THE MWALIMU NYERERE FOUNDATION

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND PUBLIC LECTURE

BY

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ON

PEACE, LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES IN 21ST CENTURY AFRICA

AT THE

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Salim Ahmed Salim: Lecture on Peace, Leadership and Governance Challenges in 21st Century Africa

Mr Chairman *Hon. Govern + ~~Minister~~ Minister Mauritala ~~...the Mayor~~, The Chancellor of this University, You Worship the Mayor.*

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Rukudzo Murapa

Ambassad + their counteres.

Members of the University Community

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to be back at the Africa University, and once again to cherish the grandiose setting of the ancestral hills of Umtali from whose blessings a bright constellation of hope and optimism is emerging, in the form of this ~~dynamic~~ *emerging* Institution. I was here in March 2001 at the occasion of the official opening of the Jokomo/Yamada Library, and I cannot fail to notice the developments that have taken place in these 15 months, both in terms of physical facilities and also in the vibrancy of the University community. For the past two days I have been back at the Africa University, once again to participate in the unraveling of an important University initiative. *I want to express my sincere appreciation to the Convenor of this session for the warm and traditional welcome extended to me since coming back again to this session.*

I wish to thank the Vice Chancellor, Professor Rukudzo Murapa, for inviting me for yet another time and to allow me to share with you my thoughts on some of the pertinent issues concerning our Continent. This time around, I have been asked to speak on '**Peace, Leadership and Governance: Challenges in 21st Century Africa."**

I was motivated to accept the invitation to address this topic by appreciating two features of this Institution. In the first place, the fact that the theme I have been asked to speak on is also the name and mission of an Institute of this University is very revealing to me. Essentially, it underscores the quest by this University to transcend the limitation of traditional preoccupation with reflections and analysis of such important subjects as peace, leadership and

governance. By establishing an Institute for these issues, it demonstrates a determination to become more proactive by advancing means and modalities of engagement in these facets so as to realize the African Vision. Within an Institute framework, peace, leadership and governance can no longer remain as simply issues in the Social Sciences to be studied. It becomes necessary to develop programs, partnerships and networks for surmounting the associated challenges.

A second reason that has motivated me to accept the invitation to speak is the Pan-African character of this Institution. Indeed, as I pointed out last time I was here, it is not the name that makes this University African. It is the nature of its mission and vision, and also the composition of its community, specifically the diversity of African nations that are represented among its faculty, staff and students. I get a sense of talking to Africa as I stand at this podium. Even more inspiring, I get a feeling that I am talking to the custodians of the Africa of tomorrow, you the youths – students of this University.

The challenges of peace, leadership and governance concern every African. None of our nations and societies, however, strong, stable, or rich can afford to ignore the critical importance of these challenges. Equally so, in their wholeness and when appropriately configured, these factors constitute a vehicle that can enable our Continent and our nations to realize a brighter future that we all

desire. Therefore, for the students and faculty of this University, who come from the different parts of Africa and the world, and for the youths of this Continent, addressing the questions of peace, leadership and governance is not simply an intellectual exercise. It is about confronting an existential reality, our being, and our destiny.

There is a profound linkage, almost symbiotic, between peace, leadership and governance. Each feeds into the other, reinforcing its impact, whether negatively or positively. While leadership impinges on governance, the latter contributes to the prevalence or absence of peace, which in turn circumscribes or bolsters the nature of leadership and governance. The experience of post-independence Africa provides telling lessons of this linkage. Indeed, while each of these facets has a distinct role in the development of our respective societies, the cumulative impact of their linkage tend not only to reinforce each factor, but more seriously to shape and determine the destiny of our societies.

In their totality, the elements of peace, leadership and governance define the domain of politics in society, as distinguished from the social and economic domains. In the context of the African Continent, the history of this domain - that is the political domain - has been one of subjugation, tension, imposition, and alienation.

The context of colonialism and apartheid engendered a particular character to the domain of politics in Africa, which impinged on the relations between state and society, within society, in the nature of leadership, and in the mode of governance. The more than a century of colonialism and many decades of apartheid led to the deliberate and systematic distortion and/or destruction of indigenous systems of politics, even where traditional systems were retained and incorporated to serve the colonial regime. More seriously, it was the colonial imposed structures, institutions, and practices that subsequently formed the foundation for modern politics in Africa.

