

2

**REMARKS BY THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**H.E. MR SALIM AHMED SALIM**

**TO THE REGIONAL SUMMIT CONFERENCE**

**ON RWANDESE REFUGEES**

*Arusha, 19 February, 1991.*

MR CHAIRMAN,

DISTINGUISHED HEADS OF STATE AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS,

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THIS MEETING, WHICH BRINGS US TOGETHER TODAY, IS IN MY VIEW OF VITAL IMPORTANCE. IT IS OF SUCH IMPORTANCE, FIRSTLY, BECAUSE IT IS A MANIFESTATION OF THE DESIRE OF THE LEADERS OF THIS REGION TO PERSIST IN THEIR EFFORTS INITIATED DURING THE PREVIOUS ENCOUNTERS SUCCESSIVELY IN MWANZA, GBADOLITE AND GOMA TO FIND A STABLE AND LASTING SOLUTION TO THE CURRENT CRISIS IN RWANDA. SECONDLY BECAUSE, IN ADDITION TO THE RWANDESE REFUGEE PROBLEM, THIS MEETING IS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE ELABORATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION TO THE THORNY PROBLEM OF REFUGEES IN THE REGION AS A WHOLE. AND LASTLY, BECAUSE I DO BELIEVE THAT IT WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A WIDE-RANGING AND FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS THAT WOULD CONCENTRATE ON AREAS OF CONVERGENCE RATHER THAN ON ISSUES OF DIVERGENCE BASED ON THE WISH WE ALL SHARE - THAT THE CURRENT DIFFICULTIES IN RWANDA ARE OVERCOME AND NORMALCY IS RESTORED AND THE REFUGEE PROBLEM SETTLED.

IT IS FOR THESE REASONS THEN THAT I ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE PRESENCE OF ~~ALL~~ THE HEADS OF STATE <sup>and Heads of Delegations</sup> OF THE REGION TO THIS CRUCIAL SUMMIT AND WISH TO COMMEND YOUR DETERMINATION TO DEPLOY EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS FACING THE REGION. THIS CONSTITUTES A MOST ELOQUENT TESTIMONY TO YOUR EXCELLENCIES COMMITMENT AND PREPAREDNESS TO SERVE AFRICA AT LARGE.

MR CHAIRMAN,  
DISTINGUISHED HEADS OF STATE AND HEADS OF DELEGATION,  
YOUR EXCELLENCIES,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

YOUR MEETING IS CONVENING AT A MOST DIFFICULT TIME FOR AFRICA. AFRICA CONTINUES TO FACE THE DIRE EFFECTS OF A PROFOUND ECONOMIC CRISIS THAT IS, REGRETTABLY NOW, BEING COMPOUNDED BY THE MANY INTERNAL CONFLICTS ON THE CONTINENT. RWANDA PROVIDES, IN MY VIEW, A MOST UNFORTUNATE EXAMPLE OF THE TRAGEDY THAT OUR CONTINENT IS EXPERIENCING TODAY.

I WENT TO RWANDA FROM 1 TO 3 FEBRUARY THIS YEAR IN FURTHERANCE OF THE EFFORTS BEING MADE BY THE OAU GENERAL SECRETARIAT TO ASSIST IN THE RESTORATION OF PEACE IN THAT COUNTRY. IN MY DISCUSSIONS WITH H.E. PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA AND OTHER RWANDESE AUTHORITIES AND DURING MY TRIP WITHIN THE COUNTRY, I WAS ABLE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE SAD AND TRAGIC REALITY OF A DEVELOPING COUNTRY THAT IS LOCKED IN A WASTEFUL CONFLICT AND NOW BOUND TO DIVERT THE MEAGRE RESOURCES THAT IT NEEDS FOR DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES TO PROSECUTE A WAR. THIS IS THE TRAGEDY OF RWANDA AS IT IS OF A GOOD NUMBER OF RESOURCE-STARVED AFRICAN STATES INVOLVED IN UNENDING CONFLICTS WITH EXTREMELY ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS. IN ADDITION TO THE MOST HORRIBLE CASES OF FAMINE, THERE IS THE HUGE BURDEN OF REFUGEES WHO SURVIVE OR WITHER AWAY IN CAMPS UNDER THE MOST MISERABLE CONDITIONS.

