

STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAU AT THE OPENING
OF THE FIFTY-NINTH ORDINARY SESSION
OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

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Mr. Chairman,

I wish to join the President of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, H.E. Meles Zenawi in welcoming you all to Addis Ababa and to wish your session very successful deliberations. I wish also to extend to you my sincere congratulations on your well deserved election as Chairman of our 59th Ordinary Session of the Council and to assure you and your colleagues in the Bureau of our fullest support and cooperation. May I also put on record my personal appreciation and that of the General Secretariat on the outstanding role played by the outgoing Chairman, Mr. Amr Moussa, the Foreign Minister of Egypt.

You convene at a particularly important juncture in the history of the continent. Today Africa stands at the door of total political liberation as apartheid is about to be relegated to the ignominy of history. The process of further democratization is well underway, notwithstanding the many difficulties of transition and adjustment. Political pluralism and multiparty elections are progressively being internalized as an integral part of the political fabric of the continent. Countries and Governments have become more aware and are responding with uncommon determination and resolve to the imperative of safeguarding and protecting human rights. There is equally a firm determination in the continent to address the cancer of conflicts which have decimated our populations, divided nations and undermined the efforts of the continent at development. Economic development, within individual States and collectively within the context of the African Economic Community is a goal to which our Governments are applying themselves, equally, with determination and vigour. What all this represents, is a new beginning, an awakening of the continent to the need to re seize the initiative and begin doing what must be done both individually and together to right what has gone wrong as well as to sustain the momentum for reform and change which has been triggered and is in process everywhere.

Today we are living through a period of fundamental changes in our own countries and in the world. These are changes to which we must adjust and adapt. How we adjust and cope will determine how ably we will be able to manage the affairs of tomorrow. The rapidity with which we shall internalize those changes and realign our national and continental institutions as well as our resources to the imperative of sustaining them, will equally determine whether Africa will emerge as the strong force in global affairs, it is supposed to be, or will continue to be mired into confusion and relegated to the fringes of the international system.

The future of Africa, the role it is going to play and how we are to go about creating strategic importance for it, is the challenge our countries now face collectively. But in order to do so, we need first and foremost to ensure that we deal decisively with those factors which hold our countries back. We need to deal with the economy, peace and stability, democracy and human rights. Yes, we have begun, but we need to move more expeditiously, in the full knowledge that time is not on our side. The rest of the world is moving and doing so fast. We need to cope if we are to keep up. This is our challenge today.

Mr. Chairman,

This Council convenes when South Africa is undergoing fundamental transformation. The process of change which started two years ago has already culminated into an interim constitution which will govern the transition to a free, non-racial, democratic South Africa. The Transitional Executive Committee is operational and is now guiding South Africa along the path towards democracy and multi-party elections in three months to come. What we are seeing in South Africa is the triumph of reason over bigotry, the triumph of right over injustice. It is the beginning of a new South Africa founded on the principles of equality and justice, a country united in common humanity and held together by shared

values of democracy and not by the force of arms applied to maintain barriers of prejudice and of exploitation. The march we have begun is towards the new South Africa, we all have fought for, and for which so many sacrificed their lives. We all hope that the next months of political campaigning will proceed smoothly so that the people of South Africa can be able to exercise their democratic rights to vote in conditions of peace.

But beyond our wish for peace, Africa has a particular responsibility to South Africa. Africa and the OAU have invested so much energy and resources in support of the liberation struggle, and against apartheid in that country. We supported the liberation movements politically and materially. Many of our countries especially the Frontline States paid dearly for this support. Today when we are walking the final mile and we are about to see the results of the years of struggle and sacrifice, we owe it to ourselves and to the people of South Africa not to relax our vigilance or allow our enthusiasm to diminish. On the contrary, we need to sustain interest and keep the momentum of support to the process in South Africa, if ultimately we are going to fully accomplish the objectives we set for ourselves there.

We have an OAU observer mission in South Africa. But its mandate and number are inadequate to fulfil the objectives of observing the elections planned for the 27th of April. We therefore need a presence which will be credible and enable the OAU to pronounce itself, with some certainty, on the conduct of the electoral process there. This, we can not do with thirty or so observers, especially considering the size of the country, the number of polling stations and the objective political circumstances in which the elections will be taking place. This is why I made an urgent appeal to each of your Governments to send at least two observers, to be part of the OAU Team. I therefore

hope that the Council will find it possible to deliberate on how the OAU can mount an effective presence to monitor the elections there.

