AT WHAT ARE THE PERCEPTIONS AND WHAT ARE THE REALITIES OF THE EUROPE WE ENVISAGE.

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EUROPE IS TODAY AT THE CENTRE OF WORLD ATTENTION. THE SITUATION IN EASTERN EUROPE CONTRASTS WITH THAT IN THE WEST. IN EASTERN EUROPE, ON ONE HAND, THE TREND IS TOWARDS DISINTEGRATION OR THE LOOSENING OF TIES AND THE RAPIDITY OF EVENTS IS GENERATING A CERTAIN DEGREE OF UNCERTAINTY. WESTERN EUROPE, ON THE OTHER HAND, REFLECTS A CAREFUL AND METHODICAL CONSTRUCTION OF AN INTEGRATED EUROPE WHICH COULD EVOLVE INTO ALMOST A SINGLE COUNTRY, WITH ONE ECONOMY, ONE MARKET AND PERHAPS A SINGLE CURRENCY. THIS EVENT IS SCHEDULED TO REACH FULL FRUITION ON THE FIRST OF JANUARY 1993.

LIKE ALL OTHER REGIONS OF THE WORLD, AFRICA IS FOLLOWING CLOSELY, AND WITH A DEGREE OF ANXIETY, THE BUILD-UP TO THE CULMINATION OF THE UNIFIED WESTERN EUROPE. THERE IS THE BASIC RECOGNITION THAT THE EUROPEAN SINGLE MARKET OF 1992, PAVING THE WAY TO THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION, IS AN INTERNAL AFFAIR OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY THOUGH IF COURSE ITS IMPLICATIONS WILL REVERBRATE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THE YEAR 1992 FOR THE EEC, THEREFORE, POINTS TO THE CULMINATION OF THE EFFORT TO ACHIEVE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION AS AN INDICATION OF THE MAJOR DETERMINATION AND COMMITMENT OF EUROPEAN LEADERS TO TRANSFORM THEIR VISION INTO A REALITY, BY BUILDING A SECURE FUTURE FOR A SINGLE EUROPEAN HOME. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT AFRICA CAN DRAW SIGNIFICANT LESSONS FROM THIS PROCESS OF CREATING A UNIFIED EUROPEAN ECONOMY.

FROM ALL INDICATIONS, IT WOULD SEEM THAT AFRICA ATTACHES CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO ITS RELATIONS WITH THE EEC AND, EVENTHOUGH THE CONVERSE MAY NOT BE TRUE, AFRICA IS CYNICALLY CONSIDERED, IN GEO-POLITICAL TERMS, AS PRIMARILY A RESERVE FOR WEST EUROPEAN INTERESTS. OF COURSE, THERE WAS EUROPEAN COLONIZATION IN BOTH ASIA AND AMERICA, BUT TODAY, MAJOR NON-EUROPEAN POWERS HAVE EFFECTIVELY REPLACED EUROPEAN DOMINANCE IN THOSE AREAS, POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY. THERE IS CERTAINLY A DEFACTO RECOGNITION OF THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS AND OF JAPAN IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA. IN THE AFRICAN CASE, WHERE VITUALLY ALL OAU MEMBER STATES, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LIBERIA, WERE COLONIZED, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, BY AN EEC MEMBER, PAST COLONIAL TIES, RATHER THAN BEING WEAKENED, HAVE BECOME STRENGTHENED BY A WEB OF MANY INSTRUMENTS OF RELATIONSHIP AND COOPERATION. THESE ARE THE YAOUNDE CONVENTIONS WHICH BECAME TRANSFORMED, IN 1973, INTO THE SERIES OF LOME CONVENTIONS, THE COOPERATION AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE EEC AND THE INDIVIDUAL NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRIES; THE AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION FOR THE FORMER FRENCH COLONIES AND THE COMMONWEALTH FOR THE FORMER BRITISH COLONIES. BILATERAL TIES, WITH THE ERSTWHILE COLONIAL MASTERS, HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY STRONG AND COVER A WIDE FIELD - ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL, MILITARY AND CULTURAL.

THE EEC IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MARKET FOR AFRICA'S EXPORTS AND A SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF EXTERNAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES. FOR INSTANCE, IN 1987, 57.7 % OF AFRICA'S TOTAL EXPORTS WENT TO THE EEC WHILE ITS IMPORTS FROM THE COMMUNITY WAS 52.8% OF AFRICA'S TOTAL IMPORTS. REGARDING RESOURCE FLOWS, EEC'S AID

TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA ACCOUNTS FOR MORE THAN HALF OF THE COMMUNITY'S TOTAL AID. IN THE 1980/81 FINANCIAL YEAR, EEC'S AID TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA WAS 60.1 % OF THE COMMUNITY'S TOTAL AID AND, IN 1986/87, THE FIGURE WAS 55.9 %. THESE FIGURES ARE OF MUCH HIGHER MAGNITUDES THAN THOSE ON AID FLOWS TO AFRICA FROM THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN WHICH, IN 1986, WERE RESPECTIVELY 20.1 % AND 5.4% OF AFRICA'S TOTAL OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE.

QUESTIONS THAT HAVE ARISEN ARE WHETHER THE CREATION OF A SINGLE EUROPEAN MARKET BY THE 1992 SINGLE ACT WILL RESULT IN THE WEAKENING OF THE EXISTING TIES AND, MORE SPECIFICALLY, WHETHER THERE WILL BE DECLINES IN AFRICA'S EXPORTS TO THE EEC AND IN THE COMMUNITY'S AID FLOWS TO AFRICA. AMONG THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS BEING ASKED IS : WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE LOME CONVENTION?

WHILE PRECISE ANSWERS ARE NOT POSSIBLE AT THIS STAGE FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, NOT LEAST BECAUSE THE PROCESS ITSELF IS STILL EVOLVING, IT IS NEVERTHELESS POSSIBLE, ON THE BASIS OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT, TO MAKE CERTAIN GENERAL OBSERVATIONS BEARING ON THESE KEY QUESTIONS.

AT PRESENT, ONE CANNOT SPEAK OF AN ALL ENCOMPASSING EEC MARKET AS SUCH BUT RATHER OF THE MARKETS OF THE 12 EEC MEMBERS, WHICH ARE FRAGMENTED BY A WEB OF BARRIERS AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS. STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT IF THESE BARRIERS AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS ARE REMOVED, THE RESULTANT EFFECT WOULD BE A REDUCTION IN PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION COSTS AND AN INCREASE IN THE FREE FLOW OF GOODS AND SERVICES AND OF

COMPETITION AMONG EEC PRODUCERS. BECAUSE OF THE LOWER PRODUCTION COSTS, THE ECONOMIES OF SCALE WOULD PERMIT GREATER CHOICE AND LOWER COST TO THE CONSUMER. THE PRESENT BARRIERS COME IN THE FORM OF INTERNAL FRONTIERS, CUSTOMS CHECKS AND IMMIGRATION CONTROLS WHICH, THROUGH DELAYS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES, IMPOSE ADDITIONAL COSTS ON TRADE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. THE REMOVAL OF THESE BARRIERS MAY HAVE CERTAIN IMPACT ON AFRICA'S TRADE WITH THE EEC, DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF BARRIER AND ITS EFFECT ON ANY EXISTING ARRANGEMENT IN RESPECT OF PARTICULAR PRODUCTS EXPORTED BY AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

