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ADDRESS BY THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL

H.E. MR SALIM AHMED SALIM

TO

THE 27TH ASSEMBLY OF

HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

Abuja, 4 June, 1991.

MR CHAIRMAN,
YOUR EXCELLENCIES THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT,
YOUR EXCELLENCY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS,
HONOURABLE DELEGATES,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

ALLOW ME TO ADDRESS MY VERY FIRST WORDS OF THANKS TO PRESIDENT BABANGIDA AND HIS GOVERNMENT AND, THROUGH THEM, TO THE PEOPLE OF NIGERIA AS A WHOLE FOR THE WARM HOSPITALITY THEY HAVE ACCORDED US AND FOR ALL THE EFFORTS THEY HAVE MADE TO ENSURE THAT THIS SUMMIT TAKES PLACE UNDER SUCH PROPITIOUS CONDITIONS IN THIS NEW FEDERAL CAPITAL OF NIGERIA - ABUJA - WHICH IS A SYMBOL OF UNITY, DETERMINATION AND PROGRESS. THE EXCELLENT WORKING FACILITIES, WHICH HAVE BEEN PUT AT OUR DISPOSAL, ARE THE END-RESULT OF THE CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS AND SACRIFICES MADE BY THE AUTHORITIES OF THE HOST COUNTRY AND A REFLECTION OF THE COMMITMENT OF NIGERIA, ITS PEOPLE AND LEADERS TO THE IDEALS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF OUR CONTINENTAL ORGANIZATION. IT IS, THEREFORE, WITH PLEASURE THAT I WISH TO EXPRESS MY DEEP GRATITUDE TO THEM.

I ALSO WISH TO CONGRATULATE MOST SINCERELY PRESIDENT BABANGIDA ON HIS ELECTION AS CHAIRMAN OF THE ORGANIZATION AND ASSURE HIM OF MY FULL SUPPORT AND THE COOPERATION OF THE ENTIRE SECRETARIAT IN THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS TASK.

I FURTHER WISH TO SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT YOWERI MUSEVENI, FOR THE COMMENDABLE EFFORTS HE HAS MADE IN THE SERVICE OF THE ORGANIZATION DURING HIS TERM OF OFFICE. I WOULD PARTICULARLY LIKE TO THANK HIM FOR THE SUPPORT HE HAS PROVIDED ME IN THE PERFORMANCE OF MY DUTY AND FOR HIS READINESS TO ASSIST ON ALL AND EVERY OCCASION. INDEED, I WOULD LIKE TO PLACE ON RECORD MY PARTICULAR APPRECIATION FOR HIS READINESS AT ALL TIMES - DAY AND NIGHT - TO PROVIDE ME WITH COUNSEL AND ADVICE WHENEVER CIRCUMSTANCES SO NECESSITATED.

MR CHAIRMAN,

FOLLOWING YOUR PROCEDURE, THIS IS A REGULAR SESSION OF YOUR SUMMIT. HOWEVER, IT IS EXCEPTIONAL IN NATURE IN VIEW OF ITS HISTORIC IMPORTANCE. WE ARE NOT ENGAGING IN ANY EXAGGERATION IF WE WERE TO ASSERT THAT WE ARE WITNESSING THE REBIRTH OF THE ORGANIZATION. THE SOLEMN SIGNING OF THE TREATY TO ESTABLISH THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, WHICH WE WITNESSED YESTERDAY, WILL BE RECORDED IN THE ANNALS OF THE HISTORY OF OUR CONTINENT IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE SIGNING OF THE OAU CHARTER IN 1963. CLOSE TO THIRTY YEARS AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OAU, OUR ORGANIZATION HAS EVOLVED FROM AN INSTITUTION THAT CONCENTRATED MAINLY ON THE POLITICAL LIBERATION OF THE CONTINENT TO ONE THAT NOW FOCUSES MORE ATTENTION ON THE INTEGRATED SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY WILL PROCEED STAGE BY STAGE. INDEED, SIX STAGES OF VARYING DURATION STRETCHED OUT OVER AN INDICATIVE PERIOD OF THIRTY FOUR YEARS ARE ENVISAGED. ACCORDING TO THIS SCHEDULE, DURING THE FIRST STAGE, WHICH WILL LAST FOR FIVE YEARS, THE ORGANIZATION WILL STRIVE TO STRENGTHEN EXISTING REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES AND ESTABLISH SUCH COMMUNITIES IN REGIONS WHERE THEY DO NOT EXIST. THE SECOND STAGE WILL INVOLVE ADOPTING, WITHIN EACH REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, MEASURES AIMED AT STABILIZING TARIFF AND NON-TARIFF BARRIERS, CUSTOMS DUTIES AND ALL OTHER CHARGES HAVING EQUIVALENT EFFECT AND INTERNAL TAXES; THE GRADUAL REMOVAL OF TARIFF AND NON-TARIFF BARRIERS AND THE GRADUAL HARMONIZATION OF CUSTOMS DUTIES AND CHARGES HAVING EQUIVALENT EFFECT IN RELATION TO THIRD STATES; THE STRENGTHENING OF SECTORIAL INTEGRATION AND THE REGIONAL AND CONTINENTAL LEVELS, THE COORDINATION AND HARMONIZATION OF ACTIVITIES AMONG THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES.

DURING THE THIRD STAGE, EACH REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITY WILL ESTABLISH A FREE TRADE AREA FOLLOWED BY A CUSTOMS UNION. THE FOURTH STAGE WILL INVOLVE COORDINATION AND HARMONIZATION OF TARIFF AND NON-TARIFF SYSTEMS AMONG THE DIFFERENT REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES WITH A VIEW TO ESTABLISHING A CUSTOMS UNION AT THE CONTINENTAL LEVEL.

THE CONTINENTAL CUSTOMS UNION WILL BE FOLLOWED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN COMMON MARKET. THIS WOULD INVOLVE ADOPTING COMMON POLICIES IN A NUMBER OF AREAS SUCH AS AGRICULTURE, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS, INDUSTRY, ENERGY AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH; THE HARMONIZATION OF MONETARY, FINANCIAL AND FISCAL POLICIES, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS; THE APPLICATION OF THE RIGHT OF RESIDENCE AND ESTABLISHMENT AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNITY'S OWN RESOURCES.

