



ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY
P.O. BOX 3243
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
TELEPHONE 517700 TELEX 21046 OAU
FAX 513036

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**NEW YEAR MESSAGE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL
DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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My Fellow Africans,

1993 has been an anniversary year. The Organization of African Unity celebrated thirty years of solidarity and of working together. It was an occasion to look back, travel back the tortuous route the continent has travelled, review the achievements made and difficulties faced and draw inspiration from the indomitable spirit of the founding fathers of the Organization. We were able to take pride in the many achievements we have made in terms of building nations, creating a distinct African identity, fostering unity among African countries; trying to uplift the standards of life of the African and above all, liberating the Continent from colonialism and soon apartheid.

We reflected on the Continent's past three decades. We were painfully reminded of the many problems which continue to afflict it. The many conflicts which have decimated our populations and bred millions of refugees and displaced persons; the serious economic problems which have undermined abilities of our countries to provide for the basic needs of the people; the violations of human rights which are still prevalent in the Continent - all call for solution. The anniversary was therefore an opportunity for rededication - to the spirit of Pan-Africanism, to the spirit of collective self-reliance, and to the imperative of Unity.

Of course we end the year on a sorrowful note of the passing away of President Houphouet Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire, a founding father of the OAU. As we mourn his passing away, let Africa rededicate itself to the ideals of Unity and Solidarity which he and his colleagues espoused and which they had engraved in the Charter of the Organization of African Unity.

Happily, this year is ending on a positive note in South Africa. The painstaking negotiation process embarked on two years ago culminating in the Multi-party framework has finally borne fruit. Today, the Transitional Executive Committee is operational and a new Constitution to Govern South Africa through Transition has been adopted. And notwithstanding the many obstacles which still face the transition process the people of South Africa are firmly on the road to the building of a more just and democratic society they have fought and sacrificed for, for so long. I want to commend the Liberation Movements and the Anti-Apartheid forces generally for seizing the challenge of peace and democracy seriously and for the spirit of tolerance and compromise which has brought the process this far. I wish also to pay special tribute to the two Nobel Laureates President Nelson Mandela and President de Klerk for their invaluable contribution each in his own special way.

But as we look forward into the new year, Africa remains concerned at the level of violence in the country especially as preparations for the Multi-party Elections planned for the 27th of April 1994 gain momentum.

This is why I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate my appeal and that of the OAU to the people of South Africa without exception, to give peace a chance. I urge each and every one of them to put an end to violence, to join in the process now underway so as to facilitate the organization and conduct of the Elections as well as ensure smooth transition.

The OAU, as it has been doing through its Observer Mission in South Africa, will continue to be available and to support the process. But the work of the OAU and indeed that of the International Community generally will be made easier if the people of South Africa irrevocably commit themselves to the process of change and not let the difficulties of transition or the opposition of the extremists, undermine transition. I hope and pray that reason will prevail and that ultimately all South Africans, of every race, gender and creed will embrace peace, link arms in solidarity, and resolve to march together towards a non-racial democratic and United South Africa, we all have been fighting for.

We end 1993, equally on an encouraging note in Rwanda. a Broad-based Transitional Government is now taking over the affairs of guiding the country through the next couple of years. That Government is 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 leading to the General Peace Agreement. Peace in Rwanda is a victory for the people of that country, and for Africa. The OAU was able through the duality of

participating in the peace negotiations and cease-fire observation through the Neutral Military Observer Group, to keep the momentum, of peace.

The OAU Neutral Military Observer Group successfully completed its mandate at the end of October this year. I personally travelled to Kigali to formally wind up NMOG and hand over its operations to the United Nations Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) which will now 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 commendation 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.

This year also saw the gradual emergence of Somalia from the humanitarian catastrophe which had engulfed it, though the country continues to be mired in political polarization, insecurity and uncertainty. The OAU will continue through the efforts of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt - the Current Chairman of the OAU, of President Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia who has been mandated by the OAU Heads of State and Government to follow the Somali question on their behalf as well as those of my own as Secretary General to lend whatever support possible

to the process of restoring peace to that country. In this, we shall continue to urge all factions in Somalia, to rally behind the cause of peace and to converge in the full implementation of the Addis Ababa Agreement which continues to provide a viable framework for a comprehensive settlement. The Somali people bear the primary responsibility for peace in their country. The world cannot make peace for them nor can we impose it on them. We can help but we will continue to remind them that the duty is theirs.

