

STATEMENT BY H.E. SALIM A. SALIM  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAU AT THE 12TH SESSION  
OF THE PTA AUTHORITY

5 November 1993  
Kampala, Uganda

**President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni**  
**Excellencies Heads of State and Government**  
**Honourable Ministers**  
**H.E. The Secretary General of the PTA**  
**Invited Guests**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a singular source of pleasure for me to be able to address this 12th Session of the Heads of State and Government of the PTA Authority. But before doing so, allow me Mr Chairman to extend my very sincere appreciation to you, to the Government and people of Uganda for the excellent facilities which have been put at our disposal since our arrival in this city. Uganda's disposition and readiness to host the PTA Summit for a second time in 5 years, is a clear manifestation of its leadership's determination to contribute to the search for solutions to many development and political problems facing the countries of the region.

I am particularly pleased to see the delegation of Eritrea in the meetings of the PTA Authority for the first time. I would like, in this regard, to seize this opportunity to welcome the State of Eritrea and the Republic of Madagascar as members of the PTA.

Your Excellencies will recall that the implementation of the provisions of the Abuja Treaty is envisaged to be carried out in stages following its ratification by the required number of OAU Member States. The first and perhaps most important requirement will be that of building the African Economic Community on the basis of a bedrock of strong regional economic communities such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa whose Treaty will be signed here in Kampala. In this regard, the signing of the COMESA Treaty is a major contribution to the implementation of the AEC Treaty in many ways.

Following the signing of the COMESA Treaty, it will be possible for the OAU and COMESA Secretariats to build on their common resolve in order to complement one another. It will, for instance, be much easier for the two Secretariats to start the implementation of clearly identified and agreed upon priority programmes within the framework of the Abuja and COMESA Treaties.

This is especially so in those critical integrating sectors such as transport and communication, trade, money and finance, industry and agriculture. Our common approach in these and other related areas will greatly contribute to the adoption of cohesive policy measures by Member States, in the region and in the context of regional integration and economic cooperation. A common approach by the countries of the region, in such matters as the harmonisation of investment codes, monetary and fiscal

policies or the adoption of a common strategy regarding the management of the region's external debt, would greatly strengthen the position of all Member States both at national and international levels.

Your Excellencies may perhaps wish to know the progress which has so far been made as regards the signing and ratification of the Treaty establishing the African Economic community. According to the provisions of the AEC Treaty, the Treaty should come into force following its ratification by two-thirds of Member States. The process of ratification has been rather slow but re-assuring. To-date, thirty-four Member States (34) of the 52 OAU Member States have ratified the AEC Treaty. This means that we are left with only one country before the coming into force of the AEC Treaty. So far, all indications are that we should be able to get into place the operations of the AEC Treaty before the end of the year. In this regard, I would like to seize this opportunity to urge those Member States present here, which have not yet ratified the AEC, to do so as expeditiously as possible, in order to enable us to interface AEC programmes and activities with those of COMESA.

**Mr Chairman**

**Excellencies**

Allow me at this juncture to pay tribute to the PTA Member States and to the PTA Secretariat for the significant achievements which have been made in the past decade. I

am doing so because of the wider overview I have as regards other regional economic communities in Africa, given the relatively short time the PTA has been in existence.

This is a significant step not only in the PTA region, but also for the entire membership of the OAU.

**Mr Chairman**

We have before us, the report and recommendations of the Ministers on a number of issues on which decisions are expected to be reached. Perhaps the most important aspect to be addressed is the Treaty establishing the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The Treaty which is about to be signed, is an extremely important instrument in many ways. The most crucial contribution of COMESA is that the COMESA Treaty has been designed in such a way as to promote overall transformation of the economies of the region, and in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC).

Your Excellencies will recall that the implementation of the provisions of the Abuja Treaty is envisaged to be carried out in stages, following its ratification by the required number of OAU Member States. I will take for example the question of the expansion of membership of the PTA to include more countries. This is a significant achievement and it is an indication of the seriousness and commitment

which Member States of the PTA have demonstrated with a view to forging closer cooperation within the framework of a wider economic space. Such cooperation will undoubtedly help Member States in their efforts to tap and to effectively utilize the natural and human resource potential of the region.

