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Organization of African Unity

INTRODUCTORY REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL
TO THE 10TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE OAU
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

Harare, Zimbabwe

19th March 1994

Mr. Chairman,
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Distinguished Heads of Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, from the outset, to welcome you all to this 10th Ordinary Session of the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa. I am particularly encouraged that despite the short notice given for this session and notwithstanding your very busy schedules, there has been such an impressive turnout of our leaders.

Your Committee is convening under special circumstances to review the situation in South Africa which has reached a critical moment in its history now that it is preparing for the very first democratic and non-racial elections in the country. For the very first time in their lives, South Africans of all walks of life will exercise their right to vote.

Indeed, since your last meeting in October, 1992 in Gaborone, significant progress has been made in the multiparty negotiations culminating in the decision to hold the first democratic and non-racial elections on 27 April, 1994 and to establish the Transitional Structures leading to the holding of free and fair elections.

Your current Session is therefore, a unique opportunity to assess the situation in South Africa on the eve of the April elections and to consider how best the OAU could make a further and meaningful contribution towards a successful conclusion of the on-going process.

Distinguished Heads of State and Government and Heads of Delegations will recall that your Committee, at its last Session, had requested me to deploy observers in South Africa as part of efforts aimed at creating a climate conducive to free political activities and thereby enhancing the peace process. I wish to report that since then, I appointed a Special Representative and deployed a team of Observers who have been actively involved in monitoring violence and contributing to confidence building among the parties in South Africa with a view to sustaining the peace process. They have done so working in cooperation with the other observers of the International Community notably those of the United Nations, the Commonwealth and the European Union. In this connection, I am glad that the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, our brother Lakhdar Brahimi, whom I have invited to attend this meeting, is here with us. Whenever necessary, he will be prepared in the course of this session to provide his own insight on the situation.

During the last Session of the Council of Ministers in Addis Ababa, I suggested that the OAU team be strengthened with additional observers to be dispatched by Member States and at their own expense to monitor the elections. The observers from Member States will operate under the umbrella of the OAU which will provide them with the required logistical support and co-ordinate their activities in South Africa. I wish to report that the response from Member States has been quite encouraging. Clearly however much more can be done. Ideally, we need to deploy 200 observers. At the very least, we have to have 100 observers.

This, I believe, is but the minimum that Africa could do in support of the peace process in the country and in view of the fact that the OAU could not afford to be absent at this crucial stage which is the culmination of the lengthy and protracted struggle of the people of South Africa with which Africa, in particular, and the International Community in general, have always identified. I wish therefore to appeal to all Members of the Ad Hoc Committee which have not yet done so to submit to us as a matter of urgency the number and names of their observers. I also wish to request those in a position to do so to increase the number which they have already indicated. Here, I wish to thank our Current Chairman, who in my meeting with him last night agreed to increase the number of observers from Egypt from 2 to 7.

On the issue of sanctions, I wish to report, that in the light of the developments in the negotiations in South Africa, and taking into account the appeal made by the President of the ANC, for the lifting of economic sanctions against South Africa, an Extra-Ordinary Session of the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa convened in New York, at Ministerial level, on 29th September, 1993, and decided to call on all the OAU Member States, the International Community at large and the United Nations in particular to respond positively to this appeal. The Committee further expressed its support for the maintenance of the embargo on arms and on nuclear cooperation. With respect to the oil embargo, it urged that this should be lifted after the establishment and commencement of the work of the Transitional Executive Council. It also supported the establishment or restoration

of full diplomatic relations with South Africa following the installation of an Interim government of National Unity to be constituted after the elections to be held on 27 April, 1994.

