

# AU ECHO

2023 Special Edition | 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue

# 60 YEARS

OAU - AU  
1963 - 2023

Speeches and Statements made at  
the first Organization of African Unity  
(O.A.U) Summit, May 1963

**SPECIAL  
PULLOUT!**  
Treaty Establishing  
the African Economic  
Community  
(ABUJA TREATY)

In May 1963 as the fight for independence from colonial rule gained momentum Heads of independent African States and representatives of liberation movements fighting for freedom from the yokes of colonialism and apartheid met in Addis Ababa Ethiopia to form a united front in the fight for the total liberation of the continent and to sign the Charter that would create Africa's first post-independence continental institution, The Organization of African Unity (OAU) which was the manifestation of the pan-African vision for an Africa that was United, Free and in Control of its own destiny

**The OAU was established on 25 May 1963 and the day was also declared AFRICA DAY.**

In 2002 the OAU was replaced by the African Union which continues to work to deliver the vision of the heroes of Africa's liberation for an Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena and envisioned in Africa's Development Framework of Agenda 2063

In commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the founding of Africa's continental organisation, which will be celebrated on Africa Day 25th May 2023 this commemorative edition of the AU Echo Magazine presents the speeches made during the first OAU summit in May 1963. Their words are still relevant today and inspire us to strive for a better Africa.



# INSIDE

The AU ECHO is produced by the Directorate of Information and Communication of the African Union. The views expressed by contributing external authors who are not officials of the African Union do not reflect the official position of the African Union. Articles from this publication, except those emanating from the AU, may not be freely printed. Articles from the AU must correctly state source as the African Union when used on any publication (print or digital) or extracted as source material for any digital, print, audio, video or any other broadcast medium. Copyrighted photographs may not be reprinted without written permission from the Directorate of Information and Communication of the African Union.

**Editor in Chief:** Leslie Richer  
**Administration:** Rahel Akalewold  
**Layout & Design:** Peter Kyambadde, Mitonini Malanda Christ Jordan  
**Photography:** Getty Images

## 05 | EDITOR'S NOTE

Leslie Richer, Director, Directorate of Information & Communication

## 06 | From the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to African Union (AU)

In May 1963, 32 Heads of independent African States met in Addis Ababa Ethiopia to sign the Charter creating Africa's first post-independence continental institution, The Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

## 08 | His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia



**H.E Ahmed Ben Bella**, President of the Republic of Algeria

## 19 | His Majesty Mwami Mwambutsa IV, King of Burundi



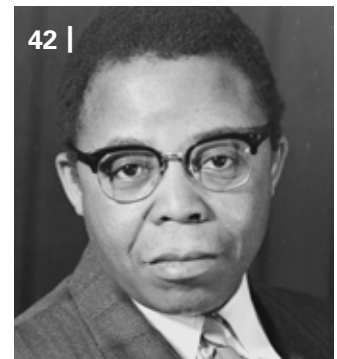
## 22 | H.E Ahmadou Ahidjo, President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon

## 28 | H.E David Dacko, President of the Central African Republic

## 32 | H.E. François Tombalbaye, President of the Republic of Chad



## H.E Joseph Kasa-Vubu, President of the Republic of Congo (Leopoldville) (Present day Democratic Republic of Congo)



## 36 | H.E Fulbert Youlou, President of Congo (Brazzaville) (Present day Republic of the Congo)



46 |

**H.E. Hubert Maga**  
President of the Republic of Dahomey (Present day Republic of Benin)

50 | **H.E. Leon Mba**, President of the Republic of Gabon

**H.E. Kwame Nkrumah**,  
President of the Republic of Ghana



53 |

62 | **H.E. Sekou Toure**,  
President of the Republic of Guinea



70 |

**H.E. Houphouet-Boigny**,  
President of the Republic of Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire)

78 | **H.E. William V.S. Tubman**  
President of the Republic of Liberia

81 | **His Majesty King Idris I**,  
Libya

**H.E. Philibert Tsiranana**,  
President of the Malagasy Republic (Madagascar)



84 |

92 | **H.E. Modibo Keita**,  
President of Mali

98 | **H.E. Moktar Ould Daddah**,  
President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania



102 |

**H.E. Hamani Diori**  
President of the Republic of the Niger

106 | **H.E. Alhaji Abubaker Tafawa Balewa**,  
Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria (Present day Federal Republic of Nigeria)

112 | **H.E. Gregoire Kayibanda**,  
President of Rwanda

114 | **H.E. Leopold Sedar Senghor**,  
President of the Republic of Senegal

118 | **H.E. Milton Margai**,  
Prime Minister of Sierra Leone

120 | **H.E. Aden Abdulla Osman**,  
President of the Somali Republic (Present Day Federal Republic of Somalia)

128 | **H.E. El-Fariki Ibrahim Abboud**,  
President of the Supreme Council and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Sudan

132 | **H.E. Julius Nyerere**,  
President of the Republic of Tanganyika (present day United Republic of Tanzania)

136 | **H.E. Habib Bourguiba**,  
President of the Republic of Tunisia

142 | **H.E. Milton Obote**,  
Prime Minister of Uganda

146 | **H.E. Gamal Abdel Nasser**,  
President of the United Arab Republic of Egypt



152 | **H.E. Maurice Yameogo**,  
President of the Republic of Burkina Faso





It is my great pleasure to present this special edition of the AU Echo Magazine.

On 25th May 1963 Africa's continental organisation, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was created and to mark the occasion, 25th May was declared Africa Day and on 25 May 2023 we will be celebrating 60 years since the formation of the OAU which was later transformed into the African Union (AU).

60 years for some may seem far off, but when we look around us in our own families today, we have generations that not only lived through the pre-independence era but we look to them to remember our history and to learn about the journey that brought us to where we are today. It is this need to reflect on our past, not only as an organisation, but as Africans, that this edition of the AU Echo commemorates the 60th anniversary of the OAU / AU by presenting the speeches that were made by Heads of State and their representatives at the 1st Summit held in 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Often due to the passage of time we may forget or even think that nothing said so many decades ago holds relevance today. Yet as one reads these speeches made in 1963, we are reminded of the courage and hope that those present, during that momentous occasion held for people all over the continent who were experiencing the joys of newly acquired independence or in the trenches fighting for freedom from imperialism, colonialism and apartheid; and we are reminded that the words spoken then still hold true today. Their words were the foundation upon which African Unity was laid. Their words were the blueprint for designing and implementing treaties, programmes and institutions that today mark the work that we must undertake to ensure that Africa' is charting its own path by seeking African solutions for African issues and speaking with one voice on matters that affect the continent as well as how we are represented on the global stage. Their words also form the basis of the report card that we use to reflect on the progress we have made towards

realising the vision of an integrated Africa; how much we have achieved and where we have fallen short and need to put greater effort so as to honour the memories and ambitions of those who saw the collective potential of our homeland Africa.

Reflection on the words spoken 60 years ago will resonate even more as we implement the African Union's Theme for the year 2023 on the Acceleration of the AfCFTA Implementation. A free trade zone for Africa was an idea that was mooted and supported in 1963. Our founders recognised that only through unified efforts and economic integration, would Africa take and own its place on the global stage; and as we make the various efforts towards ensuring that Africa realises its ambition to become a global trading powerhouse, we must recognise that just as envisioned in 1963, the success of the AfCFTA will depend on the implementation of other integration efforts which are captured in the African Union's Agenda 2063 Flagship Programmes that promote regional, social, and economic integration such as the Single African Air Transport Market, the establishment of the African Financial Institutions (African Investment Bank and Pan African Stock Exchange; the African Monetary Fund and the African Central Bank), the implementation of game changing infrastructure projects that improve regional connectivity under the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and most importantly underpinning them all, making it possible for people to travel, live and work in their own continent by fast-tracking the implementation of the African Passport and Free Movement of Persons.

60 years ago, our founders foresaw rightfully that only through integration and African Unity would the vision they hoped for Africa in 1963, and which is captured in Africa's Agenda 2063 become a reality. In the words of his H.E Hubert Maga from his 1963 speech

***"...Despite affinities of blood and geography we are, still far too often strangers to each other. Certain frontiers, which ethnically do not exist, have in fact, by the rivalries they have engendered, turned into veritable chasms. Let us, therefore, fill these chasms, let us see to it that there is greater circulation of men, goods and capital among us, let us in a thousand ways strengthen the ties which unite us and, little by little, the feeling, still latent of belonging to one big family will, from Algiers to the Cape and from Dakar to Nairobi, become so strong and so evident that the organic union of the different African States will occur of itself."***

**Leslie Richer, Director  
Directorate of Information & Communication**

# From the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU)

In May 1963, 32 Heads of independent African States met in Addis Ababa Ethiopia to sign the Charter creating Africa's first post-independence continental institution, The Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was established on 25 May 1963 [25 May AFRICA DAY] The OAU was Africa's continental body from 1963–1999. The OAU was the manifestation of the pan-African vision for an Africa that was united, free and in control of its own destiny and this was solemnised in the OAU Charter

**The OAU spelled out the purpose of the Organisation namely:**

- To promote the unity and solidarity of the African States;
- To coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;
- To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence;
- To eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and
- To promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On 9.9.1999, the Heads of State and Government of the OAU issued a Declaration (The Sirte Declaration) calling for the establishment of an African Union [9 September–African Union Day].9.9.99.

The African Union is established in accordance with the Constitutive Act which was adopted in 2000 at the Lome Summit, Togo and entered into force in 2001.





In 2002, The African Union (AU) was officially launched as the successor to the Organisation of African Unity.

The decision to re-launch Africa's pan-African organisation was the outcome of a consensus by African leaders that in order to realise Africa's potential, there was a need to refocus attention from the fight for decolonisation and ridding the continent of apartheid, which had been the focus of the OAU, towards increased cooperation and integration of African states to drive Africa's growth and economic development.

**The Objectives of the AU:**

1. Achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries their the people
2. Defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States;
3. Accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
4. Promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
5. Encourage international cooperation
6. Promote peace, security, and stability on the continent;
7. Promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
8. Promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;
9. Establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
10. Promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
11. Promote cooperation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;
12. Coordinate and harmonise the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
13. Advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology
14. Work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent.

15. Ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making, particularly in the political, economic and socio-cultural areas;
16. Develop and promote common policies on trade, defence and foreign relations to ensure the defence of the Continent and the strengthening of its negotiating positions;
17. Invite and encourage the full participation of the African Diaspora as an important part of our Continent, in the building of the African Union.

With the launch of the African Union, the Emblem of the Union was transitioned to reflect the new vision for Africa's' future and the aspirations of its people. Each component of the AU Emblem therefore has a significance



With the launch of the African Union, the Emblem of the Union was transitioned to reflect the new vision for Africa's' future and the aspirations of its people.

**Each component of the AU Emblem therefore has a significance**



**Palm Leaves** stand for Peace



**Gold Circle** symbolises Africa's wealth and bright future.



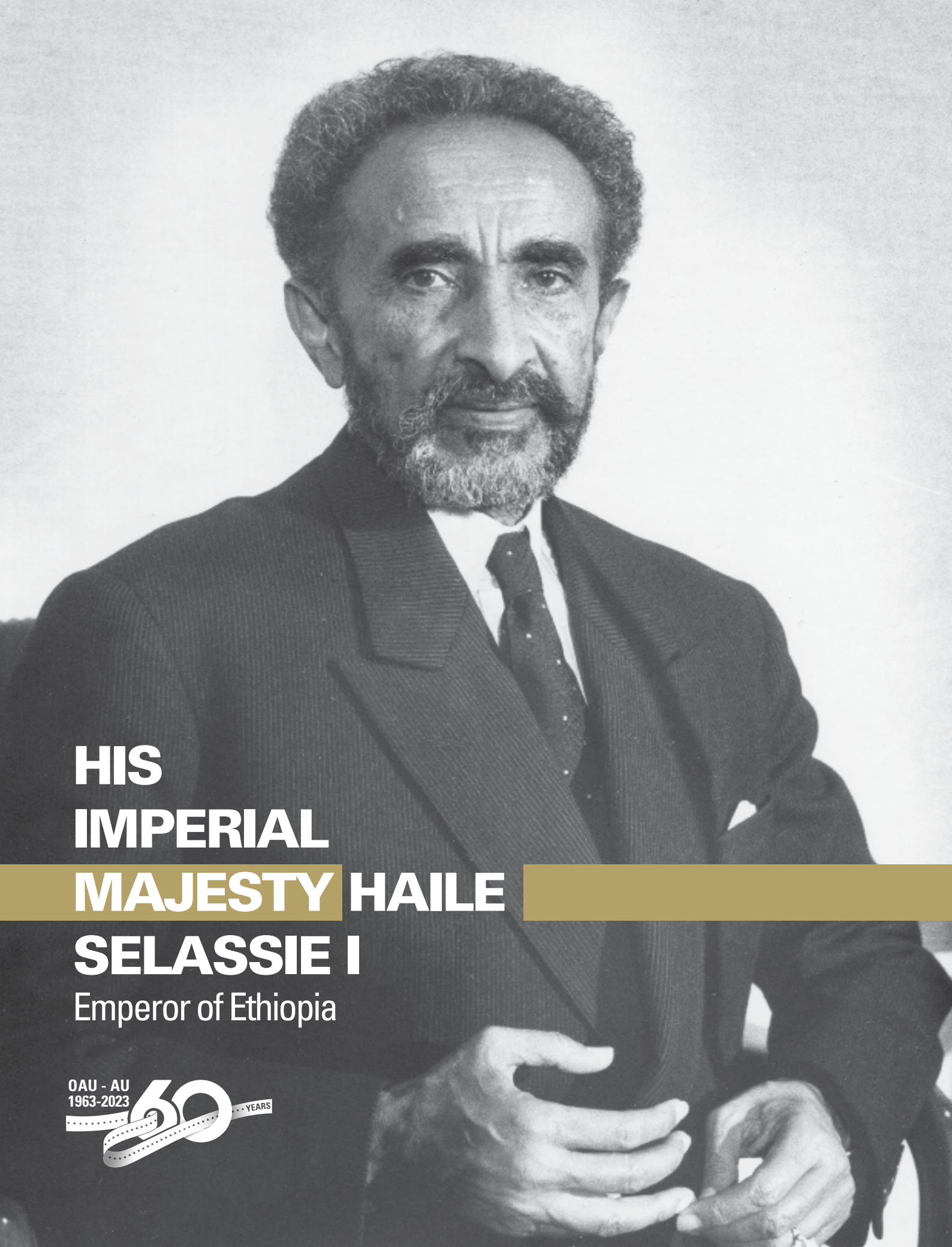
**Green circle** stands for African hopes and aspirations.



**The Gold Map of Africa** without boundaries in inner circle signifies African unity.



**7 interlocking Red rings** signify African solidarity and the blood shed for Africa's liberation.



**HIS  
IMPERIAL  
MAJESTY HAILE  
SELASSIE I**  
Emperor of Ethiopia







We welcome to Ethiopia, in Our name and in the name of the Ethiopian Government and people, the Heads of States and Governments of independent African nations who are today assembled in solemn conclave in Ethiopia's capital city. This conference, without parallel in history, is an impressive testimonial to the devotion and dedication of which we all partake in the cause of our mother continent and that of her sons and daughters, This is indeed a momentous and historic day for Africa and for all Africans.

We stand today on the stage of world affairs, before the audience of world opinion. We have come together to assert our role in the direction of world affairs and to discharge our duty to the great continent whose two hundred and fifty million people we lead. Africa is today at mid-course, in transition from the Africa of yesterday to the Africa of Tomorrow. Even as we stand here, we move from the past into the future. The task on which we have embarked, the making of Africa, will not wait. We must act, to shape and mould the future and leave our imprint on events as they slip past into history.

We seek, at this meeting, to determine wither we are going and to chart the course of our destiny. It is no less important that we know whence we came. An awareness of our past is essential to the establishment of our personality and our identity as Africans.

This world was not created piecemeal. Africa was born no later and no earlier than any other geographical area on this glob. Africans, no more and no less than other men, possess all human attributes, talents and deficiencies, virtues and faults. Thousands of years ago, civilizations flourished in Africa which suffers not at all by comparison with those of other continent. In those centuries, Africans were politically free and economically independent. Their social patterns were their own and their cultures truly indigenous.

The obscurity which enshrouds the centuries which elapsed between those earliest says and the rediscovery of Africa are being gradually dispersed. What is certain is that during those long years Africans were born, lived and died. Men on other parts of this earth occupied themselves with their own concerns and, in their conceit, proclaimed that the world began and ended at their horizons. All unknown to them, Africa developed in its own pattern, growing in its own life and, in the Nineteenth Century finally re-emerged into the world's consciousness.

The events of the past hundred and fifty years require no extended recitation from us. The period of colonialism into which we were plunged culminated with our continent fettered and bound; with our once proud and free peoples reduced to humiliation and slavery; with

**....History teaches us that unity is strength and cautions us to submerge and overcome our differences in the quest for common goals, to strive, with all our combined strength, for a path to true African brotherhood and unity.**

**...If we permit ourselves to be tempted by narrow self –interest and vain ambition, if we barter our beliefs for short-term advantage, who will listen when we claim to speak for conscience, and who will contend that our words deserve to be heeded? We must speak out on major world issues, courageously, openly and honestly, and in blunt terms of right and wrong. If we yield to blandishments or threats, if we compromise when no honorable compromise is possible, our influence is weakened.**

His Majesty Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Ethiopia, opens the conference of the Organisation of African Unity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Image © William Lovelace/Express/Hulton Archive/ Getty Images





« United Arab Republic President Gamal Abdel Nasser, (L) is accompanied by Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, as they leave airport, following Nasser's arrival for the African Heads of State Conference. Addressing leaders of 20 other African nations, Selassie told the group, "this conference cannot close without the adoption of a single African charter." Image © Getty Images

Africa's terrain cross-hatched and checker-boarded by artificial and arbitrary boundaries. Many of us, during those bitter years, were overwhelmed in battle, and bloodshed. Others were sold into bondage as the price extracted by the colonialists for the "protection" which they extended and the possessions of which they disposed. Africa was a physical resource to be exploited and Africans were chattels to be purchased bodily or, at best, peoples to be reduced to vassalage and lackey hood. Africa was the market for the produce of other nations and the source of the raw materials with which their factories were fed.