I wish to emphasize that Africa, has a stake in what is happening in South Africa and certainly in the elections. We need to be there, in good time and sufficient numbers, to support the process and to encourage our brothers and sisters. We all know that we can make a difference if we act together. We did so in Namibia. But in order also to make a difference we must be able to give some material assistance to the liberation movements, to enable them compete against a Government endowed with almost unlimited resources and the advantages of incumbency. I make this point because, so far, Africa has not responded with encouraging enthusiasm to the call to contribute to the Election Fund which was set up at the last Summit Meeting in Cairo last June. I therefore wish to reiterate my appeal to Member States to respond positively and urgently with Financial contributions to the Fund.

As we prepare for the elections in South Africa we hope and look forward to welcoming in our midst, the new South Africa thereafter. South Africa will be an important addition to the ranks of our continent.

Mr. Chairman,

The end of apartheid in South Africa marks not only the closing of one of the saddest chapters in the history of our continent, but also the opening of a new challenge of economic cooperation in the sub-region and Africa as a whole. We now need to see how the immense potential which exists in South Africa in terms of capital, resources and know-how, can interface with those found in the rest of the continent, to forge an economic partnership which can propel the continent to new heights of growth

and development. Of course, no one should have the illusion that the mere end of apartheid means economic prosperity, either to the South Africans or the rest of the continent. Obviously, South Africa has her own priorities and needs - and not least those of meeting the expectations of the millions of black South Africans who were disenfranchised and locked out of the economic mainstream. To these, South Africa will have to devote immense resources. Equally true however, is that the potential of meaningful partnership exists and our countries should approach it realistically and creatively so that our shared resources can interplay and contribute to the achievement of the objective of economic development in the continent. The peace dividend both in terms of the resources otherwise expended to fight apartheid, as well as accruing from economic cooperation, if channelled properly can make a major difference.

Mr. Chairman,

The challenge of economic cooperation with South Africa is one of the priorities which must be met. But beyond cooperation with South Africa, we need to begin to seriously address continental economic integration, which has been allowed to remain largely in the realm of political declarations. Today, three years after the signature of the Abuja Treaty on the establishment of the African Economic Community, our countries have made no serious efforts at addressing the many factors which militate against continental integration. The patterns of our trade are still mono-dimensional focussing horizontally on our erstwhile colonial masters. Intra-African trade remains an abysmal 4% of our total trade. We have made no serious efforts to know each other, what we produce, what expertise we can share, what we can exchange by way of trade. We all too readily look to the outside when we want to trade or even to recruit expertise.

We can not extricate ourselves from his cycle of dependence if we do not change our perceptions and begin on the process of self reliance. We can not trade, if we don't know each other and neither can we hope to move expeditiously with the building of the African Economic Community we want and need.

This is not to say that we have not tried. I know of the efforts at regional level, within the Southern Africa Development Community, COMESA, ECOWAS, ECCAS as well as the recent decision to work towards the reestablishment of the East African Economic Community. At the General Secretariat we have also covered considerable ground in terms of elaborating certain key protocols on those areas we consider most integrative such as trade, money and finance, transport and communications, customs as well as the movement of persons, goods and services. But all these still remain at bureaucratic level and need to be brought down to the level where they mean something concrete to the people of this continent. They should be able to promote and facilitate trade. They should ultimately enable people to move from one country to another without hinderance. They should also in the final analysis allow the merchant to move his or her goods and money from one corner of the continent to another. This is the challenge which the African Economic Community our countries have resolved to establish, must meet.

Mr. Chairman,

Economic integration is indispensable partly since it will stimulate growth and development in the continent but most importantly because it is the only way of the future. Our countries individually, do not stand a chance of emerging as meaningful economic players in the world of tomorrow. This is true even with those countries of Europe which individually, generate more wealth than most of our continent put together. They too have

seen the limitations of individual action and are seeking stability and strength in larger and more integrated markets of trading blocs. The trend in Europe, America, Asia and the Pacific, is towards integration and the establishment of trading blocs. If these regions need integration, certainly Africa needs it even more.

