

ORGANISATION DE L'UNITÉ AFRICAINE

Sec. 3/4/90

Réf.

STATEMENT BY H.E. Dr. SALIM AHMED SALIM, SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF OAU TO OAU/ACP GROUP OF AMBASSADORS IN BRUSSELS

Mr. Chairman of the ACP Group,
Mr. Chairman of the OAU Group,
Mr. Secretary-General of the ACP,
Distinguished Ambassadors and distinguished Representatives,

I am particularly honoured to be in this ACP House. I am grateful and thankful to the very kind and generous remarks addressed to me and about me by the distinguished co-chairmen and also by the distinguished Secretary-General of the ACP. I am informed that it was only yesterday that those of you who belong to the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States were celebrating the 15th Anniversary of the signing of the Georgetown Agreement. Permit me therefore to start my few remarks by extending my congratulations to you on behalf of the entire membership of the Organization of African Unity. We have always cherished the fact that the birth of the ACP was very much associated with the OAU. I do not have to remind you that, in 1973, when Sir Kamisese Mara from the Pacific and Shridath Ramphal from the Caribbean and Wenike Briggs from Africa were referring to the 8 principles adopted by the OAU Heads of State and Government, in May 1973, as the basis for negotiating with the EEC, they were doing so in recognition of our common destiny and the unshakable desire to promote our unity of purpose.

As the distinguished Secretary-General of the ACP rightly said, I happened to have personally had the honour of having been involved and associated with the Caribbean.

.../2

I spent some of my best years as Ambassador to the United Nations and also as my country's Representative in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Barbados; and I can say without any hesitation that, when I left New York after 11 years, quite frankly, I did not very much miss the U.N. but I missed the Caribbean. And in the process of my stay there, I can claim to have had some understanding, however limited, of the aspirations and degree of solidarity that prevails between the peoples of the Caribbean and the peoples of Africa. This solidarity is not artificial; it is genuine; it is affectionate and one can feel it not only at the level of governments but at the level of the ordinary people in the Caribbean.

I have had also in my relatively short stay in the United Nations considerable contacts with our friends from the Pacific. At least, I had the pleasure of enjoying the hospitality, a great hospitality, of our brothers and sisters in Fidji and Papua New Guinea. I was also happily stranded in Tonga. I say happily stranded because I went there leading a UN team to Nuku'alofa to discuss about the constitutional development of that country and happily the Air Line Pilots decided to go on a one day strike and so the strike took place and, though I had planned to stay in Tonga for one day, I ended up to stay for 2 days which was a tremendous gain for me personally. So, in a sense, this degree of solidarity and unity which prevails between our three communities is in a way also enshrined in the operations and the activities of the Group of the ACP which Representatives I am very happy and honoured to meet with here.

At the OAU level, we have continued to follow very closely the efforts you have been making as an ACP Group of countries to make Lome Conventions more dynamic, by moving away from a circumscribed economic agreement into a more all round convention embracing political, social, environmental and cultural issues. Lome IV, therefore, is obviously an improvement of the previous ones. However, I have no intention of analysing the achievements or shortcomings of Lome Conventions here. You negotiate them, on our behalf, and I have no doubt that whatever you concluded with our European partners was the best that could be achieved in the circumstances. I had the privilege of sending a message to the Head of State of Togo, President Eyadema, during the signing ceremony of the Convention and also to receive a message from him as a reply to the message which I had sent. The purpose of this message was to underscore the Organization of African Unity's own appreciation of the Convention and own assessment and appreciation of the work done by our eminent representatives.

Let me also say that we are following very closely the progress of the Maghreb Union in its efforts towards a common position vis-à-vis the EEC. But, I am sure, Ladies and Gentlemen, that you do not and you would not expect me to come and talk here on the Lome Convention and progress of the Lome Convention. I think you are better experts and more equipped than I could ever be. So, let me try and say, as briefly as I can, why I am in Brussels, what I am doing in Europe, what is happening in our continent and what we expect our colleagues, not only African colleagues but also

.../4

those who are in alliance with African countries, to be doing in the context of what is going on.