Today, Africa has emerged from this dark passage. Our Armageddon is past. Africa has been reborn as a free continent and Africans have been reborn as free men. The blood that was shed and the sufferings that were endured are today Africa's advocates for freedom and unity. Those men who refused to accept the judgment passed upon them by the colonizers, who held unswervingly through the darkest hours to a vision of an Africa emancipated from political, economic and spiritual domination, will be remembered and revered wherever Africans meet. Many of them never set foot on this continent. Others were born and died here. What we may utter today can add little to the heroic struggle of those who, by their example, have shown us how precious are freedom and human dignity and of how little value is life without them. Their deeds are written in history.

Africa's victory, although proclaimed, is not yet total and areas of resistance still remain. Today, we name as our first great task the final liberating of those Africans still dominated by foreign exploitation and control. With goal in sight, and unqualified triumph within our grasp, let us not now falter or lag or relax. We must make one final supreme effort; now, when the struggle

grows weary, when so much has been won that the thrilling sense of achievement has brought us near satiation. Our liberty is meaningless unless all Africans are free. Our brothers in the Rhodesia, in Mozambique, in Angola, in South Africa cry out in anguish for our support and assistance. We must align and identify ourselves with all aspects of their struggle. It would be betrayal were we pay only lip service to the cause of their liberation and fail to back our words with action. To them we say, your pleas shall not go unheeded. The resources of Africa and of all freedom loving nations are marshalled in your service. Be of good heart, for your deliverance is at hand.

As we renew our vow that all of Africa shall be free, let us also resolve that old wounds shall be healed and past scars forgotten. It was thus that Ethiopia treated the invader nearly twenty-five years ago, and Ethiopians found peace with honour in this course. Memories of past injustice should not divert us from the more pressing business at hand. We must live in peace with our former colonizers, shunning recrimination and bitterness and forswearing the luxury of vengeance and retaliation, lest the acid of hatred erode our souls and poison our hearts. Let us act as befits the dignity which we claim for ourselves as Africans, proud of our own special qualities, distinctions and abilities. Our efforts as free men must be to establish new relationships, devoid of any resentment and hostility, restored to our belief and faith in ourselves as individuals, dealing on a basis of equality with other equally free peoples

Today, we look to the future calmly, confidently and courageously. We look to the vision of an Africa not merely free but united. In facing this new challenge, we can take comfort and encouragement from the lessons of the past. We know that there are differences among us. Africans enjoy different cultures, distinctive



values, special attributes. But we also know that unity can be and has been attained among men of the most disparate origins, that differences of race, of religion, of culture, of tradition, are no insuperable obstacle to the coming together of peoples. History teaches us that unity is strength and cautions us to submerge and overcome our differences in the quest for common goals, to strive, with all our combined strength, for path to true African brotherhood and unity.

There are those who claim that African unity is impossible, that the forces that pull us, some in this direction, others in that, are too strong to be overcome. Around us there is no lack of doubt and pessimism, no absence of critics and criticism. These speak in Africa, of Africa's future and of her position in the Twentieth Century in sepulchral tones. They predict dissention and disintegration among Africans and internecine strife chaos on our continent. Let us confront these and, by our deeds, disperse them in confusion. There are others whose hopes for Africa are bright, who stand with faces upturned in wonder and awe at the creation of a new and happier life, who have dedicated themselves to its realization and are spurred on by example of their brothers to whom they owe the achievements of Africa's past. Let us reward trust and merit their approval.

The road of African unity is already lined with landmarks. The last years are crowded with meetings, with conferences, with declarations and pronouncements. Regional organizations have been established. Local groupings based on common interests, backgrounds and traditions have been created.

But through all that has been said and written and done in these years, there runs a common theme. Unity is the accepted goal. We argue about techniques and tactics. But when semantics are stripped away, there is little argument among us. We are determined to create a union of Africans. In a very real sense, our continent is unmade; it still awaits its creation and its creators. It is our duty and privilege to rouse the slumbering giant of Africa, not to the nationalism of Europe of the Nineteenth Century, not to regional consciousness, but to the vision of a single African brotherhood bending its united efforts toward the achievement of a greater and nobler goal.

Above all, we must avoid the pitfalls of tribalism. If we are divided among ourselves on tribal lines, we open our doors to foreign intervention and its potentially harmful consequences. The Congo is clear proof of what we say. We should not be led to complacency because of the present ameliorated situation in that

country. The Congolese people have suffered untold misery, and economic growth of the country has been retarded because of tribal strife.

But while we agree that the ultimate destiny of this continent lies in political union, we must at the same time recognize that the obstacles to be overcome in its achievement are at once numerous and formidable. Africa's peoples did not emerge into liberty in uniform conditions. Africans maintain different political systems, our economies are diverse; our social orders are rooted in differing cultures and traditions. Further, no clear consensus exists on the "how" and the "what" of this union, it is to be, in form, federal, confederal or unitary? Is the sovereignty of individual states to be reduced, and if so, by how much, and in what areas? On these and other questions there is no agreement, and if we wait for agreed answers, generations hence, matters will be little advanced, while the debate still rages.

We should, therefore, not be concerned that complete union is not attained from one day to the next. The union which we seek can only come gradually, as the day-to-day progress which we achieve carries us slowly but inexorably along this course. We have before us the examples of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. We must remember how long these required to achieve their union. When a solid foundation is laid, if the mason is able and his materials good, a strong house can be built.

Thus, a period of transition is inevitable. Old relations and arrangements may, for a time, linger. Regional organizations may fulfil legitimate functions and needs which cannot yet to be otherwise satisfied. But the difference is in this; that we recognize these circumstances for what they are, temporary expedients designed to serve only until we have established the conditions which will bring total African unity within our reach.

There is, nonetheless, much that we can do to speed this transition. There are issues on which we stand united and questions on which there is unanimity of opinion. Let us seize on these areas of agreement and exploit them to the fullest. Let us take action now, action which, while taking account of present realities, nonetheless constitutes clear and unmistakable progress along the course plotted out for us by destiny. We are all adherents, whatever our internal political systems, of the principles of democratic action. Let us apply these to the unity we seek to create. Let us work out our own programmes in all fields – political, economic, social and military. The opponents of Africa's growth, whose derive much satisfaction from

the divided and balkanized continent, would derive much satisfaction from the unhappy spectacle of thirty and more African States so split, so paralyzed and immobilized by controversies over long-term measures goals that they are unable even to join their efforts in short-term measures on which there is no dispute. If we act where we may in those areas where we adopt will work for us and inevitably impel us still farther in the direction of ultimate union.

What we still lack, despite the efforts of past years, is the mechanism which will enable us to speak with one voice when we wish to do so and take and implement decisions on African problems when we are so minded. The commentators of 1963 speak, in discussing Africa, of the Monrovia State, The Brazzaville Groups, the Casablanca Powers, of these and many more. Let us put an end to these terms. What we require is a single African organization through which Africa's single voice may be heard, within which Africa's problems may be studied and resolved. We need an organization which facilitates acceptable solutions to disputes among Africans and promote the study and adoption of measures for common defence and programmes for co-operation in the economic and social fields. Let us, at this Conference, create a single institution to which we will all belong, based on principles to which we all subscribe, confident that in its councils our voices will carry their proper weight, secure in the knowledge that the decisions there will be dictated by Africans and only by Africans and that they will take full account of all vital African considerations.

We are meeting here today to lay the basis for African unity. Let us, here and now, agree upon the basic instrument which will constitute of the foundation for the future growth in peace and harmony and oneness of this continent. Let our meetings henceforth proceed from solid accomplishments. Let us not put off, to later consideration and study, the single act, the one decision, which must emerge from this gathering if it is to have real meaning. This conference cannot close without adopting a single African Charter. We cannot leave here without having created a single African organization possessed of the attributes we have described. If we fail in this, we will have shirked our responsibility to Africa and to the peoples we lead. If we succeed, then, and only then, will we have justified our presence here.

The organizations of which We speak must possess a well-articulated framework, having a permanent headquarters and an adequate Secretariat providing the necessary continuity between meetings of the permanent organs. It must include specialized bodies

to work in particular fields of competence assigned to the organizations. Unless the political liberty for which Africans have for so long struggled is complemented and bolstered by a corresponding economic and social growth, the breath of life which sustains our freedom may flicker out. In our efforts to improve the standard of life of our peoples and to flesh out the bones of our independence, we count on the assistance and support of others. But this alone will not suffice and, alone, would only perpetuate Africa's dependence on others.

A specialized body to facilitate and coordinate continent-wide economic programmes and to provide the mechanism for the provision of economic assistance among African nations is thus required. Prompt measures can be taken to increase trade and commerce among us. Africa's mineral wealth is great: we should co-operate in its development. An African Development Programme, which will make provision for the concentration by each nation on those productive activities for which resources and its geographic and climatic conditions best fit it is needed. We assume that each African nation has its own national development programme, and it only remains for us to come together and share our experiences for the proper implementation of a continent-wide plan. Today, travel between African nations and telegraphic and telephonic communications among us are circuitous in the extreme. Road communications between two neighbouring States are often difficult or even impossible. It is little wonder that trade among us has remained at a discouragingly low level. These anachronisms are the remnants of a heritage of which we must rid ourselves; the legacy of the century when Africans were isolates one from the other. These are vital areas in which must be concentrated.

An additional project to be implemented without delay is the creation of an African Development Bank a proposal to which all our governments have given full support and which has already received intensive study. The meeting of our Finance Ministers to be held within the coming weeks in Khartoum should transform this proposal into fact. This same meeting could appropriately continue studies already undertaken of the impact upon Africa of existing regional economic groupings, and initiate further studies to accelerate the expansion of economic relations among us.

The nations of Africa, as is true of every continent of the world from time to time dispute among themselves. These quarrels must be confined to this continent and quarantined from the contamination of non-African interference. Permanent arrangements must be agreed upon to assist in the peaceful settlement of



👉 **His Majesty Haile Selassie presides the opening of the African Union conference , 1974.** Image © Michele LAURENT/ Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images

these disagreements which however few they may be, cannot be left to languish and fester. Procedures must be established for the peaceful settlement of disputes in order that the threat or use of force may no longer endanger the peace of our continent.

Steps must be taken to establish an African defence system. Military planning for the security of this continent must be undertaken in common within a collective framework. The responsibility for protecting this continent from armed attacks from abroad is the primary concern of Africans themselves. Provision must be made for the extension of speedy and effective

assistance when any African State is threatened with military aggression. We cannot rely solely on international morality.. Africa's control over her own affairs is dependent on the existence of appropriate military arrangements to assure this continent's protection against such threats. While guarding our own independence, we must at the same time determine to live peacefully with all nations the world.

Africa has come to freedom under the most difficult and trying of circumstances. No small measures of the handicaps under which we labour derive from the low educational level attained by our peoples and from their lack of knowledge of their fellow Africans. Education abroad is at best an unsatisfactorily substitute for education at home. A massive effort must be launched in the educational and cultural field which will not only raise the level of literacy and provide the cadres of skilled and trained technician's requisite to our growth and development but, as well, acquaints one with another. Ethiopia, several years ago, institute a programme of scholarships for students coming from other African lands which has proved highly rewarding and fruitful, and we urge others to adopt projects of this sort. Serious consideration should be given to the establishment of an African University, sponsored by all African States, where future leaders of Africa will be trained in an atmosphere of continental brotherhood. In this African institution, the supra-national aspects of African life would be directed toward the ultimate goal of complete African unity. Ethiopia stands prepared here and now to decide on the site of the University and to fix the financial contributions to be made to it.

This is but the merest summary of what can be accomplished. Upon these measures we are all agreed, and our agreement should now form the basis for our action.

Africa has become an increasingly influential force in the conduct of world affairs as the combined weight of our collective opinion is brought to focus not only on matters which concern this continent exclusively, but on those pressing problems which occupy the thoughts of all men everywhere. As we have come to know one another better and grown in mutual trust and confidence, it has been possible for us to coordinate our politics and actions and contribute to the successful settlement of pressing and critical world issues

This has not been easy. But coordinated action by all African States on common problems is imperative if our opinions are to be accorded their proper weight. We Africans occupy a different – indeed a unique position among the nations of this Century. Having for so long known oppression, tyranny and subjugation,



who, with better right, can claim for all the opportunity and the right to live and grow as free men? Ourselves for long decades the victims of injustice and right for all? We demand an end to nuclear testing and the arms race because these activities, which pose such dreadful threats to man's existence and waster and squander humanity's material heritage are wrong. We demand an end to racial segregation as an affront to man's dignity which is wrong. We act in these matters in the right, as a matter of high principle. We act out of the integrity and conviction of our most deep-founded beliefs.



**📍 Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie (C) and Ghana's founder and first President Kwame Nkrumah (L) during the formation of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa.**

*Image © STR/AFP via Getty Images*

If we permit ourselves to be tempted by narrow self-interest and vain ambition, if we barter our beliefs

for short-term advantage, who will listen when we claim to speak for conscience, and who will contend that our words deserve to be heeded? We must speak out on major world issues, courageously, openly and honestly, and in blunt terms of right and wrong. If we yield to blandishments or threats, if we compromise when no honourable compromise is possible, our influence and weakened. Let us not deny our ideals or sacrifice our right to stand as the champions of the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed everywhere. The acts by which we live and the attitudes by which we act must be clear beyond question. Principles alone can endow our deeds with force and meaning. Let us be true to what we believe that our beliefs may serve and honour us.

We reaffirm today, in the name of principle and right, our opposition to prejudice, wherever and in whatever form it may be found, and particularly do we rededicate ourselves to the eradication of racial discrimination from this continent. We can never rest content with our achievements as long as men, in any part of Africa, assert on racial discrimination constitutes a negation of the spiritual and psychological equality which we have fought to achieve and a denial of the personality and dignity which we have struggled to establish for ourselves as Africans. Our political and economic liberty will be devoid of meaning for so long as the degrading spectacle of South Africa's apartheid continues to haunt our waking hours and to trouble our sleep. We must redouble our efforts to banish this evil from our land. If we use the means available to us, South Africa's apartheid, just as colonialism, will shortly remain only as a memory. If we pool our resources and use them well, this spectre will be banished forever.

In this effort, as is so many others, we stand united with our Asian friends and brothers. Africa shares with Asia a common background of colonialism, of exploitation, of discrimination, of oppression. At Bandung, African and Asian States dedicated themselves to the liberation of their two continents from foreign domination and affirmed the right of all nations to develop in their own way, free of any external interference. The Bandung Declaration and the principles enunciated at that conference remain today valid for us all. We hope that the leaders of India and China, in the spirit of Bandung, will the way to the peaceful resolution of the dispute between their two countries.

We must speak, also, of the dangers of the nuclear holocaust which threatens all that we hold dear and precious, including life itself. Forced to live our daily existence with this fore-boding and ominous shadow ever at our side, we cannot lose hope or lapse into despair. The consequences of an uncontrolled nuclear conflict are so dreadful that no sane man can countenance them. There must be agreed upon. Africa must be freed and shielded, as a

denuclearized zone, from the consequences of direct albeit involuntary involvement in the nuclear arms race.

The negotiations at Geneva, where Nigeria, the United Arab Republic and Ethiopia are participating, continue, and painfully and laboriously, progress is being achieved. We cannot know what portion of the limited advances already realized can be attributed to the increasingly important role being played by the non-aligned nations in these discussions, but we can, surely derive some small measure of satisfaction in even the few tentative steps taken toward ultimate agreement among the nuclear powers. We remain persuaded that in our efforts to scatter the clouds which rim the horizon of our future, success must come, if only because failure is unthinkable. Patience and grim determination are required, and faith in the guidance of almighty God.

We would not close without making mention of the United Nations. We personally, who have throughout Our lifetime been ever guided and inspired by the principle of collective security, would not now propose measures which depart from or are inconsistent with this ideal or with the declarations of the United Nations Charter. It would be foolhardy indeed to abandon a principle which has withstood the test of time and which has proved its inherent value again and again in the past. It would be worse than folly to weaken the one effective world organization which exists today and to which each of us to detract from this organization which, however imperfect provides the best bulwark against the incursion of any forces which would deprive us of our hard-own liberty and dignity.

The African Charter of which We have spoken is wholly consistent with that of the United Nations. The African organization which We envisage is not intended in any way to replace in our national or international life the position which the United Nations has so diligently earned and so rightfully occupies. Rather, the measures which we propose would complement and round out programmes undertaken by the United Nations and its specialized agencies and, hopefully, render both their activities and ours doubly meaningful and effective. What we seek will multiply many times over the contribution which our joined endeavours may make to assurance of world peace and the promotion of human well-being and understanding.

A century hence, when future generations study the pages of history, seeking to follow and fathom the growth and development of the African continent, what will they find of this Conference? Will it be remembered as an occasion on which the leaders of a liberated Africa, acting boldly and with determination, bent



**H.E. Leopold Sedar Senghor (R), President of Senegal (R) welcoming Emperor of Ethiopia, His Majesty Haile Selassie I (L) for the visit of the Museum of Contemporary Art at the courthouse during the First World Festival of Black Arts (FESMAN), in Dakar, 1966. Image © AFP via Getty Images**

events to their will and shaped the future destinies of the African peoples? Will this meeting be memorialized for its solid achievements for the intelligence and maturity which marked the decisions taken here? Or will it be recalled for its failures, for the inability of Africa's leaders to transcend local prejudice and individual differences, for the disappointment and disillusionment which followed in its train?

These questions give us all pause. The answers are within our power to dictate. The challenges and opportunities which open before us today are greater than those presented at any time in Africa's millennia of history. The risks and the dangers which confront us are no less great. The immense responsibilities which history and circumstance have thrust upon us demand balanced and sober reflection. If we succeed in the tasks which lie before us our names will be remembered and our deeds recalled by those who follow us. If we fail history will puzzle at our failure and mourn what it lost. We approach the days ahead with the prayer that we have assembled here may be granted the wisdom the judgment and the inspiration which will enable us to maintain our faith with the peoples and the nations which have entrusted their fate to our hands.

A black and white portrait of H.E. Ahmed Ben Bella, President of the Republic of Algeria. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a dark tie. The background features a repeating pattern of the United Nations emblem. A gold horizontal bar is positioned behind the text.

