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«SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS TO INTERNAL CONFLICTS :  
THE ROLE OF THE OAU»

ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OAU  
H.E. SALIM AHMED SALIM  
TO THE CONSULTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY  
ON INTERNAL CONFLICTS IN AFRICA :  
IN SEARCH OF RESPONSE

Arusha, 23 March, 1992.

MR CHAIRMAN,  
EXCELLENCIES,  
DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT IS MY SPECIAL PRIVILEGE AND HONOUR TO BE WITH YOU IN THIS FORUM AND TO ADDRESS YOU ON A TOPIC OF SUCH VITAL IMPORTANCE TO US ALL : THE ISSUE OF INTERNAL CONFLICTS IN AFRICA. I WOULD LIKE TO FIRST OF ALL EXPRESS MY SINCERE THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO MY OLD FRIEND OLARA OTUNNU, THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY, FOR HAVING INVITED ME TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PRESENT CONSULTATION. I HASTEN TO CONGRATULATE HIM AND HIS OTHER COLLEAGUES OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY ON ORGANIZING THIS ALL IMPORTANT AND TIMELY CONSULTATION THAT HAS BROUGHT TOGETHER SUCH DISTINGUISHED PERSONALITIES TO SHARE VIEWS, EXPERIENCES AND CONCERNS RELATING TO INTERNAL CONFLICTS IN AFRICA AND TO SEE HOW BEST WE CAN PLAN TOGETHER TO ADDRESS MORE MEANINGFULLY THIS HUMAN SCOURGE.

MR CHAIRMAN,

AFRICA WILL MAINTAIN ITS RELEVANCE IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER ONLY IF IT RISES TO THE NEW CHALLENGES OF THE TIME AND MEET THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PEOPLE. THESE CHALLENGES, OF COURSE, INCLUDE THE ELIMINATION OF APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA, ECONOMIC RECOVERY, THE FURTHERANCE OF . DEMOCRATIZATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VIABLE INSTITUTIONS TO CONSOLIDATE THIS DEMOCRACY AS WELL AS THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS; BUT PERHAPS, ABOVE ALL, THE MANAGEMENT OF THAT ALL EMBRACING ISSUE OF INTRA-

STATE CONFLICTS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY ON OUR CONTINENT.

ALL THESE ISSUES, WHICH CONSTITUTE OUR ORGANIZATION'S AGENDA FOR THE 1990s, ARE LARGELY INTERTWINED. INDEED, YOU CANNOT ENSURE DEMOCRACY WITHOUT ECONOMIC RECOVERY; AFTER ALL, THERE IS NO REAL FREEDOM IN POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION. NOR CAN WE ENSURE ECONOMIC RECOVERY WITHOUT DEMOCRACY OR ENSURE ECONOMIC RECOVERY WITHOUT A POLITICAL DISPENSATION THAT GUARANTEES PEOPLE'S LIBERTY TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES AND TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE ACTIVITIES THAT GOVERN THEIR DAILY LIVES. EQUALLY, WE CANNOT ENSURE ECONOMIC RECOVERY WITHOUT RESPECTING THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF THE HUMAN PERSON WHO, AFTER ALL, SHOULD AND MUST BE AT THE CENTER OF OUR DEVELOPMENT ENDEAVOURS. ABOVE ALL, WE CANNOT ENSURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT GUARANTEEING PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY.