WITH REGARD TO INTERNAL BARRIERS, FOR INSTANCE, THEIR REMOVAL WOULD PLACE IN JEOPARDY CERTAIN HISTORICAL OR SPECIAL BILATERAL PREFERENTIAL SCHEMES BETWEEN SOME EEC MEMBERS AND INDIVIDUAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES, COVERING SUCH PRODUCTS AS FOOTWEAR AND STEEL. THE CREATION OF A SINGLE EEC MARKET WOULD MEAN THAT, ONCE SUCH PRODUCTS HAVE ENTERED ONE EEC MEMBER COUNTRY, THEY CAN CIRCULATE FREELY THROUGHOUT ALL THE OTHER MEMBERS WITH NEITHER RESTRICTION NOR CHECKS. THIS WOULD BE A MAJOR ADVANTAGE FOR AFRICA'S MANUFACTURED EXPORTS. HOWEVER, THE LOSS OF SPECIAL TARIFF PREFERENCES COULD, IN THE IMMEDIATE, REDUCE THE COMPETIVENESS OF SUCH EXPORTS VIS-A-VIS SIMILAR PRODUCTS IMPORTED FROM THE NEWLY INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES AND THE RELATIVELY LESS DEVELOPED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY. IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE BENEFIT OF THE SINGLE MARKET WILL BE IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE ABILITY OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO UTILIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED. FOR AFRICA, THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE ABSENCE OF AN EFFICIENT INDUSTRIAL BASE

WOULD VERY MUCH MILITATE AGAINST OR WEAKEN ITS CAPACITY TO COMPETE WITH THE NEWLY INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES LIKE SOUTH KOREA, TAIWAN AND THE RELATIVELY LESS DEVELOPED EEC MEMBERS LIKE PORTUGAL AND GREECE. THE END RESULT WILL BE A REDIRECTION OF TRADE AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL SUPPLIERS AND TOWARDS PARTNER EEC MEMBERS.

AS I HAVE REMARKED EARLIER, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE, AT THIS EARLY STAGE, TO BE PRECISE ABOUT HOW AFRICA WILL BE AFFECTED. FIRSTLY, THE RESPONSIVENESS OF THE EEC ECONOMY TO THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY INTEGRATION WILL DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF GAINS AND IMPACT ON NON-MEMBERS; SECONDLY, THE INTEGRATION OF THE EEC MARKET IS TWO YEARS AWAY AND CERTAIN IMPORTANT DETAILS AND IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES ARE STILL TO BE WORKED OUT AND TO BE AGREED UPON. FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES, WHICH DEPEND MAINLY ON EXPORTS OF RAW MATERIALS, IT MAY BE SAFE TO OBSERVE THAT THEIR GAINS WILL BE MINIMAL BECAUSE OF THE LOW ELASTICITY OF DEMAND FOR PRIMARY PRODUCTS AND COMMODITIES. THUS, EVENTHOUGH EXCISE DUTIES ON COCOA AND COFFEE ARE ARE LIKELY TO BE ABOLISHED OR BROUGHT TO A UNIFORM LEVEL IN ALL THE TWELVE EEC MEMBER STATES; WITH CONSEQUENT FALL IN PRICES, THE ANTICIPATED INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR COFFEE AND COCOA IS NOT LIKELY TO BE IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO EXPECTED PRICE DECLINES.

IN THE AREA OF RESOURCE TRANSFERS, THE AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES HAVE ALWAYS RECEIVED A PREPONDERANT SHARE OF EEC AID. IN 1987, THESE STATES, AS A GROUP, RECEIVED A TOTAL OF 1.04 BILLION ECUS AS AID FROM THE EEC, OUT OF

A TOTAL EEC AID BUDGET OF 1.66 BILLION ECUS. OF THIS AMOUNT, 519 ECU WENT TO DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN ACP STATES, WHILE 325 ECU WAS FOR STABILIZATION OF SHORTFALL IN EARNINGS FROM EXPORTS OF COMMODITIES AND MINERALS AND FOR TRADE PROMOTION. IN 1988, STABEX WAS SCHEDULED TO REACH 375 MILLION ECUS. LATE IN 1987, THE EEC LAUNCHED A 500 MILLION ECUS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SUPPORT PROGRAMME IN FAVOUR OF LOW INCOME, DEBT DISTRESSED SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN COUNTRIES UNDERTAKING ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES.

CURRENTLY, THE COMMUNITY BUYS 58 % OF AFRICA'S EXPORTS AND WE BUY 53 % OF OUR IMPORTS FROM IT. THE EEC ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT 40 % OF ALL OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND ROUGHLY THE SAME PERCENTAGE OF PRIVATE RESOURCE FLOW TO AFRICA. THE TOTAL AID TO AFRICA STANDS AT ABOUT 2.5 BILLION ECU OR US\$ 3 BILLION A YEAR. THE LOME IV CONVENTION WILL COME WITH A FINANCIAL PACKAGE OF ECU 12 BILLION FOR FIVE YEARS AND ANOTHER ECU 10 BILLION MORE IN THE FORM OF GRANTS. THE COMMUNITY IS THUS AFRICA'S MAIN PARTNER.

CONCERNS HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED THAT THE INTEGRATION OF THE EEC MARKETS WITH FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES, CAPITAL AND PERSONS WOULD LEAD TO A DIVERSION OF INVESTMENT RESOURCES AWAY FROM THE ACP STATES, IN GENERAL, AND AFRICAN STATES, IN PARTICULAR. THE MAJOR CONSIDERATION WILL BE THE COST ADVANTAGES OF PRODUCING WITHIN THE EUROPEAN MARKET, COMPETITION AMONG MEMBER STATES FOR DIRECT INVESTMENT OR WITHIN THE LARGER, RICHER AND SAFER MARKET. MOREOVER, THE POLICY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT WILL IMPLY A REDIRECTION OF INVESTMENT RESOURCES TO THE RELATIVELY LESS DEVELOPED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

FOR AFRICAN STATES, HOWEVER, PRIVATE RESOURCE FLOWS FROM THE EEC HAVE BEEN DWINDLING AND, IN SOME CASES NEGATIVE; THIS IS PARTLY A DIRECT RESULT OF THE POOR INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN AFRICA, ARISING FROM DEBT ACCUMULATION, THE DELAPIDATED STATE OF THE ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURES, AND AT TIMES, POLITICAL INSTABILITY. THE MAIN CONCERN HAS THUS BEEN ON A POSSIBLE DROP IN THE LEVEL OF OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AT THE TIME THAT AFRICA IS IN DIRE NEED OF EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE TO SUPPLEMENT ITS OWN EFFORTS OR ON THE INTRODUCTION OF ADDITIONAL CONDITIONALITY FOR INCREASED AID FLOWS.