Economic integration and the unity of Africa is made more necessary by the present attempts to marginalize Africa in global affairs. Our voice is getting fainter and our involvement in international affairs is receding, and this is a matter of utmost concern. We have evidence in the just concluded GATT negotiations in which Africa played a marginal role even in those areas which affect it the most such as commodities. We have allowed ourselves to have prescriptions handed down to us, with little consideration to our interests. The result is that unless we move to reestablish our standing in terms of action at the global market place, Africa will move into the next century operating at the margins of the global economic system. Action is therefore needed to retrieve Africa from this fringe and restore it to the mainstream.

Of course, continental integration is one of the key elements of the strategy to bring Africa to play its rightful role. Another is economic reform and development within our respective countries. So far in the last year, Africa has continued on the road of economic reform. This, the Governments have done with and without international support. But central to all these efforts, is the realization that unless economic reforms take root, and productivity and growth return, Africa can not hope to stem the slide of the continent into deeper poverty with all the implications to peace and stability. Indeed, these reforms, undertaken at great social cost and political risk, have begun to register some positive results. Creative policies and free market reforms have, in many instances, stemmed negative trends and restored growth to the economies.

This apart, more needs to be done to mitigate the many painful effects of these economic reforms and adjustments especially to the more vulnerable segments of society such as women and children. Equally, more needs to be done to ensure that these adjustments and reforms are not undertaken purely for their statistical value, but also taking into account the need not to undermine the many social gains made or the ability of Governments to meet the many needs of our people such as education and health - all factors which are after all, key to the development of any society. Investment in people, must be made integral to these new policies if we are to put into place firm foundations for a more resilient and self-reliant Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

In both these tasks of instituting economic reforms at home and promoting integration within the continent, Africa will need to act with vigour and undivided determination, if we are to succeed. We can not succeed in restoring Africa to the mainstream of the international system, if in addition, we do not speak with one voice. We can not bring about economic integration if we do not operate in unity and with one objective. For all this, Africa needs to apply itself in meeting the economic challenge, with the same resolve and determination, as it mounted in the prosecution of the liberation struggle. We spoke with one voice, we acted together and we won. In this new phase of the economic liberation of the continent, we must do likewise.

Mr. Chairman,

While our collective resolve will certainly make a major difference in propelling the continent forward, it will be unrealistic to think that the fruits of this labour can endure in the face of the persistent conflicts which afflict our continent. Because of this fundamental determination, our countries have taken the challenge of resolving conflicts seriously, and have deployed considerable effort in this regard. There has been the gradual and positive evolution in the thinking and perception of our countries with regard to their role in helping each other resolve conflicts which face them. Today, we have not only the acceptance that we need to help each other, but also, that we have to call on ourselves first, before we look to the outside for assistance. This positive evolution in the thinking of our Governments have made it possible to evolve an institutional and political means to help in the resolution of those conflicts.

In Cairo last year, our leaders decided to establish, within the OAU, a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Subsequently, the Central Organ, meeting at Ambassadorial as well as at Ministerial levels, was able to elaborate organizational and operational aspects of the Mechanism, including the human and material resources needed. Today, we have a Mechanism which is operational with a Peace Fund to provide resources for its work. Progress is underway to make the necessary institutional adjustment and capacity augmentation within the General Secretariat so as to enhance efficacy in the organization of matters of conflict resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

Of course having this mechanism is very important. It has brought an institutional link to the political efforts which are expended to meet the exigencies of resolving conflicts. However, by itself, the mechanism is only an instrument which must be used if it is to make a major difference. This is why I wish to reiterate my appeal to all Member States to look at the mechanism as a means of self-empowerment, and a statement that Africa wants to put a definite end to ambivalence and indecision in matters of conflicts which afflict it. We have shown the world that we can begin. We now should demonstrate that we can act in a coordinated and sustained manner. To do so, we have to have faith in the mechanism, to support it and above all, to use it. Only if we manage to integrate the philosophy and the instrumentality of the mechanism in conflict resolution, shall we be able to make it grow and effectively applicable to the imperative of bringing peace to the continent.