MR CHAIRMAN,

OUR PEOPLE'S DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE DERIVED ITS MAJOR STRENGTH FROM THEIR DEMAND NOT ONLY FOR HUMAN DIGNITY AND FREEDOM BUT ALSO FOR PEACE, SECURITY, STABILITY AND PROSPERITY IN THEIR VILLAGES, IN THEIR SMALL TOWNS AND IN ALL THEIR LIVES. THEY AGITATED FOR GOVERNING THEMSELVES IN THEIR OWN WAY SO THAT THESE IDEALS AND NORMS MAY BE ADVANCED AND STRENGTHENED, REALIZED FULLY AND SUSTAINED. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE HAVE BEEN DIFFICULTIES. TODATE, WELL OVER ONE-HALF OF THE COUNTRIES IN AFRICA HAVE BEEN DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN CONFLICTS SINCE 1960 AND VIRTUALLY ALL OF THEM HAVE, ALBEIT IN DIFFERENT PROPORTIONS, SHARED THE MISERY AND



SORROW THAT HAVE ALWAYS ACCOMPANIED THESE CONFLICTS. OF COURSE, SIGHT SHOULD NOT BE LOST OF THE FACT THAT SOME COUNTRIES HAVE ENJOYED RELATIVE PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY SINCE INDEPENDENCE. FURTHERMORE, THE MERE FACT THAT AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE EFFECTIVELY MANAGED TO MAINTAIN THEIR HARD-WON INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY IS ITSELF A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT. HOWEVER, THERE ARE STILL COUNTRIES IN AFRICA WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN SO FORTUNATE IN THAT THEY HAVE BEEN EMBROILED IN PERPETUAL INSTABILITY AND HUMAN SUFFERING ALMOST EVER SINCE THEIR INDEPENDENCE.

IN SO FAR, AS THESE STATES HAVE BEEN FORCED TO SPEND IN SOME CASES OVER 50 PERCENT OF THEIR NATIONAL BUDGETS ON THE EXIGENCIES OF WAR, AND IN SO FAR AS OTHER STATES WHICH MAY NOT BE AT WAR WITH THEMSELVES OR WITH THEIR NEIGHBOURS HAVE ALSO BEEN FORCED TO DIVERT A GREAT DEAL OF THEIR RESOURCES INTO MATTERS RELATING TO MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND SECURITY, AS WELL AS CARING FOR THOUSANDS AND SOMETIMES MILLIONS OF REFUGEES, ARMED CONFLICTS HAVE AND CONTINUE TO BE A MAJOR DRAIN ON AFRICA'S LIMITED RESOURCES. IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT'S PREOCCUPATION WITH CRISIS MANAGEMENT SITUATIONS RELATING TO WARS, ARMED CONFLICTS AND INSECURITY, THEREBY DIVERTING THEIR ATTENTION AND PEOPLE'S ENERGIES FROM MEANINGFUL DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT PLANNING IS SOMETHING THAT DESERVES URGENT REFLECTION BY OUR GOVERNMENTS.

THE DESTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES ALREADY IN PLACE LET ALONE THE LOSS OF HUMAN LIVES AS A RESULT OF THESE ENDEMIC CONFLICTS SHOULD BE A SOURCE OF CONCERN TO US ALL. EQUALLY, THE NECESSITY OF SPEEDILY BRINGING TO A HALT ALL THESE WARS AND CONFLICTS, TO REESTABLISH PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY AND TO HARNESS ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO BUILD AN