These colonially derived structures in the domain of politics were characterized by exclusion, alienation and the deprivation of the majority of Africans the means of articulating their demands and interests, and of contributing towards the shaping of their societies. Politics became an arena of monopolized power, ridden with antagonism, sectarianism and intolerance. The Social Contract between the state and society was only loosely honoured thus making anarchy to remain looming at the threshold.

The domain of politics after the century of colonialism, preceded by slavery, was further characterized by personalized, as opposed to institutionalized, leadership; and the political order was

akin to a system of ruler-ship, corresponding with the master-subject relationship that prevailed.

This was the framework of politics that Africa inherited at independence and more or less sustained, with a few alterations, in the first three decades of post-independence. It needs no overstating to point out that the consequence of such a political framework was disastrous not only to the process of political development, but also, and even more gravely, to the social and economic well being of the African people. Consequently during the last decade of the twentieth century, Africa has found herself ridden with violent conflicts and afflicted by widespread poverty and an increasingly alienated population and this sad situation setting in, in the aftermath of a successful war against colonial rule.

Africans like any other colonial peoples had struggled against colonial rule not only because it symbolized foreign domination but also because of a higher ideal of self-determination and empowerment. The ideal cannot be said to have been achieved at independence. The end of colonial rule and racist exclusion only provided an opportunity to redefine the relationship between those who would accede to reigns of power within the state structures and those from whom legitimacy to exercise that power and authority are derived. In the new social contract, the new African leadership almost everywhere found the inadequacy of the inherited colonial

state structure. Not only was there an imperative to transform these structures but even more daunting has been the transformation of our own mindsets to enable us see the deeper meaning and challenges of independence and post colonial reconstruction.

An occasion such as this conference offers us an opportunity to reflect on the path we have traversed and the distance we have so far covered taking note of successes we have registered, setbacks and tribulations we have gone through in order to map out correct strategies for a further advance in an otherwise more challenging environment for African Social and Economic emancipation.

The need to transform the structures of politics was thus seen to be an urgent imperative. It became necessary to go beyond the mere reform of the political order, and to embark into a fundamental transformation of the political process by promoting sustainable peace, dynamic leadership and good governance. This has been the new challenge for the African Continent.

Concretely, it is the challenge of institutionalizing the critical ingredients of the political domain by building sustainable structures, procedures and values. It is an endeavour to transcend ad hoc arrangements in dealing with issues of peace, security and stability; avoiding reactive interventions in overcoming obstacles; and not relying on chance and fortune in getting visionary and dynamic

leadership. This is the path that I see Africa taking as it enters the new century and new millennium.

In-order to treat these subjects in greater detail and deep insights, allow me now to take the liberty to dwell a little bit more on each separately although as I have already acknowledged they do have a cumulative effect on society.

It is indisputable that the African Continent has been ravaged in the past three decades by the scourge of violent conflicts and its associated consequences. Millions of our people have either lost their lives or maimed in a cruel way; millions more have been rendered refugees or internally displaced persons – in other words forced to vote with their feet; resources have been squandered and destroyed; a lot of hardships and suffering have been meted on the people; communities have been destabilized and the atmosphere of insecurity and instability has deprived the Continent the opportunity for growth and development. Indeed, I do not have to recount the consequences of the lack of peace in Angola, the Great Lakes, Somalia, Southern Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, now Madagascar and also in many other nations where there are simmering tensions and conflicts that are about to explode violently.

The tragedy of conflict is such that apart from its devastation at the locus of occurrence, it is also not confined to a bounded space or

time. Currently there are less than one third of African countries that are affected by violent conflicts. However, the aftermaths of the situation in those countries tend to affect the whole Continent either in terms of dealing with refugees and coping with the resultant instability, or in terms of lost opportunities for development.

The fact that most of these conflicts, which have occurred in the Continent during the past two decades have been between citizens of the same countries, indicates that their causes are internal to these societies. Invariably, these causes are associated with questions of leadership and governance whereby discontent may be generated by the choice and modality of representation and the abuse of power and authority; or grievances that emerge due to denial for participation, violation of human rights, disregard to the rule of law, practices of intolerance, or due to the inequitable allocation of and access to public goods. All these translate to the prevalence of an institutional framework that generates tension and animosity in society, without adequate mechanisms that are capable of containing tension or the capacity to provide sustainable resolution of the internal contradictions.