THE SIXTH AND FINAL STATE WILL BE THAT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNITY. IT PROVIDES FOR THE CONSOLIDATION AND STRENGTHENING OF THE AFRICAN COMMON MARKET STRUCTURE. IT ALSO ENVISAGES THE INTEGRATION OF ALL SECTORS ULTIMATELY CULMINATING IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SINGLE DOMESTIC MARKET AND A PANAFRICAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION. THIS WOULD ALSO BE THE FINAL STAGE IN THE SETTING UP OF AN AFRICAN MONETARY UNION, AN AFRICAN CENTRAL BANK AND A SINGLE AFRICAN CURRENCY. THE STRUCTURES OF THE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING THE SETTING-UP OF A PANAFRICAN PARLIAMENT ELECTED BY CONTINENTAL UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND THE EXECUTIVE ORGANS, WILL ALSO BE IN PLACE DURING THIS STAGE.

MR CHAIRMAN,

LIKE EVERY OTHER HISTORIC ENDEAVOUR, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY WILL BE AN ARDUOUS TASK. IT

SUSTAINED THROUGH EFFICIENT AND PATIENT EFFORTS AND A PRAGMATIC AND PROGRESSIVE APPROACH. WE MUST, IN NO CIRCUMSTANCE, BE DISCOURAGED BY THE TIME FRAME PROVIDED FOR ITS REALIZATION.

THE MOST IMPORTANT STAGE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNITY IS, IN MY VIEW, THE PREPARATORY PHASE, DURING WHICH EFFORTS WILL HAVE TO BE MADE TO PREPARE THE GROUND AND SET THE PROCESS IN MOTION. IN THIS RESPECT, A NUMBER OF PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES, WHICH WILL AFFECT THE PROPER CONDUCT OF THE ENTIRE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITY, NEED TO BE CARRIED THROUGH.

IT IS IMPORTANT FIRSTLY, FOR MEMBER STATES, TO QUICKLY COMPLY WITH THE FORMALITIES CONNECTED WITH THE RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY SO AS TO ENABLE US EMBARK ON ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO QUICKLY GET DOWN TO THE ACTUAL DRAFTING OF THE VARIOUS PROTOCOLS TO THE TREATY, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH A PRIORITY STATUS. THE PERMANENT STEERING COMMITTEE HAS DRAWN UP A WORK PROGRAMME TO THAT EFFECT.

AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL, THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT INTENDS TO ORGANIZE, IN THE COURSE OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR, ONE OR MORE SESSIONS OF THE AD HOC OAU CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE IN ORDER TO SUGGEST AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY. THE REVIEW EXERCISE SHOULD CULMINATE IN THE ADOPTION OF A REVISED OAU CHARTER.

DURING THE SESSIONS OF THE AD HOC OAU CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE, I ALSO INTEND TO USE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROPOSE SOME INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS AIMED AT IMPROVING THE FUNCTIONING OF OUR ORGANIZATION AND AT EQUIPPING IT WITH THE MEANS TO COPE WITH ITS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES. AS REPORTED TO YOU DURING YOUR LAST SESSION, IN ADDIS ABABA, THESE MEASURES WOULD INCLUDE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MECHANISM TO REINFORCE OAU'S ABILITY IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ANTICIPATION AND RESOLUTION. SUCH A MECHANISM SHOULD ENVISAGE MODALITIES FOR RESPONDING SPEEDY AND EFFICIENTLY TO A CONFLICT SITUATION WHERE THE ORGANIZATION'S ROLE CAN BE CRUCIAL IN TERMS OF PUTTING AN END TO THE CONFLICT OR AT THE VERY LEAST PROVIDE A BREATHING SPACE IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR A COOLING OFF PERIOD AND FACILITATING THE PROCESS OF A NEGOTIATED RESOLUTION.

WITH REGARD TO THE PRESENT STRUCTURES OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT, IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY ARE NOT ADAPTED TO THE NEW ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT IS, AT THE MOMENT, NOT SUFFICIENTLY EQUIPPED WITH THE NECESSARY HUMAN RESOURCES TO LIVE UP TO ITS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES. THERE IS, THEREFORE, NEED TO UNDERTAKE STRUCTURAL REFORMS WITH A VIEW TO REINFORCE THE MANAGERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT. I AM OF THE VIEW THAT WE NEED TO ADOPT A GRADUAL APPROACH WHICH TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE PHASE-BY-PHASE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNITY. WE WOULD BE FORESTALLING A LOT OF DIFFICULTIES AND BE COST-EFFECTIVE IF WE APPROACHED IT IN THIS MANNER. THE STRUCTURES OF THE ORGANIZATION SHOULD, IN OTHER WORDS,

DEVELOP AS RESPONSIBILITIES ACCRUE. CONSEQUENTLY, FOR THE TIME BEING, THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT HAS TO APPLY ITSELF ASSIDUOUSLY TO IMPROVING ON ITS COORDINATION AND FOLLOW UP CAPACITIES. IT IS MY INTENTION, THEREFORE, TO SET UP A COORDINATION AND FOLLOW UP UNIT WITHIN THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT AND WITH THE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE MANPOWER. THE UNIT WILL COORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF THE SECRETARIAT IN CONNECTION WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNITY.