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT REMAINS AN INESCAPABLE DUTY OF US ALL IN AFRICA. INDEED, HISTORY WILL JUDGE US HARSHLY, INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY, IF WE CHOOSE TO REMAIN SILENT OR INDIFFERENT TO THE GROWING SITUATIONS OF WAR AND ARMED CONFLICTS IN AFRICA THAT KEEP ON CAUSING SORROW AND LOSS OF LIFE, DEPRIVING AFRICA OF ITS MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR DEVELOPMENT, NAMELY THE HUMAN PERSON.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE OAU HAS, IN THE PAST, BEEN INVOLVED IN THE RESOLUTION OF INTER-STATE CONFLICTS EVEN IF ON AN AD HOC BASIS. THE CHARTER PROVIDES FOR A MECHANISM FOR MEDIATION, ARBITRATION AND CONCILIATION. NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT THAT THIS MECHANISM SET IN THE FORM OF A COMMISSION HAS REMAINED LARGELY DORMANT, ITS INCLUSION IN THE CHARTER WAS BY ITSELF A FUNDAMENTAL RECOGNITION FOR THE NEED OF SUCH A FACILITY. REASONS REVOLVING ESSENTIALLY AROUND THE NARROW INTERPRETATION OF SOVEREIGNTY HAVE, OF COURSE, CREATED DIFFICULTIES FOR THE OAU IN ITS EFFORTS TO FORMULATE PROCEDURES FOR THE RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN ITS MEMBER STATES. THESE DIFFICULTIES APART, THE OAU AND THE MEMBER STATES, INDIVIDUALLY OR IN SMALLER GROUPINGS, HAVE BROUGHT INNOVATION TO THE PROCEDURES AND MECHANISMS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION. THIS INNOVATION HAS INCLUDED THE CREATION OF AD HOC COMMITTEES OF WISE MEN TO HANDLE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS AS WAS THE CASE IN WESTERN SAHARA, CHAD/LIBYA AND SENEGAL/MAURITANIA CONFLICTS. THE INSTITUTION OF THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL HEADS OF STATE, WITH INSIGHT INTO SPECIFIC PROBLEMS, HAVE BEEN MANDATED TO INTERVENE IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT. SUB-REGIONAL AND REGIONAL



ORGANIZATIONS, AS IS THE CASE OF ECOWAS IN LIBERIA, HAVE ALSO BEEN USED TO PROMOTE SETTLEMENT OF SPECIFIC AND LOCALIZED CONFLICTS. IN ADDITION, THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OAU HAS UNDERGONE A QUALITATIVE CHANGE AND INCREASINGLY, HE IS NOW ABLE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO INTERVENE PERSONALLY OR, THROUGH SPECIAL ENVOYS, TO PROMOTE PACIFIC SETTLEMENT OF CONFLICTS.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THESE HAVE ALL BEEN ATTEMPTS TO INNOVATE AND IMPROVISE MECHANISMS FOR RESOLVING INTER-STATE CONFLICTS, IN THE ABSENCE OF AN ACCEPTABLE FRAMEWORK FOR SUCH UNDERTAKINGS. BUT THESE WERE ATTEMPTS DIRECTED SPECIFICALLY TO CONFLICTS AMONG STATES AND NOT WITHIN STATES. TRADITIONALLY, A STRONG VIEW HAS BEEN HELD THAT CONFLICTS WITHIN STATES FELL WITHIN THE EXCLUSIVE COMPETENCE OF THE STATES CONCERNED. ARISING FROM THIS BASIC ASSERTION WAS THE EQUALLY STRONG VIEW THAT IT WAS NOT THE BUSINESS OF THE OAU TO PRONOUNCE ITSELF ON THESE CONFLICTS AND THAT THE ORGANIZATION CERTAINLY HAD NO MANDATE TO SEEK ITS INVOLVEMENT IN RESOLVING PROBLEMS OF THIS NATURE. IN CONSEQUENCE, THE ORGANIZATION HAS HAD TO STAND BY IN APPARENT HELPLESSNESS AS MANY OF THESE CONFLICTS HAVE TORN COUNTRIES APART, CAUSED MILLIONS OF DEATHS, DESTROYED INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROPERTY, CREATED MILLIONS OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND CAUSED IMMENSE HURT AND SUFFERING TO INNOCENT MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

THE HORRENDOUS EFFECTS OF THESE INTERNAL CONFLICTS, THEIR IMPLICATIONS TO THE ECONOMIES AND SECURITY OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS THE GRAPHIC IMAGES AND PICTURES OF BRUTALITY AND MASS STARVATION, FLASHED AROUND THE WORLD MEDIA, HAVE

TOUCHED THE CONSCIENCE OF MANY AFRICAN LEADERS AND PEOPLE. INCREASINGLY, MANY COUNTRIES AND LEADERS ARE RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT THE SUGGESTION THAT AFRICA SHOULD STAND ASIDE AND WATCH WHILE A PART OF HER, TEARS ITSELF APART, SIMPLY ON ACCOUNT OF ARGUABLE TECHNICALITIES OF SOVEREIGNTY. IT IS INCREASINGLY ALSO BECOMING UNACCEPTABLE THAT AFRICA SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE PERCEIVED AS A CONTINENT PRONE TO CONFLICTS AND A PLACE WHERE SUFFERING IS ENDEMIC AND WHERE PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY ARE A DISTANT POSSIBILITY.