**H.E.**

**AHMED BEN**

**BELLA**

President of the Republic of Algeria

OAU - AU  
1963-2023







our Imperial Majesty, Mr. President Excellencies,

It is one o'clock and my speech will be brief I shall content myself with stating in a few words, the position of my Government and of the Algerian People. First I should like to say how symbolic our meeting at Addis Ababa is and I thank His Imperial Majesty and the Government and people of Ethiopia for having afforded us the opportunity of receiving this warm welcome, which enhances the feeling that we all belong to one big family, all confronted with the same problems. I consider it my duty to spare you the long speech I had prepared. I am simply going to tell you what we in Algeria think of the essence of these problems.

In so far as African unity is concerned, a committee is now meeting to sketch out, before we separate, the broad outlines of this unity and in particular, to prepare a draft charter.

I stress that Algeria subscribes in advance to all the conditions, to all the reasons, to all the justifications that committee will adopt. But it is my duty to say, on behalf of the Algerian People and on behalf of one million five hundred thousand martyrs fallen on the field of honour, that this Charter will remain a dead letter unless we take concrete decisions, unless

we lend unconditional support to the peoples of Angola, of South Africa, of Mozambique and others, unconditional support which these peoples still under the colonialist yoke are entitled to expect from us.

**...African brothers agreed to die a little so that Algeria might become an independent State. So let us all agree to die a little, or even completely, so that the peoples still under colonial domination may be freed and African unity may not be a vain word...**

(from L to R) Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia and chairman of The Organisation of African Unity, Ahmed Ben Bella, President of Algeria, Hassan II King of Morocco and Modibo Keita, President of Mali, signing a peace agreement between Morocco and Algeria and a ceasefire after the Sand War or Sands War which occurred along the Algerian-Moroccan border, during OAU summit in Addis-Ababa. Image © AFP via Getty Images



It is my duty to say that if concrete decisions in this sense are not taken, the Charter we are going to adopt will resemble all the Charters which all the assemblies of the world may have adopted. It is my duty to say again that all the, fine speeches we have heard here will be the strongest weapon against this unity.

There has been talk of a development Bank. Why have we not talked of setting up a blood bank? A blood bank to help those who are fighting in Angola and all over Africa.

Obviously problems arise before these decisions can be put into practice. We, for our part, would like to study them.

I should also like to state that since February, that is since Angola Day, ten thousand Algerian volunteers have been waiting for a chance to go to the assistance of their brothers in arms. Yes, there are problems, particularly in the peripheral countries, where the crisis areas are to be found. These problems must be solved, or this calamity symbolized by the fascism of Salazar may be perpetuated.

Are we going to allow ten million men to insult each day three hundred million Africans? This we no longer have a right to accept.

We must ask ourselves the question: what we shall do now to prevent a repetition of these insults in Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and elsewhere in Africa? At these crisis points, African unity must take the form of effective solidarity with these who are still fighting for their liberty. I assure you that this is so, and I speak, from experience, since for seven and half years we fought in Algeria against the strongest and most stubborn imperialism. Today, we are discussing Africa's economic problems. I very much fear that everything we are proposing to do in this domain may be reduced to straightforward agreements enabling us to feed our peoples better. We have no right to think of -filling our bellies when our brothers are still dying in Angola, Mozambique and South Africa.

Although there are problems, in particular with regard to the security of countries such as the Congo and Guinea, which border on the crisis areas, it is our duty to examine them and to ensure that our solidarity with these countries is effective.

Thus the day that Portugal attempts to undertake a further evil action, such as that against Senegal or the Congo, in Guinea or against any other African country, it will find the whole of Africa - united opposing it.

These peripheral countries must know that they owe a ransom to African unity. A ransom had to be paid for Algeria's liberation. It is because Tunisian brothers died at Sakiet-Si- Di-Youssef, because Moroccan brothers died at OUIDA, because Egyptian brothers died at PORT-SAID, and because Libyan brothers and others lost their lives that Algeria is free. For I must state here that it was because of the unconditional support afforded us by Egypt that the latter fell victim to the tripartite aggression.

It is thanks, too, to support from our brothers in Guinea, Mali, Nigeria and other countries that Algeria was able to free itself. Thus, African brothers agreed to die a little so that Algeria might become an independent State.

So let us all agree to die a little, or even completely, so that the peoples still under colonial domination may be freed and African unity may not be a vain word.



our Imperial Majesty, Mr. President, Honourable Heads of State, Respected Delegates to this Noble Conference,

It is for me a signal honour to take the floor on behalf of the Burundi people, of whom I am now the spokesman. This great day sees those responsible for the future of Africa assembled to consider together the problems of their continent that are common to them all. What are those problems? For the most part they arise from the present structure of the world. Africa is today, it must be agreed, in a state of technical inferiority in comparison with the other continents. We cannot suffer this state of affairs to be perpetuated. Moreover, it is because we have adopted a revolutionary attitude toward this situation that we called this conference

**the African must fight unceasingly against the appetites of foreign domination, whether called colonialism, neo-colonialism or imperialism. It is our present task to unmask and mercilessly to stigmatize every slightest sign of colonialism aiming to undermine the independence of the African States, whether under an economic or a cultural guise**

together, which will give us an opportunity to discover the factors at the root of Africa's underdevelopment; then to study ways of eliminating these unfavourable factors; and finally, to discover what new factors there are which are likely to lead our continent to a satisfactory state of development.

Among the unfavourable factors responsible for the underdevelopment of Africa is of course the fact that our continent has only recently been opened up to the rest of the world. Up to the nineteenth century, one might say, Africa remained outside the civilizations which elsewhere flourished increasingly. The industrial civilization, for example, which characterizes the modern world, began developing at the end of the eighteenth century, first in England, then in France, Germany, Western Europe, and finally in North America, thanks to many European inventions.

Where was Africa then? Africa then was a mosaic of human groupings showing traces of ancient



**HIS  
MAJESTY MWAMI  
MWAMBUTSA IV**

King of Burundi





organizations which had advanced in the form of empires.

Some empires, such as those of Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Congo and others had had their splendours. But during the eighteenth century those empires crumbled, for reasons which history has taught us.

The various African civilizations which preceded the colonial era resembled one another from various points of view. For example, the spirit of family solidarity was found everywhere, and the idea of hospitality was similarly general. Indeed, a careful study of the various African civilizations shows surprising similarities which make it clear that African unity is not a chimera-like and superficial



**Mwambutsa IV Bangiriceng of Burundi (1912 - 1977) at a conference of African heads of state in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25th May 1963. Those attending voted unanimously to establish an Organization of African Unity.**  
*Image © FPG/Archive Photos/ Getty Images*

construction, but a living entity which requires only to be translated on to the institutional plane.

Let us now turn to the colonial era. After the opening up of Africa, when figures like Stanley attained fame, we had the colonial system on which was built a marked advancement, whatever the intentions of the European conquerors may have been, but which in the course of time became intolerable, because of certain Europeans in authority who sought to perpetuate the system for the system's sake, to the detriment of the interests and aspirations of the native Africans. From that moment the colonialist factor became and remained henceforth an unfavourable factor for African development, like the geographical factor in the period before the opening up of Africa. Indeed, the African of today is seized with the ambition to discover not only Western Europe, but the entire world, in spite of those who would enclose him in the old Western views.

On this account, the African must fight unceasingly against the appetites of foreign domination, whether called colonialism, neo-colonialism or imperialism. It is our present task to unmask and mercilessly to stigmatize every slightest sign of colonialism aiming to undermine the independence of the African States, whether under an economic or a cultural guise. Why must we attack the colonial system? Because the colonial system in all its forms serves chiefly national interests. Moreover, whenever the interests of the colonizer are in conflict with the interest of the colonised, and that is not a rare case, troubles arise, of the kind which threw Algeria into mourning for more than eight years, the Congo from 1959 onwards and still trouble Angola: there are the two Rhodesias and South Africa, and the list might be extended.

We can therefore, sum up the factors unfavourable to development in three categories; geo- graphical, colonial, and post-colonial. In the second part of our speech, we would like to outline the solutions which would provide ways of discounting these unfavourable factors.

As regard to the geographical factor, we

can already congratulate ourselves on the distance we have covered. Whatever his intentions, the colonizer worked with energy and has ploughed through Africa from North to South, from West to East, so that there is hardly a mountain, forest, stream, river, lake, or valley unknown. Africa is no longer a "Terra Incognita". African cartography is excellent. Only the sub-soil still holds surprises for us, which we hope will be agreeable.

Before long, the purely colonial factor will no longer be a major concern for the Africans. Without being a prophet one can say that within a short time the colonial system will collapse like a pack of cards. International pressure is such that the system is destined irrevocably to disappear.

There remains the group of post-colonial factors. They are many and varied, but all rise from one source: The state of under-development of the African States which binds them to aid from the developed countries. The latter draw profit from it and seek to perpetuate this state of subordination of Africa, particularly by sabotaging efforts to unify Africa, according to the imperialist principle "Dvide et Impera". Our enemies are happy to see Africa balkanized. It is certain that a divided Africa will always be a dominated Africa.

And yet we must not base ourselves on these considerations and scorn all aid and assistance from abroad. These considerations simply require us to remain vigilant. Burundi for its part gladly accepts all assistance which is not loaded with political or military conditions like those which involve ideological alignment behind one of the two blocs, the installation of military bases on national territory or the maintenance of foreign troops in the country. Burundi will accept foreign aid the more readily, the fewer the conditions attached.

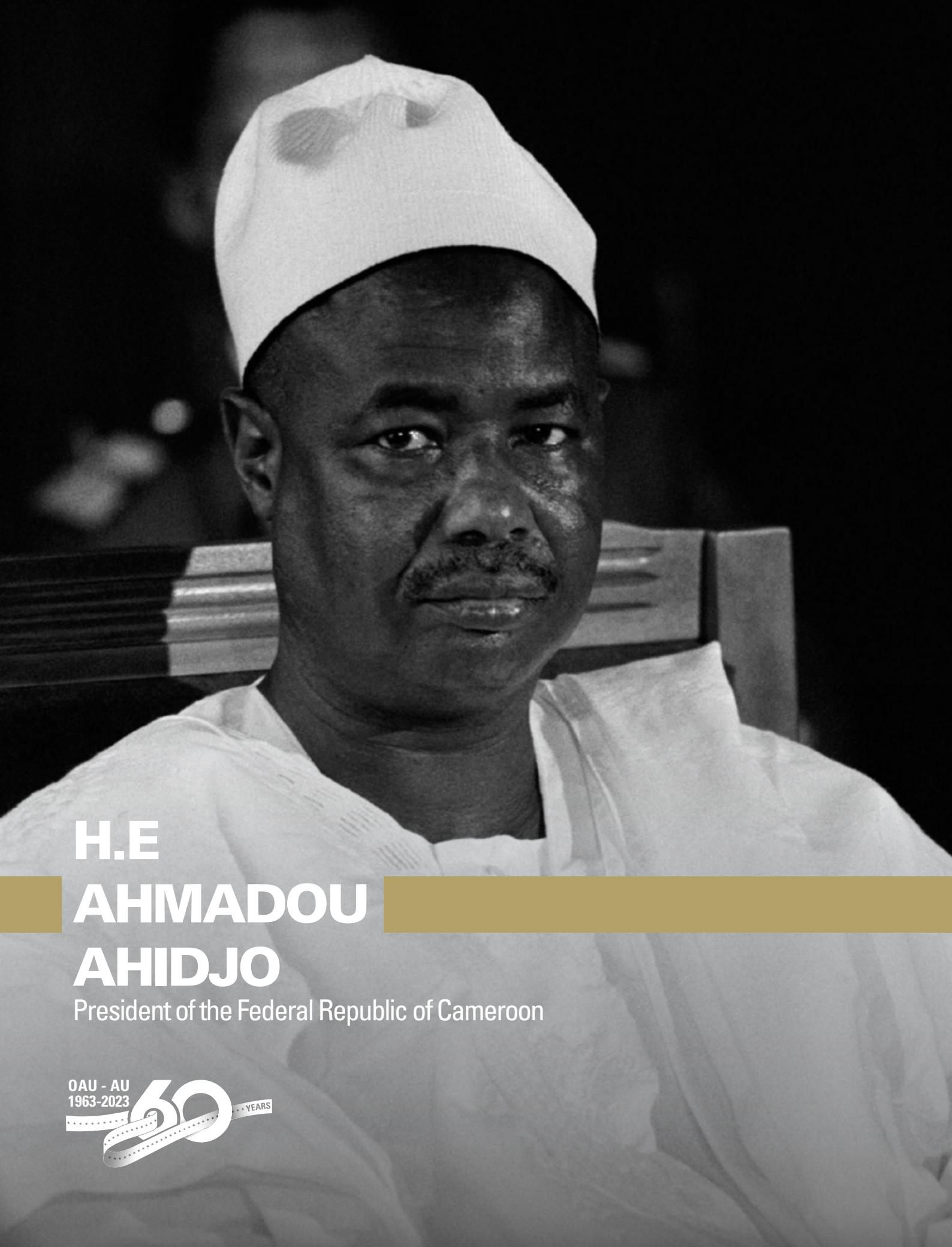
What is the essence of African under-development? Let us analyse this problem in two aspects: the economic and social infrastructure and the superstructure. As regards the infra-structure, it is immediately obvious to any observer that the African States need more means of communication, alongside the improvement of existing means of industries and so on. A comparison of African infrastructure with the infrastructure of countries like the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. shows clearly what efforts are still required in this field to satisfy our legitimate wish to draw level with those countries. You will no doubt see the implications of substantial effort arising out of it. As regards the superstructure, the problems of education and teaching are the most crucial. There are also problems of the institutions parliamentary, governmental, and judicial - which



may still be established. In brief, the state organization of Africa must be inspired by both independence and progress. In this field, we have need of technical assistance which can come to us only from the advanced states, until we have a full complement of native trained personnel. This, too, implies substantial effort. At this stage we are justified in wondering how much longer Africa must go on appealing to the economically advanced countries to assure its well-being. Realism forces us to admit that Africa will still have need to these countries for a long time. Here we must remember that independence can be defined as free inter-dependence. Thanks to independence the African States are capable if those in authority are serious-minded and honest, or negotiating with the other- states, including the former colonial states, on ways of complying with their interests, without sacrificing any of the major benefits of independence and international sovereignty.

These then, are briefly the motives which justify our presence at this memorable summit Conference of Independent Heads of State.

On this occasion, we have all become aware of the need for Africa unity, and are resolved to study the means of attaining it, in the political as much as in the economic field. The institutions necessary for this unity will not be long in emerging. Africa will be transformed by it, to make unprecedented progress



**H.E**

**AHMADOU**

**AHIDJO**

President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon







our Imperial Majesty,

To welcome your guests who have journeyed from all the horizons of Africa and no doubt to be worthy of this historical gathering, Addis Ababa and all the glorious Ethiopian people whom you incarnate, are adorned with the purest and most legendary hospitality.

You have welcomed us all, many as we are, such as we are, with an open heart and open arms.

Permit me, after the other distinguished Heads of State, to express to you our deep feelings for this welcome and to say how grateful our people whose good tidings we bear will be to yours for the agreeable stay we shall have spent in friendship on your soil.

**Our continent can claim that it has made a major contribution to the prosperity of the world, not only with its raw materials but with the sweat and blood of its sons, enriching other parts of the world where colossal fortunes and gigantic agricultural and industrial powers have since been built up. What we are claiming now is not an illusory and impossible redress of the past, but a fair remuneration for our primary products and the stabilization of prices. What we demand is a readjustment of the terms trade which are only detrimental to one side, ourselves.**

Your Excellencies,

We have come to this extraordinary meeting at Addis Ababa with the conviction that it must and will mark a major decisive stage in our march towards freedom and towards the building of African Unity.

The concept of Unity is unquestionably the noblest and most profound aspiration to permeate and animate our continent at the present time. In all the history of mankind, the original populations of Africa have been the longest subject to the Foreigner, humiliated, divided, exploited.

And so, for them, any rehabilitation, their rehabilitation, can never be complete and total, until and unless they have made good this tragic period of division imposed by colonial conquests. The simple proof of this is that this aspiration towards Unity has figured and continues to figure in the programmes of all African nationalist parties who have fought or are still fighting for the liberation of their territory.

This demand has been widespread and still is, to such an extent that it has become a challenge on a continental scale which history obliges us to accept. We cannot logically denounce the Foreigner for having divided us, nor can we continue to complain of this division if, once having become masters of our destiny, we prove ourselves incapable of restoring this Unity.

To these sentimental reasons must be added others more pressing, imposed by the economy, by technique and policy, in short, by the present trends in world affairs.

Is it therefore a mere accident that the two greatest world powers of today, Continental China, and India apart, are also the two largest conglomerations of population and as a result of industrial and technical potential? Who could deny that world affairs are influenced, whether we like it or not, by this powerful China with its 650 million inhabitants? Is it by chance that Europe herself, conscious of and emprised by the astonishing successes of our era which are beginning to elude her, has now, after a voluntary self-appraisal embarked upon a feverish work of construction which is underway despite its own problems?

Accordingly, sentiment, reason, self-interest and in the final analysis, survival, all of these impel Africa to unite if she wishes her voice to be heard in the councils which will deter mine our planet's fate.

Defining this objective, is to grasp ipso facto the Importance of what is at stake, become aware of the complex nature of the real facts behind the Africa of today and to all intents and purposes take stock of the difficulties to be overcome if our ideal is to succeed and to triumph.

We must firstly as Africans make an appraisal of this Africa on the march, realize the road travelled in the recovered freedom, and then keep in step together over the remaining distance to be covered which will be the determining factor in our progress in this presently dangerous world, dangerous because so full of pitfalls. We must firstly take

the precautions indispensable for ensuring every chance of initial success: we must, as is always the case with Africans, open our hearts in frank, loyal and brotherly discussion; we must obtain the complete support of all concerned, free from any thought of ulterior motive, of any distrust, that deadly poison which corrodes any and every organization.

It is, I feel persuaded, no betrayal of our ideal of unity to say regretfully that the Africa of today, once so united in its determination to be free, reveals its divisions to the world; at least in the now free territories. There is no escaping the fact that such schisms, even if not necessarily hostile, have tended to diminish our following and saddened our friends, those who had faith in us and hoped that our appearance on the international scene would bring in its wake, together with the seal of our solid union, the message of a new world where hatred and opposition do not exist, where friendship and love are cultivated.

At this juncture, it is only natural and I hope you will allow me to do so briefly to take a look at our present relations.