THE ISSUE OF THE FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY IS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF AFRICAN WORKERS IN THE EEC MEMBER STATES. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE OVER 2 MILLION AFRICAN NATIONALS IN THE 12 EEC COUNTRIES, 1.7 MILLION OF WHOM ARE FROM NORTH AFRICA. WITH THE COMING INTO FORCE OF THE EUROPEAN SINGLE ACT WHICH PROVIDES FOR FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS, THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THIS FREEDOM WILL BE EXTENDED TO THE AFRICAN GUEST WORKERS. EVEN IF WE ASSUME THAT IT WILL BE, AFRICAN WORKERS WILL HAVE TO COMPETE FOR JOBS WITH WORKERS FROM THE RELATIVELY LESS DEVELOPED EEC COUNTRIES; THERE IS EVERY LIKELIHOOD OF AN OVERWHELMING PREFERENCE FOR THE LATER CATEGORY OF WORKERS. AS IN THE CASE OF EXPORT PRODUCTS, ONCE ENTRY HAS BEEN GRANTED INTO AN EEC MEMBER STATE, PRESUMABLY, THE FOREIGNER CAN CIRCULATE FREELY THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY. WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT THE GRANTING OF VISAS WILL BE MADE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT AND, AS FOR RESIDENT PERMITS, THE SITUATION COULD BE CLOSE TO AN IMPOSSIBILITY AFTER 1992.

MR PRESIDENT,
EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

BY AN ACT OF HISTORY, NIGERIA IS TODAY NEIGHBOURED BY MANY COUNTRIES WHICH BELONG TO THE CFA FRANC ZONE. THIS CURRENCY HAS BEEN SUPPORTED AND MANAGED BY THE FRENCH TREASURY DEPARTMENT FROM COLONIAL DAYS UP TO THE PRESENT MOMENT. UNFORTUNATELY, IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THE ISSUE OF MONETARY COOPERATION WITH NON-EEC MEMBERS HAS FEATURED AMONG THE RECENT STUDIES CONDUCTED BY THE EEC, REGARDING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT, THE FULL MONETARY UNION WITH A SINGLE CURRENCY UNDER A SINGLE MONETARY AUTHORITY. THE POSITION OF THE EEC ON THE MATTER IS NOT CLEAR, NOR IS THAT OF FRANCE, NOR OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE CFA FRANC ZONE. BUT, IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT, AFTER 1992, SUCH DECISIONS RELATING TO MONETARY INTEGRATION WILL BE TAKEN BY MAJORITY VOTE, NOT BY UNANIMITY AS IS CURRENTLY THE CASE. IT WOULD SEEM THAT GIVEN THE PRESENT DISTRESSED ECONOMIC SITUATION IN MOST AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND THE POOR PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE, THE EEC WOULD BE EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS IN DEVELOPING CLOSE MONETARY TIES WITH AFRICAN COUNTRIES, EITHER INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY, AFTER 1992.

SUPPOSING FRANCE WERE TO END ITS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CFA FRANC ZONE; WOULD THE RESULT BE A DISASTER - AN END TO THIS ARRANGEMENT OF LIMITED CONVERTIBILITY OF AN AFRICAN CURRENCY; OR SHOULD IT BE SEEN AS A CHALLENGE TO

AFRICA'S MATURITY AND ABILITY TO HANDLE ITS OWN AFFAIRS WITHOUT OUTSIDE SUPERVISION ? THE CFA FRANC ARRANGEMENT REALLY DEMONSTRATES THE POSSIBILITIES AND ADVANTAGES THAT CAN BE EXPLOITED THROUGH INTRA-AFRICAN COOPERATION.

I WOULD LIKE TO DIGRESS A LITTLE ON THIS ISSUE OF MONETARY COOPERATION. WHEN THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION WAS ADOPTED HERE, IN LAGOS, TEN YEARS AGO, OUR LEADERS PLACED SPECIAL PRIORITY ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN MONETARY FUND. EVENTHOUGH THERE IS A JOINT SECRETARIAT WORKING ON THIS MATTER, PROGRESS HAS BEEN VERY SLOW. IN FACT, THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE ENTHUSIASM DEMONSTRATED BY EVEN SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES REMINESCENT TO THE OPPOSITION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK. WE CAN IMAGINE WHAT AFRICA WOULD LOOK LIKE AND WHERE IT WOULD BE WITHOUT THE ADB.

I NOW TURN TO THE VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE OF SPECIAL COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE EEC AND AFRICA. AT THE MOMENT, THE LOME CONVENTION AND THE INDIVIDUAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE EEC AND THE NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRIES ARE THE ONLY FRAMEWORKS OF COOPERATION. BUT OF ALL THESE AGREEMENTS, THE LOME CONVENTION IS MORE COMPREHENSIVE, BOTH IN TERMS OF ITS PROVISIONS AND IN THE NUMBER OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES INVOLVED NOW STANDING AT 45, INCLUDING NAMIBIA. THE FOURTH LOME CONVENTION CAME INTO FORCE A FEW MONTHS AGO. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PROCESS OF CREATING A SINGLE MARKET FOR THE 12 EEC COUNTRIES IS STILL EVOLVING. OBVIOUSLY, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO BE DEFINITIVE

AS TO THE IMPACT OF 1992 ON THE LOME IV CONVENTION ITSELF. FOR MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THIS CONVENTION HAD TRIED TO ENVISAGE THE LIKELY IMPACT OF THE SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT OR ON WHETHER THE PENDING DECISIONS AND PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACT WILL TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE COMMITMENTS MADE IN LOME IV. IF THE ACP STATES ARE EVENTUALLY ABLE TO RETAIN THEIR NORMAL PREFERENCES, AS EXISTED IN PREVIOUS LOME CONVENTIONS, THEN THEY WOULD CERTAINLY BENEFIT FROM INTEGRATION IN TERMS OF REDUCED COMPETITION FROM THIRD PARTIES.

ALTHOUGH THE EEC HAS STRESSED THAT CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS UNDER LOME IV WILL BE RESPECTED, IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE MAIN ADVANTAGE OF THAT ARRANGEMENT FROM THE AFRICAN STAND POINT IS NOT NECESSARY IN THE AREA OF TRADE PREFERENCES. THE EEC AND MANY AFRICAN COUNTRIES ARE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE (GATT) UNDER WHOSE AUSPICES THE CURRENT MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS ARE BEING CONDUCTED THROUGH THE URUGUAY ROUND. THESE NEGOTIATIONS ARE POINTING TO A GENERAL REDUCTION OR EROSION OF SPECIAL PREFERENCES, SUCH AS THOSE UNDER LOME IV CONVENTION. SECONDLY, THE EEC HAS CONCLUDED SPECIAL TRADE ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER REGIONS, INCLUDING ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA WITH THE RESULT THAT THE COMMUNITY'S TRADE PREFERENCES HAVE BECOME VIRTUALLY GENERALIZED FOR ALL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

