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STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAU,  
H.E. MR. SALIM AHMED SALIM,  
AT THE AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS,  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1992: TUNIS, TUNISIA

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YOUR EXCELLENCY,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THE DECISION TO CONVENE A WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS VERY TIMELY INDEED. BUT MORE FUNDAMENTAL THAN ITS TIMELINESS IS THE RECOGNITION INHERENT IN IT THAT THE WORLD HAS TO TAKE COLLECTIVE ACTION TO DEAL WITH HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS EQUALLY THE RECOGNITION THAT THE WORLD IS A HUMAN FAMILY IN WHICH MANY PEOPLES AND NATIONS EXIST BUT WITH EQUAL NEED AND RIGHT TO THE FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS WHICH UNIVERSALLY FIND EXPRESSION IN THE BODY OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE WORLD CONFERENCE WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GOVERNMENTS, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS TO ARTICULATE JOINTLY THE UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN NATIONS AND WITHIN THE GLOBAL HUMAN FAMILY. THIS IS WHY THE OAU IS HAPPY TO BE ASSOCIATED AT THIS INITIAL STAGE WITH PREPARATIONS AIMED AT LOOKING AT HOW AFRICA IS DOING IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ASSESSING OUR NEEDS AND SEEING ALSO HOW WE CAN SITUATE THEM WITHIN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT. AND WE HAVE A GOOD REASON TO BE HAPPY. FOR AFRICA WHICH HAS SUFFERED HORRENDOUS ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AFRICA WHICH HAS SUFFERED HUNDREDS OF YEARS OF ALL FORMS OF HUMAN INDIGNITIES AND ATROCITIES, RANGING FROM SLAVERY AND COLONIALISM AND RACISM, MUST TAKE THE CHALLENGE

OF SAFEQUARDING AND PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS. WE ARE ALSO GRATIFIED THAT THE INITIATIVE TO HOLD THE CONFERENCE CAME FROM AFRICA- FROM THE SISTER STATE OF MOROCCO AND SUPPORTED BY THE AFRICAN STATES. AND HERE ALSO WISH TO SALUTE THE PARTICULAR CONTRIBUTION OF OUR DISTINGUISHED SISTER, MADAM HALIMA WARZAZI.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE WORLD IS ONE AND NOTWITHSTANDING ANY DIFFERENCES WHICH HUMAN BEINGS MAY HAVE, THEY ARE CONDEMNED TO LIVE TOGETHER. THE UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS EMBODIES THE INHERENT JUDGEMENT THAT FREEDOM, THE WORTH OF HUMAN BEINGS IS BOTH SACROSANCT AND INDIVISIBLE. ATTEMPTS TO ERECT BORDERS OF PREJUDICE ACROSS SOCIETIES AND CULTURES IS A NEGATION OF THE ONENESS OF HUMANITY AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS. FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND LIBERTY OF HUMAN KIND ARE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS WHICH KNOW NO COLOUR, RACE, NO GENDER OR BOUNDARIES OF GEOGRAPHY. THE YEARNING FOR FREEDOM IS INHERENT IN BEING HUMAN, AS THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ALL FORMS OF OPPRESSION IS EQUALLY INHERENT IN HUMANKINDS' REFUSAL TO HAVE THAT FREEDOM CURTAILED OR CIRCUMSCRIBED. THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM, THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY IS ESSENTIALLY A STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. THE RIGHT TO BE HUMAN IS PARAMOUNT AND ALL OTHER RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS DRAW RELEVANCE FROM THE CENTRAL RIGHT OF PRESERVING ONE'S HUMANITY.

IN AFRICA AS ELSEWHERE, PEOPLE CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE FOR THEIR FREEDOM IN ALL ITS MANIFESTATIONS - WHETHER IT IS FREEDOM OF SPEECH, FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND WORSHIP OR FREEDOM FROM WANT AND MISERY.