I have come to Brussels essentially to have an opportunity like this one, to be able to meet with the ACP and OAU Representatives, to be able to meet with the leadership of your groups and also to have discussions with the Secretary-General of the ACP, to talk with the Belgian authorities. It is also my intention to talk with the Commission high authorities. I was, before coming here, in Paris and I was also in London. I had a working visit in Paris and had very useful discussions with the Foreign Minister of France and other officials. I had also very useful discussions with the Foreign Minister of Britain and several Ministers together with Members of Parliament and Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations. The objective for me is to try and assess what is going on in Europe from the perspective of the European leaders and also try to express our own concerns about the implications of some of what is happening from an African perspective. The objective also is to try and see, in the context of what is going on, what are the issues on which there is convergence between us and our European partners; what are the issues where we might have differences of approach and try to express these differences as candidly, as politely as possible.

This tour of mine, of course, is an attempt, on the part of the General Secretariat of the OAU, to try and have meaningful discussions with institutions with which Africa has continuous cooperation. So, in addition to talking to Governments, I will have discussions and will be meeting with different Head of the agencies concerned. This was true

in Paris and should equally be true, especially, in Geneva, which will be my last stop. The context of this visit of mine should be seen also in the light of the changes which are taking place in the world, including, of course, the "rapprochement" between the East and the West; the changes in Eastern Europe; the implications of the Single Market in 1992 for Africa. And the idea is, not only, to have this as assessment but also in the context of what we are likely to do as Africa's response to these challenges. As the Chairman of the OAU Group observed in his introductory remarks, at the OAU, what we have been trying to do is to try and make a thorough, well, perhaps the word thorough is not the right word, but try to attempt a thorough study of what is going on. To try to understand what is going on, the implications of what is going in Europe to Africa and what should Africa's response be. And, of course, the people who can give the African response is not the Secretariat of the OAU but rather the leaders of Africa whom we are expecting to meet on the 9th of July in their annual Summit, in Addis-Ababa. So, it is in a sense, therefore, part of the preparations of this Summit that I have undertaken this tour but also part of the preparation of my own self education because, where it is true that I have spent a considerable part of my life in international affairs and also in U.N. affairs and I have been following a lot of what has been going on, whether it is in Brussels or Geneva or Vienna or New York, there is no substitute for first hand information, first hand experience than you, eminent Representatives, who have been dealing with these problems on a day-to-day basis. Let me share with you, therefore, some of my own assessment, arising from the visits I have undertaken so far and the impression I have accumulated and, please, I should be very grateful, if these

impressions are erroneous, my colleagues both from Africa, those from the Pacific and those from Caribbean should kindly help because we are in the process of trying to get information and to be able to follow what is going on, they should be kind to let me know where I have add or if there is anything additional which I need to know, I will appreciate.

In all my discussions with the European leaders that I have been able to meet so far and with the different institutions that I have met - and I happened to have taken part yesterday also to a very important symposium organized by the Overseas Development Institute in London under the title :

"The prospects of African Development in the 90's" and I was asked to speak on the theme of "African Economic Recovery and Democracy" - there is a lot of talk about what is going on in Africa. I remember, I don't think this is revealing any confidential information, when I talked to the Foreign Minister of France, and he asked me about my visit, I said, well, we are trying to find out what is happening in Europe. He said, but we are also trying to find out what is happening in Africa. I said, fine, if that is the case we are in a good position to discuss because you want to find out what is happening in Africa and I want to find out what is happening in Europe, which also shows there is a mutuality of interest of what is happening in Africa and what is happening in Europe and also the degree whatever happens will have some effects on us .

So, my impression in my discussions there is that the concern expressed by the African countries that because of the changes in Europe and specifically because of the changes in Eastern Europe, there is the possibility of the diversion of resources from Europe which were intended either for Africa or intended for the Third World will now be diverted

to Eastern Europe, I was told by the official spokesmen that this concern has no justification in so far as the question of official development assistance is concerned. In other words, whatever was earmarked as assistance for African countries or for the Third World Countries is not going to be diverted from those countries which it was targeted for to Eastern Europe.

I was also told however that this is not the same which is expected from the private investors. And it is very clear that private investors are going to focus more and more now on Eastern Europe and definitely are going to have a diminution of interest in so far as investment in Africa is concerned. That point was also made to me very clearly both at official level and at the discussion with the non-officials but responsible and authoritative persons and people. Of course, the point has also been made that, with respect to private investment, there is nothing that governments can do; this is a matter which the private investors themselves have their own role and they have to choose where they want and, simply put, Africa is not a very attractive proposition right now.