Very often these forms of non-democratic governance were justified in the name of national solidarity and efficient administrative management of the process of development. 30 years after, political instability still reigns in many of our countries while the lot of our

people has deteriorated. It is not surprising that military coups in African have even been justified on the claim of restoration of democracy or freeing society from the scourge of corruption. You are, I am sure aware of the hollowness of such claims. It is only through democratic process that both democracy and accountability can be restored. It is through the ballot box that democracy and people centred development is guaranteed.

The challenge is to build an architecture for peace at all levels, both in a way of preempting the occurrence of discontent and grievances that lead to violent tensions and animosity, and also in terms of managing and resolving them at the early stage when they occur.

To a certain extent, this process has been initiated at the Continental level. In 1993, African Leaders decided to establish an OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution with a view to putting in place a more effective facility for promoting peace in the Continent. The establishment of this Mechanism was a very important development. It asserted in no uncertain terms that peace and security in the Continent is a collective responsibility of all Africans. It cannot be left to the idiosyncrasies of individual states, in the guise of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign nations.

Despite its technical and resource limitations, in these nine years since its establishment, the Mechanism has been deployed in a number of conflict areas and it has contributed towards the amelioration and resolution of conflicts in the Continent. Steps are now being taken aiming at enhancing its capacity and working methods.

Alongside the Continental Mechanism, there are several other structures at the regional level, all of which are attached to the existing Regional Economic Communities. These include, the ECOWAS' Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism, the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defense and Security for Southern Africa; and the ECCAS' Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa.

The establishment of all these mechanisms bears testimony to the Continent's determination to face up to the challenge of promoting peace, security and stability. Their functioning has not been perfect, as they still have to overcome a number of constraints. Many of them, including the Continental Mechanism, tend to respond more in a reactive manner, as opposed to engaging in preventive diplomacy. Nevertheless, efforts are being exerted to surmount these limitations and to ensure that in the 21st Century peace in the Continent remains a sustainable component.

It is unfortunate that efforts at establishing mechanisms for peace building and maintenance at the Continental level have not been matched at the national level. While measures are being taken to address the root causes of conflict, particularly by building a foundation for good governance within our national systems, the specificities of the peace factor and its requirements seem not to be addressed adequately. Indeed, herein lies a challenge for the Institute for Peace, Leadership and Governance. Serious and rigorous analytical and operational inquiry is needed to develop robust systems for peace promotion in our nations.

Students of politics may be familiar with the history of institutional and political development in the Continent. Perhaps it may be necessary to revisit the problematic of state – society relations within the paradigm of enhancing peace in our nations. It was believed in the early post-independence period that it is a strong state that can exclusively consolidate nationhood and prevent the tendency towards social fragmentation and anarchy. We have all witnessed how the outcome of that perspective fostered authoritarianism and dictatorships that led to the wave of violent conflicts that we are still suffering from.

Now, there is almost a consensus prevailing that peace and stability in Africa, among other things, requires a strong civil society

that is united and engaging. The challenge, however, is what are the practical implications of building such strength; and what kind of relations can be fostered with the State at the present conjuncture, when it is being subjected to globalizing trends that are calling for its withdrawal and virtual weakening.

In the same regard, the building of a strong civil society entails a transformation of the existing diversity among our peoples from being a basis for its present weakness into a source of strength and vibrancy. The existing differences on the basis of ethnicity, religion, colour, regionalism and even national origin should engender strength into us rather than become a basis for discrimination and a source of conflict. There are African countries in which this hurdle has been overcome. It behooves the Institute for Peace, Leadership and Governance to bring out the salient elements of such successful societies and to disseminate such positive experiences throughout the Continent.

The other important factors to be considered in addressing the institutionalization of peace at the national level include the issues of tolerance, the sharing of a common vision and the need to develop robust constitutional order that accommodates and resolves tensions amicably. Equally important in this context is the necessity of having an institutional balance of power not only among the main organs of governance but also for the other institutions.