BUT WE ALL EXIST IN A COMMUNITY - WHETHER WITHIN SMALL SOCIETIES, WITHIN NATIONS AND AT THE BROADER LEVEL WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS. THIS COMMUNAL LIVING IMPOSES ON US, INDIVIDUALS AND NATIONS, CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. THAT OBLIGATION IS TO CONDITION OUR FREEDOM TO THAT OF OTHER INDIVIDUALS AND NATIONS SO THAT RELATIVE FREEDOM IS ENJOYED BY ALL. THE DEGREE OF FREEDOM OR LIBERTY WITHIN A COMMUNITY AND EVEN AMONG NATIONS HAS TO BE RELATIVE. MAXIMUM FREEDOM IS UNREALISTIC AND CAN DEGENERATE INTO ANARCHY. THE RIGHT TO BE FREE HAS TO BE EXERCISED WITHIN A CONTEXT OF DISCERNIBLE ENTITIES - WHICH ENTITIES HAVE RULES AND REGULATIONS, CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS. IT IS THESE LIMITED CONSTRAINTS WHICH GOVERN THE EXTENT OF ONE'S FREEDOM AND WHICH SEEK TO REGULATE HUMAN BEHAVIOUR. ANY SOCIETY NEEDS RULES, ANY GOVERNMENT NEEDS LAWS SIMPLY AS ANY CLUB NEEDS REGULATIONS. BUT THE IDEA IS NOT AND MUST NOT BE TO CURTAIL OR TO UNDERMINE FREEDOM. RATHER, IT MUST BE TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS A BALANCE OF RIGHTS AND AN EQUAL SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITIES. ANY IMBALANCE WOULD GENERATE CHAOS, AND WOULD BE INIMICAL TO DEMOCRACY. IN THIS CONTEXT WE MUST AVOID EXTREMISM OF ALL KINDS.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

GOVERNMENTS IN OUR CONTINENT HAVE INVARIABLY ALL TRIED, SOME AGAINST TREMENDOUS ODDS TO RAISE THE LOT OF THEIR PEOPLE FROM THE OPPRESSION OF POVERTY.

OBVIOUSLY THE SUCCESSES HAVE BEEN LIMITED BUT NOT WITHOUT SIGNIFICANCE. YET THERE IS NO DENYING THE FACT THAT IN SOME CASES, INCIDENCES OF CONTINUED VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARE STILL IN PREVALENCE. THESE WE MUST NOT TOLERATE, MUCH LESS



TO EXPLAIN, JUSTIFY OR CONDONE. AFRICA FOUGHT AGAINST COLONIALISM. WE ARE STILL FIGHTING AGAINST RACISM AND APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA. WE FOUGHT THESE EVILS BECAUSE THEY EMASCULATED OUR HUMANITY, AND DENIED US OUR FREEDOM. THESE SYSTEMS KILLED OUR PEOPLE, UNDERMINED OUR CULTURES AND TRADITIONS AND STIFLED OUR CREATIVITY AND INDUSTRY BY USE OF RACIST IDEOLOGIES. THEY DENIED US OUR RIGHT TO BE HUMAN. WE WON AGAINST COLONIALISM AND WE ARE WINNING AGAINST INSTITUTIONALIZED RACISM. BUT THESE VICTORIES WERE NOT WITHOUT MUCH SACRIFICE BY OUR PEOPLE EVEN IF WITH INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