THE LOME CONVENTION, OF COURSE, COVERS SEVERAL AREAS OF COOPERATION : EDUCATION, CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY AND OTHERS. UNDER EACH OF THESE AREAS, AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE BENEFITED FROM EEC ASSISTANCE. AS ALL EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL, PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ARE NOW FOCUSING THEIR ATTENTION ON INTEGRATION AND ARE TOTALLY INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS OF BRINGING IT ABOUT, ALL OTHER ISSUES STAND A CHANCE OF BEING OBLITERATED OR AT BEST, BEING REDUCED TO SECONDARY POSITION. THERE IS CONCERN ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A DECLINE IN MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE IN REAL TERMS TO AFRICA AND AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS AS UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT IS NO LONGER A SPECULATION THAT WESTERN EUROPE WILL DIVERT THEIR INVESTMENTS TO EASTERN EUROPE. IT IS CLEAR THAT IT MAKES ECONOMIC SENSE TO DO SO. I EVEN DARE SUGGEST TO YOU THAT A SENSIBLE NIGERIAN ENTREPRENEUR, BASED SAY IN WEST-GERMANY, WOULD SERVE HIMSELF WELL BY INVESTING IN EASTERN EUROPE. EASTERN EUROPE HAS A FAR MORE ADVANCED INFRASTRUCTURE, MORE SOPHISTICATED WORKFORCE, A LARGER CAPACITY TO ABSORB INVESTMENT AND IS CONTIGUOUS IN TERMS OF TERRITORY TO THE WEST. ALL THESE FACTORS MAKE IT MORE ATTRACTIVE TO POTENTIAL INVESTORS WHO WILL SEE QUICKER AND PROBABLY MORE PROFITABLE RETURNS ON THEIR INVESTMENTS.

QUITE APART FROM THESE FACTORS, THERE ARE THOSE OF SHARED IDENTITY, CULTURE AND HISTORY. THESE WILL PLAY SIGNIFICANT ROLES IN PROVIDING THE NECESSARY PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE OF CONFIDENCE WHICH IS CRUCIAL IN DECIDING WHERE, WHEN, IN WHAT AND HOW MUCH TO INVEST. IT IS NATURAL THAT AN ENTREPRENEUR IN BONN WILL FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE INVESTING IN EAST GERMANY OR IN HUNGARY WITH WHICH HE HAS CULTURAL AFFINITY. I UNDERSTAND THE LOGIC OF SUCH A DECISION. OBVIOUSLY, AFRICA WILL HAVE NO CONTROL OVER SUCH DECISIONS. WHICH IS WHY I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT IT WILL SERVE NO PURPOSE FOR AFRICA TO WASTE TIME AND EFFORTS LAMENTING OVER IT. RATHER WE SHOULD BE TAKING A HARD LOOK AT OUR DIRECTION AND SEE WHETHER WE ARE PREPARED TO FACE THE VAGARIES OF A FUTURE WITHOUT OUR TRADITIONAL PARTNERS, WHETHER WE CAN FACE THE FUTURE IN TRUE SELF-RELIANCE.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME. WE MUST BEGIN BY MAKING A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF WHAT WE HAVE DONE TO FORSTER SELF-RELIANCE OR COOPERATION AMONG OURSELVES. IS IT NOT TRUE THAT WE HAVE TALKED VOLUMES ON THE NEED FOR COOPERATION, ADOPTED MOUNTAINS OF RESOLUTIONS ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION ONLY TO LEAVE IT AT THAT ? HOW MANY TIMES DO WE THINK OF AFRICANS FIRST WHEN WE NEED TO RECRUIT CONSULTANTS OR EXPERTS ?

IN A SURVEY DONE ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN AFRICA, IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT, IN 1987, INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE WAS A MERE 4-5 % OF AFRICA'S TOTAL TRADE OUT OF WHICH INTRA-AFRICAN EXPORTS AMOUNTED TO 4.8 % AND IMPORTS TO 4.1 % OF THE RESPECTIVE TOTALS OF THE REGION. WHAT THIS MEANS IS NOT ONLY A STATISTICAL

ABSTRACTION BUT A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOPSIDED NATURE OF OUR TRADE PATTERNS. WE LOOK MORE TO FOREIGNERS THAN WE DO TO OURSELVES. WE ARE LINKED MORE TO FOREIGNERS AND FOREIGN ECONOMIC SYSTEMS THAN WE ARE TO EACH OTHER.

NATURALLY, THERE IS A HISTORICAL EXPLANATION TO ALL THESE. WE ALL, TOO OFTEN, ARE QUICK TO POINT AT LEGACIES OF COLONIALISM AND AT THE INBUILT MECHANISM IN THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM, WHICH IMPOSES ON US, DEPENDENCE ON THE TRADITIONAL PATTERNS OF TRADE AND ENSURES PERPETUATION OF THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF OUR POVERTY. TRUE AS THIS MAY BE BUT IS IT NOT ALSO TRUE THAT WE HAVE NOT BEEN RESOLUTE IN PURSUING THE VERY KIND OF POLICIES OF UNITY THROUGH INTEGRATION WHICH WOULD HAVE ENABLED US TO EMERGE OUT OF THIS CYCLE OF DEPENDENCE ? IS IT ALSO NOT TRUE THAT WE HAVE WILLINGLY ALLOWED OURSELVES TO BE TRIAL GROUNDS OF EXPERIMENTAL MODELS OF DEVELOPMENT FORMULATED BY PEOPLE, SOME PERHAPS WELL MEANING, BUT WITHOUT THE LEAST KNOWLEDGE OF THE REAL CONDITIONS IN OUR COUNTRIES AND BY SOME DELIBERATELY MISLEADING US ? IS IT NOT TRUE THAT WE HAVE BEEN MORE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT CHARITY THAN WE HAVE BEEN ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF GENUINE SELF-RELIANCE ? DO WE NOT NEED TO KNOW WHAT EACH OF OUR COUNTRIES PRODUCES AS A BASIS FOR PROMOTING TRADE AMONGST OURSELVES ? WE MUST PUT INTO PLACE THE KIND OF POLICIES WHICH ENSURES THE COMPLIMENTARITY OF OUR ECONOMIES.

EUROPE IS MOVING TOGETHER, POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY. THIS PROCESS ENTAILS, AS OF ESSENCE, THE DISMANTLING OF THE VARIOUS STRUCTURES WHICH NOW HOLD TOGETHER THE BLOCKS OF THE OLD ORDER. IT WILL MEAN PAVING WAY FOR INTEGRATION BY

REMOVING ALL THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIABLE WITH THE PRESENT TERRITORIAL AND LEGAL JURISDICTIONS OF THE MEMBER STATES. FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE, GOODS AND SERVICES WILL MEAN DOING AWAY WITH IMMIGRATION FORMALITIES, CUSTOMS AND TARIFF BARRIERS. IT WILL MEAN HAVING A SINGLE LEGAL REGIME TO GOVERN TRADE AND INDUSTRY, TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS AND ALL OTHER ASPECTS OF HUMAN ENDEAVOUR. THIS IS HOW INTEGRATION WILL COME ABOUT - BY THINKING TOGETHER, ACTING TOGETHER, BUILDING TOGETHER. AFRICA SHOULD LEARN FROM EUROPE. AFRICA SHOULD TAKE NOTE OF THE SERIOUSNESS AND DETERMINATION WITH WHICH EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS PURSUE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR DECISIONS.