THIS EMERGING PERSPECTIVE IS HAVING A PROFOUND EFFECT ON THE THINKING OF POLICY-MAKERS IN AFRICA. THERE IS NOW A REALIZATION THAT IF AFRICA IS TO TACKLE THE MONUMENTAL TASK OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT, IT WILL A PRIORI HAVE TO RESOLVE THE MANY INTERNAL CONFLICTS WHICH ARE NOW RAGING ON. INTEGRAL TO THIS NASCENT THINKING IS ALSO A RECOGNITION THAT, WHERE NATIONAL MEANS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROVE UNSUITABLE OR INADEQUATE TO COPE WITH THE CONTENDING INTERESTS AT CONFLICT, THEY NEED AND INDEED HAVE TO BE SUPPLEMENTED BY INTERNATIONAL ACTION ESPECIALLY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY.

IT IS THIS RECOGNITION OF THE CENTRAL ROLE WHICH CONFLICT RESOLUTION MUST OCCUPY IN THE AFRICAN AGENDA WHICH LED TO THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT MEETING IN ADDIS ABABA IN JULY 1990 TO ADOPT THE SOLEMN DECLARATION ON THE POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN AFRICA AND THE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN THE WORLD. IN THAT DECLARATION, THE LEADERS OF AFRICA EXPRESSED THEIR DETERMINATION TO WORK TOGETHER TOWARDS

THE PEACEFUL AND SPEEDY RESOLUTION OF ALL THE CONFLICTS ON OUR CONTINENT.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE OAU THAT THE ISSUE OF RESOLVING THE MANY CONFLICTS IN AFRICA, ESPECIALLY THOSE INTERNAL, WAS ADDRESSED AS AN ISSUE REQUIRING ATTENTION. EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT HAS BEEN THE FOLLOW-UP ACTION TAKEN BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. LAST YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THEY RECOGNIZED THE ROLE OF THE OAU WITHOUT CIRCUMSCRIPTION, IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND AGREED TO SET ASIDE FINANCIAL APPROPRIATIONS IN THE BUDGET OF THE OAU, DEVOTED SPECIFICALLY TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION. AT THE JUST CONCLUDED COUNCIL MEETING, THIS FEBRUARY, IN ADDIS ABABA, A FURTHER STEP WAS TAKEN BY ENDORSING THE PROPOSAL OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL THAT A MECHANISM, EMPOWERING HIM AND THE ORGANIZATION, IN GENERAL, TO RESPOND SWIFTLY AND DECISIVELY TO CONFLICT SITUATIONS, BE ELABORATED AND DEPLOYED SOON.

ALL THIS MARKS A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN THE THINKING OF MEMBER STATES - FROM A POSITION OF TOTAL OPPOSITION TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE OAU IN INTERNAL CONFLICTS, TO ACCEPTING THAT THE ORGANIZATION HAS A VIEW AND INDEED A ROLE IN ASSISTING IN THEIR RESOLUTION, AND NOW EVEN TO PROVIDING FINANCIAL AS WELL INSTITUTIONAL MEANS TO HANDLE CONFLICTS INCLUDING THOSE WITHIN STATES. WHAT, OF COURSE, THIS EVOLUTION IN THE POSITION OF MEMBER STATES MEANS, IS VESTING GREATER RESPONSIBILITY IN THE OAU AND CHALLENGING IT TO ACTION. AT THE LEVEL OF THE SECRETARIAT, WE SEE IT AS A NEW BEGINNING, CONSTITUTING A CHALLENGE TO WHICH WE MUST