VICTORY OVER THE TYRANNY OF COLONIALISM AND APARTHEID HAVE NOT MEANT THAT AFRICA HAS ERADICATED ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS. INDEED, AS I HAVE ALREADY STATED, VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE BEEN COMMON PLACE AND ARE STILL VERY MUCH IN PREVALENCE ON THE CONTINENT. PEOPLE ARE STILL SUBJECT TO THE ABUSES OF POWER AND THEIR FREEDOMS ARE CONSTRAINED MORE OFTEN ON ACCOUNT OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY. THIS IS HOWEVER NOT TO SAY THAT AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE NOT TRIED TO STEM THOSE ABUSES. SOMETIMES THE VERY FRAGILE NATURE OF OUR SOCIETIES EMERGING FROM COLONIALISM, WERE UNEQUIPPED TO HANDLE THE DAUNTING CHALLENGE OF CONSTRAINING THE NATURAL APPETITE OF THE STRONG TO DOMINATE THE WEAK, OF THE RICH TO FURTHER IMPOVERISH THE POOR IN ANY SOCIETY. ADDITIONALLY, THE LEGACY OF COLONIAL VIOLENCE, PROVIDED READY REFERENCE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR CERTAIN EXCESSES AS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER IN A SOCIETY IN TRANSITION. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THE REMNANTS OF THE COLONIAL APPARATUS WHICH STAYED BEHIND TO ASSIST IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION, INSTIGATED STRONG ARM TACTICS TO DEAL WITH OPPOSITION TO THE NEW GOVERNMENTS AND PROMOTED PARAMILITARISM AS AN INSTRUMENT OF PACIFICATION.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE LEGACY OF COLONIAL VIOLENCE IS ONE PART OF THE POSSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR THE DIFFICULTIES AFRICA FACED AND STILL FACES IN TRYING TO DEAL WITH ISSUES OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE OTHER PART IS OBVIOUSLY HUMAN AND POLICY FAILURES. FOR THERE ARE CASES IN AFRICA, WHERE NOTWITHSTANDING THE LEGACY OF COLONIAL VIOLENCE, SERIOUS ATTEMPTS WERE MADE TO CREATE SYSTEMS WHICH WERE FOUNDED ON THE WORTH OF HUMAN BEINGS AND OPERATED ON THE BASIS OF JUSTICE. IN THESE CASES, WE HAVE SEEN AN EVOLUTION OF A CULTURE OF TOLERANCE AND A TRADITION OF FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

IF I SAY THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES ARE STILL PREVALENT IN AFRICA, IT IS NOT TO SAY THAT GOVERNMENTS HAVE NOT TRIED OR ARE NOT TRYING. QUITE TO THE CONTRARY; THERE IS ACROSS THE CONTINENT A MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE. INDIVIDUALLY, COUNTRIES ARE RISING TO THE CHALLENGE, EITHER VOLUNTARILY OR BY FORCE OF PUBLIC OPINION. NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS ARE BEING FORMED IN MANY COUNTRIES AND THESE COMMISSIONS ARE EMERGING AS FOCAL POINTS FOR MONITORING THE PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENTS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS. MOST COUNTRIES HAVE ACCEDED TO INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS WHICH SEEK TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS. IN ADDITION TO SUBSCRIBING TO THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AFRICA HAS ON ITS OWN ADOPTED THE AFRICAN CHARTER OF HUMAN AND PEOPLES RIGHTS.

THE CHARTER SEEKS TO PROPAGATE THE INVIOABILITY OF HUMAN BEINGS AND THEIR CORRESPONDING RIGHT TO THE RESPECT OF THE DIGNITY INHERENT IN BEING HUMAN. MOST SIGNIFICANTLY THE CHARTER PLACES UPON THE GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE THAT THE PEOPLE ENJOY THEIR FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND HAVE FULL ACCESS TO THEIR



RIGHTS WITHOUT POLITICAL HINDRANCE. AS A FURTHER DEMONSTRATION OF THEIR SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE, THE GOVERNMENTS OF AFRICA SET UP THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES RIGHTS TO OVERSEE THE OBSERVANCE OF THE CHARTER. OBVIOUSLY MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE BY WAY OF STRENGTHENING THE COMMISSION; EQUIPPING IT WITH THE NECESSARY POLITICAL MANDATE AND ENABLING IT PLAY AN ENHANCED ROLE. THIS NOTWITHSTANDING, I AM OF THE VIEW THAT WE ARE ON TO A GOOD BEGINNING AND THE CHALLENGE BEFORE US IS TO CONSOLIDATE THESE ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXPAND TO NEW AVENUES. IN THIS CONNECTION IT IS VERY SIGNIFICANT THAT AT THE LAST SESSION IN DAKAR, SENEGAL, THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE OAU CALLED FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THE COMMISSION SO THAT IT CAN BETTER LIVE UP TO ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA HAS MANY DIMENSIONS. AND BECAUSE HUMAN RIGHTS ARE ALL EMBRACING, THERE IS IN EACH ASPECT OF STRUGGLE IN AFRICA, THE CENTRAL ELEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE MOVEMENT WE NOW SEE IN AFRICA, THE STRONG WINDS OF CHANGE BLOWING ACROSS THE CONTINENT ARE IN A VERY REAL SENSE ALL ONE LARGE AND AN ALL ENCOMPASSING MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