MOREOVER, I HAVE ALREADY SET UP A TASK FORCE WITHIN THE SECRETARIAT TO PACKAGE A GRADUATED PLAN FOR THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT TO TIE UP WITH THE NEW OAU. SUCH A PLAN WILL BE PREPARED WITH DUE CONSIDERATION FOR THE MISSION ASSIGNED TO THE ORGANIZATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROGRESSIVE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNITY. IT WILL ALSO INCLUDE THE NEW AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY THAT NOW LIE WITH THE ORGANIZATION IN THE FIELD OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION, SECURITY AND STABILITY OF AFRICA. OUR PROPOSALS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE NEXT ORDINARY SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

FINALLY AND IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE COMMUNITY WILL BE BUTTRESSED BY THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROUPINGS, IT IS NECESSARY, I BELIEVE, TO ESTABLISH A MECHANISM TO MONITOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNITY. I WOULD, THEREFORE, LIKE TO RECOMMEND, FOR YOUR DISTINGUISHED CONSIDERATION, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MONITORING COMMITTEE MADE UP OF THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE CHIEF

EXECUTIVES OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROUPINGS.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THESE ARE THE PROPOSALS AND OBSERVATIONS THAT I DEEMED APPROPRIATE TO SUBMIT FOR CONSIDERATION BY YOUR DISTINGUISHED ASSEMBLY. ALL THAT IS NOW LEFT IS FOR ME TO CONGRATULATE YOU, MR CHAIRMAN, AND ALL YOUR PEERS, THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT AND HEADS OF DELEGATION, ON THIS HISTORIC OCCASION. BY SIGNING THE ABUJA TREATY YESTERDAY, YOU RENEWED YOUR FAITH IN THE IDEALS AND OBJECTIVES OF OUR CONTINENTAL ORGANIZATION THUS REINFORCING IT. YOU HAVE REKINDLED THE PAN-AFRICANIST SENTIMENT BY GIVING IT A CONCRETE DIMENSION. YOU HAVE FURTHER PROVIDED THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA WITH A MAJOR PROJECT AND A POINT OF FOCUS FOR THE FUTURE.

BY SIGNING THE TREATY TO ESTABLISH THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, YOU HAVE ESTABLISHED A PACT OF SOLIDARITY AMONG THE COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES OF AFRICA. IN ADOPTING SUCH A DECISION, YOUR DESIRE HAS BEEN TO ENSURE THAT THE OAU BECOMES, MORE THAN EVER, THE CONCERN OF ALL.

MR CHAIRMAN,

DURING YOUR SUMMIT LAST JULY, IN ADDIS ABABA, YOU AGREED THAT YOUR ORDINARY SESSIONS WILL HENCEFORTH CONVENE ON THE FIRST MONDAY OF JUNE. THIS SESSION IS TAKING PLACE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THAT

DECISION. INDEED, AND OVER AND ABOVE THE FACT THAT SUCH A DECISION WAS WARRANTED FOR PURPOSES OF ORGANIZATION, IT WAS OF GREATER IMPORTANCE IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT IT WAS THE FIRST STEP IN THE PAINSTAKING ENTERPRISE INITIATED IN ORDER TO STREAMLINE THE ACTIVITIES OF OUR ORGANIZATION. YOU HAVE SET UP A FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION THAT WOULD ENABLE AFRICAN ECONOMIC OPERATORS AND, INDEED, THE AFRICAN MASSES TO FORGE ECONOMIC AND HUMAN LINKS WHICH WILL THUS STRENGTHEN THE ABILITY OF OUR CONTINENTAL ORGANIZATION TO BRING AFRICA TOGETHER. THE EDIFICE THAT WE INTEND TO BUILD TOGETHER WILL BE UNDERMINED IF WE ARE NOT COMMITTED TO ACTUALLY IMPLEMENT THE DECISIONS ADOPTED COLLECTIVELY. IT IS, THEREFORE, MY SINCERE HOPE THAT MEMBER STATES WILL UNDERTAKE TO RESOLUTELY OBSERVE AND STRICTLY COMPLY WITH THE DECISIONS AGREED UPON WITH RESPECT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY.

THIS UNDERTAKING TOGETHER WITH THE DECISION TO SET UP A COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES HAVE BEEN A MAJOR SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE SECRETARIAT WHICH HAS CONTINUED WITH ITS THOROUGH IN-HOUSE REVIEW AIMED AT IMPROVING THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS OF THE SECRETARIAT. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE SECRETARIAT HAS STRIVED TO INSTILL GREATER DISCIPLINE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MANPOWER AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN ITS EMPLOY BY COMPLYING STRICTLY WITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION. IT HAS ALSO STRIVED TO OPERATE IN A MANNER COMMENSURATE WITH THE DIRECTIVES OF THE POLICY-MAKING BODIES OF

THE ORGANIZATION AND TO APPLY THE REQUIRED AUSTERITY TO ITS FUNCTIONING WITH DUE CONSIDERATION FOR THE ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS FACING MEMBER STATES.

SINCE IT IS OUR FIRM BELIEF THAT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SECRETARIAT DEPENDS ON PROPER ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT NEW AND IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO OUR ORGANIZATION WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, WE ARE DETERMINED TO PURSUE OUR EFFORTS AND TO WORK, HAND IN HAND, WITH THE MEMBER STATES IN TRANSFORMING OUR CONTINENTAL ORGANIZATION INTO AN EFFICIENT TOOL FOR THE PROMOTION OF COOPERATION AND ENTENTE AMONG AFRICAN COUNTRIES. AND IN THIS, WE SHALL COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF MEMBER STATES SO THAT THE RESOURCES REQUIRED BY THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF ITS MISSION COULD BE PROVIDED. I AM DUTY-BOUND IN THIS REGARD TO RAISE THE ISSUE OF THE CRITICAL FINANCIAL SITUATION OF OUR ORGANIZATION AND TO RECALL THAT, AS OF TODAY, LESS THAN TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE REGULAR BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 1990/1991, WHICH ENDED FOUR DAYS AGO, HAS BEEN PAID. AS A RESULT OF THIS, THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF ARREARS HAS NOW REACHED THE STAGGERING FIGURE OF . I, THEREFORE, WISH TO SEIZE THIS SINGULAR OPPORTUNITY TO AGAIN MAKE AN URGENT APPEAL TO THOSE MEMBER STATES WHICH ARE NOT UP TO DATE IN THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OAU BUDGET TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO HONOUR THEIR FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE ORGANIZATION. THE ISSUE OF FULFILLING

BUDGETARY COMMITMENTS OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANT. FOR WITHOUT ADEQUATE RESOURCES, THE ORGANIZATION CANNOT BE IN A POSITION TO COPE WITH ITS MANFOLD RESPONSIBILITIES.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA IS STILL A CAUSE FOR CONCERN. SINCE YOUR LAST SUMMIT, A NUMBER OF EVENTS HAVE OCCURRED IN THAT COUNTRY, IN AFRICA, IN GENERAL, AND IN THE REST OF THE WORLD WHICH CALL FOR THE ATTENTION OF YOUR DISTINGUISHED ASSEMBLY.