In view of the evolving situation in South Africa, I deemed it important to undertake a working visit to that country from 22nd to 26th February 1994. I also visited Namibia, Lesotho and Mozambique. While in South Africa, I held wide-ranging discussions with the main actors on the South African political scene. I met, in turn, with the leadership of the ANC and PAC, General Constand Viljoen of the Afrikaner Volksfront, Foreign Minister Pik Botha and President F.W. De Klerk. I also went to Ulundi to meet with Chief Buthelezi, the leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party. While in Ulundi, I also had the opportunity to have a telephone conversation with King Goodwill Zwelithini. I also held talks with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in South Africa together with the Heads of the Observer Missions of the Commonwealth and the European Union; I also discussed with the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission, Mr. Justice Johann Kriegler and with Mr. Justice Goldstone. On my way back from Lesotho, I had the opportunity to hold a second meeting with President Mandela in Umtata in the Transkei, with whom I shared impressions on my discussions with the various parties I met in South Africa and who, in turn, briefed me on the outcome of his recent encounter with Chief Buthelezi.

The purpose of my visit was to obtain first-hand information on the current situation in South Africa and to demonstrate OAU's support for the process of democratisation and the peace efforts in the country, the intention being to see what further contribution could be made by our

Organization in this regard. My discussions were profound, incisive and instructive. It is my belief that the first-ever visit of the OAU Secretary General to South Africa was appreciated and viewed by all those whom I met as a manifestation of the Organization's concern over developments in that country and its commitment to work for peace in the country.

My visit to South Africa took place at a critical juncture and at a time of heightened tension in the country subsequent upon the decision of some parties not to participate in the April elections.

To all my interlocutors, I conveyed a message of peace, restraint, tolerance and hope. I expressed the unwavering commitment of the OAU to the democratisation process, the unity and territorial integrity of South Africa and the holding of an all-inclusive, free and fair elections in conditions of peace, security and tranquility. I urged all of them to demonstrate a sense of accommodation and go the extra mile in this regard in the interest of peace and national reconciliation.

During my discussions with the leadership of the ANC and PAC whom I met on several occasions and at various levels, I was extensively briefed on the potentially explosive situation in the country and on the efforts being made to, as much as possible, accommodate all the parties involved in the negotiations and to ensure a smooth conduct of the forthcoming elections. The President of the ANC, Mr. Mandela informed me of his overtures towards the Inkatha Freedom Party as well as the intensive dialogue he engaged in with the representatives

of key sectors of the society such as the security forces, farmers, members of the business community, right-wing groups, church leaders and other political figures. Though expressing his concern over the dangers inherent in the process arising from the attitude of some parties and particularly the relations between the White Right-wing and some elements of the security forces, he conveyed his confidence that the process will not be hindered. The President of the ANC expressed the firm commitment of his movement to the unity of the country and the observance of the date of 27 April, 1994 set for the elections. On the question of the Zulu Kingdom, he stressed that consultations would continue with a view to finding a more acceptable form of accommodation to allow for a constitutional role for the King of the Zulus. He stressed however that the unity and territorial integrity of the country cannot be compromised.

The PAC leadership also manifested a clear disposition and commitment to work for an all inclusive participation in the elections. They also underscored the importance of maintaining the unity of the country. Since the PAC has good relations with Chief Buthelezi, I urged the PAC leadership to spare no effort in impressing upon the President of the Inkatha Freedom Party to participate in the elections.

I took the opportunity to commend and encourage both the ANC and PAC leadership to stay the course in the efforts towards accommodation that would safeguard the fabric of the South African society and ensure an uninterrupted process of democratisation.

I made the same appeal in my talks with General Constand Viljoen and Chief Buthelezi of what was then the Freedom Alliance. They expressed their frustration for having been marginalized during the negotiation process. They stated their opposition to a central domineering authority and their preference for a strong federalist system. General Viljoen even referred to a confederal set up.

General Viljoen recognised that many of their demands had been met in the recent concessions, including the powers of the regions and the right to self-determination, made by the ANC and the Government which therefore constituted a good basis for further negotiations. He articulated the position of his movement for an "Afrikaner Volkstaat" where the Afrikaners would be the dominant group and which will have loose political relations with South Africa.