As we do so, we shall also continue to urge the International Community to maintain the momentum of peace as well as the humanitarian mission in the country. I urge them to prevail over the difficulties of the moment, and stand with the Somali people as they grapple with the challenge of bringing peace and embarking on the more vexing and resource demanding tasks of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Unfortunately the people of Burundi were rudely awakened to an attempted Military Coup on 21st October, in which President Ndadaye and a number of his close associates were assassinated. The OAU, condemned the attempted coup as a retrogressive step for Burundi and a blow to the cause of democracy in that country and Africa as a whole. Africa called on the perpetrators of the attempted coup to put an end to that illegal act and to pave the way for the restoration of social order and constitutional rule in that country.

Subsequently, I undertook a series of consultations, including at the Regional Summit bringing together the leaders of Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire which was held in Kigali on 28th October to consider the situation, on what the OAU could do to help in ending the crisis. My visit to Burundi on 30th October and subsequently those of my Special Envoy provided an opportunity to consult with the Government, the Army Command, the Political Parties and the Civil Society generally, on the kind of role the OAU could play in helping the people of Burundi end the political polarization, rebuild the shattered confidence, restore constitutional rule and begin the process of national reconciliation and healing.

Those consultations culminated in an agreement on an OAU international presence for protection and restoration of confidence in Burundi. That presence is 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 collaboration 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 constitutional rule can commence.

We began putting together the elements of the Mission and my Special Representative with the core staff of the civilian component arrived in Bujumbura two weeks ago. Today, thanks to the very positive response, I received from African countries and assistance from the International Community, we are ready to put the Mission on stream. We have the personnel, the Military Commander and the resources. And in

fact, had it not been for logistical and other difficulties being faced by the Burundi authorities, and which have necessitated postponement of the deployment of the security component, ^{all} the troops would have arrived in Bujumbura by tomorrow the 31st December. We hope that these difficulties will be resolved soon, greater consensus on the Mission achieved so that the full emplacement of the Mission can take place in the course of January.

The situation in Liberia also holds promise after years of war and devastation. Today, we stand on the verge of new dawning in the country, as the process towards the implementation of the Cotonou Peace Agreement acquires new momentum. My Special Representative in the person of Reverend Canan Banana - former President of Zimbabwe continues to deploy efforts in conjunction with the countries of ECOWAS to iron out the remaining obstacles to the emplacement of a transitional authority in the country. As part of supplementing the efforts of ECOMOG within the terms of the Cotonou Agreement, an advance contingent of Tanzanian troops have already arrived in Liberia. It is soon to be joined by a full complement of the contingent as well as contingents from Uganda and Zimbabwe. Ultimately it is my hope that soon in the coming year, we shall see the end of the suffering and devastation which the unfortunate war had imposed on the people of that country.

Hope is on the horizon also in Mozambique, where the process of preparing the country for enduring peace is progressing. The OAU is happy to have been associated in the efforts at restoring peace to that country. The OAU Mission in Mozambique headed by My Special Representative there, will continue to extend whatever assistance necessary to enable the people of that country traverse the remaining hurdles to peace.

After witnessing one of the most destructive Years in the history of its war, Angola is also slowly on the path to peace as we move into the new Year. We hope the Lusaka Round of Negotiations will be sustained and expanded so that when they resume early in the New Year, they can culminate in peace.

This year witnessed the historic decision taken by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government meeting in Cairo this July, to establish within the OAU, a Mechanism for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts in the Continent. It was an empowering decision giving Africa the framework and means to act collectively in dealing with Conflicts. Underlining that decision was the determination of our leaders to re seize the initiative and play the central role in all efforts at resolving Conflicts in the Continent, instead of standing by as outsiders have come and try to provide solutions, mostly without success.

The Mechanism is already operational and it has met several times at ambassadorial level and once each at Ministerial and Heads of State level to consider the conflicts now going on in the Continent.

A key component of the Mechanism is the OAU Peace Fund which was established to channel resources into the operations of the Mechanism. The Fund will receive contributions from within and outside the Continent. I wish to appeal to everyone in the Continent to make whatever contribution he or she can to the Fund.

