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REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAU,
H.E. DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM AT THE FAREWELL RECEPTION
FOR THE OUTGOING ASSISTANT SECRETARIES-GENERAL
AT THE OAU CONGO HALL, THURSDAY, 31 AUGUST 1995

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to welcome you all, and to thank you for having responded to my invitation to join me and the Staff of the General Secretariat in bidding farewell to our colleagues and friends, Ambassadors, Dede, Mapuranga and Osman, who are leaving us having completed their term of office as Assistant Secretaries General of the OAU. It is always sad when friends part, but this is not a sad occasion. It is an occasion to pay tribute to the work done by these three distinguished Ambassadors, on behalf of the OAU and to honour them for their dedication to the cause of peace and economic development of our continent. The services of these three distinguished colleagues coincided with a period of fundamental changes in Africa and the world. As the OAU has strived to adjust to these changes, it has benefitted greatly from the contribution of these Ambassadors. The three have been good and able Ambassadors of the OAU both in the Continent and beyond. I have been particularly happy to benefit from their unfailing support, cooperation and advice. As they leave the Organization, I am one of those who know how hard they have worked, and how much devotion they have had to the work of the Organization.

Of course, as part of the team of the leadership of the Secretariat, they have brought their collective contribution. Individually however, they had different roles to play. It is in tribute to their individual roles, as well, that I ask your indulgence, if I speak of them singularly.

Ambassador Brownson Dede, is a friend and colleague who came to the Secretariat in 1986 after having been active in the foreign service of Nigeria from 1964. He served in various capacities in Nigeria Embassies in Washington DC, Conakry, Bonn, Brasilia and Canberra, rising to the rank of Ambassador in 1983.

At the OAU, he brought his energy and tenacity to bear on his functions as the Assistant Secretary General in charge of Administration. In particular, he played a key role, in initiating the process of strengthening the administration of the Department. In this regard, I wish to single out his efforts at negotiating and subsequent implementation of the UNDP Project for enhancing the Managerial capacity in the Secretariat and in particular, the computerization of the services as well as the modernization of the Printing Unit. As the Assistant Secretary General in charge of EDECO, he continued to provide determined leadership and brought dynamism to the process of finalizing the negotiations on the Abuja Treaty, and the subsequent process of its implementation, especially, with regard to the work on the protocols to the Treaty. With his usual spirit of initiative, he was able to negotiate with the African Capacity Building Foundation, the financing of the Project on Capacity-Building within the Secretariat for the implementation of the Abuja Treaty.

In the same desire to see the OAU play the central role in the economic development of the continent, he was able to bring a commendable personal contribution to the strengthening of the working relations with the African Development Bank, the ECA as well as consolidating our links with the Regional Economic Communities.

Even beyond the continent he was the able representative of the OAU and performed his duties with exemplary zeal and devotion.

Dr. Machivenyika Mapuranga came to the OAU, after a distinguished career as a scholar and lecturer in Universities in Nigeria and Zimbabwe and having served in the diplomatic service as High Commissioner of his country in Tanzania. In the nearly six years that I have worked with Dr. Mapuranga, I have come to admire his keen sense of fairness and justice. When he served as Assistant Secretary General in charge of Administration, he played

a key role in spearheading the overhauling of the Administrative procedures of the Organization, bringing them up to date and aligning them to the new challenges we face.

In the ESCAS, he drew upon his training as scholar, to understand and coordinate the diverse and complex issues falling under the department. He took particular interest in promoting inter-African cooperation in meeting the many social challenges and was instrumental in working out arrangements for the strengthening of the working relations with the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations. On assuming the responsibility over the Political Department, he showed keen knowledge in the issues facing the Continent. He was sensitive to the tragedies that befell Africa and laboured continuously to bring his contribution to the efforts at their alleviation. He is a true and devoted Ambassador of the Organization and Africa as a whole, and an untiring champion of the cause of peace and security of the continent.

Ambassador Abdillahi Osman worked the shortest with me as compared to his two colleagues. He joined the Secretariat in 199 after a long and distinguished diplomatic career where he served as Ambassador of Somalia in Geneva and New York for eleven years from 1976. Yet, within the four years we have been together, I have come to appreciate his dedication and loyalty to the Organization and his sense of responsibility. I have admired his resourcefulness, energy and tenacity - as well as his commitment to the cause of African Unity. He performed his duties with dedication and brought vigour and dynamism to the work of the Administration Department which he headed. Indeed, he came to the Department at the critical phase of the reorganization and development of the Secretariat. His input into the work of the numerous administrative and Structural Reform Committee as well as Task Forces, has been critical. In his selfless devotion to his work, he was always prepared to go the extra mile to complete some unfinished business. I was particularly inspired by his inner

strength, which in spite of the tragic circumstances of his country he was always able to transcend them and devote his full energies to the work of the Organization, not only in the area of administration but in other important fields.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I know these three distinguished colleagues as individuals, but also as part of a very supportive team upon which I relied and from which I got unfailing cooperation. If we have been able to achieve as much as we have, in terms of strengthening the structures of the Organization, having its voice heard, and making it more and more relevant to the needs of the continent, it is due to the collective work we have done as a team. Needless to say therefore, I shall miss their friendship, their support and contribution to the work of the organization. In the case of Ambassadors Dede and Mapuranga, our loss as a Secretariat is the gain of their countries and of the larger community of Africans. I hope therefore that they will use their diverse and rich experience in the OAU, for the advancement of Africa and continue to be the good Ambassadors of the Organization, they have been all along. I hope they will come back to encourage us in what we are doing and perhaps with the advantage of experience and wisdom, advise us on what we can do to further the cause of peace and economic development of the continent.

In the case of Ambassador Osman, because of the still uncertain and tragic circumstances prevailing in his country, it is clear that Somalia will still not be in a position at this point in time to benefit effectively from his experience and services. Nonetheless, as a distinguished African I am confident he will continue to serve the large cause of our continent as and when circumstances allow. For our part, it is certainly my intention to see how best the Organization can still benefit from his valuable

knowledge and experience as well as his unquestioned commitment to our Pan African Organization.

Finally, to Ambassador Dede and Mrs. Dede, Ambassador Mapuranga and Mrs. Mapuranga and to Ambassador Osman and Mrs. Osman, I wish them and their families good health and the very best in their future endeavours.