THIS TRAGEDY IS ALL THE MORE CHALLENGING TO AFRICA TODAY AS THE GENEROSITY OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE NORTH IS CLEARLY DWINDLING. THE DEVELOPED WORLD, SWAYED BY THEIR OWN NEEDS AND, ~~TO SOME EXTENT,~~ BY <sup>OTHER</sup> ~~ECONOMIC~~ CONSIDERATIONS, IS STEADILY TURNING AWAY FROM AFRICA. AFRICA, MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, IS INCREASINGLY BEING MARGINALISED AND ABANDONED AS IRRELEVANT TO THE WORLD. TIME HAS NOW COME FOR AFRICA TO SETTLE ITS OWN PROBLEMS IF WE ARE TO RISE AS A PEOPLE AND CONTINENT AND BE RELEVANT TO THE LARGER WORLD WE LIVE IN. TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE, WE MUST KNOW HOW TO MAKE AND ORGANIZE PEACE. THIS IS WHY I AM PLEASED, IN THIS CONNECTION, THAT CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS THAT HAVE AND ARE BEING MADE AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL NOT ONLY TO RESTORE PEACE IN RWANDA BUT, WITH THIS CONFERENCE, ALSO TO SKETCH OUT AN ORDER OF LONG TERM STABILITY, ENDURING PEACE AND COOPERATION IN THE REGION. I WOULD LIKE, ONCE MORE, TO NOTE WITH SATISFACTION THE FACT THAT THE MWANZA, GBADOLITE AND GOMA SUMMITS DID TAKE PLACE AS PART OF THE ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE RWANDESE CRISIS, INSTILLING A SENSE OF SYSTEM AND A STRATEGY THAT REVOLVES AROUND THE MAJOR AREAS OF CEASEFIRE FOLLOWED BY THE DEPLOYMENT OF MILITARY OBSERVERS, DIALOGUE AND THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE.

I ALSO WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TO THEIR EXCELLENCIES FOR THE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE YOU PLACED IN THE OAU BY ASSIGNING IT A ROLE IN THE PROCESS OF RESOLVING THE RWANDESE CRISIS. INDEED, RIGHT FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE HOSTILITIES IN RWANDA, THE OAU, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT AND MYSELF, IN FULL AWARENESS OF THE POSITION AND ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFRICA, SPARED NO EFFORT IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO BRING HELP ABOUT PEACE IN RWANDA. I WAS IN TOUCH WITH PRESIDENTS YOWERI MUSEVENI AND JUVENAL HABYARIMANA IMMEDIATELY WHEN THE CONFLICT STARTED AND,

SUBSEQUENTLY, SENT A HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION TO RWANDA AND UGANDA TO GATHER INFORMATION AND TO EXAMINE WAYS AND MEANS WE COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE AND EXAMINE THE ROLE THE OAU CAN PLAY IN THE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. MY ENVOY MET THE BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER IN NAIROBI WHO, AT THE TIME, WAS TRYING TO PUT TOGETHER A DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE TO END THE CRISIS. I, SUBSEQUENTLY, HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ENVOYS OF THE RWANDESE GOVERNMENT AND OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT (RPF). I WAS ALSO IN CONTACT WITH YOUR EXCELLENCIES AS WELL AS WITH THE AUTHORITIES OF A NUMBER OF INTERESTED OTHER COUNTRIES OUTSIDE AFRICA SUCH AS <sup>Belgium and</sup> FRANCE, IN PARTICULAR REGARDING THE KIND OF LOGISTICAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT THEY HAD PLEDGED TO EXTEND TO A PEACEKEEPING OPERATION OR MILITARY OBSERVATION. *in the event one is established*  
*[Elaborate here on the experiences & contacts with Belgium and France]*

MOREOVER, A HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION FROM THE OAU GENERAL SECRETARIAT PRESIDED OVER THE MEETING OF THE MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP WHICH TOOK PLACE IN GOMA IN NOVEMBER 1990. RECENTLY, THE OAU GENERAL SECRETARIAT, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE UNHCR, CONTRIBUTED ACTIVELY TO THE PREPARATION OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON RWANDESE REFUGEES WHICH MET IN KINSHASA IN JANUARY 1991 AT THE EXPERTS AND MINISTERIAL LEVELS.

I MUST CONFESS, HOWEVER, THAT IN ALL THESE REPRESENTATION, THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT DID ENCOUNTER A NUMBER OF DIFFICULTIES ARISING BASICALLY FROM THE FACT THAT THE ORGANIZATION WAS NEITHER ASSOCIATED WITH MOST OF THE MEETINGS AND CONSULTATIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE WITHIN THE REGION, NOR WAS IT <sup>Adequately</sup> ~~PROPERLY~~ BRIEFED ON THE OUTCOME OF SUCH EXCHANGES. THIS MADE FOLLOW-UP ACTION

EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT. AT TIMES, LACK OF CLEAR POLITICAL GUIDANCE OR GIVING CONFLICTING INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR US TO PROCEED WITH THE SPEED REQUIRED.