Mr. Chairman,

The outside world takes seriously the establishment of the mechanism. They see in it, a collective resolve and determination of the continent to bring an end to conflicts. Their view on the mechanism has found expression in their support for it and readiness to assist. To this end, we have had expression of political support and pledges of financial contributions to the Peace Fund, from several countries, to which I wish to reiterate my appreciation. But support and assistance from abroad should not and can not suffice. Africa herself needs to reach into her pockets and show that it is also prepared to make the necessary sacrifice. Charity begins at home. This is why I do not believe that Africa should fold her hands and wait for outside assistance. I therefore wish to reiterate my appeal to all our countries to respond and make contributions to the OAU Peace Fund, drawing from

the good example which the African Ambassadors' wives and the African women in Addis Ababa, generally, set by making a contribution of about \$10,000 dollars.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the establishment of the Mechanism, it has involved itself in the efforts at conflict resolution. It has considered the various conflict situations in the continent with a view to exploring ways and means of bringing speedy and lasting settlement to them.

The situation in Somalia remains grave with threats of renewed fighting with implications to peace as well as to the provision of humanitarian assistance which is still so vital to the survival of the people of Somalia. We have been encouraged by the new emphasis by the international community, on political means of searching for a solution to the Somali conflict. But what we can do, what chance of success we stand, will ultimately depend on whether the Somali groups and factions themselves are ready to cooperate and to enter into constructive dialogue with each other. We have repeatedly said that, the outside world can only assist. The responsibility of ending the conflict and erecting the structures of peace in that country rests entirely with the Somali people. It is therefore the responsibility - of those who represent the Somali people - to exercise responsible leadership, and to emerge from the psychosis of fear and distrust and put their energy on the side of peace.

As we want the Somali people to understand that the world's patience is not infinite, so too do we request the international community not to be overcome or discouraged by the present difficulties. We need to remain with the people of Somalia as they go through this difficult period, and ultimately assist them in the

long term tasks of rehabilitation and reconstruction of their country.

In Burundi, the situation remains tense although inter-communal killings, which followed the attempted coup of last October in which President Ndadaye and some of his close associates were killed, have appreciably de-escalated. Subsequent to the sad events of last October, I undertook a series of consultations including at the Regional Summit which took place in Kigali on 28 October, as well as with the Government of Burundi and the Army Command on what the OAU could do to help end the crisis.

Those consultations culminated in an agreement on an OAU presence to be in the form of a civilian component of twenty people and a security element of 180 personnel. The primary objective of that Mission which will have a duration of six months, is to help, in close cooperation with the Burundi Security Services, in providing physical security to the members of the Government, as well as in the re-establishment of confidence so that the process of returning the country to normalcy can begin.

We began putting together the elements of the Mission and my Special Representative with the core staff of the civilian component arrived in Bujumbura in mid December last year. Today, thanks to the very positive response I received from African countries and assistance from the International Community, we are ready to deploy the security element.

In order to follow up my earlier visit to Burundi as well as the work of my Special Representative, I decided to travel to Burundi on the 25th of this month, until the day before yesterday. During my five-day stay in Bujumbura, I was able to consult broadly, meet with as many individuals and organizations as possible across the political spectrum in Burundi. I met members

of the Government including the Prime Minister and the President-Elect, of the legislature including the President of the National Assembly, the Army Command, Political Parties both within the Government and the Opposition, Representatives of the Civic Society, of Religious Institutions, Human Rights Groups, former Heads of State, former Ministers as well as many private individuals. The primary objective of these consultations were to hear from those who live the crisis in Burundi, and learn from them on how they saw the crisis, the future of their country and what it is they think the OAU can do to assist in bringing the crisis to a speedy resolution and building foundations for a lasting peace in the country. It was likewise, to explain to them how the OAU saw the crisis, and what we think we can do, within the context of our presence there, to assist. In particular, I seized the opportunity to explain what our mission there is all about, and to dissuade them from the many misunderstandings, some real, some whipped up for political expediency about the OAU presence in Burundi. I wish to put on record my appreciation to all those I met for their candour in our discussions and their preoccupation about the future of their country.

I left Bujumbura encouraged, that in spite of some differences with those in the Opposition, regarding in particular, the security aspect of our Mission in Burundi, there was broad agreement on the need for the OAU to play the key role in rebuilding confidence, and promoting dialogue which will facilitate the process of national reconciliation. I intend henceforth to build and expand on the dialogue I have initiated with the many political forces in the country, so that we can concretize that broad understanding and elaborate suitable mechanism for sustained cooperation as we assist in finding a solution to the crisis. At the same time, let me also stress that the situation in Burundi and especially Bujumbura remains tense, fragile and potentially explosive.