I wish to underscore that peace is not only the absence of conflict. Indeed, a condition of peace is one in which positive goals and objectives of individuals, communities and the society as a whole are pursued without hindrance or fear of loss of life or integrity. In the present day Africa, the challenge of peace is how it can lead to the promotion of growth and the elimination of poverty among our peoples.

Turning to the question of leadership in Africa, it is unfortunate that this is one subject that has often been addressed in the negative. A lot has been said about the uncomplimentary attributes of leadership, but very little effort has made to develop a profile of positive leadership that is required in facing the Continent's challenges.

Admittedly, the Continent is littered with failed institutions, mostly due to bad leadership. Devastating conflicts have been provoked and sustained by leadership factors. Indeed, sometime the narrow interests of a given leadership have determined the whole destiny of nations and societies. Over the years, we have seen how political parties, the military, the executive bureaucracy, and even International Financial Institutions have usurped, to the exclusion of everybody else, the leadership of some of our societies. Yet, such a

critical factor has always been taken for granted and accepted fortuitously.

As we move in the new century and Africa faces up to its challenges, it is important that the leadership factor is given due attention. The role of leadership needs to be clearly understood, appropriate modalities of nurturing and appointing dynamic leadership have to be developed, and also critical is the need to foster accountability and transparency in the exercise of leadership functions. A major challenge is to transcend the notion of leadership being a personalized preoccupation to the building of a culture of leadership as being an institution. It has to be recognized that leadership operates within the framework of Governance – which is the third variable of our discourse this morning that I wish to turn to.

Governance is a term that has gained currency during the last decade. Sometimes one wonders if we are all clear on its difference with the other words that were used before its advent – such as, political system, political rule, government, governing, and many others. Nevertheless, I defer that inquiry to the scholars and academicians.

All I wish to say in this regard, is that in the context of Africa the notion of 'governance' also captures the role of non-state actors in the shaping of the destiny of our societies. Whether it is in cities or in the rural areas, it has been clearly recognized that there are other societal structures and institutions, apart from the government, that make things happen. Indeed, the error of the early period of independence was to overlook this factor.

It may perhaps be useful for purposes of clarity to ask ourselves what we really mean by such terms as good governance in Africa. The expression undoubtedly has gained not only wide currency but have even acquired intellectual respectability in its use among scholars. But precisely what does the term mean to justify its popularity? Is it merely a new intellectual fashion, a political terminology that keeps us current or has it a deeper and more profound meaning which underscores the essential attributes of a framework of a politico-social and economic order in society which galvanises and engages the whole society in the quest of self-realisation?

Certainly good governance is not merely a new fad in political terminology. It is in-fact the essence of our struggle for independence; a struggle to regain the right hitherto expropriated form us by our colonizers and one that fires our aspirations for human existence. It should be recalled that the African people have

fought for freedom and shed their blood for it. Precious lives were lost and untold sacrifices made. In all this, the objective was not simply to substitute one form of rulers with another. The objective was to enable them to decide their destiny including how they are governed by whom and for what period. In a sense therefore our people have all along been fighting for a genuine democratic dispensation.

Good governance or democratic governance therefore refers to a political and socio-economic framework in which every individual and every community becomes an equal member of society, and is provided with a space of engagement in shaping the destiny of society. It incorporates relations, norms, values, procedures, institutions, duties and obligations. It is a totality that encompasses the political, social and economic domains in a mutually reinforcing and symbiotic manner.

Good governance is not simply structures or only rituals; it is also a behavioural pattern and interaction. It constitutes relations as well as values to be internalized. It is a means of societal empowerment. It is a dynamic process that is nurtured and enriched with the growth and evolution of a society. It is not something to be juxtaposed or grafted into a society.

No is democratic governance a relationship between state and society only. It also deals with relationships within society. It underscores such virtues as tolerance, dialogue and understanding, social integration, gender equality, abidance to norms, respect for fundamental human rights, adherence to the rule of law and the fight against corruption.

In the last ten years or so, Africa has embarked in full earnest on a path of building good governance in our respective societies. It is doing this with the background of the experience of more than three decades of one party-states, military dictatorships, as well as authoritarian regimes in a majority of countries. During these 30 years of non-democratic forms of governance in many of our countries, not only has the lot of our people deteriorated, but also the excuse often given of establishing dictatorships so as to promote growth and economic development has not materialized.