MR CHAIRMAN,
EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

NO MATTER WHAT WE MAY THINK ABOUT THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION OR ITS IMPACT ON AFRICA, THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THE SINGLE EUROPE ACT OF 1992 IS TO DEVELOP EUROPE THROUGH INTEGRATION. ITS IMPACT ON THE WORLD IS, CERTAINLY, SECONDARY. IT IS, THEREFORE, MY FIRM CONVICTION THAT AFRICA'S CONCERN OUGHT TO TRANSCEND MATHEMATICAL CALCULATIONS OF GAINS AND LOSSES FROM EUROPEAN INTEGRATION WHICH IS IRREVERSIBLE AND AN EVENTUALITY WHICH IS OUTSIDE OUR CONTROL. IT IS ROOTED IN EUROPE'S BELIEF IN ITSELF AND IN ITS VISION OF THE FUTURE. AFRICA'S CONCERNS SHOULD BE ON AFRICA, ON ITS FUTURE DURING THE DECADE OF THE 1990'S AND BEYOND INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.

THE SUCCESSIVE LOME CONVENTIONS HAVE KEPT AFRICA IN A CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EEC. BUT IT IS CERTAINLY NOT A RELATIONSHIP OF EQUALS. AFRICA REMAINS MORE AN ECONOMIC APPENDAGE TO THE EEC AND A PERMANENT SOURCE OF CHEAP RAW MATERIALS THAN AN EQUAL PARTNER. THIS IS WHY I BELIEVE THAT IT HAS NEVER BEEN MORE OPPORTUNE AND URGENT, FOR SOBER REFLECTION ON THE PART OF OUR GOVERNMENTS, IN ORDER FOR AFRICA TO DRAW LESSONS FROM THIS MAJOR DEVELOPMENT, IN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION.

PERHAPS, NO FACTOR HINDERED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION AND ITS FINAL ACT MORE THAN THE BELIEF, CONTRARY TO WHAT AVAILABLE EVIDENCE WOULD SUGGEST, THAT THE PROGRAMME FOR INCREASING SELF-RELIANCE AND SELF-SUSTAINEMENT WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED BY BENEVOLENT FOREIGNERS BRINGING WITH THEM BILLIONS OF DOLLARS AND SKILLS. IT WOULD SEEM THAT WE FAILED TO APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT IT WAS EUROPEANS WHO DEVELOPED EUROPE AND IT IS THE ASIANS WHO ARE DEVELOPING ASIA NOW. THESE DEPENDED ON DELIBERATELY PLANNED AND CREATED FACTOR INPUTS OF DOMESTIC ORIGIN TO DO SO. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT AFRICA WOULD BE AN EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE.

THE 1980'S HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED AS AFRICA'S «LOST DECADE» BECAUSE ALL SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS PAINTED A DISMAL PICTURE OF AFRICA. FOR INSTANCE, THE AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME WHICH WAS US\$ 854 IN 1978, NOW STANDS AT US\$ 565; THE GROWTH RATE OF PER CAPITA GDP ALSO DROPPED FROM 3.03 % IN 1978 TO - 0.7 % IN 1988. DECLINING GROWTH RATES WERE ALSO RECORDED IN NEARLY ALL

SECTORS, AGRICULTURE, MINING AND INDUSTRY AS WELL AS IN THE EXPORT AND IMPORT GROWTH SECTOR. THE RECORD OF AFRICA'S EXTERNAL ECONOMIC TRANSACTIONS WAS EQUALLY DISMAL. THE DEFICIT IN AFRICA'S BALANCE OF CURRENT ACCOUNTS GREW FROM US\$ 3.9 BILLION IN 1978 TO A HUGE FIGURE OF US\$ 20.3 BILLION IN 1988. THE ACCUMULATION OF EXTERNAL DEBT HAS BEEN EQUALLY ALARMING; IN 1978, AFRICA OWED US\$ 48.3 BILLION AS AGAINST US\$ 230 BILLION IN 1988 AND US\$ 250 BILLION IN 1989 WITH THE DEBT SERVICING OBLIGATIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF EARNINGS FROM EXPORTS OF GOODS AND SERVICES INCREASING ALMOST THREEFOLD TO EXCEED 100 % IN THE CASE OF SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

THE DETERIORATION WAS EQUALLY DEVASTATING IN THE SOCIAL SECTOR WITH THE TOTAL NUMBER OF AFRICAN ILLITERATES INCREASING FROM 124 MILLION IN 1960 TO 162 MILLION IN 1985 - A 30.6 % INCREASE; UNEMPLOYMENT SHOT UP FROM 5.3. % OF THE AFRICAN LABOUR FORCE IN 1980 TO 13 % OF THE LABOUR FORCE IN 1988; THERE WAS AN INCREASE IN THE INCIDENCE OF POVERTY AND MALNUTRITION AS A RESULT OF DECLINES IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND SUCCESSIVE DROUGHT; HIGH RATES OF INFANT MORTALITY; A REVERSAL IN THE IMPRESSIVE GROWTH RATES IN EDUCATION THAT WERE ACHIEVED IN THE 1960s AND 1970s, IN TERMS OF BOTH THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF EDUCATION SERVICE.

IN SPITE OF AFRICA'S STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO RESTRUCTURE ITS ECONOMY, THE AFRICAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE BECAUSE OF A COMBINATION OF BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS. THESE INCLUDE INADEQUATE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATEGIES ADOPTED AT THE MULTILATERAL LEVEL, LACK OF SOUND ECONOMIC POLICIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL; DIVERSION OF RESOURCES TO COMBATING CONFLICTS AND INSTABILITY; INADEQUATE COMMITMENT BY COUNTRIES TO THE NEED FOR ACCELERATED, SELF-SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT AS A NATIONAL PRIORITY AND THEIR TOTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ALL ASPECTS OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION; THE IMPACT OF THE EXTERNAL ADVERSE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ESPECIALLY THE COLLAPSE IN THE PRICES OF AFRICA'S MAJOR EXPORTS; DETERIORATING TERMS OF TRADE AND CONSEQUENT FOREIGN EXCHANGE LOSSES; EXTERNAL INDEBTEDNESS AND BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICITS AMONG OTHERS.