IN SOUTH AFRICA, THERE WAS THE STATEMENT MADE BY MR DE KLERK ON THE 1ST OF FEBRUARY, THIS YEAR, WITH RESPECT TO THE ABOLITION OF CERTAIN CORNERSTONE LEGISLATION OF APARTHEID. THESE MEASURES, WHEN IMPLEMENTED, WILL CLEARLY CONSTITUTE A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN CONFRONTING THE FOUNDATIONS OF APARTHEID. THIS STATEMENT, WHICH WAS MADE A YEAR AFTER THE MEASURES TAKEN IN THE WAKE OF NELSONG MANDELA'S RELEASE, WAS WELCOMED BY THE WORLD COMMUNITY. THE ISSUE OF SANCTIONS WAS NOW RAISED IN A DIFFERENT CONTEXT IN VIEW OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS.

IN AFRICA, WE HAVE WITNESSED THE EROSION OF THE COMMON POSITION ADOPTED BY THE CONTINENT, THROUGH OUR ORGANIZATION, ON THIS MATTER. INDEED, IT IS NO SECRET ANY MORE THAT A GROWING NUMBER OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES ARE PURSUING RELATIONS IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER WITH SOUTH AFRICA. AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, WE HAVE ALL

FOLLOWED, WITH REGRET, THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE AND SOUTH AFRICA. WE ALSO FOLLOWED THE DEBATES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WHICH CULMINATED IN THE RECENT DECISION TO LIFT PART OF THE SANCTIONS IMPOSED ON SOUTH AFRICA.

THE OAU AD HOC COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA MET IN HARARE, LAST FEBRUARY, AND RECOMMENDED THAT SANCTIONS BE MAINTAINED AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA UNTIL THE PROCESS OF DISMANTLING THE APARTHEID SYSTEM BECOMES IRREVERSIBLE. IT FURTHER RECOMMENDED THAT THE QUESTION OF SANCTIONS BE CONSIDERED BY THE PRESENT SESSION OF YOUR ASSEMBLY. THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ALSO DWELT ON THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND HIGHLIGHTED PRETORIA'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SITUATION NOW PREVAILING. THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE WELCOMED THE MEETING BETWEEN THE OFFICIALS OF THE ANC AND INKATHA AND ENCOURAGED THEM TO PURSUE THEIR EFFORTS TO END THE VIOLENCE WHICH HAS ASSUMED EXPLOSIVE PROPORTIONS IN THE BLACK TOWNSHIPS. THE COMMITTEE FURTHER CALLED ON THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS TO CLOSE THEIR RANKS AND PURSUE A UNITED FRONT AGAINST THE APARTHEID REGIME. WE WERE THUS ENCOURAGED BY THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE RECENT ENCOUNTER OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES OF THE ANC AND PAC WHICH TOOK PLACE IN HARARE, ON 15 AND 16 APRIL 1991. IN THE COURSE OF THAT MEETING, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH MOVEMENTS DWELT, AT LENGTH, ON THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE AND ADOPTED THE MEASURES TO DE-ESCALATE THE STATE OF VIOLENCE. THEY ALSO AGREED ON A COMMON

POSITION WITH REGARD TO THE PROPOSALS MADE BY MR DE KLERK ON THE CONVENING OF A MULTI-PARTY CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS. THEY URGED THAT A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY BE CONVENED. THEY FURTHER AGREED TO HOLD A PATRIOTIC CONGRESS, IN CAPE TOWN, IN THE MONTH OF AUGUST THIS YEAR. THIS CONGRESS WILL BRING TOGETHER ALL THE PATRIOTIC FORCES OF THE COUNTRY WITH THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ACHIEVING UNITY IN ACTION.

TODAY, THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, AS A WHOLE, ARE LOOKING UP TO YOUR ASSEMBLY AND AWAITING AFRICA'S COLLECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE NEW SITUATION. YOUR DISTINGUISHED ASSEMBLY WILL, IN ITS WISDOM, DETERMINE THE MOST APPROPRIATE MEANS OF ASSISTING THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA, AT THIS CRUCIAL PHASE, IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT THIS ASSEMBLY WILL STRIVE TO ESTABLISH AN UNEQUIVOCAL POSITION BASED ON THE FACT THAT THE OBJECTIVE IS TO DISMANTLE APARTHEID AND ESTABLISH A NON-RACIAL AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THAT THE PRESSURE OF SANCTIONS EXERTED ON SOUTH AFRICA IS ONE MEANS OF ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE. SUCH A POSITION SHOULD BE GROUNDED ON THE REQUIREMENTS INHERENT IN THE PURSUIT OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID AND CONCURRENTLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NEW POLITICAL LANDSCAPE EMERGING IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE NEED TO ASSIST THE PROCESS. THE VIEWS OF THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, IN THIS RESPECT, WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL AND WOULD ENABLE

YOU TO ADOPT AN APPROPRIATE POSITION. YOUR DISTINGUISHED ASSEMBLY WILL DEFINITELY NOT FAIL TO APPEAL TO ALL THE PARTIES INVOLVED IN SOUTH AFRICA TO SHELVE THEIR DIFFERENCES, END THE VIOLENCE AND GET INVOLVED IN THE SINCERE PURSUIT OF DIALOGUE. IT IS MY HOPE THAT YOUR ASSEMBLY WILL ADOPT A POSITION THAT ENHANCES THE CREDIBILITY OF OUR ORGANIZATION AND THE UNITY, SOLIDARITY, AND COHESION AMONG MEMBER STATES. ONLY BY ADOPTING SUCH A UNIFIED POSITION CAN AFRICA RESEIZE THE INITIATIVE IT HAS ALWAYS HAD IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID.