Besides the expansion in membership, the PTA has also made important strides in a number of sectors. The Secretary General of the PTA has adequately addressed this matter. The PTA Development Report 1982 - 1992 before Your Excellencies details achievements of this region. It is not my intention here to repeat what was reflected in that excellent report. However, I would like to point out to Your Excellencies that these achievements are welcome by all of us. I would therefore, like to seize this opportunity to commend Member States of the PTA region for these achievements and to urge them to seize the opportunities for higher successes which the COMESA framework brings in.

**Mr Chairman,**

All our efforts towards the economic development of our continent and the betterment of the life of our people will be futile if peace, security and stability are not achieved, secured and guaranteed. We are living in a very competitive world and if we do not make Africa attractive to our own national investors, we have only ourselves to blame. I

therefore, urge you to do every thing possible to bring peace in this region to enable our people devote their energies to production and exchange.

**Mr Chairman,**

At this juncture, however, it would be appropriate to recall what has evidently become a truism for us now in Africa: that we cannot hope to find any measure of success emanating from our efforts aimed at economic integration, reconstruction and development for which the PTA and the proposed COMESA were conceived, unless we also tackle with vigour and commitment, the task of ensuring the maintenance, and more importantly, the sustenance of peace and stability on the Continent.

It could hardly be over-emphasized that it is impractical to expect our countries, both individually and collectively, to make the economic leap forward so ardently desired and to sustain, thereby, any momentum created, when essential constituents in terms of human and material resources are destroyed, consumed and dissipated, and, indeed sacrificed, at the alter of war.

Every conflict, Mr. Chairman, takes us back a number of steps, wiping out to some degree the progress we have painfully worked to achieve. Every conflict detracts from our image as a continent with a seriousness of purpose, with realizable future and with a real capacity to deliver, when

images of death, destruction, devastation and despair increasingly flit over the television screens all over the world.

Indeed, our continuing pre-occupation with the horrendous phenomenon of conflicts on the continent, which phenomenon has demonstrated an uncanny power to rear its ugly head in any and every region of our continent, and often at such short notice, has without doubt justified your decision, taken collectively with your other African colleagues at the Cairo Summit in June this year, to set up a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

In the past few months since the Mechanism was established, we have focussed on its operationalization. Such issues as have engaged our attention in that regard have included the crucial issue of funding without which the Mechanism will become inoperable: the laying down of guidelines of a procedural nature for the Central Organ, as well as the strengthening of the Secretariat's own technical capacity to handle the ever increasing number of conflicts, in accordance with its mandate in the Declaration. I am pleased to mention that the first Ministerial meeting ever of the Central Organ will be held this month, from the 17th - 19th to be followed by the first meeting ever at Summit level on the 6th - 7th December 1993. These two meetings will be a natural follow-up to the many formal meetings which the Central Organ has already had at Ambassadorial level in Addis Ababa. The Ambassadors, together with the



Secretariat, while carrying out the onerous and delicate task of enabling the fledgling Central Organ take its first steps, have dealt both with technical issues of a procedural and operational nature as well as those of substantive import; and have, with regard to the latter, endeavoured to make the Central Organ become what it was conceived to be: an efficient means for achieving a common African position on what action should be taken to resolve African crises, in between sessions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. In that light, the Central Organ, meetings thus far at the level of Ambassadors, has regularly reviewed conflict situations on the continent, and made pronouncements on specific issues, including those relating to Angola and Burundi.

Those of us who have been closely involved with the operation of the Mechanism, have proceeded on the presumption, arising from both the letter and the spirit of the Declaration setting up the Mechanism, that greater emphasis should be put on conflict prevention with a view to removing the potential for conflict wherever it exists.

**Mr Chairman**

Indeed, in recent weeks, there has been no pointer more poignant of the prime need for taking timely action to prevent potential conflicts which, seemingly in the wink of an eye, are able to transform themselves into ugly wars of horrendous dimensions, than the tragic events which have

unfolded in Burundi, a Member State of both the PTA and the OAU. There, as we know, a misguided coup led to an attempt to overthrow the elected Government as well as the murder of President Ndadaye and some of his close associates including the President and the vice-President of the National Assembly. Our grave concern about the situation in Burundi not only emanates from the fact that there has been a very high rate of casualties in such a short period, with thousands dead and hundreds of thousands more refugees and displaced persons, but also because it is a unique instance of the disruption, at a very early stage, of a process of democratization which had culminated only about six months ago in the holding of democratic elections, in whose monitoring the OAU had participated, along with other members of the international community.