IN AFRICA, PEOPLE ARE NOW AGITATING FOR CHANGE. PEOPLE ARE SAYING CHANGE MUST COME AND NOW. AND GOVERNMENTS ARE RESPONDING. THE MOVE TO MULTIPARTISM IS A PACE IN THE CONTINENT; AS ISSUES OF DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL GOVERNANCE HAVE BECOME CENTRAL TO THE DEBATE ON THE NEW SOCIETIES WE WISH TO CREATE IN AFRICA. WHAT THE PEOPLE ARE SAYING IS THAT THEY WANT A SAY ON HOW THEY ARE GOVERNED AND BY WHO , ON HOW POLICIES ARE MADE AND IMPLEMENTED. IN SUM, THEY WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN DETERMINING THEIR FUTURE. AGAIN GOVERNMENTS ARE RESPONDING

BY CONVERTING TO POPULAR PARTICIPATION AND SITUATING THE PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE OF POLITICAL GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THERE ARE NOW PROCESSES OF ELECTIONS IN MOST COUNTRIES IN AFRICA; AND THE OAU IS HAPPY TO HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROCESS BY WAY OF BEING INVITED TO OBSERVE THE ELECTION PROCESS.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

IF WE ARE TO ENSURE HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA, WE MUST FIGHT THE UNDERLYING CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH ARE INIMICAL TO THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OR MILITATE AGAINST THEM. THIS IS TO SAY WE MUST PUT IN PLACE SYSTEMS WHICH ARE GEARED TOWARDS THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FIGHT NOTIONS OF PREJUDICE WHICH MAY BE ADVANCED TO JUSTIFY CIRCUMSCRIPTION OF THESE RIGHTS. TO FIGHT THOSE OBSTACLES WHICH STAND IN THE WAY EFFECTIVELY, WE HAVE TO BEGIN WITH THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS IN GOVERNMENT.

WE NEED TO CREATE GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE ACCOUNTABLE, AND WHICH DO NOT OPERATE IN OBSCURED SECRECY OF BUREAUCRACY AND POLITICAL PATRONAGE. WE NEED TO HAVE GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE LEVERAGED UPON THE BALANCE BETWEEN THEIR OBLIGATIONS TO THE PEOPLE WHO ELECT THEM INTO OFFICE AND THEIR LEGAL PREROGATIVES TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY. A SYSTEM, IN WHICH THE PEOPLE FEEL MEANINGFUL WILL NOT ONLY ENJOY THEIR SUPPORT BUT WILL COMMIT THEM TO AN ALLIANCE FOR ITS SURVIVAL. A SYSTEM WHICH ENJOINS THE PEOPLE INTO AN ALLIANCE, MUST BE ONE WHICH IS SELF-POLICED THROUGH A SET OF CHECKS AND BALANCES. SEPARATION OF POWERS, FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, ELECTIONS, POPULAR PARTICIPATION ARE ALL ATTRIBUTES OF A FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY IN WHICH THE RESPECT FOR THE WORTH OF HUMAN BEING, THE RIGHT TO BE HUMAN IS CENTRAL. WE MUST CREATE INSTITUTIONS WHICH WILL OVERSEE THE FUNCTIONING OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN OUR COUNTRIES.



TO BE HUMAN, AND TO BE ABLE TO ENJOY THE RIGHT OF BEING HUMAN, ONE MUST BE ALIVE. THIS IS WHY ANY EFFORT TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS MUST BE LINKED TO THE RIGHT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. POVERTY AND MISERY ARE A NEGATION OF HUMANITY AND UNDERMINE THE PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRACY. WE CAN NOT ABLY PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS IN SITUATIONS OF ABJECT POVERTY, AND WHERE THE ASSURANCE FOR A DAY'S MEAL IS UNCERTAIN, THE RIGHT TO HUMAN RIGHTS MUST BE FOUNDED UPON THE RIGHT TO A DECENT MEAL AND TO LIFE ITSELF.