No plan for African construction can be envisaged, however brief, whilst, alongside of us, next door to ourselves, other Africans, our brothers, are still whimpering under the yoke of the most backward type of colonialism, its back to the wall, profiting from the collusion of those who do not forgive History for taking its normal course.

How can one finally talk about African Unity without a thought for the southern most corner of our continent where one of the most saddening tragedies imaginable is being played out. Whilst the conscience of the entire world involved in this, since it constitutes a challenge to the rights of man, it is above all a nameless disgrace and insult to the dignity of everyone of Africa's sons.

But in actual fact, how do we appear to the world? In spite of a strained will to unite, how different we really are! Differing cultures bequeathed by our former colonial rulers, each State differing in the way it obtained its freedom, differing in its economic structure or in the institutional organization of our Nations.

Differing also in the various friendships we have made which could not help but influence our behaviour or our way of viewing things.

As is normally the case, we have had different approaches to the fundamental problems of the hour; we have had an imperfect or incorrect vision of the internal situation of our neighbours. We have even had on occasion's misunderstandings. We have also been

impatient or too eager to help, for right or for wrong.

In short, all these factors have estranged us from this basic virtue we call tolerance, without which neither cohabitation nor cooperation are possible.

The hard facts of today's Africa oblige us therefore to accept each other as we are, to keep this firmly in mind and try to understand each other.

Raising such questions, even in this prefatory manner for which I ask your indulgence I to touch upon the essential problems involved.

The principle of political unity is a concept that is both precise and wide ranging which, in actual fact, cloaks various realities. It can be anything from the institutional type to a simple joint consultation and including treaty arrangements.

Apart from this, in such matters, we have need of all our intelligence, vigilance and caution. In no other sphere do we so much need to beware of the haste and enthusiasm which are the natural products of our present comradely gatherings.

Modern Africa has after all provided us with a wide range of experiences for some years now, as differing as they are instructive, either of group of purely African States on a regional basis, or of African States with other non-African States. Our continent is in fact traversing at the present time a period of intense growth. In deciding once and for all to construct this Unity, let us give this evolution the chance to work and preserve our peoples from the unavoidably baneful consequences of acts which, even though inspired by our good will, could be traumas to the normal progress of such evolutions. Nature and events are stubborn: they do not easily yield to outside disturbances without difficulty.

We must view things on a large scale, taking in everything of a similar nature that is being undertaken on our planet. Precedents abound. An inspiration which is intelligent cannot harm the originality to which we are so deeply attached and which we have to offer to the world.

Agreed as we are upon the fundamentals, the question remains of the form to be given to our Unity.

Firstly and above all things, basic alternatives are involved. We must choose between political principles, we must also choose between economic policies. In more technical fields, cooperation appears simpler.

Now, to be realistic vis a vis the political aspect that Africa presents, which I have just sketched in, the

organization that we can give to African Unity has to be a highly flexible one.

It seems to us that any rigid form of institution would be premature at this stage. And so, for the moment, let us have neither Federation nor Confederation. In our opinion, it could only involve 'making' a complete break with everything presently existing.

What has to be immediately Institutionalized is the periodical meeting of the entire African Heads of State. Its task would be to weigh up experiences, decide upon alternatives, harmonize our policies, standardize decisions made on the main affairs of continental importance or which require a common stand to be taken before international opinion. Naturally, set up as it would be for Africa and Africans, this Conference would only comprise Heads of State or of African Governments.

The proof of such Unity would primarily consist in the demonstration of our foreign action, and especially in the international forums. It follows that, once the stand we take in summit conferences is coordinated and agreed upon, we have to set up on an official basis, institutional if necessary, the African groups which are often formed solely for consultative purposes within the different international bodies, inside UNO, specialized or other organizations.

But once again, if all this is to be durable, we have to agree upon certain basic principles. We must accept each other for what we are. We must recognize the equality of all our states, whatever they be and whatever their size or population; we must accept the sovereignty of each and everyone, its absolute right to exist as a sovereign state in accordance with the will of its people. This implies absolute respect for one's neighbour; this implies abstaining from intervention in its internal affairs from encouraging or trying to maintain covert or overt subversion.



**MADAGASCAR - CIRCA 1961: September 1961, Madagascar, Antananarivo, Ivato Airport, Philibert Tsiranana, Ahmadou Ahidjo And Leopold Sedar Senghor.**

*Image © Keystone-France/ Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images)*

Even more on the economic than the political level, African unity will be our salvation. In the face of the activities or the combines and gigantic concentrations that exist these days or are being established, which of our countries is capable of defending its interests unaided? Dependent in general upon fluctuations in world prices, our economies are struggling up the arduous slope of development and industrialization. The realization that we are amongst the outcasts of what we call the developing, uncommitted nations is to bring more than ever home the need for us to be organized and united.

It is obvious that the sum total of our products, primary as they may be, constitute a considerable part of the total world consumption and that the voice of a group like ourselves will have a different ring and carry a different weight.

Admittedly, I am not forgetting that certain of our States have already started to set up on purely regional basis organizations of an economic nature.

Nor am I forgetting that a number of us have subscribed to an





« The heads of state of five African nations meet at Yaounde December 6 to discuss the Lake Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Republic; Niger's President Hamani Diori; Cameroon's President Ahmdou Ahidjo; Nigeria's General Yakubu Gowon and Chad's President Francois Tombalbaye. *Image © Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images*

Association with extra-African economic organizations recognize the short-term benefits to be derived in the initial stages which are particularly critical for our economy.

This is not the place to indict our policies.

The truth is that we have to plan ahead and take a long term perspective. We are convinced that the different experiences in this field, as in any other, are only stages on the arduous and difficult path, the end of which we shall only attain after patient efforts. What we need is perseverance, starting by broadening and harmonizing the concentric circles already existing: we have to attain the final stage.

In this field, Africa, contrary to similar experiments that have been launched elsewhere, is well placed. It is only at the beginning of its industrialization. It can accordingly at one stroke avoid the pitfalls incurred by sacrifices, difficult to accept, requiring us to renounce specific trade routes or markets which have to that date been closed or protected. On the contrary, coordination in our plans for development can assist States to specialize in industrial production and avoid, with in the same economic area that has been created, the installation of competitive activities.

All of this postulates cooperation between the existing regional unions and the development of economic activities to the scale of a continent. This implies above all a change in attitude and the determination to obtain, here, amongst ourselves and on better conditions what we frequently import from abroad on unfavorable terms of trade.

Experience has proved how difficult it is to achieve a rapid political integration. And so, in order to keep open the possibilities of such an organization for economic cooperation, the latter could be embodied in a separate treaty.

In spite of the outposts still remaining here and there, decolonization has won the day. Now we embark upon another great battle which will leave its mark upon the second half of the 20th century: the economic liberation of the developing countries of the uncommitted world.

This is precisely what was realized by the 17th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations when it turned its attention to the possibilities of an International conference on trade. It is only natural therefore that Africa should also mobilize and prepare her forces: truly, she has a lot at stake.

Our continent can claim that it has made a major contribution to the prosperity of the world, not only with its raw materials but with the sweat and blood of its sons, enriching other parts of the world where colossal fortunes and gigantic agricultural and industrial powers have since been built up.

What we are claiming now is not an illusory and impossible redress of the past, but a fair remuneration for our primary products and the stabilization of prices. What we demand is a readjustment of the terms trade which are only detrimental to one side, ourselves. It has got to be understood in agreement moreover with our other partners amongst the developing nations that we are determined no longer to let this state of affairs continue unchallenged.

Finally, this era in which we live has shown that our relations, in spite of our good will and desire for unity, have

not always been unclouded. This Organization we shall have set up would be quickly threatened by disintegration if it did not at the same time provide the machinery for settling the differences which would arise amongst its members. There are examples in this sphere upon which we can draw to our mutual benefit.

Judicial bodies are already in existence, such as the International Court of which our States are members. A Conciliation Commission could be set up to take cognizance of our internal disputes and give an initial ruling.

Differences which the Conciliation Commission has been unable to settle would be brought before the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

There also remains the matter of cooperation in spheres other than the political and economic ones I have just touched upon. There exist within the groups already installed specialized organizations for defence, transport or telecommunications. Failing a merger of these which at the present time seems difficult or simply premature, we could envisage a periodical consultation between management or execution boards so as to achieve subsequent harmonization and unity.

In this way, we shall initiate in all fields a close and progressive cooperation amongst ourselves, slow but effectual, towards the achievement of a Unity that will have been solidly constructed since it will have given the time for the different experiments in progress to mature and come to fruition unaided and find the normal way leading to their inevitable destiny.

Your Excellencies,

Two schools of thought, springing out of one civilization that has been stamped with the hardness of steel by out and out mechanisation, are gripping the world like the two inexorable jaws of a vice, threatening to asphyxiate it, nay pound it, pulverize it even. Does not the entire earth live at present in perpetual fear at the sight of this sky glowing with the ominous flashes that announce that, the total annihilation, is henceforth within the reach of man and his whims? What a strange irony, that matter, which suddenly discloses to us, by dint of our struggle to disintegrate it, that we are imperceptibly sliding down the slope of our own self-destruction.

That is why Africa must testify before world opinion. That is why the voice of Africa has got to be heard, the voice which proclaims in appealing tones its love for mankind, which reminds us that the finest emotion on earth is not simply that aroused by the clash of arms.

After much suffering, effort and patience, Africa at

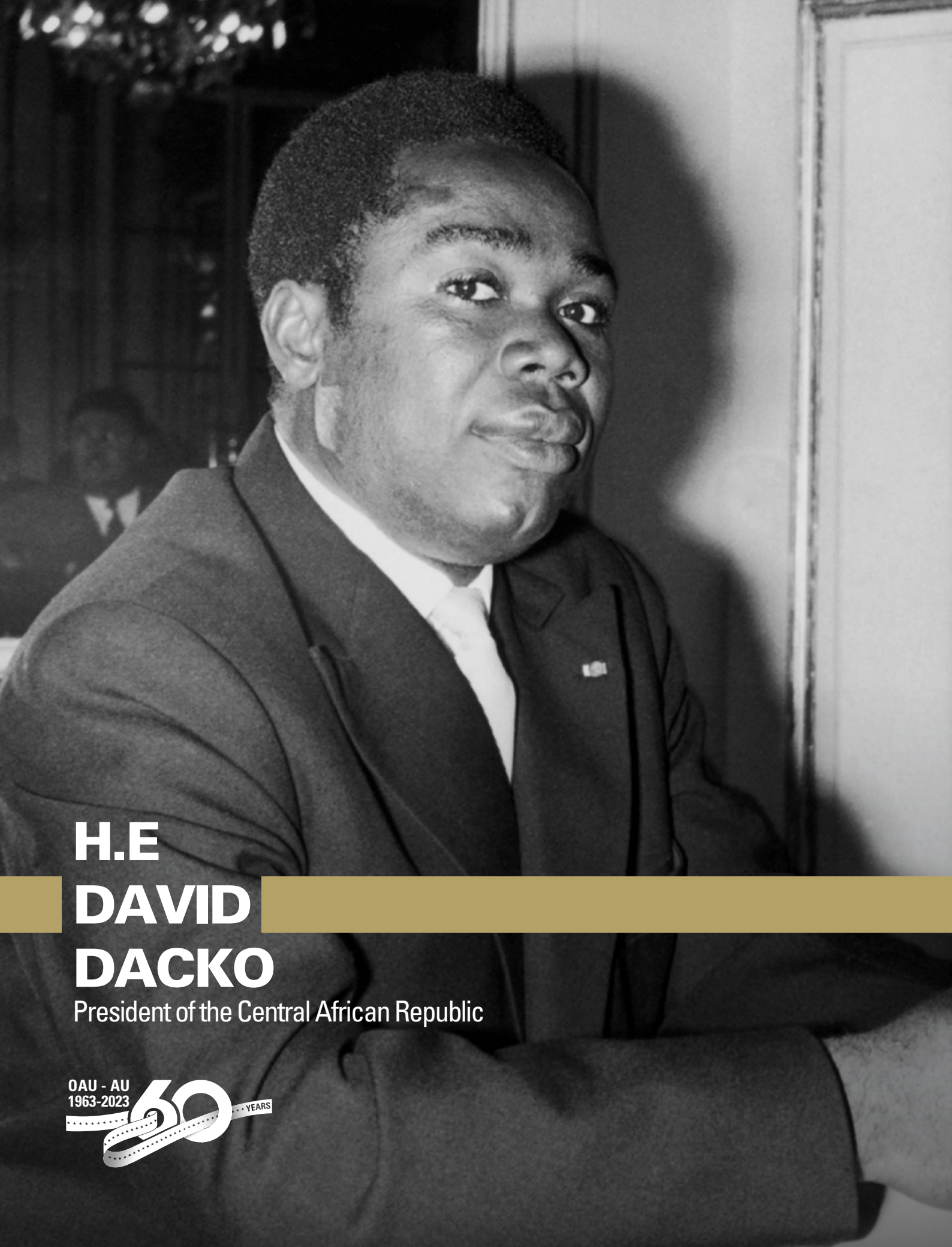


**H.E. Ahmadou Ahidjo, President of Cameroon, attending OAU summit conference, in Kampala. August 3, 1975**  
*Image © AFP via Getty Images)*

last takes her place at the family table. It is the time to record our regret that empty seats await those who are still detained by the Foreigner.

But we are already filled with hope by the conviction that soon they will present besides us and with us to build Africa, our motherland.

May God enlighten us all, and may the fruits of our work be such that they are hailed by the generations to come as a major contribution to the building of a world in which our continent shall have its select and rightful place.



**H.E**

**DAVID**

**DACKO**

President of the Central African Republic

OAU - AU  
1963-2023







our Imperial Majesty, Presidents and Dear Brothers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

What would become of the Central African Republic which I represent here, and which is only a very small State like the majority of the African States? Without a prosperous economy and with out industry, my country is in addition exposed to the subversion carried on from abroad that weighs so heavily upon our continent. It would be in danger, alas, of disappearing from the political chess board of the world, if it did not belong to one of the large, strongly constructed groupings.

The entire population of the Central African Republic too claims a right (and why not?) to existence and a place in the concert of free nations, and that is why my delegation arrived here, without trepidation, full of confidence and optimism, and determined to work for any objective that would ensure the necessary harmonious and pacific emancipation for Africa and the African States.

In 1958, the first National Constitution of my country - entirely inspired by my regretted predecessor, the late -President Barthelemy Boganda, who believed deeply in African Unity; fore - shadowed the relinquishment of a considerable part of its powers and sovereignty for the benefit of a larger and more solid African Nations, which explains why my country renounced its colonial name, "The Territory of Ubangi - Chari" in favour of the Central African Republic, thus opening the door to other brother nations that did not belong to the natural basin of the Ubangi River.

It may, therefore, be easily understood that it is for me a great joy and a great honour to be present at the birth of unity on our continent a unity ardently desired by the people of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Chairman, if you will allow me to do so. I should like to refer to a material but not negligible detail which seems to augur positive results for our work: the organization of our Conferences.

The occasion is all the more pleasant for me in that I can convey in my own name and in the name of the delegation of the Central African Republic, an expression of our profound gratitude for the warm welcome and the individual attentions that we have enjoyed, to His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I. and to the Government and People of Ethiopia. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should also like to take this opportunity of solemnly expressing all my deep admiration for His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I, who has already given a lesson to all Africans that will go down in world history. Yes, Your Imperial Majesty, you have taught us to be and to remain masters of our own continent, and to throw back from African soil all foreign powers. But also, your cries could not then be heard or your example followed because at that time radio and press were lacking. The colonial administration, naturally enough was careful not to give publicity to your courageous struggle for the liberation of Ethiopia. Today, without hesitation and without flinching we should make a positive response to your appeal, and we are here to lay the foundations of our beloved unity.

We must not fail, and my delegation hopes to leave Addis Ababa bringing home not only simple declarations of intention, but also and above all something concrete - documents drawn up and signed, pledges of our firm desire to attain the ideal that we have set our- selves.

The principal problems which the African States have in common were explicitly set forth and defined in the opening speech of His Majesty, the Emperor Haile Selassie I. Their scope transcended the restricted framework of our countries as well as of our daily preoccupations. Thus, now more than ever, we must concentrate our efforts on resolving them with objectivity so as to create a prosperous united Africa.

This African unity that we are firmly decided to achieve - and I ask for no better proof than the statements of the eminent Heads of State and Government who have succeeded each other at this rostrum - this African unity. I say, must be an efficacious weapon to annihilate for ever foreign domination in all its forms on our continent, not to mention the institutions it will provide for us.

**...This African unity that we are firmly decided to achieve - this African unity. I say, must be an efficacious weapon to annihilate forever foreign domination in all its forms on our continent...**

**...If colonialism were to be resuscitated on our soil that would indeed be our own fault and future generations would never pardon us for having encouraged its resurrection.**

Various arguments have been put forward in an attempt to define the structures of this unity. For my part, I would subscribe to a realistic formula based on the foundations of reciprocal respect for the sovereignty of all states. The same must apply to respect for the human person and in this connection any tendency towards racialism or political regionalism sometimes veiled by religious beliefs must be combated and removed.

All those who have preceded me at this rostrum have vehemently condemned colonialism and its misdeeds. I shall not return to the subject, as I share their opinions entirely. Nevertheless, I must make a point of emphasizing that we can annihilate colonialism forever, strong in the sovereignty of our countries by taking concerted action. If colonialism were to be resuscitated on our soil that would indeed be our own fault and future generations would never pardon us for having encouraged its resurrection.

Here and now, it is our duty to coordinate our efforts



and help our brethren in the still dependent countries by every means in our power to free themselves from foreign domination.

But, however, firmly we may be resolved to achieve the unity of Africa, our respective nations have, individually or in groups, signed agreements of cooperation either between themselves or with other powers, and at present, it must be admitted, our administrative, political economic and social organization is dictated by these cooperation agreements. We could not abrogate them from one day to the next without exposing Africa to a general crisis, the consequences of which would be numerous, difficult to assess, and devastating and the aim of our mission to Addis Ababa is not that.

So it would be expedient to build up our unity from those living and coherent elements which already exist, while paying attention to the substantial reforms applicable to those elements in order to adapt them to our Pan-Africanism.

The Central African Republic thinks that in this way our policy of large groupings will be realistic and constructive, as it will not simply have destroyed something but will have helped us to revise our present regime, in which the consequences of colonialism predominate.

