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STATEMENT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL, DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM

AT THE FLAG RAISING CEREMONY FOR ERITREA

AT THE OAU ON FRIDAY, 4 JUNE 1993

Mr. Haile Menkerios,  
Representative of ERITREA

Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

We are gathered here this afternoon to mark an important and historic event. We are here to observe a ceremony symbolizing the formal admission of ERITREA to our continental organization in accordance with the principles of our Organization, the pertinent rules of its Charter and the established practice of our Organization.

You will recall that the Eritrean referendum was held from 23 to 25th April 1993. The referendum was observed by the United Nations, the OAU, the League of Arab States, the Non-aligned Movement and many other international Organizations both governmental and non-governmental. The international observers stated that the referendum was free and fair and that it was held in conditions of peace and tranquility. As you know, the results of the referendum were an overwhelming assertion by the people of ERITREA for independence.

Subsequent to this referendum, and the proclamation of the independence of Eritrea, Mr. Issaias Afewerki then Secretary General of the Provisional Government of Eritrea communicated to me on the 3rd of May 1993, the intention of his country to be member of our continental organization. This request was immediately communicated to all Member States.

The request of Eritrea obtained the support of the necessary majority of Member States on June 2, 1993. On the same day, I communicated to the President of Eritrea, H.E. Mr. Issaias Afewerki

that the Eritrean request has attained the necessary majority required by Article 28 of the OAU Charter and that therefore the state of Eritrea became a member State of the Organization of African Unity.

The Member States of the Organization were informed of this development yesterday.

It is therefore my pleasure, on behalf of the General Secretariat of the OAU, to once again welcome the State of Eritrea into the OAU family of nations and warmly congratulate the people of Eritrea. I am looking forward to the contribution of the new State of Eritrea in our common endeavour towards the achievement of the objectives of our continental organization. I have no doubt that Eritrea will bring to our organization its important contribution to our efforts aimed at ensuring the socio-economic development of our peoples and promoting peace, security, stability, understanding and cooperation in our continent. In this respect, it is my confident hope that Eritrea will play a positive role in maintaining and enhancing an atmosphere of understanding and close cooperation between the peoples and countries of this region which has so much potential and yet has seen so much suffering and devastation brought about by man-made and natural calamities.

I also look forward to the emergence and consolidation of an era of entente, understanding, cooperation and solidarity among the countries of the region in general and Eritrea and Ethiopia in particular whose peoples have so much in common and whose cooperation and solidarity will contribute immensely to the development of both countries and the region as a whole.

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REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE  
ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY, DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM  
AT THE CLOSURE OF THE CONFERENCE ON  
NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IN SOMALIA  
AFRICA HALL, ADDIS ABABA: SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 1993

Mr. Chairman,

Dear Somali Brothers and Sisters,

For two weeks you have been meeting here. During this period you have had lengthy and extensive discussions on the tragic situation in your country and what can and should be done. You have at times disagreed. There have been moments when you and all of us who have been supporting the peace process have been utterly frustrated. But neither you nor us had ever given up. Your patience and perseverance has now been rewarded. We now have the Addis Ababa Agreement as a culmination of this National Reconciliation Conference.

I wish therefore first and foremost to pay tribute to where it rightly deserves namely to all the Somali leaders and participants at this Conference: For it is you who have made this Agreement possible. In this connection, I wish to recognize the important role played by the Somali women present in this conference who have worked assiduously and with unflinching determination for the achievement of this Agreement. In the last two weeks I have had many contacts with the different leaders of political factions and groups. I also met separately with an impressive group of Somali women. I was inspired by their commitment and dedication to peace and moved by their resolve that the pain, suffering and anguish of Somalia must come to an end. Their commitment was total. Meeting them and hearing their words of anguish and iron determination convinced me that this conference was bound to succeed.



I also wish to join General Aideed and Mr. Ali Mahdi in paying a particular tribute to the President of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia Ato Meles Zenawi for his outstanding contribution to the success of this conference. In the last eighteen months I have met on numerous occasions with President Meles. And in all these meetings we had discussed the tragic situation in Somalia and what can be done to help our Somali brothers and sisters to end the nightmare there. I therefore know from first hand experience President Meles' concern to the plight of the Somalis and to his commitment to the peace process in that country.

To the Chairman of this Conference, Ambassador Lansana Kouyatte, Deputy Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary General to Somalia, we all owe a debt of gratitude for his determination, patience, perseverance, confidence and optimism - qualities which clearly contributed to the happy outcome of the conference's deliberations. I am sure that you will all join me in wishing Ambassador Kouyatte and Admiral Jonathan Howe greater successes in support of the efforts of our Somali brothers and sisters to restore peace, security and stability in their country.

Naturally, I join all those who have preceded me in paying tribute to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali for his important role and mission on behalf of Somalia. I urge him to see to it that UNITAF/UNOSOM II should take firm and decisive measures in implementation of this Agreement.

In the last two weeks we have worked very closely but quietly with the Representatives of the Regional Organizations including the Standing Committee on the Horn of Africa, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Non-aligned Movement in cooperation with the United Nations in support of the

peace process. I therefore wish to recognize their important contribution in this endeavour.

Mr. Chairman,

This is a historic moment for the Somali people. It is also a great moment for Africa, for the OAU and for the United Nations. Through this agreement you have given hope to the Somali people. You have sent the right signal to the international community. You have demonstrated that you are determined to put an end to insecurity, chaos, and anguish. You have shown that you are determined to begin the process of building institutions which will return Somalia to normalcy. On behalf of the OAU, on behalf of the Governments and people of Africa, we salute you for this important and historic achievement. You have confounded the cynics and the pessimists. We indeed rejoice with our brothers and sisters of Somalia in this Peace Agreement which is nothing short of a magnificent GIFT OF IDD EL FITR.

But, dear Somali brothers and sisters, this is just a beginning, although a very significant beginning. The challenges ahead are formidable. It is to ensure first and foremost the implementation of the Agreement. I am however confident that this can and will be done. For whatever the past and present differences between you, whatever the bitterness and suffering that has been engendered especially in the last two years; the fact remains you are all members of one large family. Please use the valuable assets of your common culture, language and rich traditions to overcome whatever problems that may lie ahead. There is no going back. You and us should resolve that never again will Somalia have to go through such agony and suffering. Let Somalia restore its dignity. Let the Somali people raise their heads in pride and hope.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As you go back to Somalia, please spread the word of hope, peace, security and national reconciliation as enshrined in the Addis Ababa Agreement. When you do this, and I have every confidence that you will, Africa will solidly be with you and working with you. I believe that the international community will respond positively to this challenge.

God be with You

Long live Somalia

Long live the Somali people