RISE. IN RISING TO THIS CHALLENGE, IT HAS BECOME NECESSARY TO LOOK A-NEW AT THE STRUCTURES OF THE ORGANIZATION AND ITS METHODS OF WORK SO AS TO BRING THEM IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE TASKS AT HAND. ACCORDINGLY, I HAVE NOW ESTABLISHED, WITHIN THE STRUCTURES OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT, A DIVISION ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION. OF COURSE, THIS WILL BY ITSELF NOT BE ENOUGH. WE SHALL, THEREFORE, ALSO HAVE TO COOPERATE WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS SO AS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON STRATEGIES AS WELL AS RELEVANT EXPERIENCES. IN ADDITION TO STREAMLINING THE INSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY, WE HAVE ALSO TO LOOK AT HOW WE CAN NOT ONLY DISCHARGE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO MEMBER STATES BUT ALSO HOW WE CAN ASSIST THOSE AT CONFLICT IN STEERING THEM TOWARDS AMICABLE SETTLEMENT.

WHILE WE UNDERTAKE THIS REVIEW AND RATIONALIZATION OF INSTITUTIONAL SET UP AT THE LEVEL OF THE SECRETARIAT AND THINK ABOUT THE KIND OF ROLE WE SHOULD PERFORM IN PROMOTING PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF INTERNAL CONFLICTS, I SEE ALSO THE ATTENDANT IMPERATIVE OF EDUCATING OURSELVES ON THEIR HISTORY, NATURE, CAUSES AND ALL THEIR OTHER ASPECTS. FOR ONLY IF WE FULLY UNDERSTAND THEM, CAN WE BE ABLE TO PRESCRIBE THE CORRECT SOLUTIONS AND SPELL-OUT THE KIND OF ROLE THE OAU CAN PLAY IN IMPLEMENTING THOSE SOLUTIONS. THIS PROCESS OF SELF-EDUCATION IS A CENTRAL ELEMENT IN THE STRATEGY OF DETERMINING WHERE ONE BEGINS IN TACKLING THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THESE CONFLICTS AND HELPING PUT IN PLACE THE APPROPRIATE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK FOR LASTING SETTLEMENT.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE NATURE OF INTERNAL CONFLICTS IN AFRICA DIFFERS FUNDAMENTALLY FROM ONE SITUATION TO ANOTHER. IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION AND AGAINST RACIST SETTLER REGIMES LED TO SERIOUS INTERNAL CONFLICTS, IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA AND THE FORMER PORTUGUESE COLONIES OF ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE, THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE DISPOSSESSED BLACK MAJORITY AND THE LANDED RACIST WHITE SETTLER MINORITY LED TO YEARS OF WAR AND DESTRUCTION. EVEN AFTER THE TRIUMPH OF JUSTICE AND THE ACCESSION OF THESE COUNTRIES TO MAJORITY RULE AND INDEPENDENCE, THE WARS OF DESTABILIZATION BY APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA CONTINUED TO WRECK HAVOC TO THE ECONOMIES OF THESE COUNTRIES AND TO FUEL INTERNAL POLITICAL DIFFERENCES, RESULTING IN FRATICIDAL CONFLICTS ESPECIALLY IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE.