IN AFRICA, THERE IS THE CLEAR REALIZATION THAT THE PROMOTION OF THE WELFARE OF OUR PEOPLE IS PIVOTAL, AND MUST CONSTITUTE A CENTRAL SEAM LINKING AND BINDING THE VARIOUS ENDEAVOURS OF THE CONTINENT. BY THE SIGNATURE OF THE ABUJA TREATY ESTABLISHING THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY LAST YEAR, THE COUNTRIES OF AFRICA, EXPRESSED A COMMON DETERMINATION TO PURSUE THE GOAL OF INTEGRATION PURPOSEFULLY. IT WAS IN THE REALIZATION THAT WHILE SOUND ECONOMIC POLICIES AND MANAGEMENT AT HOME WILL REVERSE THE ECONOMIC DECLINES AND RESTORE GROWTH TO OUR ECONOMIES, THE LONG TERM ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF AFRICA, LIES IN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION. IT IS THE SAME CONSIDERATION WHICH IS URGING THE EUROPEANS TO COME TOGETHER, EVEN IN THE FACE OF SOME RESISTANCE OR HESITATION FROM SOME AMONG THEM.

THE STRUGGLE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC EMANCIPATION WHICH IS AT THE HEART OF THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY UNDERTAKING, IS MOTIVATED BY AN EMPHATIC DESIRE BY OUR GOVERNMENTS TO LIFT THE LOT OF THEIR PEOPLE FROM THE GRIP OF EXCEEDING POVERTY.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

WHILE AFRICA IS IN THE PROCESS OF FURTHER DEMOCRATIZATION AND BEGINNING ALONG THE PATH OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION, THERE IS STRONG REALIZATION THAT DEMOCRACY, PROGRESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

CAN NOT BE BROUGHT ABOUT OR ENSURED IN SITUATIONS OF CONFLICT. WITHOUT SOCIAL ORDER AND PEACE, NO REALISTIC ATTEMPT CAN BE MADE TO ADDRESS THE MANY PROBLEMS WHICH FACE AFRICA. HOW CAN YOU SPEAK OF DEMOCRACY, OR ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OR HUMAN RIGHTS IN TRAGIC AND CALAMITOUS SITUATIONS SUCH AS SOMALIA. ARMED CONFLICTS HAVE DECIMATED OUR POPULATIONS, BROUGHT ABOUT MISERY AND SUFFERING AND DESTROYED OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY. CONFLICTS IN THE CONTINENT HAVE UNDERMINED THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. EFFORTS TO END CONFLICTS ARE THEREFORE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE HUMAN AND PEOPLES RIGHTS. TO THIS END, I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT HERCULEAN EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY IN AFRICA TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF CONFLICTS - THOSE WITHIN NATIONS AND AMONG NATIONS.

INCREASINGLY, COUNTRIES ARE BECOMING DISPOSED TO AN OAU ROLE IN ASSISTING MEMBER STATES TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS. PERHAPS MORE SIGNIFICANT IS THE EVOLVING PERCEPTION THAT WHILE THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF STATES REMAINS SACROSANCT, IT SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO MASK INDIFFERENCE IN THE FACE OF ACUTE HUMAN SUFFERING. THE PRINCIPLE OF HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION IS STILL EVOLVING BUT ALREADY HAVING PRACTICAL APPLICATION IN AFRICA. IN ADDITION TO THIS QUITE NOVEL PRINCIPLE IN AFRICA, THERE IS A DECISION TO SET UP WITHIN THE OAU, A MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE ORGANIZATION TO RESPOND WITH SPEED AND EFFECTIVENESS TO SITUATIONS OF CONFLICT.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THIS IS A PREPARATORY MEETING, AND THEREFORE, IT IS EXPECTED TO COME OUT WITH SPECIFIC VIEWS AS TO HOW AFRICA SEES ITSELF IN THE WHOLE DYNAMISM OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT ENCOMPASSING HUMAN RIGHTS. THE MEETING IS EXPECTED TO CONVEY THIS IMAGE AND VIEW OF THE CONTINENT TO THE WORLD AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE NEXT YEAR. IN MY VIEW, THE MESSAGE WE SHOULD TAKE



TO THE WORLD IS ONE OF STRIVING, HOPE AND EXPECTATION. IT IS OF STRIVING BECAUSE, I AM CONVINCED THAT AFRICA IS NOW ENGAGED IN TREMENDOUS EFFORTS TO CORRECT THE MANY MISTAKES OF THE PAST. THERE IS DETERMINED EFFORT TO BRING AN END TO THE SEEMINGLY ENDEMIC CONFLICTS WHICH HAVE DECIMATED OUR CONTINENT.