It is to be recalled that the 1990 Summit in Addis Ababa, called for further democratization and greater respect for human rights; and since then, in spite of a few slips and imperfections, we have been witness to an Africa, which, while drawing on its rich own culture and tradition, has demonstrated sheer courage and determination by firmly setting foot on the forward journey to democratic transformation.

Thus, to the extent that this unsuccessful coup constitutes a shocking and cynical attempt to disrupt this trend, it was heartening to note the outright condemnation with which it was received all over the Continent and, indeed, beyond. The fact of the matter was that the coup

had implications for the prospects of the process of democratization not only in Burundi and the region, but in Africa as a whole.

You would, in that regard, recall the Summit of neighbouring countries, kindly hosted by President Habyarimana of Rwanda, which among other things, expressed its outright condemnation of the coup. You would also recall that within the OAU, following my own condemnation of the coup the very day it occurred, the fledgling Central Organ of the Mechanism met at Ambassadorial level in two extraordinary sessions, first to condemn the coup as well, and to demand an immediate return to constitutional rule: and subsequently to lend the formal backing of the OAU to the call of the Kigali Summit that an international force for stabilisation and confidence-building, drawn essentially from Africa, be deployed in Burundi. It also endorsed the role accorded by the Kigali Summit to the UN Secretary General, in conjunction with the OAU Secretary-General, to ensure the establishment of such an international force with the minimum of delay.

On my part, while on a visit to the region during that period to witness the cessation of the OAU's military operation in Rwanda and its formal hand-over to the UN, I not only seized the opportunity to attend the Kigali Summit in the capacity of an observer but I also travelled to Bujumbura. There I met, in the French Embassy, with the Prime Minister, Madame Sylvie Kinigi, and other members

of the legitimate Government of Burundi and subsequently representatives of the Army High Command. I wish to inform you that the issue of an international force, especially as regards its size and its clearly non-interventionist nature, featured prominently in the broader context of my discussions with both the legitimate government, which had made a clear request for such a force, and the military as to the ways and means by which a climate of stability, confidence and normalcy could be restored to the country. It is my hope that whatever initial hurdles might presently be manifest as regards the deployment of such a force, will soon be overcome.

To that end, and following the promises I made to the legitimate government and the Army High Command, I have despatched a mission, composed of my Special Envoy, Ambassador Papa Louis Fall of Senegal, and officials of the Secretariat. This mission should not only assist in creating common ground for agreement on measures to be taken so as to move rapidly towards the resolution of the crisis and assist in building confidence in the country.

Elsewhere in Africa, Mr. Chairman, we have endeavored to monitor situations of potential and actual conflict, and where possible, have tried to deploy efforts towards achieving solutions.

Thus in Somalia, Africa's involvement has been enhanced, through the "good offices" of President Meles

Zenawi of Ethiopia, with whom I have been working closely, to see how our desired objectives can be brought about. We welcome the new thrust that emphasizes the diplomatic rather than the military approach and we trust that a diplomatic solution can be achieved while UNISOM's presence in Somalia remains strong.

On Liberia, I wish to express my continuing concern about developments there. Though some hope has emerged with the reaching and signing of the Peace Agreement in Cotonou to which the OAU, through its Eminent Personality, former President Canaan Banana of Zimbabwe, made no mean contribution, the fact remains that though the countries concerned have expressed their readiness to provide contingents to the non-ECOWAS component of an international force in Liberia, has been constrained by a lack of resources in monitoring this force.

In Congo, the OAU continues to be involved in assisting the people of that country bring to completion the democratization process. This is in accordance with the agreement in which it has played a pivotal role both in brokering and implementing the situation.

The situation in Mozambique where some signs of hope have lately emerged continues to receive our attention where, at the request of the Government, we have set up and

OAU office headed by my Special Representative, enabling us to monitor the situation on a continuing basis.

In Angola, in spite of a number of initiatives undertaken by the international community, including earlier initiative of the OAU Ad Hoc Committee of Heads of State and Government on Southern Africa to despatch a Mission consisting of the Presidents of Zimbabwe and Cape Verde, as well as the Secretary General of the OAU, the situation, including details which emerged recently about the horrific humanitarian crisis caused by the war, has continued to cause concern.

Finally, with regard to South Africa, while the decisions of the OAU to lift economic sanctions has been followed by the recent General Assembly decision to lift still more, we must continue to monitor the situation in order to maintain the momentum in the steady transition to a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