MR CHAIRMAN,

SINCE YOUR LAST SESSION IN ADDIS ABABA, THE WORLD HAS GONE THROUGH A MAJOR CRISIS IN THE GULF REGION FOLLOWING THE IRAQI INVASION AND OCCUPATION OF KUWAIT. THIS CRISIS EVOLVED INTO A WAR. THE GULF CRISIS AND THE RESULTANT OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES HAD SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. WE DID, AT THE TIME, DEPLORE THE CONFLICT WHICH WAS PARTICULARLY DEVASTATING FOR A REGION WHERE PEACE WAS PRECARIOUS AND THE SITUATION ALREADY COMPLEX. IT WAS, THEREFORE, WITH RELIEF THAT WE LEARNT OF THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES ON 28 FEBRUARY 1991. SINCE THE CEASEFIRE CAME INTO FORCE, DIPLOMACY HAS RE-ESTABLISHED ITSELF AND FULL-SCALE EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO REBUILD WHAT HAS BEEN DESTROYED AND TO RESTORE CONFIDENCE WHICH THE CRISIS HAD SERIOUSLY SHATTERED. IT IS OUR MOST SINCERE HOPE THAT THE ARAB COUNTRIES, TO WHICH WE

ARE ATTACHED IN SO MANY WAYS, WILL QUICKLY RECOVER FROM THIS SAD EXPERIENCE AND DIRECT THEIR EFFORTS AT RESTORING AN ATMOSPHERE OF ENTENTE, RECONCILIATION AND COOPERATION. SUCH A STATE OF AFFAIRS WILL, MOREOVER, ALLOW FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF THE ARAB WORLD AND AFRICA TO BE RE-LAUNCHED.

A LOT HAS, INDEED, BEEN SAID ABOUT THIS AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION WHICH HAS FAILED TO LIVE UP TO EXPECTATIONS. IT MIGHT JUST BE THAT IT WAS NOT APPROACHED IN A MANNER THAT WOULD HARNESS ALL THE ENERGY AND GOODWILL EXISTING ON BOTH SIDES. THE FORTHCOMING SESSION OF THE STANDING COMMISSION ON AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION IS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE IN THIS REGARD. THIS MEETING, WHICH ALGERIA HAS OFFERED TO HOST, SHOULD, THEREFORE, BE CAREFULLY PREPARED AND SERVE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ESTABLISHING THE BASIS FOR REACTIVATING AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION.

MR CHAIRMAN,

WITH THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES IN THE GULF, HOPES WERE REKINDLE ON THE PROSPECTS FOR A JUST AND LASTING SOLUTION TO THE PAINFUL QUESTION OF PALESTINE. AFRICA HAS ALWAYS PROVIDED AN UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR THE STRUGGLE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PLO, THEIR AUTHENTIC AND LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE, FOR THE RESTORATION OF THEIR INALIENABLE RIGHTS IN CONFORMITY WITH THE RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. IT HAS CONSISTENTLY CALLED FOR THE UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAEL FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. IT HAS ALSO CONDEMNED THE POLICY OF EXPANSIONISM AND REPRESSION THAT ISRAEL PRACTICES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. IT HAS CONDEMNED ISRAEL'S POLICIES OF CHANGING THE DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

WE REMAIN CONFIDENT IN THE ABILITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO FIND A JUST AND LASTING SOLUTION TO THIS QUESTION, WHICH IS AT THE VERY ROOT OF THE INSECURITY AND INSTABILITY, PREVAILING IN THE MIDDLE-EAST FOR MORE THAN FOUR DECADES NOW. INDEED, AT A TIME WHEN RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLES IS INCREASINGLY BECOMING A MAJOR TENET OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS DUTY-BOUND TO RISE TO ITS RESPONSIBILITY WITH RESPECT TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN DENIED THEIR RIGHTS FOR SO LONG.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION TO THIS QUESTION AND TO OTHER ILLS THAT AFFLICT OUR PLANET IS AN IRREPLACEABLE ONE. OUR CONTINENT, WHICH HAS EMERGED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE THROUGH THIS UNIQUE FORUM, HAS PLACED ITS FAITH AND HOPES IN THIS INSTRUMENT FOR PEACE AND COOPERATION IN THE WORLD. THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE ALWAYS PROVIDED AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THEIR SUPPORT IN FURTHERING THE IDEALS AND PURSUING THE

OBJECTIVES OF THE UNITED NATIONS BOTH WITHIN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND IN THE VARIOUS COMMITTEES AS WELL AS IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL. DESPITE THE ACUTE PROBLEMS IT IS FACING IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT AND IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN STATES, AFRICA HAS EMERGED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE AS A FORCE FOR PEACE.

AS YOU ARE AWARE, THE MANDATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL WILL EXPIRE AT THE END OF THIS YEAR. MR JAVIER PEREZ DE CUELLAR, WHO HAS SERVED THE ORGANIZATION WITH DEVOTION, COMMITMENT, AND DISTINCTION, HAS MADE IT KNOWN THAT HE DOES NOT INTEND TO SEEK A THIRD TERM. ON THE BASIS OF THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE INCUMBENT SECRETARY-GENERAL WILL NOT SEEK A NEW MANDATE, SEVERAL IDEAS HAVE BEEN ADVANCED AS TO HIS REPLACEMENT. NATURALLY, AFRICA HAS SHOWN SPECIAL INTEREST IN THIS MATTER.

THE IMPORTANT AND PRESTIGIOUS POST OF SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS HAS BEEN OCCUPIED BY EMINENT PERSONALITIES FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF THE GLOBE. NON AFRICAN HAS, AS YET, HAD THE HONOUR OR PRIVILEGE TO SERVE THE ORGANIZATION AT THAT LEVEL. IT IS MY FIRM BELIEF THAT THERE ARE MANY AFRICANS WITH DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AND ENDOWED WITH MANAGERIAL SKILLS WHO ARE ABLE AND CAPABLE OF CARRYING OUT THE DUTIES ATTACHED TO THIS TOP INTERNATIONAL POSITION. THE COMPETENCE, SKILL, DEVOTION AND EXPERIENCE OF THESE EMINENT AFRICANS PLACE THEM IN A GOOD POSITION TO LEAD THE UNITED NATIONS. IT IS MY HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT THE

