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Tribute to the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere by  
Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary General of  
the Organisation of African Unity, Read at  
the Memorial organised by Jubilee 2000

London, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2000

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I stand here on behalf of Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, the Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity, who has not been able to join you on this solemn occasion due to compelling engagements. He has therefore requested me to convey to the Organisers of this important event for Africa, his warm salutations and gratitude<sup>and</sup> to share with you the following memories on Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

For us at the Organisation of African Unity, we shall always remember Mwalimu as an epitome of what the Continental Organisation stood for, strived for, and was able to achieve during his lifetime.

As a Founding Member of the OAU, Mwalimu was not only among the visionary African leaders who saw the strength of the continent to lie in its unity of purpose and action, but he was among the leaders of the African Continent who was able to articulate the collective destiny of the African people in a manner that will guide and inspire many generations to come.

Throughout his lifetime, Mwalimu remained a Pan-Africanist.

The notion of unity for Mwalimu was cardinal for the survival of the African people. The lessons he has left us on forging harmony amidst diversity will remain a living memorial. He was able to build a nation state in which individual differences became strength rather than a liability, a state in which the individual and the nation moved along a common destiny.

He remained in the vanguard of the struggle for freedom and dignity for the people of Africa and for all oppressed people of the world. A teacher that he was, Mwalimu taught us that freedom for the Continent cannot be partial. Either we are all free or we are all in bondage. And in the pursuit of freedom, what mattered for Mwalimu is not the material capacity but the commitment to the principle of freedom. It was in this regard, that despite the poverty of his country, under his leadership, the people of Tanzania made ultimate sacrifices to ensure that the continent became free.

Throughout his life, Mwalimu never lost sight of the fact that his country Tanzania, and the African Continent as a whole, are part of a larger world, of which we all have responsibilities. He was a firm advocate of a new international economic order, in which every actor is given a fair opportunity and the rights and concerns of the weak are attended to. Towards his last years, Mwalimu patiently and perseveringly demonstrated his qualities as a peace-maker. The case of Burundi is the best example that can be quoted. Mwalimu devoted himself fully to this case despite his numerous tasks, his age and also his state of health. His

capacity to listen, his preparedness to understand and the clarity of his position and proposals enabled him to bring together all the Burundian parties around the same table to initiate a constructive dialogue between them. We can express satisfaction that it is on this basis laid down by Mwalimu that Mr. Mandela has taken over the torch.

The best tribute we can therefore pay to Mwalimu is to pursue his ideals and fight together, against poverty, hunger, diseases and illiteracy.

We are grateful to Jubilee 2000 for organising this tribute and for the work that it has been doing in mobilising support for debt relief and cancellation. It is fitting that you are organising this event, for Mwalimu Nyerere was among the first to call for the cancellation of the heavy debt on African countries. He recognised very early the difficulties of repaying the heavy debt.