While awaiting this transformation, my delegation considers that the Conference could already pronounce its opinion on the formulation of an African and Malagasy group in the United Nations Organization in order to harmonize our foreign policy and aid, by diplomatic means, states that are still dependent to free themselves without bloodshed.

In addition to the Charter laying down the framework of our unity, the adoption of which I hope for ardently, the Conference would do well to turn its attention immediately to the necessity of endowing our continent with a Common Market, which would ensure for African price stability for their products.

Finally, the delegation of the Central African Republic to note in the course of the debates of this Conference and during its stay has been pleased in Addis Ababa,

« From left to right, President Léon Mba (Gabon), François Tombalbaye (Chad), Fulbert Youlou (Congo) and David Dacko (CAR), in Bangui, Central African Republic, on 22 February 1960, Image © Photo by KEYSTONE-FRANCE/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images

that the differences arising between the African leaders are attributable in fact to miscalculations, and to fictitious antagonisms fostered by foreign powers that wished to see them divided.

From the bottom of my heart, I hope to see the brotherly rapprochement of all the African States.

Long live African unity!



↳ Undated picture of Centrafrican President David Dacko. Centrafrican independence was proclaimed on August 13, 1960 and David Dacko became the first President, *Image © AFP via Getty Images*





**H.E**  
**FRANÇOIS**  
**TOMBALBAYE**

President of the Republic of Chad





The Chad delegation is happy to be in Ethiopia, Historic land of Africa. It wishes, first and foremost, on its own behalf and on behalf of the people of Chad, to express its thanks for the warm and brotherly welcome given it by His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I. and by His people. To the Ethiopian people it conveys fraternal greetings from the people of Chad.

The foundations of African Unity must be laid at Addis Ababa.

On this occasion, in coming to the Ethiopian capital, we are happy, and we intend, to make our modest contribution to the search for a possible solution.

The importance of this conference escapes no one it is an event of primary importance in the history of Africa because:

African Unity means all the forces of the continent united for the total liberation of the continent;

African Unity means the pooling of all our economic resources for our material well-being;

African Unity is also the restitution of all moral and cultural values.

By virtue of its geographic position, Chad is a crossroad between black and white Africa; it is also a crossroad between East and West Africa. It is one of the African States where peoples of many different religions, races and tongues live together and cast their destiny in a single mould.

Chad which, since its accession to international sovereignty has taken part in all conferences of independent countries, commends and lends effective support to the efforts of a great number of its sister countries to secure African Unity and peace in the world.

The time has come, at Addis Ababa for a brotherly confrontation of our points of view for as has already been said this is the first time in the history of the world that so many Africans leaders are meeting.

In the opinion of the people of Chad and its Government's society capable of withstanding the tests of time can only be built on foundations of friendship and fraternity. In Chad and generally in Africa the word "brother" is not limitative.

**...African Unity means the pooling of all our economic resources for our material well-being. The reconversion of present economic structures into horizontal inter-African structures are the sine qua non of our self-assertion in the world. The establishment of a free trade area, development bank of a single currency all contain very varied and complex aspects which we hope will, starting from our conference find elements for a permanent and effective solution....**

**...Although our countries have gained their political independence, mental decolonization remains to be won. We are convinced that the mental decolonization of our people will enable us to resolve some of the difficulties which oppose us to each other**

It goes without saying that there are today many speculators hoping for the failure of our meeting. To that end, it gives them pleasure to draw attention to our present political, economic and, above all, linguistic differences. Their sole purpose is to maintain the present cleavage of the African continent and in this way to continue the savage exploitation of each of our peoples who, God knows, are so poor and so wanting.

It is up to us, then responsible politicians to understand the situation and foil any manoeuvres liable to retard our continent's progress towards its complete liberation and towards its happiness. In reality, these manoeuvres are in vain. They will last only for a certain time, for we have good reasons for believing in the possibility of achieving African Unity.

There is no much sense in building Africa in sovereign States, independent of each other for we know that it is from our union and from it alone, that we shall draw sufficient strength to assert ourselves in the world. The main thing for us is to determine carefully and realistically the lines on which this future union of our States can be built. In other words, the question whether



« March 19, 1963 in Ouagadougou, African leaders of African and Malagasy Union attending the laying of the first stone of the building of UAMD (African and Malagasy Union of Defense), after the AMU conference held on 10-14 March 1963 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (former / Upper Volta). From L to R: Maurice Yameogo, president of Upper Volta, Fulbert Youlou, president of Congo-Brazzaville, François Tombalbaye, president of Chad, Moktar Ould Daddah, president of Mauritania and Hamani Diori, president of Niger Image © AFP via Getty Images

the structure of our future organization of African States should be unitary, federal or confederal must be examined very carefully.

Moreover, the present division of the African continent into French-speaking and English-speaking groups is but insignificant and superficial in the sense that it does not apply to the majority of our people. If we are at all unanimous in furthering the development of the new independent Africa in the way of democracy, it is in terms of the masses that we must reason. And the great majority of our people have remained very African, very original, with none of the varnish of French, English, or any other culture. Whether they come from French or English areas of influence they are characterized only by poverty, destitution, ignorance and misery and, hence by the unanimous desire for learning or education, the desire to open themselves to the outside world. There is in this general aspiration of African people the leaven necessary to the building of our unitary structures. There is, moreover, nothing fundamental, unchangeable in the language barriers: it is merely a question of generations and of reforming educational programmes.

The work to be done with respect to the economic development of our continent is even greater and more arduous than the political work. The reconversion of present economic structures into horizontal inter-African structures are the sine qua non of our self-assertion in the world. The establishment of a free trade area, development bank of a single currency all contain very varied and complex aspects which we hope will, starting from our conference find elements for a permanent and effective solution.

There is no doubt that decolonization must be total in 20th century Africa. To achieve this concerted action of the Heads of State is necessary. More than ever, the African and Malagasy States must coordinate their efforts.

May we be allowed with respect to decolonization to draw your attention to one fact. Although our countries have gained their political independence, mental decolonization remains to be won. We are convinced that the mental decolonization of our people will enable us to resolve some of the difficulties which oppose us to each other.

The Chad delegations as firmly opposed to devouring or annexationist tendencies and ambitions as it is in favour of African Unity. We think that the Unity we seek will be founded on the policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign countries. We shall have the opportunity during our discussions to explain and state explicitly our ideas on this matter.

To dispel all misunderstanding, we wish to reiterate that our delegation is quite ready to make its contribution, however modest it may be, to the achievement of African Unity. We are firmly convinced that the general principles of this Unity which we desire will become evident here.

By way of conclusion, we can state that these general principles are already taking shape following the excellent speeches made at this Conference since yesterday.

Politically, it is inconceivable to think of an organization, the leadership of which would fall either to one person or to one country; it is a question above all of seeing



how, practically it would be possible for our various States to concert or coordinate our options, both to promote the liberation of countries still colonized and to harmonize our foreign policy.

Economically, the fact that we are producers of raw materials and tributaries of industrialized countries imposes on us the imperative duty of establishing specialized inter-African organizations which will enable us to present a common front to the outside world.

Culturally, we must quickly adapt educational programmes and speed up the establishment and development of our educational institutions at all levels.

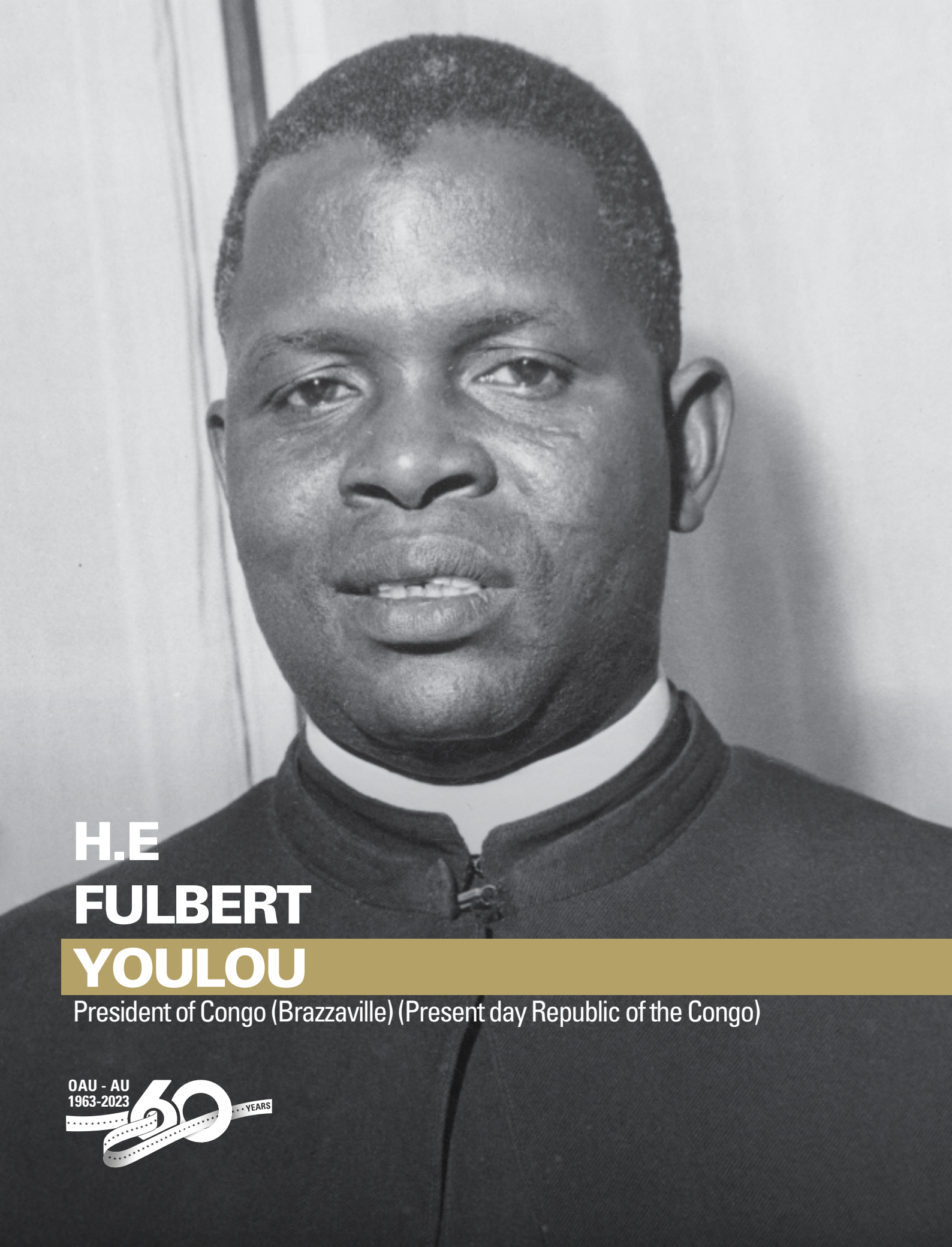
In all these fields, the articulation of the various organizations whose purpose is to facilitate rapprochement and union must be studied straight away. We must therefore make provision for other meetings at all levels-specialists, diplomats, Head of State, so as to find the agreement which will give birth to a joint organization of African States, the name of which matters little.

**Thank you!**

**Alphonse Massamba-Débat (L), President of the Republic of the Congo, and François Tombalbaye (N'Garta Tombalbaye, R ), attend the conference of the Heads of State of Equatorial Africa where a Protocol of Agreement concerning the achievement of a complete Customs Union between the five States of Equatorial Africa and Cameroon signed on February, 11 1964**

 Image © STRINGER/AFP via Getty Images





**H.E**  
**FULBERT**  
**YOULOU**

President of Congo (Brazzaville) (Present day Republic of the Congo)





residents, Excellencies, Gentlemen,

We are assembled here to seek the “common denominator” of Africa - that is to say, to define that which transcends each of our individual countries to form the African conscience.

This African conscience is for us the best judge of what we should do and undertake in common. It must dictate our line of conduct.

**... The African States conduct very little mutual trade. Most of their trade is between Europe and Africa. Exports consist mainly of raw materials, and agricultural, forestry and mining products. Imports consist mainly of manufactured goods. Economically speaking, the African States are competitive rather than complementary. Often, they supply the same products. On the whole, their purchasing power is fairly low.**

**...African development depends on industrialization. Only by producing itself the essential manufactured goods it needs, can Africa ensure its development and reach a higher standard of living...**

**...African industrial production should benefit, on the home market, by a special customs tariff agreed by all States, offering preferential treatment for any article manufactured in Africa.**

**...The idea of a Common Market is compelling, and must be reckoned with, even if it is difficult to achieve in the present state of inter-African trade. It adds a further element to the African consciousness; namely, the idea of mutual economic assistance to attain together and sooner an improvement in the living standards of the people.**

**...Working separately each state is unable to take action, except competitively, with other African States. Their grouping, however, as a sort of Inter-State Co-operative, would lend great weight to their negotiating power with the international purchasers of African products.**

If we consult this African conscience, we shall first of all avoid whatever conflicts with it, dismissing any excessive ascendancy which might modify its workings. We shall thus easily find the road that we must take together in order to get to know each other better and help each other.

What does the African conscience dictate? Above all, that we must be free men and that in Africa there should be only free men, which implies the complete liberation of the continent from all colonialism and its vestiges, as we affirm the complete equality of Africans and their rights, in relation to the other peoples of the world.

On this point we shall easily reach agreement, and unity can be achieved without difficulty. African unity, however, although, it is easily recognizable in relation to the rest of the world, is not so easily defined when viewed from inside Africa. There are different means of finding the form and laying the foundations of African unity.

Let us try to prevent different conceptions - albeit perhaps more theoretical than real - from clashing, and finally damaging the union of Africans among themselves in the name of unity.

One of the essential rules for any constructive human endeavour is to lay sound foundations before building up to the summit. This imperative need obliges the African peoples to fashion first of all their national unity, then to associate these acquired national unities into a whole, which brings them together while allowing them to retain their individuality, and finally to concentrate at the summit whatever is of universal application for Africa.

#### **I. African Independence**

Except for the dominant nations of the world, and especially the two greatest, it would be presumptions to think that all the rest, and particularly the medium-sized and small nations, can lay claim to absolute



independence.

The development of means of communication and their rapidity have created a trade network over the surface of this globe so extensive that interdependence has become a law of modern times in economic matters - a law, moreover, which is valid for other sectors.

Africa, where heavy industry is scarcely beginning, and which still has no industrial base corresponding either to its needs or its potentialities, cannot at present envisage its development in isolation from the highly industrialized nations.

Africa must, however, have the right to seek the outside help it needs wherever it pleases. That is the primary concept of independence.

Some African countries have reached this stage after assuming their own internal and external sovereignty on the morrow of decolonization. Other parts of African territory, however, remain beneath the weight of colonization.

The countries which have attained independence must resolutely unite and act in common so as to ensure that territories that are still dependent accede to independence in their turn with the least possible delay.

To this end, it is desirable to establish a "Monroe Doctrine" for Africa, that is to say to secure Africa against any direct interference by a non-African power, in the same way that North and South America have acted with regard to their own continent.

Secondly, it is important to fix a time-limit after which the independence of colonized territories shall be proclaimed. A transitional period could be laid down, varying in accordance with each particular case, during which liberal institutions would be set up, including in the first instance municipal and certain national responsibilities, under cover of self-government granted as a first stage.

The essential principle to be respected in every case is the organization of elections, on a set date and under universal suffrage, for the establishment of new self-governing or fully sovereign institutions, which should guarantee equal electoral and representational rights without any discrimination.

The dependent territories do not demand a brutal rejection of the European contribution and the European element. Their only desire - a most determined one - is that the relations of colonizer to colonized cease, and that in their place relations of co-operation and solidarity be substituted.

The method appropriate to these principles of action

is to proceed by successive stages, beginning with a formal notice to quit addressed by the independent African States to the colonial powers still remaining in Africa.

If this notice to quit, coupled with a time limit and a minimum programme adapted to the place and Circumstances, is not acted upon, a series of measures should be introduced on successive dates, in accordance with a solemn undertaking by the signatory states, and following a sequence drawn up in advance, on an increasing scale of severity.

A solemn undertaking by the signatory states is imperative, and may not be ignored. The strength of Africa lies in its own solidarity, and any State which failed to honour its commitments and respect its signature would damage the continent as a whole.

The main measures envisaged are the following:

- Breaking off of diplomatic relations
- Economic sanctions
- Prohibition of flights over African territory
- Military sanctions
- Organization of volunteer camps
- Interception of ships transporting armaments

Let us hope that these measures do not have to be taken, as Africa is dedicated to peace, and needs peace in order to build up the continent.

If, however, the colonial powers remained deaf to our appeal and to our injunctions alike, we could not long remain inactive in face of the situation imposed upon our brethren in Angola, Cambinda and other places.

## II. African Unity

The unity of Africa reflects the most noble of aims. It 'must be pursued by all who are convinced of its necessity. Even if unity is not attained, the common objective which it represents serves to lessen the rivalries between African States when these arise, and to provide a means of settling them in a spirit of African brotherhood.

The principle of African unity must be the foundation stone of the foreign policy of African States. This should be solemnly proclaimed. And its first application-brings us back to the declaration of an African "Monroe Doctrine", keeping Africa for the Africans.