THE CRITICAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN AFRICA, WHICH MANIFESTED ITSELF AS A CRISIS IN THE 1980s, LED MANY AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO CONCLUDE, WITH THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND AND WORLD BANK, ONE FORM OF STABILIZATION/ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES OR ANOTHER, AS A MEANS OF CORRECTING SHORT-TERM INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL IMBALANCES. THE CONSENSUS VIEW IS THAT CONVENTIONAL STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES, FORMULATED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY THE WORLD BANK AND THE IMF, ARE INADEQUATE IN ADDRESSING THE REAL CAUSES OF ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS FACING AFRICAN COUNTRIES WHICH ARE OF A STRUCTURAL NATURE. IN ADDITION, THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONVENTIONAL SAP'S HAVE , IN ALL COUNTRIES WITHOUT EXCEPTION, LED TO SERIOUS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DISRUPTIONS - OFTEN, THOSE LEAST ADVANTAGED IN SOCIETY BEING THE MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY THESE MEASURES.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT, IF CURRENT TRENDS ARE NOT ARRESTED AND REVERSED, THE 1990's COULD WELL END UP AS ANOTHER LOST DECADE FOR AFRICA AND THAT AFRICA COULD ENTER THE 21ST CENTURY AS THE ONLY REMAINING CONTINENT, STILL GRAPPLING WITH THE SCOURGE OF ABJECT POVERTY. AVAILABLE EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATE THAT WHERE HAS THERE HAS BEEN A DECREASE IN AN ABSOLUTE POVERTY IN ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA, THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN AFRICA. CLEARLY, AFRICA NEEDS A STRATEGY FOR THE 1990's AND BEYOND; THE CHALLENGE THAT FACES OUR LEADERS TODAY IS TO DRAW UP THAT STRATEGY WITH CLEAR PERCEPTION OF WHAT KIND OF FUTURE THEY WANT FOR AFRICA - JUST AS THE EUROPEAN LEADERS HAVE DONE. THE OBJECTIVES OF SUCH A STRATEGY SHOULD BE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SELF-RELIANT GROWTH AND SELF-SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT AS A FOUNDATION FOR ACCELERATED SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA. AFRICAN LEADERS MUST HAVE A CLEAR PICTURE OF WHAT THEY WOULD WANT AFRICA TO BE WITHIN A SPECIFIED TIME-FRAME, ARTICULATE THIS PICTURE FOR THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF THE ENTIRE AFRICAN POPULATION AND FORMULATE PLANS AND PROGRAMMES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY.

MR CHAIRMAN,
EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

ULTIMATELY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES CONSTITUTE A SET OF GOALS, WHICH IN ORDER TO BE ACHIEVED, COLLATERAL ACTION BECOMES NECESSARY. WHAT IS MAKING POSSIBLE THE DREAM OF AN INTEGRATED EUROPE IS THE POLITICAL CONSENSUS ON SUCH A NEW

DIRECTION. THIS CONSENSUS IS BUILT ON THE FIRM PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY WHICH HAVE TAKEN ROOT IN THE POLITICAL PROCESSES IN THE INDIVIDUAL WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND AT THE LEVEL OF THE COMMUNITY ITSELF. LIKEWISE, THE AFRICA OF THE FUTURE WILL HAVE TO TAKE COLLATERAL POLITICAL MEASURES WHICH ENSURE THE NECESSARY POLITICAL FREEDOM, WHICH CAN PLAY THE KEY ROLE IN FORSTERING DEVELOPMENT. THIS IS NECESSARY IN VIEW OF THE CHANGES TAKING PLACE ALL AROUND AFRICA BUT, EVEN MORE SO, TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE. FOR IF OUR GOVERNMENTS ARE TO SENSITIZE THE PEOPLE TO THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT, THEY MUST BE ABLE TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY POLITICAL DISPENSATIONS WHICH ALLOW FOR FREE DEBATE AND CROSS-POLLINATION OF IDEAS.

THE UNITY OF EUROPE MEANS ALSO THE UNITY OR AT LEAST CONSENSUS OF VIEW ON WORLD AFFAIRS. IT MEANS THAT EUROPE WILL ADOPT COMMON POLICY AS A BLOCK, TO GLOBAL QUESTIONS. FOR THIS REASON, I SEE EUROPE EVOLVING A COMMON POSITION ON THE ISSUES CONCERNING AFRICA, IN PARTICULAR AS THEY RELATE TO THE EVOLVING POLITICAL PROCESS ON THE CONTINENT.

ALREADY THERE ARE COORDINATED AND SYNCHRONIZED POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS IN SOME FINANCIAL CAPITALS OF THE WORLD, MAKING EXPLICIT LINKAGE OF CONTINUED EXTENSION OF AID AND CONCESSIONARY RESOURCES FLOW TO AFRICA, TO THE INSTITUTION OF WHAT THEY CALL DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM ON THE CONTINENT. WHATEVER TERMINOLOGY USED, WHETHER DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM OR MULTIPARTYSM, THE

MESSAGE IS NOW QUITE CLEAR. AFRICA IS INCREASINGLY BEING TOLD TO ESTABLISH MULTIPARTYSM, OF COURSE, AS UNDERSTOOD AND PRACTICED IN EUROPE OR FACE THE POSSIBILITY OF WHAT EFFECTIVELY WOULD BE ECONOMIC SANCTIONS. WHAT THEN SHOULD BE AFRICA'S RESPONSE TO THIS NEW CHALLENGE. HOW CAN THE CONTINENT ADDRESS ITSELF TO THIS NEW TREND TOWARDS ANOTHER CONDITIONALITY FOR AID OR CREDIT?

AFRICA IS TODAY ADMITTEDLY IN THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL TRANSITION. THERE IS GROWING DEMAND BY THE PEOPLE FOR MORE PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS OF GOVERNANCE AND FOR THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF GOVERNMENT. THIS NEW AWARENESS NOW PRESENTS A CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENTS - A CHALLENGE ON HOW A RESPONSE SHOULD BE FORMULATED, ARTICULATED AND THE PEOPLES WISHES ACCOMODATED. AND WHETHER IN THE PROCESS, THE DEBATE IS ABOUT MULTIPARTYSM, POLITICAL PLURALISM OR POLITICAL REFORMS, THE ESSENCE OF IT ALL IS TO BRING ABOUT DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA. I NEED NOT OVER-EMPHASIZE THE NEED TO DEMOCRATISE OUR OWN SOCIETY AND TO ENSURE THAT THE PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL GOVERNANCE.

I AM A FIRM BELIEVER IN THE ALMOST INFINITE ABILITIES OF THE PEOPLE IF THEY ARE GIVEN THE POLITICAL FREEDOM AND LIBERTY AND IF THEIR FULL ENERGIES ARE HARNESSSED AND APPLIED POSITIVELY TO DEVELOPMENT. THE MODALITIES OF HOW THESE ENERGIES CAN BE HARNESSSED, OF HOW THIS FREEDOM CAN BE PROVIDED AND HOW THE PEOPLE CAN BE COALESCED AROUND A DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE IS A FUNCTION OF POLITICAL DECISIONS.

GOVERNMENTS, THEREFORE, MUST TAKE THE DELIBERATE STEPS WHICH ENSURE THAT ALL THESE ARE ADDRESSED TO WITHIN A POLITICAL FRAMEWORK WHICH IS A PRODUCT OF NATIONAL CONSENSUS. THIS NATIONAL CONSENSUS MUST ALSO BE A RESULT OF ON-GOING DEBATE WITHIN OUR OWN SOCIETIES ON HOW TO STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN THE NEED OF THE PEOPLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT. IF WE MANAGE TO ESTABLISH A WORKING BALANCE, WE SHALL HAVE MANAGED TO ESTABLISH A SOCIETY LEVERAGED UPON ITS OWN SHARED POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. UNDERLYING THIS BALANCE IS IN MY VIEW THE ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY. WE MUST ESTABLISH A SOCIETY IN WHICH THE OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE PROVISION OF FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IS AN AUTOMATIC RIGHT INHERENT IN CONSTITUTIONAL RULE. WE MUST BUILD A SOCIETY IN WHICH DISSENT IS NOT TAKEN TO BE TREASON IN WHICH THE FREE FLOW OF IDEAS IS AN ENCOURAGED ATTRIBUTE OF DEMOCRATIC RULE. WE MUST EQUALLY ESTABLISH SOCIETIES GOVERNED BY GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE OPEN, RESPONSIVE AND ANSWERABLE TO THE PEOPLE.