On my part, I made it clear to General Viljoen that OAU's position on South Africa has never been based on considerations of race and colour. It was rather a position of principle against a system which denied the majority their fundamental human rights. The OAU was interested in promoting unity in diversity through the ability of people of different races, colours and beliefs to live and work together in conditions of peace and in an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect. I urged the members of the Afrikaner Volksfront to rise to the occasion and maximise the rich mosaic of diversities in the country to build a strong nation that will ensure a better life for all its sons and daughters and also be an important asset to Africa. I challenged General Viljoen, as a man who held national responsibilities and who, as a Commander of the South African Defence Force,

was sworn to defend the territorial integrity of his country, to seek for accommodation within a united South Africa instead of advocating its balkanisation through the demands for a separate Afrikaner State. He was unable to clearly articulate his position on the location of the so-called State, the status of non-Afrikaners living within the State or the fate of Afrikaners living outside the State. While I encouraged General Viljoen to seek accommodation for those genuine fears and concerns of his constituency, I, in no uncertain terms, conveyed OAU's firm and unwavering support for the unity and territorial integrity of South Africa.

In my talks with Chief Buthelezi, he referred to the lack of progress in levelling the political playing fields and the escalating violence. He stated that hopes for reconciliation between political organizations prior to elections were bleak. He rejected as false, the ANC and Government assertions that they were bending over backwards to accommodate the IFP during the negotiations. According to him, even after reducing his demands from 30 to 4, no due cognizance was taken of these minimum demands for a strong federalist system with regional constitutions and governments, powers of taxation for the regions as well as the recognition of a constitutional role for the King of the Zulus. He further expressed his frustrations over the conduct of the negotiations and more specifically with the fact that the IFP had not been given any opportunity to make its input to what he referred to as the so-called "concessions" announced by the ANC and added that the Zulu King only came up with his demands

after the IFP had failed to secure a constitutionally guaranteed role for the Zulu monarchy during the negotiations. He reiterated his demand for international mediation adding that Africa and the OAU could play a role in that mediation.

I reminded Chief Buthelezi of his stand against White minority rule during the dark days of apartheid. I also reminded him of his own campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela and of the fact that he had rejected the independence of his Kwazulu Bantustan. I also drew his attention to the stand he had adopted with regard to the territorial integrity of South Africa. With all these past patriotic deeds, how could he now exclude himself from the process of transition from apartheid to a democratic and non-racial South Africa and deny his people the right of to participate in the elections from which they had been excluded by white minority rule for so long.

I told him that no African in our continent could understand how any African leader in South Africa could deny his people the right of taking part in the elections. I appealed to him to give peace a chance and seek accommodation for his concerns. I expressed my firm belief that it was not too late to arrive at an arrangement prior to the elections and conveyed OAU's willingness and disposition to be helpful in this respect.

When I met President F.W. De Klerk, I also made it a point to commend him for his courage and vision and for the sense of leadership he has shown in the process of transforming South African society. I took the opportunity to remind President De Klerk that Africa had only challenged the

legality of the South African Government and never the legitimacy of the existence of the South African State. I stated that Africa will strongly support all efforts undertaken by the Government to ensure that the process of elections and change is not interrupted by a fringe minority trying to impose its will on the majority. I reiterated the OAU's position on the responsibility of the Government of the day for the maintenance of law and order. I further informed him that I had stressed in my talks with General Viljoen and Chief Buthelezi that Africa unequivocally stands for the unity of South Africa. I expressed OAU's expectation that a democratic and peaceful South Africa would soon join and strengthen the ranks of the African family of nations. Finally, I urged President De Klerk to leave no stone unturned and to go as far as he possibly can to ensure an all-inclusive participation in the elections free from any intimidation or threat.

President De Klerk briefed me on the efforts his Government was making in order to accommodate the members of the Freedom Alliance. He told me about his frustrations in dealing with the members of the Freedom Alliance who were inconsistent in their position. He stressed special concern over what he considers as "the Zulu issue" and the position of the IFP especially in view of the recent involvement of Zulu King Zwelithini and the support that he is extending to Chief Buthelezi. He also told me that he was aware of the capacity for disturbance of the White Right-wing. However, he stated in no uncertain terms, that he and his Government were determined to face up to their responsibilities and to maintain law and order.