APART FROM THESE CONFLICTS ARISING OUT OF THE DENIAL OF A MAJORITY OF ITS INALIENABLE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE, THERE ARE THOSE WHICH WERE BROUGHT ABOUT BY RACISM AND APARTHEID. IN SOUTH AFRICA, THE CONFLICT CONTINUES TO BE THAT OF THE DENIAL OF AN ENTIRE BLACK MAJORITY OF ITS FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS. ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA, TRIBALISM AND REGIONALISM HAVE PRECIPITATED CONFLICTS OF SERIOUS PROPORTIONS. POLITICS OF EXCLUSION BY WHICH AN ARBITRARILY, OR SELF-SELECTED FEW HAVE WIELDED EXCLUSIVE POWER OR EXERCISED MONOPOLY OF CONTROL OVER RESOURCES, RESULTING IN SERIOUS SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMBALANCES, LED TO THE ALIENATION AND DISILLUSIONMENT OF THE LARGER PART OF THE POPULATION IN MANY COUNTRIES. IN SOME SITUATIONS, THIS DISILLUSIONMENT MADE THE PEOPLE RETRENCH INTO DEEP CYNICISM, BUT, IN SOME CASES, IT DEGENERATED INTO ANARCHY

AND GENERALIZED CONFLICT. STILL IN OTHER PARTS OF THE CONTINENT, POLITICS OF INTOLERANCE, IN PARTICULAR RELIGIOUS, HAVE ALSO PRECIPITATED CONFLICTS. SOME OF THE TRADITIONAL CAUSES OF CONFLICTS ARE REEMERGING WITH GREATER VIGOUR AND, UNLESS ARRESTED SOON, WILL THROW THE CONTINENT INTO CHAOS. TODAY, THE POLITICS OF PSEUDONATIONALISM AND SEPARATISM ARE THREATENING TO TEAR THE CONTINENT APART. IN ADDITION, THE POLITICS OF INTOLERANCE ARE GIVING RISE TO RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM - BOTH CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM, WITH THE ATTENDANT REAL PROSPECTS OF PROMOTING DIVISION WITHIN OUR SOCIETIES WITH FAR REACHING REPERCUSSIONS FOR OUR CONTINENT. ALL THESE ARE CHALLENGES WHICH THE OAU MUST ADDRESS ITSELF TO, WITHIN THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF HELPING PROMOTE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF CONFLICTS ON THE CONTINENT.

MR CHAIRMAN,

WHETHER THESE CONFLICTS ARISE FROM TRIBALISM, SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IMBALANCES, RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE, RACISM OR LEGACIES OF COLONIALISM, WHAT IS COMMON TO THEM ALL IS THAT THEY ARISE FROM LACK OR DENIAL OF BASIC DEMOCRACY IN SOCIETY. IN CONSEQUENCE, THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THESE CONFLICTS CAN NOT BE COMPREHENSIVELY ADDRESSED UNLESS THE SERIOUS DEFICIT OF DEMOCRACY IN OUR CONTINENT IS ALSO FULLY ADDRESSED.

I, THEREFORE, SEE THE ROLE OF THE OAU IN THE RESOLUTION OF THE INTERNAL CONFLICTS IN AFRICA AS BEING MULTIFACETED. SUCH A ROLE WILL HAVE TO EMBODY, ON THE ONE HAND, A COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE POLITICAL REFORM IN THE CONTINENT, ESPECIALLY IN THE



GREATER DEMOCRATIZATION OF OUR SOCIETIES, AND ON THE OTHER, IT WILL INVOLVE AN ENGAGING AGENDA OF PROMOTING ECONOMIC REFORM IN OUR COUNTRIES. SUCH ECONOMIC REFORM, ADDRESSING THE SHORT-TERM IMPERATIVES OF RECOVERY AND GROWTH AS WELL AS THE LONG-TERM INVESTMENT IN DEVELOPMENT, MUST BE HINGED ON THE FIRM PILLAR OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION UNDER THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. IT IS ONLY THROUGH EVOLVING A PERMITTING POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN OUR COUNTRIES AND INSTITUTING ECONOMIC REFORMS AND PROVIDING GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL, WILL IT BE POSSIBLE TO UNDERCUT THE SEPARATIST AND FUNDAMENTALIST TENDENCIES WHICH ARE NOW RAPIDLY EMERGING THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENT.