The other point that was made is the feeling about how Governments are running Africa, the need for democratisation and the fact that, without the process of democratisation, there is bound to be a diminution of interest on the part of the donor countries or the creditor countries to Africa. That governments have to be more responsible, they have got to be more responsive, to try to be better governants. There has to be democratisation and in some cases the question

of multipartism was mentioned but it was mentioned in such a manner it was not so direct. Sometimes, the word pluralism was used, but, in a sense, the link between development aid and the question of democratisation of our substantive societies was emphasized again and again by the different people that I met. Coming out of this visit, and coming out of these discussions, I must say that I have a much clearer perspective of the thinking of some European friends, leaders and officials and also they have, I hope, a clearer feeling of what the OAU, at least, feels about some issues that were raised.

Now let me, in the light of these observations, say the following : First, it is evident that the process of democratisation or the yearning for democracy or the slogans about "Democracy right now" have earned a tremendous momentum in Europe, in America and elsewhere. But the point I have been making, and I want to submit to you, is that, really, as far as the question of democratisation process is concerned, it is an issue which every African society should also aim at. In other words, as I have been saying : democracy is a system, is an ideal, it is not a monopoly of any particular community, race or any particular region; that the right for respect for fundamental freedoms, the question of respect for human rights is something which our societies, African societies, Third World societies, like other societies, must really endeavour to promote and observe. And it is to do so because of what happened in Eastern Europe but because all our countries are signatories to the Charter of the UN, are signatories of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are signatories also, with respect to the OAU, and in addition to the various United Nations instruments, to the OAU Charter

.../9

of Human and Peoples Rights. So, to the extent that these principles are enshrined in there, I personally have said it in Europe, and I have said it in many of our African countries; I was in Lome the other day, I was in Yaounde the other day, and in both these places, I have said it very clearly, and I have found nobody, none of our African leaders, none of the African intellectuals or none of the African Representatives have ever questioned the validity of these principles, and none has said : "Look, we are different", because there are 2 extremes when you talk about democratisation.

There are those who say that perhaps Africa, because of our peculiarities and our problems, we are so different from the rest of the world. That principles can be applied elsewhere but are not applicable to Africa. This is a very condescending attitude on the part of some, but also there are those who think that they can more or less juxtapose their own experiences in a stereotype manner to a given African society. In other words, my point and my assertion - and I am glad that this assertion in our discussions with the different officials in the countries I have visited has not been challenged - is that democracy, first, to ripe, must be a home grown and evolving process. You can not declare : "let there be democracy in one place" and in the morning you wake up and say : "there is democracy there", nor can you add a conditionality, a political conditionality, to the many conditionalities the Third World countries are already been subjected to by international monetary and economic institutions and you say now you want to add another conditionality. I said very frankly, and I want to say it here, that the idea of adding another conditionality will not be accepted. And, even if it is accepted by any country, it will be accepted simply in order to flout that conditionality.

You can not impose on a society a certain situation, and say what applies in one society must equally apply in another society. At the same time there are certain things which are universally recognized. It is these principles which are universal which I think Africa can be held accountable by the world community, by anyone who says : "Look, but what is happening in your continent ? Why there is this and that violation in a given countries of Human Rights ? Why there is no transparence in Government ? Why there is no accountability ? Why there is corruption ?" These are things which we can talk about. But you can not, by the same token, then say in order to do so we think that to find a solution to your problems you must do this and the other.

And, as I said yesterday, in London, whatever the merits, and I am in no position, you will appreciate, representing, as I do, 51 African States, to say about the virtues and vices of a one party State, multiparties State, 2 parties State, I am in no position to say that but I am in very clear position to talk about democracy in our continent and equally, in a very clear position and I have no hesitation to say that simply the mere creation of democratic institutions in Africa will not ipso facto guarantee economic development. It is a point also which must be addressed again and again. That really you may have 2 parties, 5 parties, 10 parties, even if you had ten parties in every single African society today, that will not be translated into economic development. Because, whether Côte-d'Ivoire has one party or 5 parties or 10 parties, that would not affect the price of cocoa; whether Kenya or Tanzania or Uganda have 3 parties or 4 parties or 5 parties, it will not affect the price of cotton, it will not affect the price of coffee.