MR CHAIRMAN,

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

YOUR EXCELLENCIES WILL RECALL THAT IN MY COMMUNICATION OF 30 NOVEMBER, 1990, JOINTLY ADDRESSED TO ALL OF YOU, I APPRISED YOU OF THE STATUS OF THE WORK OF THE GROUP OF MILITARY OBSERVERS. TODAY, THE SITUATION REMAINS THE SAME. I CONTINUE TO SEE SERIOUS DIFFICULTY IN DEPLOYING A MILITARY OBSERVER TEAM IN THE ABSENCE OF A CEASEFIRE. IT REMAINS MY STRONG VIEW THAT A FORMAL UNDERTAKING BY BOTH THE RWANDA GOVERNMENT AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO OBSERVE A CEASEFIRE IS CENTRAL TO ANY EFFORT TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THIS UNFORTUNATE CONFLICT. IT IS ON THE BASIS OF THIS FIRM VIEW THAT I PUT BEFORE BOTH PARTIES A FORMAL PROPOSAL ON THE MODALITY OF ENTERING INTO SUCH A COMMITMENT ON CEASEFIRE. I PROPOSED TO THEM THAT SIMULTANEOUS BUT SEPARATE UNDERTAKINGS TO OBSERVE A CEASEFIRE CONTAINED IN A FORMAL COMMUNICATION TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OAU WOULD CONSTITUTE A CREDIBLE BASIS FOR DEPLOYING THE TEAM OF THE MILITARY OBSERVERS. I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT, DESPITE SOME VARIANCE IN THE ORDER OF PRECEDENCE OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE PROCESS, BOTH PARTIES AGREED, IN PRINCIPLE, TO THE PROPOSAL. THE INSISTENCE OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ON EXPLICIT RECOGNITION BY THE RWANDESE GOVERNMENT AS AN ARMED OPPOSITION

HAS SO FAR SLOWED PROGRESS ON THE PROCESS OF ACHIEVING A CEASEFIRE

AGREEMENT. / I SHALL CONTINUE MY EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT THIS OBSTACLE IS OVERCOME. <sup>Mention must also made of the RPF demands position</sup>

<sup>that the signing of a separate ceasefire document would have to be a product of direct negotiations between the RPF and the Rwandan Government. I have discussed this issue during my visit in Kigali and remain convinced that this should be</sup>

<sup>in its own right</sup> MY INSISTENCE ON A PRIOR UNDERSTANDING ON A CEASEFIRE

<sup>obstacle</sup> IS TWO-FOLD. ON THE ONE HAND, IT IS TO ENSURE THAT AN ATMOSPHERE

~~of security and confidence is created so as to permit the~~

~~deployment of the military observer team. On the other hand,~~

~~it is because it is a necessary first step to create the confidence~~

~~which is necessary to facilitate any political process. Unlike~~

~~the other political questions, this cannot wait any longer. The~~

~~longer a ceasefire agreement eludes us, the gleamer the hopes~~

~~for any movement in the political process. As I did indicate to~~

~~your excellencies in my communication in November, last year,~~

~~unlike the issue of the ceasefire which cannot wait, all the~~

~~others, which are political in nature, could be referred to the~~

~~mediation process already under way under the auspices of H.E.~~

~~President Mobutu of Zaire. In my discussions with both the~~

~~government and representatives of the Patriotic Front, I~~

~~emphasized the imperative need of taking firm undertakings on~~

~~the ceasefire question so as to facilitate progress in the~~

~~mediation process. Both parties do share this concern.~~

~~Even at this hour, it is still inevitable that we should~~

~~deploy all efforts to secure agreement on a ceasefire. For your~~

~~discussions on the whole question of refugees and on a strategy~~

~~for its permanent solution will be given more meaning if the~~

~~conditions conducive to such solution are established in the~~

~~conditions conducive to such solution are established in the~~

~~conditions conducive to such solution are established in the~~

~~conditions conducive to such solution are established in the~~

COUNTRY. UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF WAR, WE CAN HARDLY HOPE TO COMPREHENSIVELY DEAL WITH THE ISSUE OF REFUGEES. IT IS, THEREFORE, MY HOPE THAT THIS REGIONAL CONFERENCE WILL STIMULATE MOVEMENT AND LAY A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR A LASTING PEACE IN

RWANDA AND THE REGION AS A WHOLE. *In this connection it is very encouraging to note the outcome of the summit meeting between Presidents Habyarimana and Ntseuremi under the auspices of President Nkurunziza held in Gatzika on Sunday Feb 17 that the Gatzika Understanding and Commitments arrived at between the two Heads of State will make a major contribution to this effect.*

DISTINGUISHED PRESIDENTS,

- YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

THIS SUMMIT COMES AFTER THE JANUARY 1991 MEETINGS, IN KINSHASA, OF THE EXPERTS AND MINISTERS WHICH CARRIED OUT A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE RWANDESE SITUATION AND ADOPTED A DRAFT DECLARATION WHICH IS TO BE PRESENTED TO THIS SUMMIT FOR YOUR APPRAISAL. THIS DOCUMENT IS TARGETTED ON A DUAL OBJECTIVE : ONE HUMANITARIAN AND THE OTHER POLITICAL.

