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**REMARKS BY THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL,
H.E. MR SALIM AHMED SALIM
ON WELCOMING COMRADE NELSON MANDELA**

AFRICA HALL - ADDIS ABABA, 9 MARCH, 1990.

COMRADE AND MRS MANDELA,
YOUR EXCELLENCY THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE STATE COUNCIL
YOUR EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR ADEDEJI,
UN SG AND EXECUTIVE-SECR. ECA,
EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT IS SUCH A GREAT HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO WELCOME COMRADE MANDELA, A GALLANT SON OF AFRICA, TO ADDIS ABABA AND TO AFRICA HALL.

I FELT PARTICULARLY HONOURED WHEN DURING OUR MEETING AT STATE HOUSE IN DAR-ES-SALAAM, TWO DAYS AGO, YOU INFORMED ME OF YOUR DECISION TO INTERRUPT YOUR BUSY PROGRAMME IN TANZANIA AND TAKE UP MY INVITATION TO VISIT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY.

BEFORE YOU, HERE, ARE THE AMBASSADORS OF THE OAU MEMBER STATES AND OTHER HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED IN ADDIS ABABA. THERE ARE ALSO OFFICIALS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA AND OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE OAU, AS WELL AS OTHER MEMBERS OF THE AFRICAN COMMUNITY.

I AM SURE THEY ALL SHARE MY DEEP JOY AND ARE ENCOURAGED AND INSPIRED BY YOUR VISIT. AGAIN, ON THEIR BEHALF, I WISH TO EXTEND A HEARTY WELCOME TO YOU, TO COMRADE WINNIE AND YOUR COLLEAGUES OF THE ANC NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

WE FEEL PROUD THAT YOU HAVE SO SOON, AFTER YOUR RELEASE, HONOURED THE OAU WITH YOUR VISIT. WE TAKE IT AS A SYMBOL OF THE DESIRE OF THE ANC TO CONSOLIDATE THE SOLIDARITY OF THE CONTINENT IN OUR COMMON STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID. WE ALSO FIND IN YOUR PERSON AND YOUR PRESENCE AMONGST US BOTH A REMINDER OF THE CRUELTY OF APARTHEID AS WELL AS AN EMBODIMENT OF THE RESOLUTE DETERMINATION TO FIGHT IT.

COMRADE MANDELA,

THE MANY YEARS YOU SPENT IN INCARCERATION AND THE BRUTALITY YOU WERE SUBJECTED TO, COULD NOT BEND YOUR WILL TO STRUGGLE. AND IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE, YOU HAVE COME TO SYMBOLIZE THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AND JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA, AND, INDEED, IN THE WHOLE WORLD. IT IS THIS PERSEVERANCE, YOUR TENACITY AND RESILIENCE WHICH HAVE GIVEN US STRENGTH AND REINFORCED OUR DETERMINATION TO CARRY ON THE FIGHT AGAINST APARTHEID.

BUT I AM SURE, YOUR DETERMINATION AND ABILITY TO SUMMON YOUR INNER MOST STRENGTH AND TO PERSEVERE WAS REINFORCED BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT YOU HAD THE UNWAVERING SUPPORT OF ALL YOUR COLLEAGUES BOTH INSIDE SOUTH AFRICA AND OUTSIDE AND, OF COURSE, THAT OF YOUR CLOSEST PARTNER - YOUR WIFE WINNIE.

COMRADE WINNIE MANDELA HELD HIGH THE BANNER OF FREEDOM. AS A MOTHER AND FREEDOM FIGHTER, SHE GAVE SOUL TO THE STRUGGLE. TOGETHER WITH HER COLLEAGUES OF THE ANC INSIDE SOUTH AFRICA THEY KEPT THE CANDLE OF HOPE BURNING AGAINST ALL ODDS - NOT LEAST BANISHMENT, IMPRISONMENT AND CONSTANT HARRASMENT.

THE EMOTIONAL MOMENTS OF YOUR RELEASE QN 11 FEBRUARY THIS YEAR ECHOED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. AFRICA AND THE WORLD WAS HAPPY AT YOUR RELEASE AND AT THE END TO YOUR PHYSICAL SUFFERING. MORE FUNDAMENTALLY, WE SAW IT AS THE TRIUMPH OF JUSTICE AND THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM. IT WAS A TESTAMENT TO YOUR OWN ENDURANCE AND FIRMNESS OF CONVICTION AS IT WAS TO THE DETERMINATION OF THE WORLD TO SEE THAT JUSTICE IS DONE.