.../11

These are realities which must be taken into account. So, my message has been, while we talk about the democratisation of the national systems, for democratisation of the national system to be effective it is equally important to talk in term of the democratisation of the international system which has hetherto been very undemocratic and very unjust, and, unless you do something about it, you are bound to have a lot of difficulties in term of ensuring stability. I thought I should mention this because the question of democracy, almost for the last 7 days, has been the theme which has been said to me and, frankly, I am glad about this theme, because I have no hesitation about it and I think I can speak for Africa on that and say that Africa does desire democracy, that our African societies are evolving, they are not passive societies. But there is a genuine attempt to be made in each and every African society to evolve a better and more accountable system. These systems are not perfect.

I know there is a lot of talk about corruption and I have been reminded about corruption and I have said we must fight against corruption. But let no one say that Africa is the one continent which has the monopoly of corruption. We know - and we don't have to cite countries - that even in the most developed ones there is corruption, even at the very high level. However, what I must say, and I have said it, African countries can not afford this kind of corruption, because when you have corruption in a situation like ours, in countries which are highly underdeveloped, corruption distroys the very fabric of the society. Therefore, it deprives justice to the ordinary person, to the ordinary villager, peasant and worker in our country. So, again, I

am saying : when we talk about fighting corruption, we should fight corruption. But let us not try to stigmatise the whole continent as a continent which is nothing but corrupted, and leaders who are corrupted and try to depict the situation that it is only in Africa where you have all these endemic diseases of corruption and so on. It is a point which I think we have made and will make it effectively and we are going to make it in the continent.

I think that things are happening in our continent as they are happening in the rest of the world. But it is important also to remember that some of these things we started having in Africa long before the events in Eastern Europe. They have been changes in Algeria, in 1988, very significant changes. This was long before any body could predict what will happen to Zivkov, Ceaucescu or the rest of them. So, in another words, there should be no attempt also to try and depict the situation that these changes are only as a result of what has been happening in Eastern Europe. So, as it is, our societies in the continent have been asking questions, our people have been asking questions. They have been calling for democratisation. Take the question of Human Rights. We have always, Africa has always had its series of problems; but, in reality, what is not publicized is that the very creation of the Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, with its headquarters in Banjul, has meant a significant departure from the way African States and African countries have been treating the issue of Human Rights. I am not saying it is a perfect situation. There are still a lot of incidences of violation of human rights in our continent. But there has been a significant movement and the fact that the Heads of State can sit down and discuss

and the fact that this commission can meet as it did the other day in Banjul and even made representations to Governments on issues which they felt affected or is likely to affect human rights, I think is a significant movement in so far the continent is concerned. So our friends and our partners who therefore talked about democratisation must also be aware of some of these things which are happening in our continent.

Mr. Chairman,

I want to say again : we cannot pretend that what is happening in the world does not affect or will not affect our region. We cannot pretend that the cohesion and the solidarity which is now binding the European countries, for exemple, which is now manifesting itself in the American/Canadian relationship, which is now manifesting itself elsewhere, in the Soviet Union/United States rapprochement, is not going to have an effect, one way or the other, on Africa and the rest of the Third World. It may have a positive effect or it may have a negative effect. It depends also on how ourselves we react, and that is why, we in the OAU, believe very strongly that the time has come for our leaders, in Africa, to make a thorough introspective analysis of the situation in our continent, to map out strategies on where we go from here and to answer some of the perennial problems that face our continent.

I personally believe and I have expressed this conviction that it is not enough and it will not help for the African countries simply to be complaining or to be lamenting about what is happening in Eastern Europe. That aid will be diverted, resources will be etc... because nobody is going to listen to lamentations. Nobody is going to listen to pleas of compassion and understanding. I mean the question of compassion and under-

.../14

standing is not there. But, what people will understand, if we, in Africa, also get together and start seriously putting into practice some of the decisions which the Heads of State have taken. We must make Africa a more viable, a more attractive, a more dynamic continent to do business with. We must make African cooperation a meaningful and serious proposition.