FROM THE HUMANITARIAN STANDPOINT, THE DRAFT DECLARATION SIMPLY RECOMMENDS THAT, IN ORDER TO RESOLVE THE RWANDESE REFUGEE PROBLEM, A NUMBER OF UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED MEASURES, WHICH ARE NOT AT VARIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE RELEVANT AOU AND UNITED NATIONS CONVENTIONS, BE ADOPTED. THE MEASURES INCLUDE VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION, THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM AND NATURALIZATION. IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE, THE DRAFT DECLARATION RECOMMENDS A SET OF MEASURES WHICH WOULD CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE THAT IS POLITICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY CONDUCIVE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUTUAL TRUST AND CONFIDENCE AND WHICH WOULD ALLOW EACH RWANDESE CITIZEN TO FEEL FREE TO RETURN HOME AND RESETTLE.



THERE ARE DIFFERING VIEWS ON THE PRINCIPLE OF NATURALIZATION BASICALLY BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS. THIS IS, PERHAPS, UNDERSTANDABLE. BUT I MUST POINT OUT THAT THE ISSUE HERE IS SIMPLY ONE OF REAFFIRMING ONE OF THE UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED PRINCIPLES FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF REFUGEE PROBLEMS. BEYOND THAT, HOWEVER, IT REMAINS THE PREROGATIVE OF THE HOST COUNTRY. THIS NOTWITHSTANDING MY HOPE IS THAT SYMPATHIC<sup>ET</sup> CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO THOSE REFUGEES WHO EXPRESS THE DESIRE OF INTEGRATION. I WOULD, IN THIS CONNECTION, LIKE TO REITERATE THE APPEAL FOR REGIONAL SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION EXPRESSED IN THE DRAFT DECLARATION AND INTENDED FOR THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES TOGETHER WITH THE REQUEST THAT THEY ASSIST RWANDA, WITHIN THE MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL, IN RESOLVING THE REFUGEE PROBLEM.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE RWANDESE REFUGEE PROBLEM DOES REQUIRE THAT APPROPRIATE MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES BE PUT IN PLACE. THE DRAFT DECLARATION APPEALS FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND MAKES PROVISION FOR A DONOR'S CONFERENCE. THE OAU, TOGETHER WITH THE UNHCR, WILL, SUBSEQUENT TO YOUR ENDORSEMENT, UNDERTAKE TO ORGANIZE THE PROPOSED DONOR'S CONFERENCE.

IN SHORT, THE DRAFT DECLARATION, THAT IS SUBMITTED FOR YOUR APPRAISAL, SKETCHES OUT A FRAMEWORK FOR RESOLVING THE RWANDESE PROBLEM. I HOPE THAT A CONSENSUS WILL EMERGE ON THE DRAFT SO THAT WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO ITS IMPLEMENTATION. I AM CONSCIOUS THAT THE REAL ISSUE IS NOT THE MERE ADOPTION OF THE

DECLARATION BUT RATHER ITS EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION. I MUST STRESS THAT THAT EXERCISE WILL REQUIRE A GREAT DEAL OF GOOD WILL, PERSEVERANCE AND POLITICAL DETERMINATION.

MR CHAIRMAN,

DISTINGUISHED HEADS OF STATE AND HEADS OF DELEGATION,

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

AT THE BEGINNING OF MY REMARKS, I UNDERScoreD THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CONFERENCE NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF THE PROCESS OF RESOLVING THE RWANDESE REFUGEE PROBLEM BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF THE BROADER OBJECTIVE OF FORGING REGIONAL SOLIDARITY, COOPERATION, PEACE AND STABILITY. I WOULD LIKE, IN CONCLUSION, TO AGAIN STRESS THE NEED FOR THE SUMMIT TO CARRY OUT A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE SITUATION OF SECURITY WITHIN THE REGION SO AS TO BREAK THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF INTERNECINE QUARRELS AND ASSURE REGIONAL PEACE AND COOPERATION WHICH ARE THE BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND THE WELL-BEING OF OUR PEOPLES.

ALLOW ME, FINALLY, TO CONVEY MY DEEP GRATITUDE TO H.E. PRESIDENT ALI HASSAN MWINYI, THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF TANZANIA FOR THE WARM HOSPITALITY EXTENDED TO US AND FOR THE VERY SPECIAL CONSIDERATION THAT <sup>the OAU</sup> ~~my~~ DELEGATION AND MYSELF HAVE ENJOYED SINCE OUR ARRIVAL.

I THANK YOU.