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In the meantime when we were at the airport we sent a word to UNESCO postponing my meeting with the UNESCO Director General, Frederico Mayor scheduled to take place this afternoon at 1700 hours to a later date.

This was certainly not the most ideal time to visit. Paris considering the continued confrontation between the Trade Unions and the Government of Prime Minister Alan Juppe on the issue of the social welfare packages, the country has been experiencing general strikes of the public transportation system for many days now. And despite the Prime Minister's preparedness to meet with all levels of the trade unions, a meeting which took place yesterday and the apparent movement however slow and slight in the direction of negotiations, the strikes have continued and the traffic jam is simply unbelievable.

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Meeting with the President of the French Republic,  
Monsieur Jacques Chirac

The meeting with the President of France took place at the Elysee Palace and it lasted from 1205 to 1240 hours. President Chirac was with one of his senior advisors. There was also an interpreter who was never used as the President understands and speaks English very well and in this particular case chose to speak with me in English throughout the 35 minutes discussion. I was accompanied by Said Djinnit, my Director of Cabinet and Roland Ngong, an interpreter who in this particular case and during most of my meetings while in Paris served as a notes taker.

This was my first encounter with President Chirac since he assumed the Presidency of the French Republic earlier this year. Indeed it was my first ever meeting with Jacques Chirac. I believe this might as well have been the first formal meeting between a President of France and a Secretary General of the OAU. As for me this is the third time I have had an occasion to meet formally with a French President. The first time was in 1980 when as President of the U.N. General Assembly, I paid an official visit to France and met with President Giscard d'Estang at the Elysee. The second time I met with the President of France was in 1981 when I accompanied President Julius K. Nyerere and we met President Francois Mitterand. I was then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tanzania.

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There is no doubt however that this was the warmest meeting I have had with the French President. Our discussions were characterized with an unusual warmth and although as already stated, this was my first meeting with President Chirac, I found myself very comfortable and very much at ease. He projected a great warmth to me personally but above all he displayed considerable understanding and sensitivity to Africa and the challenges that face our continent.

The warmth displayed by President Chirac and the time he devoted to our meeting was particularly significant bearing in mind that the President of the Republic was at the material time confronted with enormous pressure. First there was the ongoing strike and demonstration of the public sector which has now gone on for nineteen days. Secondly, while we were meeting minutes were fast passing for the two French pilots shot down last August when NATO Airforces bombed the Serbian Serbs. President Chirac towards the end of our discussion magnanimously apologized for not being able to spend more time with me because he had to attend to this issue of the captured French pilots who we were about to be released. At the same time President Chirac repeatedly told me that he was looking forward to having further discussions with me when I again visit Paris.

President Chirac also did one more thing which can only be considered as a gesture of friendship and recognition to the OAU and my person. When our meeting was over he escorted me downstairs from his office. He first took me to one of the chambers where he introduced me to his Foreign Minister, Mr.....and to whom he briefly relayed some aspects of our discussion especially emphasizing the importance he and his Government attaches to the role of the OAU and assuring me of his support for the Organization and for me personally as Secretary General. After this, the French President escorted me outside the Palace and I went to meet with the press attached to the Elysee!!

On the substance of our discussion we covered a broad range of issues including the situation in the Great Lakes notably Rwanda (President Chirac spoke with some bitterness at the "hostile" attitude displayed by President Bizimungu towards France - apparently meaning certain remarks which the Head of State of Rwanda is reported to have made in Cairo earlier this month after the Regional Summit (under the auspices of former President Jimmy Carter of the United States) and Burundi. We also discussed the conflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone as well as the situation in Nigeria (also President Chirac seems to concur with my point of view that this complexity of the Nigerian situation needs to be reassessed and a policy of isolation should not be the preferred policy. Rather the objective of democratization and observance of human rights should be vigorously pursued but by effectively engaging the Nigerian leadership. The President also extended his

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full support to OAU's conflict resolution efforts with particular emphasis on preventive diplomacy.

President Chirac also highlighted the importance of continued development assistance in order to buttress the efforts of African countries at pursuing democratization and economic reforms. The President who demonstrated great optimism in the future of the continent and a clear recognition of the positive changes taking place in the continent in the area of democratization and economic reforms (and categorically rejecting Afro pessimism) stressed the importance of the Anglo-Saxon world and other developed countries not to reduce the level of development assistance to Africa. He urged me to speak out on this issue. At the same time ...at the forthcoming G-7 Summit in July 1996 in L..., France, which he will host, he has decided to put this issue of development as the first clear agenda and has decided, to the chagrin of the Americans, to invite the Secretary General of the UN, the President of the World Bank (IBRD) and the Managing Director of the IOF to attend the Summit during the discussions of this item.

The following is a detailed record of my meeting with the French President as prepared by Rolang Ngong.