The possibilities are there; because whereas Africa is now the continent which has the greatest abundance of absolute poverty, which has the greatest number of the least developed countries, the fact remains that we have also a tremendous potential in our continent; and it is to this potential that we hope to sensitize our leaders, to sensitize our States to be working on, so that Africa refuses to be marginalized as we enter the 1990s and beyond. These are the issues which are going to be discussed and, I hope, discussed thoroughly when our leaders meet in July during the 26th Session of the OAU Summit. They are going to discuss these issues, because, in my opinion, African States and, if I may be presumptuous, Third World countries in general, have no option but really to start putting into practice the many declarations we have been adopting all the time about the need for South/South cooperation. So, in respect to African countries, we need to put into concrete operation, for example, the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action.

Our leaders met well back 10 years ago and decided about the Lagos Plan, about the economic cooperation and even had priority areas in which to operate on. So, if we would afford, well back in 1980 to be a bit lax, we can not afford to do so now. If we could afford, as African countries, to work individually in the 80s, we cannot afford to do so now, and I think, if

there is one think which we can learn from Europe, we can learn first the day these governments understand the importance of working together. That is one lesson. If Germany and France and Britain, some of the major colonial powers of our continent, who have the necessary resources, the necessary technology, find the necessity to work together and they are working together, despite the differences here and there, there is no reason why African countries should also not feel the same and urge to do so.

But the second proposition is that we have also to be serious. In other words we have to be serious in our own actions and, again here, I think, there is no harm in saying we should also emulate the European example. They are serious governments; when they take decisions, they make sure those decisions are implemented; and before they take decisions, they argue. If the decisions are not going to be implemented they don't take them. In a sense also, we have responsibility to move from the area of rethoric and mere declarations to area of concrete actions.

My feeling, ladies and gentlemen after visiting several African countries and meeting with our leaders both in West Africa, in North Africa, in Central Africa, in Southern Africa and Eastern Africa, I have not met all our leaders but I have met with a substantial number of our leaders, and it seems to me that our leaders understand these issues very clearly and they understand it and they can articulate them more than I can possibly do. I think they understand the challenges that are facing Africa now and the challenges of survival that Africa has to live with and I am absolutely convinced

that we will move into a position of greater action among African countries and solidarities with our other partners.

Finally, let me say one or two things only. For us, to be able to develop and to use our energies and resources for the development of our continent and to be able to forge the necessary solidarity with our brothers and sisters of the Caribbean and of the Pacific in issues of common interest, it is absolutely necessary for African countries first to do our utmost to solve our own problems. And, in particular, I am referring to the problems which now decimate, which sap the energies and resources of our people, which cause death and sufferings to our populations. I am referring to the question of conflict areas. And we have as African countries to focus also on solution of conflict areas. We have to try and do our utmost best to bring an end to the conflict that are taking place in our country. It is not easy, and I should say also we cannot blame the foreigners for these conflicts. But also we can not exclude the involvement of the foreigners in some of these conflicts. So when people say : "why don't Africans solve their own problems", they should also understand that behind some of these problems, have been long periods of intervention by outsiders which have precipitated or aggravated some of these conflicts. Yet Africa has to exercise its own definitive responsibility in solving these conflicts. And so, in the OAU - it is our opinion in the Secretariat - we are going to focus more and more on attempts, at least genuine attempts by our leaders to solve some of the problems that face our continent whether these conflicts are interstate or if they are conflicts of within a State.

Let me make a differentiations here : the OAU Charter does not provide for the intervention or interference in what are internal affairs of Member States. And, sometimes, people

have told us that African countries cannot do anything about conflicts within the country because of this provision of the Charter. I want to say very clearly there is no provision of the OAU Charter which says that Africans should be indifferent to the sufferings of fellow Africans. The Charter provision, the Charter itself talk in term of the dignity of the Africans. So the issue here is not to interfere in the internal affairs of Member States. There is no question of interfrerring. The issue is the collective wisdom of the African leaders must be put to try and help in the process of conflict resolution and conflict management.

We are in Addis-Ababa, for example. The Headquarters of the OAU is in Ethiopia. You know of the death that is happening in Ethiopia. I will look very incredible and almost to the point of hypocrisy, if I had to meet any body and say : "well, what is happening in Ethiopia is an internal affairs of Ethiopia. I, Secretary-General of the OAU, has no business". Of course, I have business, and of course whatever I can do quietly, whatever I can do to be helpful and to encourage other leaders to be helpful and to find a negotiated solution to the problems of Ethiopia is something which is welcomed. And in my discussions with the Ethiopian authorities, and in my discussions with other authorities, I have found no one who says Africa should be indifferent to the sufferings and agonies of the African peoples in African States. This is not to say you should now, like a bull in a Chine shop, try and say you have a solution for every problem. No, it is not true, these conflicts are long standing. But I think, the image of the outsiders that Africa being indifferent is a wrong image and we have to erase this image.