ALREADY, THERE ARE ENCOURAGING SIGNS THAT MEMBER STATES ARE WILLING TO LET THE ORGANIZATION ASSUME THE FUNCTION OF PROMOTING DEMOCRACY IN THE CONTINENT. THE OAU IS NOW FREQUENTLY BEING ASKED TO OBSERVE ELECTIONS IN MANY COUNTRIES. WE OBSERVED ELECTIONS IN COMOROS, CAPE VERDE, ZAMBIA AND WE HAVE REQUESTS TO DO THE SAME IN MALI, CONGO, TOGO, LESOTHO, ETHIOPIA, ANGOLA AND LIBERIA. THIS EXPRESSION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE OAU CONSTITUTES A NEW CHAPTER IN THE POLITICS OF AFRICA.

WHILE WE HAVE THIS DISPOSITION AND GOOD WILL OF MEMBER STATES, WE SHALL CONTINUE TO OFFER OUR SERVICES IN RESOLVING CONFLICTS. WE THINK IT IS IMPORTANT, IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS TASK, TO INSIST TO ALL POLICY-MAKERS THAT THE NEW AGENDA FOR THE RESOLUTION OF INTERNAL CONFLICT MUST ADDRESS THE FUNDAMENTALS OF GOVERNANCE. FOR WHILE CLASSICAL NEGOTIATIONS CAN BRING AN END TO INTERNAL HOSTILITIES, IT IS ONLY GENUINE POLITICAL REFORM, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROVIDING GREATER OPPORTUNITY FOR

ALL OUR PEOPLE, WHICH WILL ACT AS AN INSURANCE AGAINST INSTABILITY AND CONFLICT. BUILDING DEMOCRACY WILL REQUIRE THE BUILDING OF INSTITUTIONS OF DEMOCRACY TO OVERSEE THE POLITICAL PROCESS. FOR, IT IS THROUGH BUILDING A CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY, WILL IT BE POSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH FIRM BASIS FOR NATIONAL UNITY AND CONCORD.

MR CHAIRMAN,

AFRICA IS UNDERGOING CHANGE. PEOPLE ACROSS THE ENTIRE CONTINENT ARE AGITATING FOR CHANGE AND RIGHTLY GOVERNMENTS ARE RESPONDING TO THIS AGITATION BY INSTITUTING FAR-REACHING POLITICAL REFORMS PROVIDING FOR THE GREATER DEMOCRATIZATION OF SOCIETY. INCREASINGLY, THERE IS A GROWING REALIZATION ON THE PART OF GOVERNMENTS THAT PEACE AND STABILITY LIE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMITTING POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH PEOPLE ENJOY THE UNFETTERED FREEDOM, WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE LAW, TO EXPRESS THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS. THERE IS ALSO A RECOGNITION THAT SUCH A PERMITTING POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, BUILT AROUND THE RULE OF LAW AND BASED ON POPULAR PARTICIPATION, MUST BE ABLE TO BALANCE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNMENTS AND THE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE PEOPLE. IT IS ALSO BEING ACCEPTED AS AN IMPERATIVE THAT WE NEED TO CREATE, IN OUR SOCIETIES, A CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN WHICH DISSENTING POLITICAL OPINION IS REGARDED AS AN ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTE OF THE PROCESS OF THAT DEMOCRACY AND THAT WE MUST BE ABLE TO SET UP GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE BASED ON THE WILL OF THE GOVERNED GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE TRANSPARENT AND SUBJECT TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS, SUPERVISED BY AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE CENTRAL OBJECTIVE IN ALL THIS IS TO BRING ABOUT A SOCIETY LEVERAGED ON THE RULE OF LAW AND IN WHICH INDIVIDUAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, SUCH AS OF EXPRESSION OR WORSHIP, ARE OBSERVED AND PROTECTED BY GOVERNMENTS. WE NEED TO HAVE ELECTED GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PEOPLE. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL THIS WILL, NATURALLY, ENTAIL SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN OUR SOCIETIES AND, ALREADY, IN AFRICA, WE ARE WITNESSING A PROTRACTED DEBATE ON WHAT KIND OF CHANGES NEED TO BE MADE TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES.