THE ESSENCE OF MY ARGUMENT IS THAT AFRICA HAS COME OF AGE. OUR COUNTRIES HAVE HAD, ON THE AVERAGE, THREE DECADES OF INDEPENDENCE. WE SHOULD NOW BE ABLE TO PROCEED TO THE NEXT PHASE OF CONSOLIDATING THE PRINCIPLES OF CONSTITUTIONAL RULE AND BUILDING OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF DEMOCRACY. AMONG THESE, MUST BE THE RESPECT FOR ABSOLUTE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY, CREATING AN ACCOUNTABLE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, THE NURTURING OF A CULTURE OF POLITICAL TOLERANCE OF DIFFERENT VIEWS AND PROMOTING LITERACY. NATURALLY, THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS WILL

HAVE TO PLAY THE KEY ROLE IN THE ARTICULATION OF THESE VIEWS. A PERMITTING POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT WILL ALSO CHALLENGE THE PRESS TO OBJECTIVITY AND TO THE SUSTENANCE OF THESE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS UPON WHICH THE CONSOLIDATION OF THAT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION WILL LARGELY DEPEND.

IN ADDITION, THE FREE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS SHOULD BE TARGETTED TOWARDS THE ELABORATION OF A CONSENSUS ON NATIONAL ETHOS TO GUIDE THE POLITICAL PROCESSES. THESE ETHOS SHOULD BE BUILT AROUND POLITICAL FACTORS AND PRINCIPLES WHICH PROMOTE NATIONAL UNITY. THESE ETHOS SHOULD ENTAIL, IN CONSEQUENCE, THE REJECTION OF THE EXPLOITATION OF SECTARIAN ISSUES SUCH AS TRIBALISM, ETHNICITY, RACE AND RELIGION FOR POLITICAL ENDS. ALL THESE HAS TO BE DONE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF AN AFRICAN POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT. IT WILL DEPEND ON THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS WHICH OBTAIN IN OUR COUNTRIES.

WHAT WE SHOULD NOT ACCEPT, HOWEVER, IS THE NOTION THAT THERE CAN BE A UNIVERSAL STANDARD FORMULA DEFINING DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES. DEMOCRACY IS A FUNCTION OF SOCIAL VALUE AND AS SUCH IT IS HEAVILY ENFLUENCED BY SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL FACTORS. EACH SOCIETY DEFINES THESE VALUES DIFFERENTLY. JAPAN, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEVELOP WHAT IS LARGELY CONSIDERED TO BE A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM WITHIN THE FIRM FOUNDATION OF ITS CULTURE AND SO HAVE MANY OTHER COUNTRIES. AFRICA IS DIFFERENT - NOT IN ITS REJECTION OF THE IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY, BUT IN ITS INSISTENCE THAT DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA HAS TO TAKE COGNIZANCE THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS THAT EXIST. TO THAT

EXTENT, THEREFORE, DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES MUST INEVITABLY DIFFER FROM PLACE TO PLACE. AFRICA SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ARTICULATE DEMOCRACY WHICH IS ROOTED IN ITS TRADITIONAL VALUES. CORRESPONDINGLY, WE MUST EQUALLY RESIST ATTEMPTS TO SUPER-IMPOSE DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES AS ARE PRACTISED IN DIFFERENT CULTURAL CONTEXTS ONTO OUR CONTINENT.

DEMOCRACY, AS AN IDEAL, IS UNIVERSAL. IT IS AN EMBODIMENT OF THE NATURAL YEARNING OF MAN FOR FREEDOM. TO THAT EXTENT YOU CANNOT EXPECT ANY HUMAN BEING TO ABANDON THE CAUSE OF DEMOCRACY FOR TO DO SO WOULD BE INDEED TANTAMOUNT TO SELF-DENIAL. WHAT IS CENTRAL TO MY ARGUMENT IS, THEREFORE, THAT WE MUST TRY IN AFRICA TO DEVELOP POLITICAL MECHANISM WHICH PROTECT AND ENHANCE THAT YEARNING FOR FREEDOM. AFTER ALL AFRICA WHICH HAS BEEN THE VICTIM OF THE MOST BRUTAL CRIMES KNOWN IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND CANNOT BE FOUND LACKING IN SENSITIVITY TO HUMAN SUFFERING. AFRICA WHICH HAS SUFFERED AND HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO THE MOST DEPRIVATION OF FREEDOM SHOULD BE AT THE FORE-FRONT IN DEFENCE OF IT. THESE OUR GOVERNMENTS OWE TO THE PEOPLE. THE PEOPLE HAVE THAT RIGHT AND IT IS NOT A RIGHT WHICH GOVERNMENT CAN DISPENSE AT WILL OR WITHDRAW ON THE BASIS OF PERSONAL WHIMS.

I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO MAKE THESE COMMENTS IN VIEW OF THIS ON-GOING DEBATE ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON IN AFRICA. I WAS RECENTLY ON AN EXTENDED TOUR OF EUROPE. I FOUND OUT THAT AFRICA IS VERY MUCH IN THE NEWS - NEGATIVELY THAT IS. AFRICA IS BEING PROJECTED

AS A CONTINENT WHERE EVERYTHING IS GOING WRONG AND WHERE RECOVERY IS A DISTANT POSSIBILITY. THE SO-CALLED AFRO-PESSIMISM SYNDROME IS IN ASCENDANCE. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, AFRICA IS BEING ADVISED TO ADOPT MULTIPARTYSM AS A PANACEA FOR ITS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. WE ARE BEING TOLD THAT IF AFRICA WAKES UP A MULTIPARTY CONTINENT ITS POLITICAL PROBLEMS WILL BE SOLVED. WE ARE BEING TOLD THAT IF OUR COUNTRIES ADOPT MULTIPARTYSM, THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WILL BE SOLVED. IT IS THE CYNICAL VIEW THAT MULTIPARTYSM TRANSLATES DEVELOPMENT WHICH I WISH TO TOUCH ON. I BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE ARE THE ENGINE OF DEVELOPMENT. GENUINE POPULAR PARTICIPATION, BASED ON POLITICAL FREEDOM IS THE OIL THAT LUBRICATES THE ENGINES OF THE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A GIVEN DEMOCRATIC SETTING - WHERE PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO SUMMON THEIR CREATIVE BEST. THEY ARE ABLE TO APPLY THEMSELVES POSITIVELY TO DEVELOPMENT. CONVERSELY PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT FREE, PEOPLE WHO ARE CONSTRAINED IN THEIR FREEDOM RETRENCH INTO SILENT ANARCHY, AND LIKE TERMITES IN WOOD FRAMES THEY EAT THE SYSTEM FROM WITHIN UNTIL IT COLLAPSES. POLITICAL FREEDOM UNDERPINS ANY LONG-TERM AND STABLE DEVELOPMENT. A DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS NOT SECURELY ROOTED IN FREEDOM RUNS THE RISK OF DESTROYING ITSELF IN THE LONG RUN. IT WILL BE A DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIALS AND NOT OF HUMAN BEINGS. WHAT WE MUST AIM AT IN AFRICA, THEREFORE, IS AN ALL ENCOMPASSING DEVELOPMENT - ONE WHICH ENSURES MATERIAL GROWTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. WE CAN ACHIEVE THIS ONLY IF OUR PEOPLE ARE FREE AND SEE THE NEED AND INDEED THE MOTIVATION TO GET INVOLVED IN THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROCESS OF OUR COUNTRIES. AND THEY CAN ONLY DO THIS IF THEY FEEL THEY ARE AN INTEGRAL PART