Secondly, while the African leaders have been trying and are trying and are going to try to intensify their efforts to find solutions to these problems and make it an issue of priority in the clear knowledge that with these conflicts we can not really devote our energies to development, we are going to tackle more seriously, as I said before, the question of African economic cooperation. We are going to try our best at our level to promote subregional groups - the PTA, the ECOWAS, the ECCAS, the Maghreb Union - for the purpose of promoting genuine economic integration. The ultimate objective is the creation of the African Economic Community which is the objective of all our leaders.

Mr. Chairman,

May be I should just end with one observation and that is : you have seen that I have talked purely on developmental issues, on the question of conflicts resolution, I have not talked about decolonisation, and about apartheid. It is not that this is not an important item. It is an important item, except the difference is the following : When our Heads of State met in 1963, the priority for Africa was the assertion of the dignity of the African and, from 32 Member States, today we have 51 Member States and the decolonisation process in the continent is almost over, with the independance of Namibia on the 21st of March. The unfinished business now facing Africa and for which the OAU will give the equal and utmost priority is the situation in South Africa. And we will do so, conscious of the changes that are taking place in South Africa. We will encourage those changes which we need encouragement. But we refuse to be hijacked by the appearance of changes to forget the essence of the struggle.

.../19

The struggle in South Africa was not and has never been essentially for the release of Nelson Mandela, or for the unbanning of the political organisations or for the lifting of the state of emergency. These are the consequences of the problem; they are not the problem. Mandela was imprisoned because of apartheid. The state of emergency was proclaimed, and may be it may be lifted today, according to news, but because of apartheid. So, the actual problem in South Africa is the apartheid system. And for as long as there is no irreversible process towards the ending of the apartheid system, Africa and the friends of Africa, both in the Third World, in Europe and elsewhere, have to exert the maximum pressure in order to ensure that process of changes is not aborted.

And, in this respect, we have followed, at the OAU level, very closely the visit of Mr. De Klerk. He has been to Belgium, he has been to France, he has been to Britain, he has been to Ireland, he has been to Greece, he has been to Spain. We have followed every visit. In some places, he has been received extremely warmly. In some places he has been received just normally, but as you would have noted, we have not made any statement to condemn the visit. We have not taken up issue with the governments, I am talking of the OAU level. Not that we approved that visit, but we were saying : since the idea is to encourage Mr. De Klerk and to show him that what he is doing is right, fine, then the countries of Europe have had all the opportunity to give Mr. De Klerk the red carpet that he goes back and says : "I have been received well by the President of France, the Government in Belgium, by the Prime Minister of Britain". So, that could have been shown. But the point which we have been making, and I have been making this point in Europe and I want to make it again, is that, having made this gesture, people should be cautious in not going further and try to do things which would be counter productive and which even end up in aborting the process of changes in South Africa.

Therefore, any relaxation of pressure on the South African Government, at this point in time, would have that effect, and I think you don't need a better person, a better spokesman for that than Nelson Mandela himself. He has been saying this wherever he has been. He has been saying it in South Africa, he has said it in London, he has said it in Paris yesterday, and I am sure he will continue to say it. So my appeal to you, my colleagues, is that, in your efforts, in your approach to what we are doing in our continent, both that which involves our three communities, if I may put it that way, and those which involve, in a sense, directly Africa but also involve the rest, you should bear in mind the need for intensified cohesion, understanding and solidarity, both with respect to issues like the one of South Africa but also with respect to sensitizing public opinion to the debate of the moment. And I am sure that through your collective action, as it has been in the past, we can continue to count you as Ambassadors of the causes which we had spoused in Africa but causes which really are universally shared by the groups represented here.

From the point of view of the General Secretariat of the OAU, and let me say I am speaking on behalf of all African countries, let me, once again, say how much we appreciate the work done by you, the role played by you and we will continue to give all the necessary support that we can. It is for that reason that we have here in Brussels a specific office of the Organisation of African Unity to deal with that.

I thank you very much.