AND SINCE CHANGE IS INEVITABLE, IT WILL BE NECESSARY, IN MY VIEW, TO SEE HOW IT CAN BE MANAGED SO THAT THE TRANSITION CAN BE PEACEFUL. MANAGED CHANGE THROUGH PEACEFUL DIALOGUE OR THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES OF THE PEOPLE CONCERNED, THEIR ASPIRATIONS, THEIR HISTORY, THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THEMSELVES AND THEIR VISIONS OF THE KIND OF SOCIETY THEY WISH TO BUILD, WOULD STAND THE BETTER CHANCE OF ENSURING SMOOTH TRANSITION IN CONDITIONS OF PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY. IN CONSEQUENCE AND OF NECESSITY, THIS CHANGE MUST ARISE FROM THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE AND EMBODY A NATIONAL CONSENSUS. IT CAN NOT BE IMPOSED FROM OUTSIDE. IT MUST BE MANAGED PRIMARILY BY THOSE CONCERNED.



MR CHAIRMAN,

THE ISSUES OF PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY ARE BOUND TO ENGAGE THE ATTENTION OF THE OAU, MORE AND MORE IN THE YEARS TO COME. THIS IS BECAUSE THEY BEAR DIRECTLY ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE CONTINENT. BECAUSE CONFLICTS ARE LINKED DIRECTLY TO THE POLITICAL AND POWER RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN SOCIETY; ANY STRATEGY FOR THEIR RESOLUTION WILL INEVITABLY ALSO HAVE TO ADDRESS THE FUNDAMENTALS OF GOVERNANCE. EQUALLY, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FOR A STABLE AND LONG-TERM INSURANCE AGAINST INSTABILITY AND CONFLICT, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC REFORM WITHIN COUNTRIES AND WORK TOWARDS THE CONSOLIDATION OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION UNDER THE AFRICA ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. BOTH ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND RESOLVING CONFLICT WILL ENTAIL FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES WITHIN OUR SOCIETIES. WE SHALL HAVE TO LEARN A-NEW HOW TO DO BUSINESS, HOW TO GOVERN AND BE GOVERNED IN THE NEW SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS WE WANT TO BRING ABOUT IN OUR COUNTRIES.

I, THEREFORE, SEE THE ROLE AND INDEED THE AGENDA OF THE OAU AS BEING THREE-PRONGED. FIRST, WE SHALL HAVE TO EMBARK ON INSTITUTING THE NECESSARY ECONOMIC REFORM, HARMONIZING OUR ECONOMIC POLICIES WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF CONVERGING WITHIN THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. SECONDLY, I SEE THE ROLE OF THE OAU BEING ALSO THAT OF HELPING COUNTRIES AND SOCIETIES MANAGE CHANGE SO AS TO ENSURE THAT THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW ERA WE ALL LOOK FORWARD TO IS EFFECTED IN CONDITIONS OF PEACE, STABILITY AND NATIONAL HARMONY. THIRDLY, WE SHALL HAVE HELP IN THE PROMOTION OF THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THESE THREE AREAS CONSTITUTE A BROAD AGENDA FOR THE ORGANIZATION. ON ITS OWN, THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE OAU CANNOT COMPREHENSIVELY TACKLE THE CHALLENGES INHERENT IN AGENDA. IT WILL HAVE, THEREFORE, TO RELY ON THE COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE OF NOT ONLY THE MEMBER STATES BUT ALSO FROM ALL THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA AND BEYOND. THIS IS WHY I LOOK FORWARD TO A FRUITFUL EXCHANGE OF IDEAS IN THE COURSE OF THESE CONSULTATIONS.

I THANK YOU.