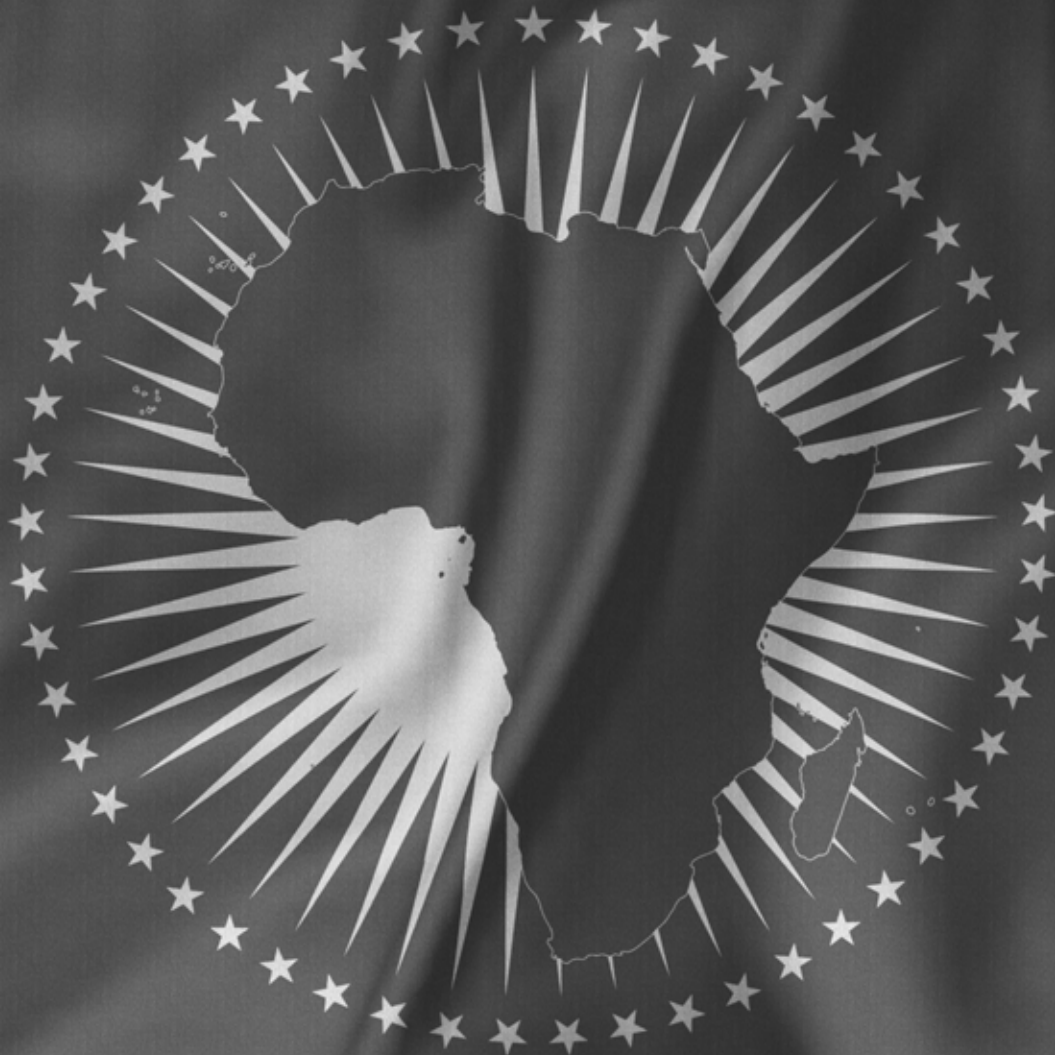
The unity of Africa must not, however, lead to forgetfulness of its diversity, especially as it is an immense continent. No continent, whether it be Europe, the Americas or Asia, has so far managed to establish, or can hope to establish, a continental government,

“

The Principle of African Unity must be the foundation stone of the foreign policy of African States. This Should be solemnly proclaimed.

**H.E. FULBERT YOULOU**  
President of Congo Brazzaville  
(Present day Republic of the Congo)

”



#OurAfricaOurFuture

au.int    

form one single State, or forge one and the same Nation.

The independent States may, however, voluntarily relinquish part of their national sovereignty in favour of a supra-national agency, which could at first be consultative and progressively increase its competence and authority in the sectors for which it was responsible.

Such is the method that has been applied in Europe by the formation of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe numbers eighteen members since the recent admission of Switzerland, and has a Consultative Assembly, the first blue print for a European Parliament.

An African Consultative Assembly could be established without delay. It would consist of two members per State on the model of the American Senate. These members would be designated by the National Assemblies or Parliaments of each State.

This method appears preferable to the fusion of existing groups, such as the Monrovia group and the Casablanca group. For it would be advantageous not only to group all the independent African States, setting aside everything that recalls their former divisions, but also to lend their groupings an authoritative institutional base, thus marking the first step on the road towards organizing the institutions of a United Africa.

As a parallel development, the outline of an African Executive would be blocked in by setting up a Conference of African Heads of State; who would meet periodically, having at their disposal in the interval between sessions a permanent Secretariat-General.

The Conference of Heads of State would choose in rotation a President for the year, who must himself be a Head of State.

The Permanent Secretary-General would be appointed by the Conference of Heads of State, who would likewise lay down his duties. He would be assisted by three Deputy Secretaries-General.

The Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretaries-General would be chosen according to geographical distribution, so that the four posts should be distributed with one falling to North Africa, one to West Africa, one to East Africa, and one to Central Africa.

The President of the Conference of Heads of State, and the Permanent Secretary-General should on no account be permitted to belong to the same geographical region.

The first task of the Conference of Heads of State would be to define powers and allocate prerogatives by establishing a charter of the United African States.

The Charter would be subject to ratification by the National Assemblies or Parliaments of the African Countries.

Its primary and fundamental institutions thus established, a United Africa would have to choose a capital. It is essential that this capital be located in an extra-territorial area independent of any African State that it should be clearly demarcated, if possible by natural boundaries, and that it should occupy a central position in Africa.

### III. African Common Market

The African States conduct very little mutual trade. Most of their trade is between Europe and Africa. Exports consist mainly of raw materials, and agricultural, forestry and mining products. Imports consist mainly of manufactured goods.

Economically speaking, the African States are competitive rather than complementary. Often they supply the same products. On the whole, their purchasing power is fairly low.

In these conditions, what should be our approach to African economic co-operation? Two kinds of joint measures appear desirable.

1. Africa cannot remain indifferent to the progressive and continuous deterioration in the price of its agricultural products. It must have international machinery capable of maintaining prices and avoiding over-production.
2. African development depends on industrialization. Only by producing itself the essential manufactured goods it needs; can Africa ensure its development and reach a higher standard of living.

The whole range of measures required might usefully be entrusted to an African Economic Cooperation Organization, responsible for drawing up an Industrialization Plan, not yet at the continental level, but covering vast parts at least of the African continent.

Finally, African industrial production should benefit, on the home market, by a special customs tariff agreed by all States, offering preferential treatment for any article manufactured in Africa.

It is by applying progressive and appropriate measures that Africa can best prepare the way towards an African Common Market.

The idea of a Common Market is compelling, and must



be reckoned with, even if it is difficult to achieve in the present state of inter-African trade. It adds a further element to the African consciousness; namely, the idea of mutual economic assistance to attain together and sooner an improvement in the living standards of the people.

The supporters of an African Common Market believe in an economic union which, at the most optimistic estimate, would cover the entire continent, and at the most realistic, large areas of Africa.

If we look at the figures, Africa has a surface area of 30 million square kilometres, i.e., one fifth of the surface area of the world, a population of 230 million, i.e. 12 per cent of world population, with a very low population density of 8 inhabitants per square kilometre, compared with a world average of 21.

From the economic point of view, African trade amounts to less than 10 per cent of world trade. But in certain spheres it occupies a privileged position. For instance, the African continent produces 95 per cent of the world's diamonds 72 per cent of the world's cocoa, 23 per cent of the world's copper, 21 per cent of the world's coffee, and one third of the Western supply of uranium.

Furthermore, Africa possesses the world's largest hydroelectric potential, which could form the basis for its industrialization.

In addition, Africa is a privileged customer for the highly industrialized nations, which need an outlet for their exports, since it still has no competitive industries in many fields.

It is on the basis of these facts that the role of an African Common Market can be defined.

In the first place, for the sale of African products, where joint marketing boards do not yet exist, for specific products, they should be set up, if possible in the form of inter-African Office, or to use the English term Marketing Boards, covering the entire continent.

There would be an African Board for coffee, cocoa, bananas, citrus fruits, pineapples, palm oil, etc.

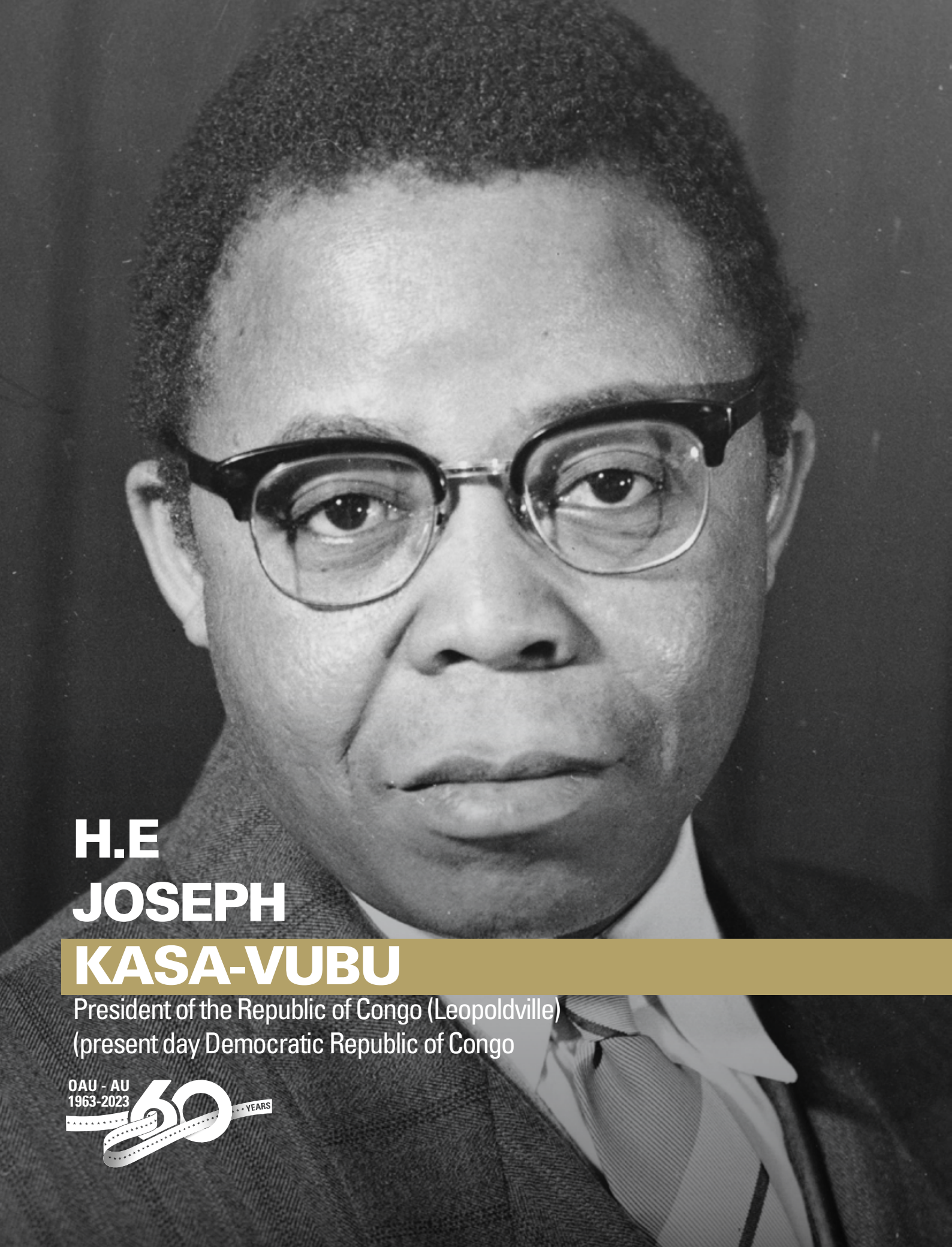
These Boards would fix maximum and minimum rates, and would maintain prices on, the world market. Working separately each state is unable to take action, except competitively, with other African States. Their grouping, however, as a sort of Inter-State Co-operative, would lend great weight to their negotiating power with the international purchasers of African products.

Then it would no longer be up to the London, Paris, Hamburg or New York markets to determine prices on the sole basis of consumer demand or of the trade cycle, as is the case today.

Let us not forget that it is only in this way that diamond producers have succeeded for more than half a century in keeping the price of diamonds at a very high level on the world market, through maintaining a rigid control over the world diamond market.

**Participants in the Abidjan Conference arriving at Port BOUET airport in the Ivory Coast in October 1960. From left to right: Yaci PHILIPPE, a member of the cabinet in the Ivory Coast, Jean DELAFOSSE, Hubert MAGA, the President of Dahomey, Leopold Sedar SENGHOR, the Senegalese President, Hamani DIORI, the President of the Republic of Niger, Fulbert YOULOU, the President of the Congo, Felix HOUPOUET-BOIGNY from the Ivory Coast and Maurice YAMEOGE, the President of Upper Volta, Ivory Coast In 1960. Image © Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images**





**H.E**  
**JOSEPH**  
**KASA-VUBU**

President of the Republic of Congo (Leopoldville)  
(present day Democratic Republic of Congo)







our Majesty, Mr. President, Honourable Presidents and Dear Brothers,

I hasten to tell you that after the grave troubles which it has undergone, the “heart of Africa” is resuming its rhythm and is beginning to beat at an increasingly normal rate. Yes, and it is not complacency: the Congo has freed itself from that sombre period that it knew following its accession to independence. This was not only due to tribalism. It was due essentially to a coalition of foreign interests which could not bring themselves to give up certain regions of our country, which geologists often have called the “treasure chest” of Africa.

**...the Congo has freed itself from that somber period that it knew following its accession to independence. This was not only due to tribalism. It was due essentially to a coalition of foreign interests which could not bring themselves to give up certain regions of our country, which geologists often have called the “treasure chest” of Africa....**

**...We insist, meanwhile, on underlining so far as economic problems are concerned, that the setting up of realizable projects, modest as they might be, is infinitely more advantageous than the best filled book of unexecuted schemes. We must begin right now to spell out our inspirations.**

At the price of what efforts, at the price of what sacrifices have we been able to bring order to our affairs? Only the passing of time will permit us to draw up this balance-sheet with all the objectivity and calm which it requires. But already we can affirm, without fear of contradiction by history, that the assistance of the African countries which hastened to our aid in a brotherly way has been a decisive if not a determining element in our victory.

I could not find a better occasion than the one which is offered me today to express the gratitude of our people to all those nations whose sons fell on Congolese soil.

Your Majesty, Mr. President, Honourable Presidents and Dear Brothers,

I will ask you to observe one minute of silence for the memory of those heroes, and fall those who gave their lives to assure or to consolidate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Congo.

I thank you.

These links sealed in blood are the best pacts which we have concluded with Africa, for whose concept we opted well before our accession to independence.

By welcoming a conference of African Foreign Ministers to Leopoldville less than two months after our own independence, the Congo gave to understand that this choice was being translated into fact. It further affirmed its choice of non-alignment a short time later by participating in the Belgrade Conference.

Non-alignment and an African policy which draws no distinctions have been two constants in all our decisions ever since.



**President of Congo Joseph Kasavubu (C right) with Pres. of Malagasy Rep. Philibert Tsiranana (C, Left) during conference, Image ©Terence Spencer/Popperfoto via Getty Images**





“ **President of Congo Joseph Kasavubu at an unidentified ceremony**

*Image © Terence Spencer/ Popperfoto via Getty Images*

are offered whereby we can achieve African Unity. Which one should we choose? Each of us, in all conscience and in all humility, must contribute to the reply.

The Congolese contribution will be made in the light of an experience of nearly three years, sad certainly, but very rich in lessons for the future.

This experience has taught us that mutual confidence and respect between partners constitutes the basis of success of all efforts at unity. That is why we have avoided letting our own current national reconciliation turn into a settling of old scores. Nothing can be built on hatred, on bitterness, or on vengeance.

We have suffered from tribalism, which is not only a Congolese phenomenon, but one which unfortunately occurs in various guises all over the continent and threatens the stability of our States.

Certain circumstances have given to tribalism a symbolic value in the Congo; in these circumstances our efforts to root it out take on the merits of a test for all Africa. These efforts have begun to bear fruit.

We feel it would be a poor service to Africa to believe that this improvement is only superficial. How can one arrive at African Unity if at the start one casts doubt on the gains and progress of the states which aspire to this unity?

In any case, we shall continue these efforts, which are directed to-day toward maintaining and reinforcing such confidence by a patient labour of harmonization and bringing together our different entities. We shall ensure that the particularities of each of our regions, which express the diversity and richness of a common heritage, should complete each other without conflict.

We might add in this context that an insidious propaganda which has laid hold of the news of our country has relegated to second place many of our actions since independence, of which Africa can be proud. As soon as we were freed, we rid ourselves of those foreign bases on our soil which might have constituted a pole of attraction for the cold war in the very heart of Africa.

Moreover, we have never ceased to re-affirm our aversion for military pacts which can only remove some degree of sovereignty from our respective countries, limiting our possibility of choice, and thus slowing down the march of Africa.

We find ourselves today at cross roads. Several routes

This concept is just as valid for the 21 provinces making up the Congo Republic as for the 32 states which now comprise liberated Africa.

Only an instrument supple enough to be adapted to all situations through which a country might pass and even more so far a continent in full evolution will permit us to attain our objectives.

The first of these objectives, without dispute, is to complete the process of decolonization without which Unity cannot be complete. The Congo carries a heavy responsibility in this domain. The line of demarcation between free Africa and that part of Africa still under colonial domination passes along its frontiers. We have suffered from the proximity of the colonialist regimes, but that only has served to confirm us in the path which we have drawn for ourselves.

We shall continue as a sovereign state to make a contribution, which we wish to be as effective as possible. This, I can assure you, always will be unselfishly devoted to the liberation movements of southern Africa.

This contribution, therefore, will be in conformity with the African ideal, as it has emerged from the Foreign Ministers conference which preceded our meeting. The work of that conference has brought out several common denominators for our different countries.

We believe the time is favourable now to translate these ideals into a Charter, which will serve to assert the personality of the African continent and will allow it to play a role in the world in harmony with its true potential.

The reinforcement of the United Nations Organization is another effective way of permitting us to attain this objective.

I believe the Congo is well placed to speak of this Organization, which has conducted an unprecedented experiment in our country. The experience has been difficult, but its success has proved the effectiveness of the UNO, despite all the obstacles which it may have encountered.

The best means of reinforcing the United Nations, in our opinion consists in respecting all our obligations towards it, and notably the financial obligations.

Your Majesty, Mr. President, Honourable Presidents



Official ceremony of the independence of the Congo in Leopoldville, in the presence of King Baudouin of Belgium, President Joseph Kasa-Vubu and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, as well as numerous foreign delegations, at the Palais de la Nation. Seated on the platform, King Baudouin of Belgium (L) and President Joseph Kasa-Vubu of the Republic of Congo-Leopoldville (R). Image © HABANS Patrice/Paris Match via Getty Images)

and Dear Brothers:-

I have the pleasure to inform you that despite its economic and financial difficulties, the Congo has just paid up its obligations to the international organization. We also are examining the possibility of purchasing loan bonds issued by the U. N.