THERE ARE SUSTAINED EFFORTS TO RESTRUCTURE OUR ECONOMIES, TO ARREST ECONOMIC DETERIORATION AND RESTORE PRODUCTIVITY AND GROWTH TO OUR ECONOMIES. THIS IS DONE INVARIABLY AT GREAT SOCIAL COST AND POLITICAL RISK. THERE IS NOW A CLEAR DIRECTION ON THE PART OF AFRICA TOWARDS ECONOMIC INTEGRATION.

THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION IS TAKING ROOT IN THE CONTINENT AS COUNTRY AFTER COUNTRY IS CONVERTING TO MULTIPARTY POLITICS AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION. ALL THESE EFFORTS EMBODY HOPE FOR THE CONTINENT, AND NOTWITHSTANDING THE MISPLACED NOTIONS OF AFRO-PESSIMISM, THE CONTINENT IS ON GOOD FOOTING AND THERE IS HOPE IN THE HORIZON. BUT OUR EFFORTS AND HOPE ALONE WILL NOT SUFFICE TO HANDLE THE MONUMENTAL PROBLEMS FACING AFRICA.

WE THEREFORE EXPECT THAT INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WILL INTERPLAY WITH OUR OWN EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE CONTINENT'S ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS. THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT, THE RIGHT TO THE FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND OTHERS ARE UNIVERSAL AND INDIVISIBLE. WE EXPECT THAT THE WORLD WILL UNDERSTAND THAT WE CAN NOT HAVE HUMAN RIGHTS CONFINED AND ENJOYED ONLY BY THE FEW IN THE DEVELOPED NORTH. AS WE STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WE EXPECT THAT INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WILL BE EXTENDED TO AFRICA. FOR WE CAN NOT FURTHER THE CAUSE OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS WITHOUT DEVELOPMENT. PEOPLE MUST BE ABLE TO EAT, TO READ AND WRITE AMONG OTHERS, TO BE ABLE TO BE AWARE OF THEIR RIGHTS AND ADVOCATE THEM. ILLITERACY AND IGNORANCE ARE BY THEMSELVES INCONSISTENT WITH



THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. TO AFRICA THEREFORE, HUMAN RIGHTS MUST MEAN THE ABILITY OF THE PEOPLE TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE FACTORS OF LIVING, ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER, TO SCHOOLS, TO SHELTER, TO MEDICAL CARE AND TO FOOD AMONG OTHERS.

AFRICA EXISTS IN THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS. ITS PEOPLE, LIKE THOSE OF EUROPE, ASIA OR AMERICA, HAVE THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS AS A PEOPLE. BUT FOR THEM TO ENJOY THOSE RIGHTS, THEIR COUNTRIES MUST HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE. THE EMERGING ORDER, WE EXPECT, WILL BE ONE PREDICTED ON EQUITY AND JUSTICE, TO NATIONS AND PEOPLES AND NOT ONE WHICH WILL SEEK TO PERPETUATE THE DOMINANCE OF POWER AND IMPOSE THE WILL OF THOSE WHO WIELD THAT POWER. HUMAN RIGHTS CAN NOT EXIST IN THE ABSENCE OF DEMOCRACY. THIS IS TRUE AT NATIONAL LEVEL AS IT IS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. ENSURING PEOPLES RIGHTS IS NOT POSSIBLE IN THE ABSENCE OF INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRACY. AS WE SEEK TO UNIVERSALIZE DEMOCRACY AT NATIONAL LEVEL, WE EXPECT THAT THOSE POWERFUL WILL DEMONSTRATE THE SAME ZEAL IN PROMOTING DEMOCRACY IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM.

I THANK YOU.