In Rwanda, a broad-based Transitional Government is supposed to have taken over the affairs of guiding the country through the next couple of years. That Government, once installed, will be a product of the collective efforts of the Government of Rwanda, the Rwandese Patriotic Front, the neighbouring countries and of the OAU, with the support of the International Community which found expression in the Arusha Peace Negotiations culminating in the General Peace Agreement. Peace in Rwanda is a victory for the people of that country, and for Africa.

The OAU Neutral Military Observer Group successfully completed its mandate at the end of October last year. I personally travelled to Kigali for the formal winding up of NMOG and handing over its operations to the United Nations Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) which will oversee the process of transition in that country. I wish to reiterate my appreciation to both the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front for the confidence they reposed in the OAU in allowing it to play an important role in helping end the conflict. I wish also to reiterate my appreciation to the facilitator - the President of Tanzania, the Mediator - the President of Zaire, to the neighbouring countries of Uganda and Burundi as well as to the Observers, for the role they played in facilitating a settlement. What our achievement in Rwanda demonstrates is that Africa can make a difference in resolving its conflicts if we have the dedication, perseverance and political will to do so.

I remain concerned however, that differences within the political parties have until now prevented the formation of the Transitional Government. I wish to appeal to all the parties to demonstrate a spirit of compromise and allow the formation and emplacement of the Transitional Government. I need not emphasize that the implications of continued political uncertainty in Rwanda are serious.

Mr. Chairman,

The situation in Liberia holds promise as the implementation of the July 1993 Cotonu Agreement has held steady, notwithstanding the existence of some difficulties. Today we can look to the future with optimism as I see an opening for peace. The OAU has, through the laudable efforts of my Special Representative, former President of Zimbabwe, Reverend Canaan Banana, continued to cooperate with the countries of ECOWAS and the Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary General, in ironing out the remaining obstacles to the emplacement of the Liberian National Transitional Government, in tandem with the beginning of the process of disarmament which is critical to the endurance of peace in the country. Additionally, I am happy to report that as part of buttressing the efforts of ECOMOG, within the terms of the Cotonu Agreement, contingents of Tanzanian and Ugandan troops have already arrived in Liberia. Soon a contingent from Zimbabwe will also join in the efforts. I wish to thank the three African countries for having responded positively and committed themselves to help. My thanks also go to the United States of America and the United Kingdom, whose financial support has made it easier for those countries to respond rapidly. I wish at this juncture to appeal to other countries to contribute generously to the UN Trust Fund for Liberia so that adequate resources be made available to assist all the forces currently in Liberia in support of the Peace Process in that country.

The maintenance of peace, and the establishment of transitional arrangements is only the beginning. Liberia will, in addition to continued humanitarian assistance, need massive support in the more resource-demanding and long term tasks of rehabilitating and rebuilding its shattered infrastructure, and economy.

I take heart at the positive evolution of the situation in Mozambique, where, in spite of some logistical difficulties, especially those of demobilization, the 1992 Rome Agreement is still on course. I wish to commend both the Government of Mozambique and RENAMO for their commitment to the Agreement and for their steady and deliberate movement towards settlement. Their agreement on holding the Presidential and legislative Elections in October this year, is encouraging and deserves our commendation and support. The OAU, through my Special Representative, Amb. Fzeri, will continue to support the political process in the country and contribute, in any way where required, towards assisting both parties along the path of dialogue and of implementing the Rome Agreement. In the meantime, however, Mozambique which is still gripped by serious crises of famine, refugees and displacement, needs sustained humanitarian assistance. I therefore appeal to Africa and to the International Community generally, along with continued support to the political process now underway, to assist financially and materially in meeting the acute humanitarian needs in the country.