OF THE SYSTEM AND NOT MERELY AN APPENDAGE OF A SYSTEM WHICH BENEFITS OTHERS. THE MORE THE PEOPLE HAVE AT STAKE IN THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS OF OUR COUNTRIES THE MORE THEY WILL FEEL PART OF IT AND THE MORE THEY WILL FEEL COMMITTED TO ITS SUSTENANCE. TO THAT EXTENT, I SEE POLITICAL FREEDOM DIRECTLY LINKED TO ABILITIES OF A NATION TO DEVELOP. IT IS DIRECTLY LINKED TO ITS ABILITY TO MARSHALL ITS RESOURCES AND TO GALVANIZE PEOPLE AROUND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES.

HOW ALL THESE CAN BE ACHIEVED AGAIN IS A FUNCTION POLITICAL PROCESSES. OUR PRE-OCCUPATION MUST BE TO PROVIDE A SYSTEM WHICH MOSTLY ENSURES THIS. MULTIPARTISM, BY ITSELF, CANNOT BRING ABOUT DEVELOPMENT OR EVEN GENUINE DEMOCRACY FOR THAT MATTER. AND WHILE MULTIPARTISM HAS THE POTENTIAL TO UNLOCK PEOPLES' ENERGIES AND THEREBY CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO DEVELOPMENT, IT CANNOT, BY ITSELF, MAKE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE TO THE FUNDAMENTAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF OUR CONTINENT. IF A GIVEN COUNTRY WERE TO ADOPT MULTIPARTYSM THAT WOULD NOT CHANGE HER ECONOMIC FORTUNES. NOTWITHSTANDING HOW MANY POLITICAL PARTIES AFRICAN COUNTRIES MAY HAVE, THAT WILL NOT CHANGE THE PRICE OF TOBACCO, SISAL, COPPER OR COCOA ON THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET. TO SUGGEST, THEREFORE, THAT THE SOLUTION TO OUR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN AFRICA DEPENDS SOLEY ON MULTIPARTYSM IS TO SIMPLIFY WHAT IS OTHERWISE A SERIOUS DEBATE ABOUT AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT.

AFRICA AND THE ECONOMIC SOUTH, GENERALLY, OPERATES IN AN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OVER WHICH WE HAVE LITTLE SAY. IT IS AN ENVIRONMENT SET UP BY THE DEVELOPED NORTH. IT IS ONE WHICH IS GEARED TOWARDS THE PRESERVATION OF ENTRENCHED PRIVILEGE FOR THE RICH AND CORRESPONDINGLY THE PERPETUATION OF THE CYCLE OF POVERTY AND DEPENDENCE OF THE SOUTH. IT IS A SYSTEM WHICH LACKS THE ELEMENTARY ATTRIBUTES OF DEMOCRACY. AFRICA IS SIMPLY RESPONDENT TO THIS SYSTEM WHICH HAS INBUILT MECHANISMS FOR AUTOMATIC SYPHONING OF WEALTH FROM THE POOR TO THE RICH. IT FOLLOWS, THEREFORE, THAT NO MATTER HOW HARD AFRICA WORKS; ULTIMATELY, OUR SWEAT AND TOIL WILL NOT BE ADEQUATELY COMPENSATED, UNLESS THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM. WE MUST, THEREFORE, CONTINUE TO INSIST THAT, AS WE ARE BEING CHALLENGED WITH THE TASK OF DEMOCRATIZING OUR SOCIETIES, THE NORTH SHOULD ALSO ACCEPT OUR DEMAND FOR THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM.

I AM NOT TRYING TO ESTABLISH A CONDITIONAL LINKAGE BETWEEN THE TWO. THEY ARE FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT AND EACH IS A DISTINCT IMPERATIVE. WE CANNOT WAIT FOR THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM BEFORE WE DO OUR SOCIETIES. WE SHOULD PROCEED TO BRING ABOUT GENUINE DEMOCRACY WITHIN OUR COUNTRIES WHILE PERSISTING IN OUR DEMAND FOR DEMOCRACY AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. FOR WITHOUT THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM, AFRICA'S EFFORTS AT ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT WILL SEVERELY BE CONSTRAINED.

EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

EUROPE IS BUZZING WITH DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY AND THE PROSPECTS OF A UNITED, STRONGER AND MORE PROSPEROUS EUROPE HAS HEIGHTENED THE PACE OF NEGOTIATIONS ON ALL ASPECTS OF INTEGRATION. THERE IS A COMMON VIEW OF THE EUROPE OF THE FUTURE. IT WILL BE A EUROPE MORE INWARD LOOKING, MORE RESPONSIVE TO ITS OWN NEEDS. WHAT AFRICA NEEDS TO DO, THEREFORE, IS NOT TO WASTE VALUABLE TIME AND EFFORT LAMENTING ON THE POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW EUROPE. INDEED, IT WOULD BE COUNTER PRODUCTIVE. INSTEAD, WE SHOULD OVERCOME SELF-DOUBT AND FIGHT THE AFRO-PESSIMISM SYNDROME WITH VIGOUR. WE CAN ONLY DO SO IF WE TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS IN AFRICA - IN OTHER WORDS, WE MUST SUBJECT OURSELVES TO INTROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS AND SEE WHERE WE STARTED GOING WRONG.

AFRICA MUST BEGIN BY FORGING UNITY, BUILT AROUND COMMON INTERESTS - INTERESTS WHICH CUT-ACROSS THE CONTINENT AND NOT RESTRICTED TO INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP OF COUNTRIES. WE SHOULD PROMOTE REAL COOPERATION WORKING TOWARDS FULL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION UNDER THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. THIS MUST BE OUR COMMON INTEREST AND OBJECTIVE. FOR WITHOUT COMMON INTERESTS, THERE CANNOT BE COMMON STRATEGIES.

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, IT IS AFRICA WHICH CAN MAKE ITSELF RELEVANT OR IRRELEVANT. WE HAVE TO ARTICULATE A COMMON AGENDA AND IN A WAY IMPOSE OURSELVES ON THE WORLD. TO DO SO EFFECTIVELY, WE SHALL NEED TOTAL COHESION AND UNITY OF PURPOSE. WITH UNITY, WE CAN BE COMPETITIVE ON THE WORLD SCENE AND WE CAN REFUSE TO BE MARGINALIZED. THIS IS A DESTINY WHICH, IN A REAL SENSE, AFRICA HOLDS IN HER OWN HANDS. WE SHOULD NOT LOOSE THE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH THE EMERGING WORLD ORDER CAN PROVIDE.

I THANK YOU.