The prudence, moderation, realism and thoughtfulness which the Foreign Ministers have shown are the best pledges of the success of our undertaking.

As a matter of fact, not only falling behind the march of history has been shown to be harmful, but also the fact of being too far ahead has been shown several times to be equally harmful. I will spare you the many citations I could make in this connection.

We insist, meanwhile, on underlining so far as economic problems are concerned, that the setting up of realizable projects, modest as they might be, is infinitely more advantageous than the best filled book of unexecuted schemes. We must begin right now to spell out our inspirations.

This would be the best guarantee we could give to the 250 million Africans whose eyes are turned towards Addis Ababa today.

I wish finally to restate our gratitude to His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I, to His people, and to His Government for their hospitality. This truly fraternal welcome is no surprise to us, for it is in conformity with the thousand-year-old tradition of Ethiopia.

A black and white portrait of H.E. Hubert Maga, a man with short, dark hair, wearing a suit and tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**H.E  
HUBERT  
MAGA**

President of the Republic of Dahomey  
(Present day Republic of Benin)







our Imperial Majesty, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At a time when the eyes of Africa and the world are fixed on Addis Ababa, where the Heads of Independent African States are met together for the first time, I have the great honour to convey to Your Imperial Majesty the message of friendship and admiration entrusted to me by the people of Dahomey who know full well the illustrious role the Kingdom of Ethiopia, symbol of the everlastingness of African civilization, has played throughout the ages. I must also express all the joy of the Republic of Dahomey at taking part in, what historians will call what they will, but which I, for my part regard as the African Summit, with a capital S.

For multiple reasons known to all the Heads of State here present the

Addis Ababa meeting is for me, after that of Monrovia and that of Lagos, of exceptional importance. I do not propose, however, in the following remarks to give an exhaustive list of these reasons, so true is it - and we must say so honestly - that their nature and intensity are liable to vary from man to man, from country to country and, of course, from what the specialists of present day African Political historic call group to group.

Allow me, however to admit that we place this conference under the sign of great hope. Hope of seeing laid foundations of African unity.

Hope that this unity, so long desired by us all, will soon materialize.

Hope that the discussions in this conference will lead us, if not complete identity of outlook, at least to reasonable agreement on the solutions likely to bring us together in facing problems of common interest.

**... Despite affinities of blood and geography we are, still far too often strangers to each other. Certain frontiers, which ethnically do not exist, have in fact, by the rivalries they have engendered, turned into veritable chasms. Let us, therefore, fill these chasms, let us see to it that there is greater circulation of men, goods and capital among us, let us in a thousand ways strengthen the ties which unite us and, little by little, the feeling, still latent of belonging to one big family will, from Algiers to the Cape and from Dakar to Nairobi, become so strong and so evident that the organic union of the different African States will occur of itself**

Hope, above all, that this ADDIS ABABA Summit Conference will not restrict itself to the mere "contact", to the mere "first meeting" of the two groups, as certain specialists of African questions wish to insinuate but that it will be both contact and action, contact and decision.

The problems which will be raised during this conference are numerous and varied and all of them are engrossing.

Although the principle of stating them in their entirety before the eminent delegations here assembled is a relatively easy task, it does not seem that the same is true insofar as their importance and urgency are concerned.

Since I think that our first task at this conference is to state objectives general problems of common interest, the solution of which would in consequence be undertaken in common, I would accord first place in the discussions to the task of decolonization which seems to me, at the present time, to be one of the most important concerns of the foreign policy of every African State.

A large number of our brothers, grouped in more than twenty territories, are, despite their cries, their efforts and their fight for freedom - still under the yoke of imperialism.

Faced with this situation African conferences, and in particular that at which we are assisting, must no longer be content with simply denouncing and condemning colonialism, even in vehement languages; from now on we must take practical measures to combat and do away with the remnants of colonialism on African soil.

African unity, as I emphasized above, might be the second big subject of our discussions.

It seems obvious that the time has now come for Africans, who have nearly all regained their liberty, to jointly choose the future they wish for themselves. For there is no doubt that henceforth they feel will themselves called to live together and no longer separated as heretofore by artificial barriers of languages, laws and customs inherited from the foreigner

If they are to build this common future on solid foundations they must now set to work to eliminate everything which may not bring them together and unite them. In particular, they must seek simple and practical measures which, if sincerely applied, will prove far more efficacious than ambitious but chimerical projects in the present context.

Seen in this perspective the responsibilities of the Addis Ababa conference

seem both very exciting and also very heavy. Although it cannot be achieved in one full sweep, African Unity does not seem to me to be a distant objective: it is a task that can be approached, that can be carried out, progressively if not immediately, by concrete and positive actions, the basis of which we can find here and now.

Inter-State Cooperation must also occupy an honoured place in our discussions. Whether it be a question of economic co-operation of technical co-operation or of cooperation pure and simple, the African and Malagasy Heads of State will, in this specific sphere, have to accomplish a delicate task, for it is essentially on the establishment of the practical means of this

cooperation that the average African man - man pure and simple - will judge them good or bad and decide whether this Summit meeting has been a success or a failure.

Three years of independence have shown most African countries that only real effective co-operation is of use in cases where spectacular projects fail.

It seems to us, for example, that trade development is an urgent necessity.

Despite affinities of blood and geography we are, on this point, still far too often strangers to each other. Certain frontiers, which ethnically do not exist, have

in fact, by the rivalries they have engendered, turned into veritable chasms. Let us, therefore, fill these chasms, let us see to it that there is greater circulation of men, goods and capital among us, let us in a thousand ways strengthen the ties which unite us and, little by little, the feeling, still latent of belonging to one big family will, from



**Beninese (former Dahomey) president Hubert Maga (C) shakes hands to Lamine Gueye (L), Senegalese president of parliament, as Leopold Sedar Senghor (R), Senegalese president looks on, on May 6, 1963 during his official visit in Senegal, Image © AFP via Getty Images**

Algiers to the Cape and from Dakar to Nairobi, become so strong and so evident that the organic union of the different African States will occur of itself.

Other problems, in varying degrees, also provide points of common interest:

Common Market, the denuclearization of the African continent.

The principle of the Common Market - and I am talking now of the African Common Market - is now admitted by the majority of African countries, but we must pass to the stage of seeking ways and conditions of bringing it into being. The preparatory work will be long and require patience; it will also require that quarrels of precedence and pre-eminence between big and

small, between the economically strong and the economically weak States give way to the well understood interest of Africa as a whole. The game is worth the candle and the experiment is worth making.

The cessation of atomic and thermo-nuclear tests on the Continent is a problem we must tackle frankly but objectively. We would not be making frank and objective examination of this problem if, while condemning some experiments, we closed our eyes to similar' experiments in other parts of the world. The contamination of the atmosphere by atomic radiation is a danger for humanity as a whole.

Thus, we must take firm positions on all atomic experiments be they French, America, Russian or, soon, Chinese ...

For the time being, we must be realists and avoid a priori formulae. I, for my part, hope that this conference will lead our States, on the basis of their full sovereignty, to a period of enhanced solidarity, particularly in the economic, diplomatic and defence spheres. Dahomey is ready to subscribe unreservedly to such a policy of concerted co-ordination. By its membership in the Conseil de l'Entente and in the African and Malagasy Union, and its accession to the Lagos Charter has, indeed it has already embarked on this path which it considers as the only one capable of leading progressively, to Unity while yet respecting the personality and independence of each of the African States.

This respect for the other person's liberty and the principle, which flows there from non-interference in the domestic affairs of another country, are, moreover, at the base of Dahomey's position in all circumstances.

Your Imperial Majesty, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not doubt that the desire of all participants in this conference will lead to concrete and positive results, by permitting us to draw up an objective balance sheet of our possibilities and our means and to take our action into the various spheres where trade and co-operation may usefully be



From left to right, the future Presidents of the Republic of Dahomey, Hubert Maga, of the High-Volta Republic Maurice Yameogo, of the Ivory Coast Republic Felix HOUPHOUËT-BOIGNY, and of the Republic of Niger Hamani Diori came to the Elysee on June 25, 1960, to request the independence of their countries from General De Gaulle. *Image © HABANS Patrice/Paris Match via Getty Images)*

developed and strengthened.

This concern to build on our continent a new economic and political order will add to the dignity and well-being of the African peoples and will fulfil their great hope of witnessing the end of the absurd clearances imposed upon us by colonization.

I should reproach myself if I were to prolong this statement, which is in fact no more than a brief review of the many problems the delegation of Dahomey would like to see posed to this conference in the hope that, in the superior interest of Africa and Africans, solutions to the most serious, the most important and the most urgent may be found.

I shall conclude by expressing the hope that the scope of the message of the ADDIS ABA- BA conference will be wide enough to incite the world powers to tackle the problems of humanity in such a way that, taking account of the aspirations of all human beings, they ensure lasting equilibrium and peace.





**H.E  
LEON**

**MBA**

President of the Republic of Gabon





heads of State and Government, Honourable delegates,

I, too, should like to thank from the bottom of my heart His Majesty, Emperor Haile Selassie I and the Ethiopian people for the welcome they have given us, a welcome which has rendered tangible the fraternity of African nations.

For the first time all the independent States of Africa are here met together and I for my part think it right and proper that it is precisely in Addis Ababa, capital of the old Ethiopian Empire, that we are seeking to build a united and fraternal Africa.

The speech which His Majesty the Emperor pronounced at the opening to our work gives expression to the deep unanimity of African nations and specifies the aims to which we all aspire. For the first time there is an attempt to trace the broad outlines of effective co operation between all African States, in a work, of the building of a united Africa.

To be sure, although we are all agreed on the aims, we may have different ideas about the methods of attaining them. As His Imperial Majesty has said: "On these and other questions there is no agreement, and if we wait for agreed answers, generations hence matters will be little advanced, while the debate will still range",

We have two fundamental objectives:

to accelerate the total liberation of the African continent; and

to proceed to the building of African unity.

I shall take these two points in succession.

We in Africa are all agreed that the present situation, particularly with respect to the liberation of our oppressed brethren in Angola, Mozambique, Sao Tome, and Principe, in Rio Muni, known as Spanish Guinea, in Portuguese Guinea, and those most shamefully enslaved in South Africa, calls for a revolutionary attitude.

This is the time for me to say once more what we said at Ouagadougou "Colonies are made to be lost; they are born with the cross of death on their brows."

In Gabon, the oppressed peoples of Africa always find, as they have found in all your countries, support, both moral and material, and the people of Gabon will afford their asylum and protection, as indeed it already does in some cases.

In former times the Ethiopian Empire suffered the most cruel invasion; and yet today, as His Majesty, Emperor Haile Selassie I said: 'We must live in peace with our former colonizers, shunning recrimination and bitterness and forswearing the luxury of vengeance and retaliation. "

From the time when Gabon's destiny was placed in the hands of its people, we have done everything to avoid hatred and paralyzing complexes, to transcend the past and worthily prepare our place in a community of varied but united brotherly people.

Revolutionary, therefore, Africa must be to achieve its total liberation. The problem today, however, is to know whether African Unity will be built in patience and continuous effort or rather by a sudden change.

We are inclined to think, with His Imperial Majesty, that "the union which we seek can only come gradually" and we share his feelings when he says a period of transition is inevitable. Old relations and arrangements may, for a time linger. Regional organizations may fulfil legitimate functions and needs which cannot yet be otherwise satisfied.

It is in this spirit that we must approach the study of a Charter at African continental level, so that each one of us rediscovers, together with his personality the need for co-operation which inspires us all, the need that is to say, to co-ordinate our political positions, reconcile our economic, social and cultural actions and find the means to ensure the integrity of all our States.

From these fundamental choices must, in our opinion, flow the methods of putting into effect the various projects

**...the present solution lies in setting up, at African continental level, an economic community within which trade will be so organized that each State gains a fair return for the advantages it affords the whole. This economic community must not, moreover, evade the principle of protecting African industries vis -a-vis products of similar industries from without the continent**

submitted to us and designed to promote African Unity in economic, cultural and defence matters.

I should like to lay special emphasis on the importance of economic cooperation as an approach to African Unity.

At this juncture realism, and efficiency must prevail over passion and precipitance.

Nothing is gained by denying that, in the case of some of us, we are placed in definite, very different situations and that we are included in economic and monetary systems which, for the time being, have no real junction point. These facts enter into the objective understanding of the development we want to stamp on inter-African economic relations.

A trade system inherited from colonization remains to be rethought. We do not consider that complete free trade is the postulate Africans should adopt at the present stage of their development. Often, indeed, the theorists of free trade are rabid protectionists.

In our opinion, the present solution lies in setting up, at African continental level, an economic community within which trade will be so organized that each State gains a fair return for the advantages it affords the whole. This economic community must not, moreover, evade the principle of protecting African industries vis-à-vis products of similar industries from without the continent.

For all these reasons, I think it would be in our interest not to insist too much, in the present state of affairs, on the establishment of a free trade area, which might be a two-edged sword liable to impede the harmonious development of our economies, may even place us in a completely artificial economic context.

This being so, Honourable Heads of State and Delegates, Gabon has not come to this conference with the intention of blocking any proposal but rather with the intention of sifting the contents of each one of them so as to make, at any time, a positive contribution, so that the progress towards African Unity maybe the progress of us all together, seeking, at each encounter, what unites and brings together rather than what divides.



our Excellencies, Colleagues,  
Brothers and Friends,

At the first gathering of African Heads of State, to which I had the honour of playing host, there were representatives of eight independent States only. Today, five years later, we meet as the representatives of no less than thirty-two States, the guests of His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie, the First, and the Government and people of Ethiopia. To His Imperial Majesty, I wish to express, on behalf of the Government and people of Ghana my deep appreciation for a most cordial welcome and generous hospitality.

**Unless we establish African Unity now, we who are sitting here today shall tomorrow be the victims and martyrs of neo-colonialism.**

**“Unite we must. Without necessarily sacrificing our sovereignties, big or small, we can here and now forge a political union based on Defense, Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy, and a Common Citizenship, an African Currency, an African Monetary Zone and an African Central Bank. We must unite in order to achieve the full liberation of our continent...**

The increase in our number in this short space of time is open testimony to the indomitable and irresistible surge of our people for independence. It is also a token of the revolutionary speed of world events in the latter half of this century. In the task which is before us of unifying our continent we must fall in with that pace or be left behind. The task cannot be attached in the tempo of any other age than our own. To fall behind the unprecedented momentum of actions and events in our time will be to court failure our own undoing.

A whole continent has imposed a mandate upon us to lay the foundation of our Union at this Conference. It is our responsibility to execute this mandate by creating here and now the formula upon which the requisite superstructure may be erected.

On this continent it has not taken us long to discover that the struggle against colonialism does not end with the attainment of national independence. Independence



A black and white portrait of Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a patterned traditional Ghanaian kente cloth. He has a slight smile and is looking directly at the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**H.E**  
**KWAME**  
**NKRUMAH**

President of the Republic of Ghana

OAU - AU  
1963-2023



is only the prelude to a new and more involved struggle for the right to conduct our own economic and social affairs; to construct our society according to our aspirations, unhampered by crushing and humiliating neo-colonialist controls and interference.

From the start we have been threatened with frustration where rapid change is imperative and with instability where sustained effort and ordered rule are indispensable.

No sporadic act nor pious resolution can resolve our present problems. Nothing will be of avail, except the united act of a united Africa. We have already reached the stage where we must unite or sink into that condition which had made Latin-America the unwilling and distressed prey of imperialism after one-and-a-half centuries of political independence.

As a continent we have emerged into independence in a different age, with imperialism grown stronger, more ruthless and experienced, and more dangerous in its international associations. Our economic advancement demands the end of colonialist and neo-colonialist domination in Africa.

But just as we understood that the shaping of our national destinies required of each of us our political independence and bent all our strength to this attainment, so we must recognise that our economic independence resides in our African union and requires the same concentration upon the political achievement.

The unity of our continent, no less than our separate independence, will be delayed if, indeed, we do not lose it, by hobnobbing with colonialism. African Unity is, above all, a political kingdom which can only be gained by political means. The social and economic development of Africa will come only within the political kingdom, not the other way round. The United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, were the political decisions of revolutionary peoples before they became mighty realities of social power and material wealth.

How, except by our united efforts, will the richest and still enslaved parts of our continent be freed from colonial occupation and become available to us for the total development of our continent? Every step in the decolonization of our continent has brought greater resistance in those areas where colonial garrisons are available to colonialism.

This is the great design of the imperialist interests that buttress colonialism and neo-colonialism, and we would be deceiving ourselves in the most cruel way were we to regard their individual actions as separate and unrelated. When Portugal violates Senegal's border, when Verwoed allocated one-seventh of South Africa's budget to military and police, when France builds as part of her defence policy an interventionist force that can intervene, more especially in French-speaking Africa, when Welensky talks of Southern Rhodesia joining South Africa, it is all part of a carefully calculated pattern working towards a single end: the continued enslavement of our still dependent brothers and an onslaught upon the independence of our sovereign African States.

Do we have any other weapon against this design but our unity? Is not our unity essential to guard our own freedom as well as to win freedom for our oppressed brothers, the Freedom Fighters? Is it not unity alone that can weld us into an effective force, capable of creating our own progress and making our valuable contribution to world peace? Which independent African State will claim that its financial structure and banking institutions are fully harnessed to its national development? Which will claim that its material resources and human energies are available for its own national aspiration? Which will disclaim a substantial measure of disappointment and disillusionment in its



**Government officials carry Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah on their shoulders after Ghana obtains its independence from Great Britain** Image © Bettmann / Contributor via Getty Images



agricultural and urban development?

In independent Africa we are already re-experiencing the instability and frustration which existed under colonial rule. We are fast learning that political independence is not enough to rid us of the consequences of colonial rule.

The movement of the masses of the people of Africa for freedom from that kind of rule was not only a revolt against the conditions which it imposed.

Our people supported us in our fight for independence because they believed that African Governments could cure the ills of the past in a way which could never be accomplished under colonial rule. If, therefore, now that we are independent we allow the same conditions to exist that existed in colonial days, all the resentment which overthrew colonialism will be mobilized against us.