Unfortunately, the situation in Angola does not lend itself to great optimism - even if the parties persist in dialogue. The people of Angola continue to suffer untold brutality and the total effects of war have left them without a home, livelihood and hope. This is unacceptable. It is an indictment to our collective humanity that so much suffering and destruction have been allowed to continue. As we await the results of the Lusaka framework of negotiations, I wish once more to appeal to both parties, and in particular, UNITA, to exercise restraint so that agreement can be reached and peace restored to Angola. We in the OAU will continue to render our firm support to the return to the democratic process under the terms of the Bicesse Accords. In the meantime, I wish to appeal for sustained humanitarian assistance to the much needy people of Angola. I also wish to appeal, especially to those countries with leverage on UNITA, to put their pressure to bear, so

that the country can retrieve itself from destruction and begin on the road to peace, democracy and national reconciliation.

Mr. Chairman,

I continue to be preoccupied by the situation in Congo which has steadily degenerated over the last few months and where the possibility of escalation remains very real indeed. I have maintained contact with the Government through the Foreign Minister, and President Lissouba. I have also, through my Special Envoy, Ambassador Sahnoun who has again been in Brazzaville, persisted in efforts at helping all the parties narrow their differences and proceed with dialogue aimed at defusing the present crisis, ushering in peace and sustaining the democratic process in the country. I am now happy to inform the Council that following the efforts of Amb. Sahnoun, agreement has been reached on the need to deescalate the tension in the country and proceed with dialogue. They have agreed on a formular for handling the results of the work of the Arbitral Tribunal within the agreed time-frame. Both the Government and the Opposition are to meet in Libreville and will benefit from the wise counsel of President Omar Bongo of Gabon. I continue to hope that all the parties in Congo, will weigh the full implications of continued polarization in terms of peace and long term stability of their country, retreat from confrontation and begin on the road to dialogue and reconciliation.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The conflict areas I have mentioned are by no means the only ones which preoccupy me or which threaten peace and stability in the continent. There are others, some active, some latent, which need also to be addressed. The Sudan, Togo, Zaire and now Lesotho, to name some, are also areas of concern. I continue to hope that in these countries as well, patience and the spirit of compromise will be exercised so that dialogue aimed at national reconciliation can be carried on or initiated.

But beyond these conflicts, Africa continues to be a continent in flux. Efforts at economic reform and conflict resolution have continued along with those at further democratization. These, our countries have pursued in tandem because of the belief and the determination that they form one integral whole. One can not bring about economic development in conditions of conflicts. Neither can economic development endure, in the long run, without being founded on democracy and its inherent regard to human and peoples rights. Conversely, democracy can not prosper in conflicts. Conflicts themselves can not find enduring solutions without democracy. Nor can democracy thrive in conditions of squalor and abject poverty.

In the course of the last year, the process of further democratization has deepened and indeed broadened. We in the OAU have been able to play a modest role in helping in the process of further democratization, particularly, through the observation of elections. It has not been easy and we wish we could have rendered more assistance, but this is a learning process. As we observe more elections, we acquire experience which we hope to put to the service of future elections. We are however still constrained by lack of resources and adequate personnel. Pursuant to the decision of the Central Organ, we shall be creating capacity by especially creating a Unit of Elections within the General Secretariat. We

shall aim at fine-tuning our knowledge and know-how in this new field to the Organization.

But while we observe elections, we know that it is only part of the process of building democracy in the continent. The mere holding of elections does not suffice unless there is consensus on the contents of the process, the ground rules and its actual conduct. This is why I believe that, as our countries move on with political pluralism and multiparty elections, they need to ensure that these processes do not become sources of tension and division but factors uniting people and country.

Mr. Chairman,

As our countries endeavour to further democratize, we need to ensure that conditions for genuine, free and fair elections are created so that the people can exercise their full democratic rights of political choice. In order to have such elections, it will of course be necessary to bring transparency to the electoral processes so that the people and the political forces feel themselves part of a national endeavour and not outsiders who can only make political point through demonstrations, petitions and confrontation.

Our Governments will stand good prospects of succeeding if, along with bringing such transparency, they also endeavour to instil in the people a culture of tolerance and political accommodation. This is ultimately what will constitute a firm foundation for the institutions of democracy in the continent. Democracy is about choice. Elections are about electoral success and lack of it. It is not of victory and defeat. In both, it is the function of a system. We therefore need to have those who win elections to know that they have obligations both to govern and to preserve the function of democracy and promote unity. Those who lose, equally, should know that it is only the function of a system

of choice. In other words, Africa needs good winners and good losers. A culture of tolerance and political compromise and accommodation are particularly necessary in a continent as varied and diverse as ours. Africa is a mosaic of cultures, religions and races spanning all its corners. These are differences which if properly harnessed and utilized hold a potential of greatness for the continent. Yet at the same time, if they are mismanaged or allowed to be manipulated by the politics of exclusion and intolerance, they can tear the continent apart. The choice is clear. We must deploy every effort and resource to the imperative of maintaining and promoting unity in our countries and in the continent using our diversity as a source of strength.