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WILL FAVOURABLY CONSIDER THE ELECTION OF AN AFRICAN TO THIS POST. IN SO SAYING, I AM FULLY AWARE OF THE FACT THAT ELECTIONS TO THE POST OF SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS DO NOT FOLLOW THE PRINCIPLE OF ROTATION AMONG THE VARIOUS REGIONS OF THE WORLD. YET, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THAT, WITH ALL THE TALENTS, SKILLS AND ABILITY THAT A NUMBER OF AFRICAN SONS AND DAUGHTERS POSSES, AN AFRICAN SHOULD BE BYPASSED FOR THIS POSITION. IT IS, THEREFORE, MY FERVENT HOPE THAT AFRICA WILL BE GIVEN A CHANCE TO MAKE ITS OWN INPUT, AT THAT LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY, IN THE CONDUCT OF WORLD AFFAIRS AND THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL, PARTICULARLY THE PERMANENT MEMBERS THEREOF, WILL CONSIDER ANY AFRICAN CANDIDATURE IN THIS LIGHT.

MR CHAIRMAN,

DURING ITS LAST SESSION, IN ADDIS ABABA, YOUR ASSEMBLY EXPRESSED ITS DEEP CONCERN OVER THE NUMEROUS AREAS OF TENSION ON OUR CONTINENT AND THEIR EFFECT ON AFRICA'S STABILITY, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT. SINCE ADDIS ABABA, WE HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS IN THE EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THESE CONFLICTS PEACEFULLY.

THE WESTERN SAHARA CONFLICT IS A CASE IN POINT. THERE IS NOW A MOVE TOWARDS A LASTING SOLUTION SINCE THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL DECIDED, ON 29 APRIL THIS YEAR TO SET UP THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA (MINURSO) AND AFTER THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATED THE NECESSARY FUNDS FOR THIS PURPOSE. ALL THE CONDITIONS HAVE ACCORDINGLY BEEN MET TO ENABLE THE REFERENDUM TO BE ORGANIZED IN WESTERN SAHARA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PEACE PLAN INITIATED BY OUR CONTINENTAL ORGANIZATION. INDEED, IT WAS WITHIN THIS ASSEMBLY, DURING YOUR 19TH ORDINARY SESSION IN 1983, THAT A PEACE PLAN FOR WESTERN SAHARA WAS PACKAGED. THIS PLAN, WHICH APPEARS IN RESOLUTION AHG 104, PROVIDES FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF A PEACEFUL AND FAIR REFERENDUM ON SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN SAHARA; A REFERENDUM WITHOUT ANY ADMINISTRATIVE OR MILITARY CONSTRAINTS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE OAU AND THE UNITED NATIONS. THIS PLAN WAS SUBSEQUENTLY ENDORSED BY THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

SINCE THEN, PATIENT AND SUSTAINED EFFORTS HAVE BEEN DEPLOYED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE OAU CHAIRMAN IN OFFICE AT THE TIME. THESE EFFORTS CULMINATED IN THE FORMULATION, BY THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN OF THE OAU, OF A SET OF SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS ACCEPTED BY THE TWO PARTIES IN CONFLICT. THE SET OF PROPOSALS, TOGETHER WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN DEVISED BY THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL, WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON 27 JUNE 1990.

THE PLAN, WHICH IS ABOUT TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN WESTERN SAHARA AND TO WHICH OUR ORGANIZATION MADE A CONTRIBUTION, IS ALSO

THE RESULT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE OAU AND THE UNITED NATIONS. SUCH EXEMPLARY COOPERATION SHOULD CONTINUE WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN. ON THAT SCORE, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME CONSULTATIONS WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT ON THE PRACTICAL STEPS TO BE ADOPTED IN ORDER TO ENABLE OUR ORGANIZATION TO CARRY THROUGH THE RESPONSIBILITY ASSIGNED TO IT WITH RESPECT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN WHICH WILL SPREAD OVER A PERIOD OF FORTY WEEKS. AN INITIAL APPROPRIATION OF US\$ 500,000 WAS APPROVED BY COUNCIL TO COVER OAU'S PARTICIPATION. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT, EXPENSES TO BE INCURRED BY THE OAU WILL BE HIGHER. I AM SURE THAT I CAN, IN ANY CASE, RELY ON THE POLICY-MAKING BODIES OF OUR ORGANIZATION TO PROVIDE THE RESOURCES REQUIRED TO ENABLE THE OAU PERFORM, IN A WORTHY AND EFFICIENT MANNER, SUCH AN IMPORTANT AND NOBLE MISSION WHICH INVOLVES BRINGING A BLOODY CONFLICT TO AN END AND RESTORING PEACE, STABILITY AND ENTENTE AMONG MEMBER STATES. AT THE JUNCTURE, I WISH TO PAY A WELL DESERVED TRIBUTE TO THE ESTEEMED SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR HIS PAINSTAKING EFFORTS WHICH MADE THE PRESENT PLAN POSSIBLE. HIS COMMITMENT AND RESOURCEFULNESS HAS WON THE RESPECT AND ADMINISTRATION OF US ALL.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE DECISION TAKEN BY LIBYA AND CHAD TO REFER THEIR DISPUTE TO THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE THUS BRINGING TO AN END A

SITUATION THAT HAS POISONED THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO MEMBER COUNTRIES WAS A DEVELOPMENT OF PARTICULAR SATISFACTION TO OUR ORGANIZATION. IN LIKE MANNER, WE WELCOMED THE STEPS TAKEN BY SENEGAL AND MAURITANIA TO RESOLVE THEIR CONFLICT PEACEFULLY AND WITHIN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT.

FINALLY, WE HAVE WARMLY WELCOMED THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT SIGNED IN LISBON BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA AND UNITA. I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF ANGOLA FOR THIS MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT WHICH BRINGS TO AN END THE MOST PROTRACTED CONFLICT IN AFRICA. THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOW PAVE THE WAY TOWARDS NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IN ANGOLA AND CREATE THE ATMOSPHERE OF PEACE AND SECURITY THAT IS REQUIRED FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THAT COUNTRY. THE SIGNING OF THIS HISTORIC AGREEMENT IS OF A MAJOR POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE THAT GOES BEYOND THE BORDERS OF ANGOLA. IT CONSTITUTES A REMARKABLE EXAMPLE OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION OF WHICH WE ARE ALL PROUD AND EXPRESS OUR MOST SINCERE HOPE THAT IT WILL BE EMULATED BY ALL OTHER CONFLICTING PARTIES IN AFRICA.