My Fellow Africans,

Throughout the year, our countries have continued to grapple with the serious economic problems which still face them. External economic factors, especially the continuing steady decline of the prices of the commodities we produce, the unfavourable terms of international trade, fluctuations of the exchange rates of the major currencies and the ever increasing stock of the external debt and the resultant hemorrhage of resources from the Continent, have undermined the many efforts our countries are exerting to stem the slide of our people into deeper poverty. The contraction of resource flow in terms of aid and concessionary credit to our countries has added to the gravity of the situation. The result has been the diminished capacities of governments to provide the basic services such as education, health care, water and sanitation, roads and housing to the people.

But in the face of these difficulties, our countries have not resigned to fate. They have instead deployed herculean efforts to mitigate the most serious effects of the economic crisis in the short run and institute forms which will restore productivity and growth; in the long run. These efforts and reforms, undertaken at great social cost and political risk,

have begun to bear fruit. Creative policies have slowed the rate of economic decline and in many cases brought about modest growth. And while the continent is far from ridding itself from economic difficulties, it is on the right path. We see a continent more determined to take the initiative in turning the economy around. We see governments more daring and resolved to institute reforms which will lay the cornerstone to long term growth and development built around the people.

While our countries show more resolve and determination individually to right the economic wrongs at home, we still realize that the efforts they deploy will be seriously constrained, if they are not conceived within the context of broader policy objectives of unity within the Continent. Our countries, now more than before, realize that individually no matter how relatively richer or poorer they may be in comparison to each other, they stand to lose out in the global economic competition in future, unless they are united. This imperative of unity, is now well understood and being pursued with vigour and determination in the Continent.

Since the Signing of the Abuja Treaty on the establishment of the African Economic Community two years ago, much has been done in terms of preparing for its coming into force. Today we await one more ratification to attain the required number of ratifications for the treaty to go into force. While we hope that more ratifications will be forthcoming so that the Continent can begin on the construction of the Community, I am encouraged by the expert work done so far, to see how the work of the Regional Economic

Communities will interface with the Continental Community. In addition, several protocols, especially those considered most integrative have been completed or are in their final stages.

At the sub-regional and regional levels, we equally see a quickened pace of economic integration. The establishment of the Southern African Development Community, the setting up of the Community of Eastern and Southern African States (COMESA), the beginning of the process to re-establish the East African Community as well as the deepening and expansion of the functioning of the ECOWAS, all point to the Continental Consensus on the need to come together and cooperate.

My Fellow Africans,

During this year, the process of further democratization in the Continent has deepened and broadened. Many countries held multi-party elections successfully. In some there have been difficulties. These difficulties notwithstanding, the process is firmly on the ground, and we all must support and nurture it. Of course in this formative stage there are about to be some difficulties. It is a learning process which must take its course. What we should however endeavour to do, is to exercise tolerance. Africa which is the most diverse of continents needs tolerance so that we can find strength in our differences rather than allowing them to divide and weaken US. And in this period of elections and transition, we need to ensure that we do not allow these attendant difficulties to undermine social order and the many achievements which our countries have made, at great cost.

Africa needs good losers and good winners. Those who win must know that those who have lost, they too have rights. Those who lose must understand that it is part of the democratic process to lose. To foster this understanding it will be necessary on the part of everyone, including Governments to create the necessary conditions to ensure transparency and the holding of genuinely free and fair elections. If we achieve this level of political awareness, our countries will have built strong foundations for the development of true democracy in the Continent.

My Fellow Africans,

This year has been difficult but promising. Some old conflicts have remained with us and unfortunately new ones have emerged; with all their attendant repercussions of killings, refugees and displaced persons. Economic problems have continued to plague the Continent. I know that one is bound to be discouraged by the extent and severity of these Conflicts in Africa. But Africa is not all conflicts, it is not all famine. There are positive and very encouraging developments which are taking place. South Africa bears promise and so too does Rwanda, Liberia and Mozambique. The process of democratization is well apace and the efforts at resolving conflicts are being intensified with the establishment of the Mechanism for Conflict Resolution. Economically, our countries are deploying determined effort to reverse the negative trends and we are beginning to see stabilization and the return of modest growth.

And apart from these sectoral efforts, we are above-all seeing the emergence of new awareness in the Continent - the realization that Africa needs unity and must seize the mantle of leadership in dealing with its issues. This new determination and resolve was most manifest in the course of this year. And it was because of this that the Continent was able to make some serious gains. I hope and pray that as we move into the New Year, we shall foster greater unity and act in solidarity.

I wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year.