COMRADE MANDELA,

WE REJOICE AT YOUR RELEASE FROM PRISON BUT WE ARE PAINFULLY AWARE THAT THE FREEDOM OF SOUTH AFRICANS AND YOUR OWN IS YET TO COME. WE REJOICE THE END TO YOUR PHYSICAL SUFFERING AND THE MANY YEARS OF INCARCERATION. BUT THE CAUSE FOR WHICH YOU HAVE SUFFERED SO MUCH DEPRIVATION REMAINS UNALTERED. YOU HAVE COME BACK TO A SOCIETY THAT IS BLEEDING AND WHOSE ENERGIES OF CREATIVITY REMAIN CHAINED BY THE ELABORATE WEB OF APARTHEID LEGISLATIONS.

YOU HAVE COME BACK TO A SOCIETY WHERE THE PIGMENT OF ONE'S SKIN CONTINUES TO BE THE DETERMINANT FACTOR OF ONE'S STATUS AND ROLE IN SOCIETY. ADMITTEDLY, THERE HAS BEEN SOME POSITIVE MOVEMENT. YOUR PRESENCE HERE BEARS TESTIMONY TO THAT MOVEMENT. BUT IT IS A MOVEMENT WHICH IS STILL UNDEFINED AND ITS DIRECTION UNCERTAIN.

PRESIDENT DE KLERK HAS NOT CONCEDED THE PRINCIPLE OF DEMOCRACY. THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IS STILL FIRMLY IN PLACE, HUNDREDS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE STILL EMPRISONED, THE BAN ON ANTI-APARTHEID GROUPS AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY ONLY PARTIALLY LIFTED AND MOST OF THE DRACONIAN APARTHEID LEGISLATIONS EFFECTIVELY ENFORCED.

ALL THESE ARE OBSTACLES IN YOUR PATH TO A DEMOCRATIC UNITARY AND NON-RACIAL SOUTH AFRICA. IT WILL BE A HERCULIAN TASK. THE SACRIFICES YOU MADE MIGHT NOT HAVE GIVEN YOU THE RIGHT TO VOTE OR TO CHOOSE YOUR PLACE OF RESIDENCE IN APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA; BUT THEY HAVE SOWED THE SEEDS FOR CHANGE. APARTHEID IS NOW IN RETREAT. BUT WE CAN ONLY ENSURE ITS TOTAL DEMISE THROUGH THE MAINTENANCE AND INTENSIFICATION OF PRESSURE INCLUDING ECONOMIC SANCTIONS. IF TODAY WE SEE VISIBLE CRACKS IN THE APARTHEID ARMOUR, IT IS MOSTLY BECAUSE OF THAT PRESSURE.

IF APARTHEID AND ITS STRUCTURES ARE STILL LARGELY INTACT AND IF IT IS THESE PRESSURES WHICH HAVE ENABLED US ACHIEVE EVEN THESE MARGINAL GAINS, WHY SHOULD WE ABANDON THEM NOW ?

YOU HAVE RIGHTLY SAID THAT NOW IS NOT THE TIME. TO DO SO WOULD REMOVE THE LITTLE MOTIVATION FOR CHANGE THAT THERE IS. IT IS NOT OUT OF BENEVOLENCE OR CHANGE OF HEART THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING THESE PARTIAL MEASURES TODAY.

THE TASK BEFORE THE MASS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT INCLUDING THE ANC, YOURSELF AND AFRICA AS A WHOLE IS MONUMENTAL. BUT WE SHALL SEEK GUIDANCE FROM YOU THE PEOPLE INSIDE SOUTH AFRICA. YOU ARE LIVING THE STRUGGLE AND YOUR VIEWS AND COUNSEL ARE CRUCIAL. WE ARE ALL WAITING TO HEAR YOU. IN THE MEANTIME, LET ME REITERATE OUR ASSURANCE THAT THE OAU STANDS FIRMLY BEHIND YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES IN THE ANC IN THE FINAL PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID AND IN YOUR COMMENDABLE EFFORTS TO FORGE RECONCILIATION AMONG THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE AND UNITY AND COHESION AMONG ALL THE ANTIAPARTHEID FORCES IN THE COUNTRY.

ONCE AGAIN KARIBU.

IT IS NOW MY PLEASURE AND GREAT HONOUR TO INVITE COMRADE MANDELA TO ADDRESS US.