

SPEECH OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE 58TH ORDINARY SESSION  
OF THE OAU COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE LIBERATION OF AFRICA

DAKAR, 19 JUNE 1992

(10)

Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs for  
International Cooperation of Tanzania  
and Acting Chairman of the 57th Session  
of the Liberation Committee, H.E. Ahmed Hassan Diria  
Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal  
representing the Host Government, H.E. Djibo Ka  
The Executive Secretary of the OAU Liberation  
Committee, Brigadier Hashim Mbita  
Your Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me at the outset to express, on behalf of the OAU General Secretariat, our sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Senegal for hosting this session of the Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa which is taking place in this beautiful city of Dakar. This is, indeed, an eloquent testimony of the commitment of the people and the authorities of Senegal to the total liberation of the Continent. I also wish to thank the esteemed representative of the Senegalese government, the distinguished Foreign Minister, H.E. Djibo Ka, who has just delivered a very important statement which will certainly inspire our deliberations.

Mr. Chairman,

Our present session is meeting at a crucial stage for the people of South Africa. Indeed, since our last session in Arusha, very important events related to South Africa have taken place. The 8th Session of the OAU Ad Hoc Committee of Heads of State and Government on Southern Africa was held on 28 April in Arusha, Tanzania. The Session took important decisions on behalf of all Member States. In South Africa itself CODESA was reconvened on 14 and 15 May 1992.

Mr. Chairman,

You will recall that at their last meetings in February both the Liberation Committee and the Council of Ministers, as well as the Ad Hoc Committee last April, welcomed the commencement of the negotiation process within the framework of CODESA aimed at establishing a new South Africa because we believed and still believe that the country is at the threshold of a non-racial and democratic society based on majority rule. However, while welcoming the positive changes in South Africa, the OAU has always cautioned against unbridled optimism. I am referring to this because Africa and the international Community were expecting that CODESA II would be a watershed development in the peace process, building on the progress already made. We were looking forward to the establishment of an Interim Government and a definitive agreement on the constitution making body. Unfortunately this was not possible at the last plenary session of CODESA owing to the intransigence and unrealistic demands of the Government of Mr. de Klerk and his Nationalist Party, despite the constructive promises offered by the ANC and other participants in CODESA. South Africa is part of the world and its constitution can only be drafted or adopted in line with universally accepted practice: it cannot be an exception. Where else in the world are majority votes of 75% required for the adoption of a constitution? Where can we find such precedence? The 2/3 majority vote is a widely accepted practice for a constitution-making body in drafting and adopting the supreme law of a country. The example of Namibia is still fresh in our minds and the ANC went beyond that by accepting 70% majority vote for the constitution and 75% for the Bill of Rights. The failure of CODESA II to achieve the much expected break through was a great disappointment. The fact that this set back came primarily due to the South African Government's attempts to block genuine majority rule puts in question the regime's sincerity in the negotiating process.

Mr. Chairman,

The OAU and the rest of the international community hope that the South African Government will drop its unreasonable and unrealistic demands so that the negotiation process will continue without any further hindrance. In the meantime and taking into account the current developments, there is an urgent need now, more than ever before for Africa to stick to the decision of the Ad Hoc Committee which called for cohesion and concerted action by the International Community so that the necessary pressure will continue to be exerted on South Africa until an irreversible stage is reached in the process towards the establishment of a democratic, non racial and united South Africa. This is, in my view, the best and most effective way Africa can break the deadlock in the negotiations.

In this connection the Ad Hoc Committee has on behalf of Africa mapped out in unambiguous terms the phase at which the International Community can constructively enter into relationship with that country by asserting that that will only be possible when an interim government of national unity responsible for supervising the transition to democratic rule is in place.

Mr. Chairman,

The question of violence is also a main concern to us as it constitutes a major obstacle to the peace process. This is why the OAU Ad Hoc Committee resolved at its 8th Session, last April, to send an OAU Monitoring Team to especially assess that situation. The Team which travelled in May to South Africa made a first assessment in its report which confirmed inter alia that the security forces were involved in the wanton killings. The exhaustive report on the Mission will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for consideration. We cannot but condemn the perpetrators of violence whose objective is to undermine the struggle against apartheid without caring

for human lives. The wanton killings which have been perpetrated in the last seventy two hours are particularly distressing and serve to reinforce our fears that violence against the people of South Africa has not only become endemic but is also used in attempts to thwart the process of change. The Committee must renew its demand of the Government, which has the capacity, to stop violence without delay if it were to be credible. The OAU should continue on its part to monitor the situation of violence and endeavour to make a contribution to finding ways and means of ending the carnage.

Mr. Chairman,

It is against the background of all these developments that I would like to reiterate the need for unity among the black majority: a need which has become more obvious today than ever before. For it is self evident that only those wishing to maintain minority domination are benefiting from the division among the oppressed people. This Committee should reiterate the urgent necessity for the black majority and the anti-apartheid forces in general to act in concert, cohesion and solidarity at this crucial stage of the struggle for the total liberation of their country.

Mr. Chairman,

We have come a long way in our common struggle against the apartheid system. We are now beginning to see some light at the end of the tunnel. But the struggle is not over. Indeed considerable obstacles lie ahead thanks to what now increasingly appears to be the attempt by the South African Government to cling to power. The requirements of the hour is the unity of the oppressed people within South Africa as well as constant vigilance on the part of Africa and the international community. In this connection the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress must provide leadership. I am confident that this session of our committee will draw the appropriate

conclusions from the current developments in South Africa and resolve on how best to effectively encourage the process of genuine change. Above all, efforts must be made to overcome the current obstacles in the negotiations process so that the process of change is not aborted or diverted.