IT IS ALSO OUR HOPE THAT THE SERIOUS AND COMMENDABLE EFFORTS MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF MOZAMBIQUE, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT JOAQUIM CHISSANO, TO ACHIEVE PEACE AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WILL BE CROWNED WITH SUCCESS.

MR CHAIRMAN,

DESPITE THE INCREASING EFFORTS BEING MADE TO FIND PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO THE CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN AFRICA, THERE IS STILL A PROLIFERATION OF SUCH CONFLICTS, BOTH HORIZONTALLY AND VERTICALLY, WITH THE ATTENDANT ENORMOUS LOSSES IN HUMAN AND MATERIAL TERMS. THESE CONFLICTS HAVE RESULTED IN A CONTINUED PERSISTENCE OF A CLIMATE OF INSECURITY AND INSTABILITY IN OUR CONTINENT. THESE CONFLICTS GENERATE AN INCREASING NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS WHICH FURTHER COMPOUND THE PLIGHT OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES ALREADY EXISTING AND WORSEN THE HUMAN TRAGEDY IN OUR CONTINENT.

THE SITUATION IS MOST DISTURBING IN THE HORN OF AFRICA WHERE CONFLICTS HAVE BEEN RAGING IN ETHIOPIA AND SUDAN COUPLED WITH THE MOST DEPRESSING HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN SOME REGIONS OF THOSE TWO COUNTRIES. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAL TO ALL MEMBER STATES AS WELL AS OTHER MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE THAT IS COMMENSURATE WITH THE NEEDS OF THE VICTIMS OF DROUGHT, FAMINE AND CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN AFRICA.

REGARDING THE SITUATION IN SUDAN, ATTEMPTS AT MEDIATION AND NEGOTIATION HAVE NOT, AS OF NOW, PRODUCED SIGNIFICANT RESULTS. I HAVE, ON MY PART, ENCOURAGED THE PARTIES CONCERNED TO EMBARK

ON THE SEARCH FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THEIR CONFLICT. I HAVE ALSO PLACED, AT THEIR DISPOSAL, THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT SO AS TO FACILITATE THE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS. BOTH THE GOVERNMENT OF SUDAN AND THE SUDANESE PEOPLES LIBERATION MOVEMENT HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO RESUME DIALOGUE. IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE THAT SUCH A DIALOGUE WILL BE RESTORED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

AS FOR THE CURRENT CONFLICT PREVAILING IN ETHIOPIA, I HAD OCCASION TO APPRAISE COUNCIL OF MY PROFOUND CONCERN AS WELL AS THE STEPS I HAD TAKEN WITH A VIEW TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AND THE BEGINNING OF NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT PUTTING IN PLACE A PROCESS TOWARDS NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND RECONSTRUCTION. THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, ON ITS PART, ISSUED AN APPEAL TO THE CONFLICTING PARTIES TO OBSERVE THE CEASEFIRE AGREED UPON AMONG THEMSELVES IN LONDON, TO PUT AN END TO HOSTILITIES IN ORDER TO AVOID FURTHER UNNECESSARY LOSS OF LIFE AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY AND TO RESPECT THE INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE CITY OF ADDIS ABABA WHICH IS THE HEADQUARTERS OF OUR CONTINENTAL ORGANIZATION AS WELL AS THE ECA AND HOSTS A GREAT NUMBER OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

THIS AUGUST ASSEMBLY IS AWARE OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAVE UNFOLDED IN THAT COUNTRY. IT IS MY EARNEST HOPE THAT A NEW CLIMATE OF UNDERSTANDING, UNITY, NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

AND SOLIDARITY WILL BE CREATED SO THAT THE PEOPLE OF ETHIOPIA CAN BE RID OF, ONCE AND FOR ALL, THE NIGHTMARE OF CIVIL STRIVE WHICH HAS TORMENTED THEM FOR SO LONG. THIS IS CERTAINLY THE CHALLENGE FACING THE PROPOSED CONFERENCE INVOLVING ALL PARTIES, SCHEDULED TO BE HELD BY 1ST JULY, THIS YEAR. WE HOPE THAT THEY WILL CONFRONT THIS CHALLENGE WITH COURAGE, VISION, PERSEVERANCE, DETERMINATION AND TOLERANCE. A GENUINE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, EMBRACING ALL PARTIES, WILL OPEN A NEW CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THAT COUNTRY WHICH, I AM CONFIDENT, WILL PLAY A DECISIVE ROLE IN ENDING THE AGONY AND SUFFERING WHICH HAVE, FOR MANY YEARS, AFFLICTED THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE.

MR CHAIRMAN,

IN SOMALIA, THE ATTEMPTS AT MEDIATION, DEPLOYED BY THE THEN CURRENT CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT MUSEVENI, AS WELL AS PRESIDENT MUBARAK AND PRESIDENT APTIDON, AIMED AT BRINGING TOGETHER THE VARIOUS FACTIONS, HAVE NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL. ON MY PART, I HAD TRIED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE VARIOUS BELLIGERENTS BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, WAS FACED WITH THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION WITH AND WITHIN SOMALIA. THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA DEMANDS THE URGENT ATTENTION OF THE AFRICAN AND WORLD COMMUNITIES. IMMEDIATE RELIEF MEASURES ARE NEEDED. BUT ABOVE ALL, THERE IS AN URGENT AND COMPELLING REQUIREMENT FOR THE VARIOUS PARTIES IN THAT COUNTRY TO ENTER INTO A NATIONAL DIALOGUE WHICH SHOULD RESULT IN THE END OF THE CONFLICT,

RESTORE NORMALCY AND FORGE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION.

