

**STATEMENT BY  
DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM  
FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAU  
AT THE OCCASION OF RECEIVING A SPECIAL AWARD  
FROM THE OAU ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND  
GOVERNMENT - DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA – 8 JULY 2002**

**Your Excellency President Thabo Mbeki**

**Your Majesty**

**Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government  
and Brother Leader**

**Secretary General Kofi Annan**

**Secretary General Amara Essy**

**Excellencies**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am deeply moved and touched by this occasion. I am honoured by the recognition that you generously have given me by awarding this medal in accordance with the decision that you took collectively in Lusaka. I sincerely believe that while this award has been conferred on me as an individual, its major significance lies in the collective accomplishments of our Organization throughout its existence. The fact that this occasion is taking place on the eve of transforming the OAU into the African Union underscores the collective realization that this award signifies.

I am very conscious of the fact that whatever achievements were recorded during my tenure as Secretary-General of the OAU, were made possible through the dedication and contribution of the many men and

women whom I had the privilege of working with at the General Secretariat of the OAU – both at Headquarters and at the various missions. In many ways therefore, I consider this honour also to be a recognition of the efforts of all of them.

This achievement would also not have been possible without the guidance, support and encouragement I received from Heads of State and Government, Ministers and Ambassadors of our Member States throughout the entire period of my tenure as the Secretary General. I would like to convey sincere gratitude for the trust and confidence reposed in me and for the wise counsel and cooperation that I received. In this context, let me also take this opportunity to thank the President, the Government and People of the United Republic of Tanzania for the support that was extended to me during my years at the OAU.

I would like to thank the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity, my brother Amara Essy, for inviting me to this ceremony and also for enabling me to witness the launching of the African Union in this beautiful city of Durban – a historical achievement that inspires great hope and expectations here in Africa and outside the Continent.

Finally, I want to thank you, President Mbeki, for the kind and generous remarks you have made on my person; but above all, I wish to pay tribute to you for your dedicated and outstanding service in the cause of our Continent and people.

I thank you.