On the eve of my departure from South Africa, I was pleased to learn from President Mandela that his meeting with Chief Buthelezi in Durban on March 1, 1994, had been meaningful and constructive. At the meeting, the ANC had accepted in principle the idea of the international mediation while the IFP, on its part, had agreed to provisional registration for the elections. The practical details of this Agreement were to be worked out subsequently by a Task Force. Unfortunately, in spite of this Agreement, the IFP was unable to submit its list of candidates prior to the deadline. I am not in a position to report on whether this failure to submit the list in time was related to a misunderstanding on the implications of the Agreement, particularly over a possible postponement of the date of the elections to allow for international mediation. I would, however, like to report, that both President F.W. De Klerk and the President of the ANC, Mr. Mandela told me that the elections shall be held as scheduled.

In the meantime, significant developments have occurred in Bophuthatswana which Your Excellencies are definitely aware of. In that connection, I would like to single out firstly the effective resistance displayed by the people of the territory and the miserable failure of the ultra Rightwing to reverse the process of change there although admittedly they succeed in causing death and destruction. Secondly, I would like to observe, with satisfaction, that the South African Government and the Transitional Executive Council moved swiftly and decisively in defusing tension and the South African Defence Force acted appropriately to arrest the situation. The events in Bophuthatswana need to be

meditated upon and lessons drawn on how the people of South Africa cannot be prevented from exercising the legitimate rights for which they have fought.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no doubt that we are at a critical juncture, indeed at a cross-roads in the history of South Africa. In about six weeks, the first-ever democratic and non-racial elections will be held in South Africa. It is the culmination of the protracted struggle and sacrifices of the people of South Africa with the active support of Africa and the International Community. This has been achieved, thanks also to the leadership and vision demonstrated by men and women of goodwill in South Africa.

We cannot afford to miss the opportunity to achieve peace and national reconciliation and to witness the emergence of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa which represents the aspiration of the overwhelming majority of South Africans and which, moreover, constitutes the ultimate goal of the International Community.

We are indeed close to our objective. Yet, the path is still strewn with obstacles and fraught with danger and uncertainty. On the one hand, we are faced with the issue of violence, which, unfortunately has characterised this process. Your Committee may wish to make a solemn appeal to the parties involved and to all segments of the South African society to exercise restraint and moderation and to refrain engaging in any acts of violence. On the other hand, we are faced with some parties that have decided to exclude themselves from the

elections. Your Committee may also wish to appeal to those parties to join the process and to refrain from any acts that would undermine the smooth conduct of free and fair elections.

This combination of violence and refusal to participate in the process, coupled with the spirit of intolerance might create serious obstacles to the peace and democratisation process. In this connection, the role of some elements of the Security Services continue to cause considerable concern. Yet it is my confident belief that the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa, both black and white, want the process to be kept under control. Africa should remain vigilant and ever supportive of the process.

I believe your meeting will be one more opportunity to reiterate Africa's unflinching stand on the unity and territorial integrity of South Africa and its unwavering opposition to any attempts to undermine it. The question of unity of the country need not be overemphasized. Throughout the struggle against apartheid, Africa and the OAU has always stood for the unity of that country. Heads of State and Government and Heads of Delegation would certainly have followed with concern the recent Statements and Declarations aimed at undermining and indeed disrupting the unity and territorial integrity of the country. I believe this Committee on behalf of Africa should send a clear message to the People of South Africa and the international Community: Africa categorically and unequivocally rejects any and all attempts which would disrupt the unity and territorial integrity of the country. It should also be an opportunity to convey a message of solidarity and hope to the people of South

Africa and to reaffirm our support for the peace process and appeal to all the parties concerned to seek accommodation through dialogue in a spirit of national reconciliation. It is also our expectation that the International Community, and the United Nations in particular, will continue to sustain the momentum for peace and national reconciliation in South Africa until it attains the so-much awaited objective. Finally, it is our confident hope that at the end of this process, a new South Africa, open to all South Africans irrespective of their race, colour or creed, would emerge. Africa and OAU are looking forward with great expectations to welcoming this new South Africa as a member of the African family of nations. We must at the same time recognize the complexities of the situation there and the formidable challenges encompassing economic, social and not least security domains that confront the new Government that will emerge after the April 27 Elections.