IN LIBERIA, THE HOPES THAT AROSE FROM THE BAMAKO SUMMIT, AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT BY ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED, TOGETHER WITH THE OPTIMISM CREATED BY THE LOME AND BANJUL MEETINGS, WHICH CULMINATED IN THE CONVENING OF AN ALL PARTY CONFERENCE IN LIBERIA, WERE UNFORTUNATELY DASHED. INSTEAD OF ACHIEVING A BREAKTHROUGH IN THE LIBERIA CONFLICT, WE HAVE, IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, WITNESSED THE UNFORTUNATE DETERIORATION OF THE SITUATION WITH THE SUBSEQUENT VIOLATION OF THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OF SIERRA LEONE, A NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY TO LIBERIA.

ONLY GREATER COHESION AND UNITY OF PURPOSE AND ACTION, AMONG THE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE REGION, WILL ENABLE US TO EMERGE FROM THIS TRAGIC AND UNFORTUNATE SITUATION. IT'S MY HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT, DURING THIS AFRICAN FAMILY GATHERING, WE WILL SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENSURE THAT AFRICA, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION, ADOPT A CONCERTED APPROACH AND A COHERENT STAND SO THAT THE PEOPLE OF LIBERIA COULD BE ASSISTED IN OVERCOMING THEIR DIFFERENCES AND EMBARKING ON THE PATH TO NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND RECONSTRUCTION. I AM, THEREFORE, APPEALING TO THE WISDOM AND GOODWILL OF EACH AND EVERYONE SO THAT OUR PRESENT ENCOUNTER COULD WITNESS A RECONCILIATION AMONG OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN LIBERIA.

MR CHAIRMAN,

SINCE YOUR LAST SESSION, ANOTHER CRISIS, APART FROM THE CONFLICT IN SOMALIA, DEVELOPED IN RWANDA IN EARLY OCTOBER, LAST YEAR. THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT MONITORED THE SITUATION IN THAT COUNTRY VERY CLOSELY. IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE CRISIS, THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION MADE COMMENDABLE EFFORTS TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT. THESE EFFORTS CULMINATED IN THE SIGNING OF A CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT ON 29 MARCH 1991 BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA AND THE ARMED OPPOSITION MOVEMENT IN PRESENCE OF PRESIDENT MOBUTU WHO WAS MANDATED BY HIS PEERS OF THE REGION TO MEDIATE IN THE CONFLICT AND WHOSE PERSONAL EFFORTS AND COMMITMENTS MADE THIS N'SELE AGREEMENT POSSIBLE. I WAS PERSONALLY PRIVILEGED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THAT OCCASION. IN PURSUANCE OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT, A GROUP OF NEUTRAL MILITARY OBSERVERS HAD TO BE DEPLOYED TO MONITOR AND OBSERVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEASEFIRE. THE GROUP OF OBSERVERS WAS PLACED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OAU. I SUBMITTED A DETAILED REPORT TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON THE EFFORTS WE UNDERTOOK, WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA, RESULTING IN THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE GROUP OF NEUTRAL MILITARY OBSERVERS. I SHOULD LIKE TO STRESS THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE OBSERVERS CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN CONFIDENCE BUILDING. BUT THE SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT REQUIRE THE TRUE COOPERATION AND

COMMITMENT OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT AS WELL AS THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION.

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THESE CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN AFRICA COUPLED WITH THE DRAMATIC CHANGES AND EVENTS THAT HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES OF THE CONTINENT GRAPHICALLY DEMONSTRATE THE PROBLEMS, FRUSTRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS IN AFRICA. DURING YOUR LAST SUMMIT IN ADDIS ABABA, YOU ENGAGED IN MEANINGFUL DEBATES ON THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN OUR CONTINENT. THE ASSEMBLY HAD THEN ADOPTED A SOLEMN DECLARATION IN WHICH IT REAFFIRMED AFRICA'S COMMITMENT TO FURTHER DEMOCRATIZATION, HER SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HER DETERMINATION NOT ONLY TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICTS BUT ALSO TO REDEDICATE ITSELF TO FURTHERING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPLIFTMENT OF HER PEOPLES.

THE ISSUES ON YOUR AGENDA CALL FOR THOROUGH DEBATES IN THIS RESPECT. IT IS OBVIOUS, TODAY, THAT WE CAN ONLY RELY ON OUR OWN RESOURCES. WE, THEREFORE, HAVE TO DWELL SERIOUSLY ON THE TYPE OF MEANS WE HAVE TO USE TO COME OUT, ON OUR OWN, FROM THE PRESENT IMPASSE IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES. TO ACHIEVE OUR PURPOSE, WE NEED PEACE AND STABILITY. IN THIS RESPECT, MAY I RECALL THE WISE OBSERVATIONS OF AFRICA'S ELDER STATESMAN, PRESIDENT

HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, WHO TOLD ME LAST MONTH, IN ABIDJAN, WHEN I CALLED ON HIM, THAT, IF IN THE CASE OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES PEACE IS NECESSARY, IN OUR CASE, IT IS INDISPENSABLE. TO ESTABLISH A CLIMATE OF PEACE IN OUR CONTINENT, WE HAVE TO SERIOUSLY FOCUS ON THE CONFLICTS THAT NOW SOW DEATH AND MISERY IN SOME OF OUR COUNTRIES AND WREAK HAVOC ON OUR ECONOMIES. WE SHOULD ALSO STRIVE BUILD DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE SOLID AND ABLE TO SUSTAIN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CONTINENT. WE SHOULD PROMOTE A CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY ROOTED IN RESPECT FOR OUR DIFFERENCES, TAKE COGNIZANCE OF OUR CULTURAL VALUES AND PROMOTE TOLERANCE. WE SHOULD ALSO UPHOLD THE WORK ETHIC AND THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS. SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES HAVE A PRIMORDIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THIS RESPECT.

IT IS MY HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT THIS DISTINGUISHED ASSEMBLY WILL ENGAGE IN A FRANK AND SINCERE DEBATE ON THE CRUCIAL ISSUES CONNECTED WITH ESTABLISHING PEACE AND STABILITY IN AFRICA AND FURTHERING THE INTEGRATED SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CONTINENT. IT IS ALSO MY SINCERE HOPE THAT THIS DEBATE WILL TAKE PLACE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF BROTHERHOOD, TOLERANCE AND SOLIDARITY.

I THANK YOU.