For Africa, therefore, the construction of the edifice of good governance has to take place simultaneously with the task of completing the process of nation building and at the same time overcoming the social and economic legacies of the non-democratic era. Concretely, the process of democratisation in Africa has to go hand in hand with the struggle for poverty eradication, combating

sectarianism, ethnicity, and xenophobia in general, as well as promoting stability and security.

A crucial consideration that has always to be borne in mind that for our people to make sense of democratic governance it has to translate itself into the improvement of their social and material conditions. Undoubtedly, coming from a background of dictatorship and authoritarianism, democracy is in itself a virtue, because it redeems dignity and human value to the citizens. However, that cannot be adequate to ensure its sustainability.

For democratic governance to have meaning to the people, it has to contribute to the alleviation and eradication of the burning problems of their daily existence. It has to tackle the problems of poverty as manifested in the deprivations associated with education, health care, employment, housing, safety and security. It has to provide for mechanisms that prevent exclusionism and violent conflicts. In general, it has to lead to the improvement of the people's welfare, enhancing their security and consolidating the nation's stability.

For an unprecedented period of three terms covering a total of twelve years, I had the honour and privilege of serving our continent as the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity. During this period I have travelled extensively covering the length and

breadth of this continent. With the benefit of this experience, I can assert that in spite of setbacks here and there, the process of democratisation on the continent, is more or less irreversible. Furthermore, I firmly believe that concepts of democracy and good governance are gradually but steadily gaining root in our continent. Indeed, the process of democratisation that has been unfolding and/or consolidating across the continent augurs well for the future of Africa. This ongoing process should lead us to good governance and good governance should in turn, ensure the sustainability of democracy in our continent.

Good governance must be seen as a generally accepted process that recognizes the centrality of our people in decision making at all levels. It should facilitate their full participation of the people in national development endeavours, particularly, in our quest to alleviate poverty and the maintenance of peace and security in Africa. People must be allowed to lead and manage the processes of development. This can be realized through a process that allows the government and the people to develop and nurture common values and aspirations and to collectively address common challenges. Governance in Africa must entail a process in which the people are empowered and have sufficient latitude to set out priorities for their socio-economic, political and other developmental needs. This underlines the need to empower the civil society in our countries, particularly, the women of our continent who have contributed so

much and made great sacrifices in the interests of, and service to the continent but only end up in the periphery of the decision-making processes.

The task ahead of us today is to consolidate, strengthen and expand the democratic dispensation in our continent. In order to achieve that on a sustainable basis we need to direct it to improve the condition of the African people. Good governance must make a difference in the existential conditions of our people.

I believe we all recognize the enormity of the challenges facing us. To overcome these challenges, we need to ensure that the process of promoting good governance continues to be a national as well as local and community undertaking. It is also a process that needs to be constantly reinforced at the Continental level. AFRICANS THEREFORE BY THE VERY NATURE OF THEIR STRUGGLES AND EXPERIENCE are CONSCIOUS & it is imperative necessity & demands through aid also instruct to learn a on its Values.

I started this lecture by underscoring Africa's determination to transform its domain of politics by promoting peace, fostering democratic governance, and enhancing an institutional framework that will lead to the realization of a collective vision. The decision taken by African Leaders to establish the African Union, which is an elevated framework of integration that puts the people of this Continent at the centre of development and the launching of other important initiatives especially NEPAD (The New Partnership for African Development) reinforces this determination. The principles

and objectives that are espoused in the basic instruments of the African Union underline a new paradigm in African politics. It is a new dawn emerging in our Continent, and we have to face up to the challenge of realizing our aspirations.

It is in our means to confront the challenges of establishing sustainable peace, building dynamic leadership and promoting democratic governance. We have both, the negative and positive experience, of what it means to have those critical elements in disarray. There is a commitment and determination in the Continent to make the 21st Century to be Africa's century, in which it propels itself out of a malaise and thrust itself into a dynamic orbit of prosperity and active engagement in the global arena. It is a mighty task, but it is our reckoning and we have to face up to it.

I thank you.