Mr. Chairman,

This is a budgetary session and therefore it is ideally supposed to focus on the budget. I have dwelt on the problems which face the continent because, the agenda of the organization is of fundamental relevance to its budget. We need resources if we are to meet the many challenges which face us. Equally we need to target the resources at our disposal to the tasks we have to fulfil.

Before this Council, is a draft biennium programme budget for 1994-1996 of \$ 29,025,000.00 for the 94/95 fiscal year and \$29,643,000.00 for 95/96 year. Both these amounts represent nominal increases over the actual average expenditures over the last three years. It is a negative growth budget taking into account the factor of inflation. While Your Excellencies will find the detailed breakdown in the programme budget itself as well as in the introduction to my report in document CM/1789 9(LIX) Part 1, I wish to address two serious issues relating to the budget. The first is the chronic problem of arrears which is hampering planning and actual execution of work programmes of the Secretariat. Today, the arrears of contribution, stand at over \$62 million, equal to

more than two regular budgets of the Organization. Compounding this problem, is that of late payment, which makes it difficult for the Organization to plan ahead due to the uncertainty of receipt of the requisite finance. As you meet, seven months into the current 1993-94 financial year, only 16% of the budget has been contributed. This delay goes to augment the arrears and further undermine the resource base and financial stability of the Organization.

The second issue is that of the budget ceiling and that of the whole question of resource disposition of the Organization. The Organization is continually being asked to shoulder more and more responsibilities. Member States are requiring the Secretariat to play an enhanced role in conflict resolution, election observation and economic development of the continent. The African Economic Community has now to be established; conflicts are multiplying and so too are requests to observe elections in many countries. All these mounting responsibilities are not backed or complemented with additionality of resources. If we can not contribute to the present budget in full, how can we expect the Secretariat to fulfil its present tasks - much less taking on additional ones?

Mr. Chairman,

The budget increase ceiling of 10% over actual expenditure of the preceding year which was directed by this Council and which is being observed, in my view had a purpose and a context. Its purpose was to check the growth of the budget, bringing frugality and rationality to it. Its context was to bring balance between the needs of the Organization and the objective economic conditions in our countries. In both, it was not the objective to diminish the resource base and capacity of the Organization to handle the tasks which the Member States themselves assign to it. Besides, the ceiling would have been more relevant in situations where contributions to the budget are made in full and in time. In the

circumstances, in which we operate however, it is not always possible to know the real actual expenditure of the previous financial year because invariably, the Secretariat can not spend - not because there are no programmes to execute, but because there is no money contributed. We always have money in our books but little cash in the bank.

In addition and quite apart from this problem of late payment which affect the pattern and rate of budgeted expenditure, there is the new issue of additionality of resources. Yes, we shall continue to re-orient the budget so that it is aligned to the new priorities of the Organisation. Yes, we shall continue to seek frugality and more rationalization of resources and programmes so as to bring efficiency. But in addition we need added resources to shoulder new and mounting tasks which the Organization is continually required to fulfil. I therefore invite the Council to reflect on how, the increasing demands on the Organization can be reconciled with the limited and unexpanding resource base it is operating on.

Mr. Chairman,

The year 1994 has on the whole opened on a note of optimism. Various conflicts in the continent show positive evolution. The processes of further democratization, economic reform and development are taking root in the continent. Our countries and Governments are demonstrating more resolve and determination to meet the triple challenge of ending conflicts, democratizing and bringing economic development. And notwithstanding the many difficulties, our countries are on the right path. Of course we need to do more to sustain the momentum of these multi-pronged processes; by way of making the necessary political adjustments and reforms. Beyond that we need to persist in the belief in ourselves, in our ability to change our condition and in our capacity to triumph. We need to think and work together. We need

to defeat self-doubt and to reject notions of pessimism which seek to hold Africa back into mental bondage. We have started well. We must persist along this path.

Thank you.