The resources are there. It is for us to marshal them in the active service of our people. Unless we do this by our concerted efforts, within the framework of our combined planning, we shall not progress at the tempo demanded by today's events and the mood of our people. The symptoms of our troubles will grow, and the troubles themselves become chronic. It will then be too late even for Pan-African Unity to secure for us stability and tranquillity in our labours for a continent of social justice and material well-being.

Unless we establish African Unity now, we who are sitting here today shall tomorrow be the victims and martyrs of neo-colonialism.

There is evidence on every side that the imperialists have not withdrawn from our affairs. There are times, as in the Congo, when their interference is manifested. But generally it is covered up under the clothing of many agencies, which meddle in our domestic affairs, to foment dissension within our borders and to create an atmosphere of tension and political instability. As long as we do not do away with the root causes of discontent, we lend aid to these neo-colonialist forces, and shall become our own executioners. We cannot ignore the teachings of history.

Our continent is probably the richest in the world for minerals and industrial and agricultural primary materials. From the Congo alone, Western firms exported copper, rubber, cotton, and other goods to the value of 2,773 billion dollars in the ten years between 1945 and 1955, and from South Africa, Western mining companies have drawn a profit, in the six years between 1947 and 1951, of 814 billion dollars.

Our continent certainly exceeds all the others in potential hydroelectric power, which some experts assess as 42 per cent of the world's total. What need is there for us to remain hewers of wood and drawers of water for the industrialized areas of the world?

It is said, of course, that we have no capital, no industrial skill, no communications and no internal markets, and that we cannot even agree among ourselves how best to utilise our resources.

Yet all the stock exchanges in the world are preoccupied with Africa's gold, diamonds, uranium, platinum, copper and iron ores. Our capital flows out in the streams to irrigate the whole system of Western economy. Fifty-two per cent of the gold in Fort Knox at this moment, where the U.S.A. stores its bullion, is believed to have originated from our shores. Africa provides more than 60 per cent of the world's gold. A great deal of the uranium for nuclear power, of copper for electronics, of titanium for supersonic projectiles, of iron and steel for heavy industries, of other minerals and raw materials for lighter industries – the basic economic might of the foreign Powers – come from our continent.

Experts have estimated that the Congo basin alone can produce enough food crops to satisfy the requirements of nearly half the population of the whole world.

For centuries Africa has been the milchcow of the Western world. It was our continent that helped the Western world build up its accumulated wealth.

It is true that we are now throwing off the yoke of colonialism as fast as we can, but our success in this direction is equally matched by an intense effort on the part of imperialism to continue the exploitation of our resources by creating divisions among us.

When the colonies of the American Continent sought to free themselves from imperialism in the 18th century there was no threat of neo-colonialism in the sense in which we know it today. The American States were therefore free to form and fashion the unity which was best suited to their needs and to frame a constitution to hold their unity



together without any form of interference from external sources. We, however, are having to grapple with outside interventions. How much more, then do we need to come together in the African unity that alone can save us from the clutches of neo-colonialism.

We have the resources. It was colonialism in the first place that prevented us from accumulating the effective capital; but we ourselves have failed to make full use of our power in independence to mobilise our resources for the most effective take-off into thorough-going economic and social development.

We have been too busy nursing our separate states to understand fully the basic need of our union, rooted in common purpose, common planning and common endeavour. A union that ignores these fundamental necessities will be but a sham. It is only by uniting our productive capacity and the resultant production that we can amass capital. And once we start, the momentum will increase. With capital controlled by our own banks, harnessed to our own true industrial and agricultural development, we shall make our advance. We shall accumulate machinery and establish steel works, iron foundries and factories; we shall link the various states of our continent with communications; we shall astound the world with our hydroelectric power; we shall drain marshes and swamps, clear infested areas, feed the under-nourished, and rid our people of parasites and disease. It is within the possibility of science and technology to make even the Sahara bloom into a vast field with verdant vegetation for agricultural and industrial developments. We shall harness the radio, television, giant printing presses to lift our people from the dark recesses of illiteracy.

A decade ago, these would have been visionary words, the fantasies of an idle dreamer. But this is the age in which science has transcended the limits of the material world, and technology has invaded the silences of nature. Time and space have been reduced to unimportant abstractions. Giant machines make roads, clear forests, dig dams, lay out aerodromes; monster trucks and planes distribute goods; huge laboratories manufacture drugs; complicated geological surveys are made; mighty power stations are built; colossal factories erected – all at an incredible speed. The world is no longer moving through bush paths or on camels and donkeys.

We cannot afford to pace our needs, our development, our security, to the gait of camels and donkeys. We cannot afford not to cut down the overgrown bush of outmoded attitudes that obstruct our path to the modern open road of the widest and earliest achievement of economic independence and the raising

up of the lives of our people to the highest level.

Even for other continents lacking the resources of Africa, this is the age that sees the end of human want. For us it is a simple matter of grasping with certainty our heritage by using the political might of unity. All we need to do is develop with our united strength the enormous resources of our continent. A United Africa will provide a stable field of foreign investment, which will encourage as long as it does not behave inimically to our African interests. For such investment would add by its enterprises to the development of the national economy, employment and training of our people, and will be welcome to Africa. In dealing with a united Africa, investors will no longer have to weigh with concern the risks of negotiating with governments in one period which may not exist in the very next period. Instead of dealing or negotiating with so many separate states at a time they will be dealing with one united government pursuing a harmonised continental policy.

What is the alternative to this? If we falter at this stage, and let time pass for neo-colonialism to consolidate its position on this continent, what will be the fate of our people who have put their trust in us? What will be the fate of our freedom fighters? What will be the fate of other African Territories that are not yet free?

Unless we can establish great industrial complexes in Africa – which we can only do in a united Africa – we must leave our peasantry to the mercy of foreign cash crop markets, and face the same unrest which overthrew the colonialists? What use to the farmer is education and mechanization, what use is even capital for development; unless we can ensure for him a fair price and a ready market? What has the peasant, worker and farmer gained from political independence, unless we can ensure for him a fair return for his labour and a higher standard of living?

Unless we can establish great industrial complexes in Africa, what have the urban worker, and those peasants on over-crowded land gained from political independence? If they are to remain unemployed or in unskilled occupation, what will avail them the better facilities for education, technical training, energy and ambition which independence enables us to provide?

There is hardly any African State without a frontier problem with its adjacent neighbours. It would be futile for me to enumerate them because they are already familiar to us all. But let me suggest to Your Excellencies that this fatal relic of colonialism will drive us to war against one another as our unplanned and uncoordinated industrial development expands, just as happened in Europe. Unless we succeed in

arresting the danger through mutual understanding on fundamental issues and through African Unity, which will render existing boundaries obsolete and superfluous, we shall have fought in vain for independence. Only African Unity can heal this festering sore of boundary disputes between our various states. Your Excellencies, the remedy for these ills is ready to our hand. It stares us in the face at every customs barrier, it shouts to us from every African heart. By creating a true political union of all the independent states of Africa, we can tackle hopefully every emergency, every enemy, and every complexity. This is not because we are a race of supermen, but because we have emerged in the age of science and technology in which poverty, ignorance and disease are no longer the masters, but the retreating foes of mankind. We have emerged in the age of socialised planning, when production and distribution are not governed by chaos, greed and self-interest, but by social needs. Together with the rest of mankind, we have awakened from Utopian dreams to pursue practical blueprints for progress and social justice.

Above all, we have emerged at a time when a continental landmass like Africa with its population approaching three hundred million are necessary to the economic capitalization and profitability of modern productive methods and techniques. Not one of us working singly and individually can successfully attain the fullest development. Certainly, in the circumstances, it will not be possible to give adequate assistance to sister states trying, against the most difficult conditions,

to improve their economic and social structures. Only a united Africa functioning under a Union Government can forcefully mobilize the material and moral resources of our separate countries and apply them efficiently and energetically to bring a rapid change in the conditions of our people.

If we do not approach the problems in Africa with a common front and a common purpose, we shall be haggling and wrangling among ourselves until we are colonized again and become the tools of a far greater colonialism than we suffered hitherto.

Unite we must. Without necessarily sacrificing our sovereignties, big or small, we can here and now forge a political union based on Defense, Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy, and a Common Citizenship, an African Currency, an African Monetary Zone and an African Central Bank. We must unite in order to achieve the full liberation of our continent.

We need a Common Defense System with an African High Command to ensure the stability and security of Africa.


We have been charged with this sacred task by our own people, and we cannot betray their trust by failing them. We will be mocking the hopes of our people if we show the slightest hesitation or delay in tackling realistically this question of African Unity.

The supply of arms or other military aid to the colonial oppressors in Africa must be regarded not only as aid in the vanquishment of the freedom fighters battling for their African independence, but as an act of aggression against the whole of Africa. How can we meet this aggression except by the full weight of our united strength?

Many of us have made non-alignment an article of faith on this continent. We have no wish, and no intention of being drawn in the Cold War. But with the present weakness and insecurity of our States in the context of world politics, the search for bases and spheres of influence brings the Cold War into Africa with its danger of nuclear warfare. Africa should be declared a nuclear-free zone and freed from cold war exigencies. But we cannot make this demand mandatory unless we support it from a position of strength to be found only in our unity.

Instead, many Independent African States are involved by military pacts with the former colonial powers. The stability



 **President Nkrumah of Ghana Seated at Assembly, 1963** Image © Getty Images

and security which such devices seek to establish are illusory, for the metropolitan Powers seize the opportunity to support their neo-colonialist controls by direct military involvement. We have seen how the neo-colonialists use their bases to entrench themselves and even to attack neighbouring independent states. Such bases are centres of tension and potential danger spots of military conflict. They threaten the security not only of the country in which they are situated of neighbouring countries as well. How can we hope to make Africa a nuclear-free zone and independent of cold war pressure with such military involvement on our continent? Only by counter-balancing a common defense force with a common defense policy based upon our common desire for Africa untrammelled by foreign dictation or military and nuclear presence. This will require an all-embracing African High Command, especially if the military pacts with the imperialists are to be renounced. It is the only way we can break these direct links between the colonialism of the past and the neo colonialism which disrupts us today.

We do not want nor do we visualize an African High Command in the terms of the power politics that now rule a great part of the world, but as an essential and indispensable instrument for ensuring stability and security in Africa.

We need a unified economic planning for Africa. Until the economic power of Africa is in our hands, the masses can have no real concern and no real interest for safeguarding our security, for ensuring the stability of our regimes, and for bending their strength to the fulfilment of our ends. With our united resources, energies and talents we have the means, as soon as we show the will, to transform the economic structures of our individual states from poverty to that of wealth, from inequality to the satisfaction of popular needs. Only on a continental basis shall we be able to plan the proper utilization of all our resources for the full development of our continent.

How else will we retain our own capital for our development? How else will we establish an internal market for our own industries? By belonging to different economic zones, how will we break down the currency and trading barriers between African States, and how will the economically stronger amongst us be able to assist the weaker and less developed States?

It is important to remember that independent financing and independent development cannot take place without an independent currency. A currency system that is backed by the resources of a foreign state is ipso facto subject to the trade and financial arrangements of that foreign country.

Because we have so many customs and currency barriers as a result of being subject to the different currency systems of foreign powers, this has served to widen the gap between us in Africa. How, for example, can related communities and families trade with, and support one another successfully, if they find themselves divided by national boundaries and currency restrictions? The only alternative open to them in these circumstances, is to use smuggled currency and enrich national and international racketeers and crooks who prey upon our financial and economic difficulties.

No independent African state today by itself has a chance to follow an independent course of economic development, and many of us who have tried to do this have been almost ruined or have had to return to the fold of the former colonial rulers. This position will not change unless we have a unified policy working at the continental level. The first step towards our cohesive economy would be a unified monetary zone, with, initially, an agreed common parity for our currencies. To facilitate this arrangement, Ghana would change to a decimal system. When we find that the arrangement of a fixed common parity is working successfully, there would seem to be no reason for not instituting one common currency and a single bank of issue. With a common currency from one common bank of issue we should be able to stand erect on our own feet because such an arrangement would be fully backed by the combined national products of the states composing the union. After all, the purchasing power of money depends on productivity and the productive exploitation of the natural, human and physical resources of the nation.

While we are assuring our stability by a common defense system, and our economy is being oriented beyond foreign control by a Common Currency, Monetary Zone and Central Bank of Issue, we can investigate the resources of our continent. We can begin to ascertain whether in reality we are the richest, and not, as we have been taught to believe, the poorest among the continents. We can determine whether we possess the largest potential in hydroelectric power, and whether we can harness it and other sources of energy to our own industries. We can proceed to plan our industrialization on a continental scale, and to build up a common market for nearly three hundred million people.

Common Continental Planning for the Industrial and Agricultural Development of Africa is a vital necessity.

So many blessings must flow from our unity; so many disasters must follow on our continued disunity,



that our failure to unite today will not be attributed by posterity only to faulty reasoning and lack of courage, but to our capitulation before the forces of imperialism

The hour of history which has brought us to this assembly is a revolutionary hour. It is the hour of decision. For the first time, the economic imperialism which menaces us is itself challenged by the irresistible will of our people.

The masses of the people of Africa are crying for unity. The people of Africa call for the breaking down of the boundaries that kept them apart. They demand an end to the border disputes between sister African states – disputes that arise out of the artificial barriers that divided us. It was colonialism's purpose that left us with our border irredentism, that rejected our ethnic and cultural fusion.

Our people call for unity so that they may not lose their patrimony in the perpetual service of neo-colonialism. In their fervent push for unity, they understand that only its realization will give full meaning to their freedom and our African independence.

It is this popular determination that must move us on to a Union of Independent African States. In delay lies danger to our well-being, to our very existence as free states. It has been suggested that our approach to unity should be gradual, that it should go piece-meal. This point of view conceives of Africa as a static entity with "frozen" problems which can be eliminated one by one and when all have been cleared then we can come together and say: "Now all is well. Let us now unite". This view takes no account of external pressures. Nor does it take cognisance of the danger that delay can deepen our isolations and exclusiveness; that it can enlarge our differences and set us drifting further and further apart into the net of neo-colonialism, so that our union will become nothing but a fading hope, and the great design of Africa's full redemption will be lost, perhaps, forever.

The view is also expressed that our difficulties can be resolved simply by a greater collaboration through cooperative association in our inter-territorial relationships. This way of looking at our problems denies a proper conception of their inter-relationship and mutuality. It denies faith in a future for African advancement in African independence. It betrays a sense of solution only in continued reliance upon external sources through bilateral agreements for economic and other forms of aid.

The fact is that although we have been cooperating and associating with one another in various fields of common endeavour even before colonial times,

this has not given us the continental identity and the political and economic force which would help us to deal effectively with the complicated problems confronting us in Africa today. As far as foreign aid is concerned, a United Africa would be in a more favourable position to attract assistance from foreign sources. There is the far more compelling advantage which this arrangement offers, in that aid will come from anywhere to Africa because our bargaining power would be coming infinitely greater. We shall no longer be dependent upon aid from restricted sources. We shall have the world to choose from.

What are we looking for in Africa? Are we looking for Charters, conceived in the light of the United Nations example? A type of United Nations Organization whose decisions are framed on the basis of resolutions that in our experience have sometimes been ignored by member States? Where groupings are formed and pressures develop in accordance with the interests of the groups concerned? Or is it intended that Africa should be turned into a loose organization of States on the model of the Organization of American states, in which the weaker States within it can be at the mercy of the stronger or more powerful ones politically or economically and all at the mercy of some powerful outside nation or group of nations? Is this the kind of association we want for ourselves in the United Africa we all speak of with such feeling and emotion.

Your Excellencies, permit me to ask: Is this the kind of framework we desire for our United Africa? An arrangement which in future could permit Ghana or Nigeria or the Sudan, or Liberia, or Egypt or Ethiopia for example, to use pressure, which either superior economic or political influence gives, to dictate the flow and direction of trade from, say, Burundi or Togo or Nyasaland to Mozambique?

We all want a united Africa, united not only in our concept of what unity connotes, but united in our common desire to move forward together in dealing with all the problems that can best be solved only on a continent basis.

When the first Congress of the United States met many years ago at Philadelphia one of the delegates sounded the first chord of unity by declaring that they had met in "a state of nature". In other words, they were not in Philadelphia as Virginians, or Pennsylvanians, but simply as Americans. This reference to themselves as Americans was in those days a new and strange experience. May I dare to assert equally on this occasion, Your Excellencies that we meet here today not as Ghanaians, Guineans, Egyptians, Algerians, Moroccans, Malians, Liberians, Congolese or Nigerians

but as Africans. Africans united in our resolve to remain here until we have agreed on the basic principles of a new compact of unity among ourselves which guarantees for us and future a new arrangement of continental government.

If we succeed in establishing a new set of principles as the basis of a new Charter or Statute for the establishment of a Continental Unity of Africa and the creation of social and political progress for our people, then, in my view, this Conference should mark the end of our various groupings and regional blocs. But if we fail and let this grand and historic opportunity slip by then we shall give way to greater dissension and division among us for which the people of Africa will never forgive us. And the popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa will condemn us. I am sure therefore that we shall not fail them.

I have spoken at some length, Your Excellencies, because it is necessary for us all to explain not only to one another present here but also to our people who have entrusted to us the fate and destiny of Africa. We must therefore not leave this place until we have set up effective machinery for achieving African Unity. To this end, I now propose for your consideration the following:

As a first step, Your Excellencies, a declaration of principles uniting and binding us together and to which we must all faithfully and loyally adhere, and laying the foundations of unity should be set down. And there should also be a formal declaration that all the independent African States here and now agree to the establishment of a Union of African States.

As a second and urgent step for the realisation of the unification of Africa, an All-Africa Committee of Foreign Ministers be set up now, and that before we rise from this Conference, a date should be fixed for them to meet.

This Committee should establish on behalf of the Heads of our Governments, a permanent body of officials and experts to work out a machinery for the Union Government of Africa. This body of officials and experts should be made up of two of the best brains from each Independent African State. The various Charters of the existing groupings and other relevant documents could also be submitted to the officials and experts. A praesidium consisting of the Heads of Governments of the Independent African States should be called upon to meet to adopt a constitution and other recommendations which will launch the Union Government of Africa.

We must also decide on a location where this body of

officials and experts will work as the new Headquarters of Capital of our Union Government. Some central place in Africa might be the fairest suggestion either at Bangui in the Central African Republic or Leopoldville in Congo. My colleagues may have other proposals. The Committee of Foreign Ministers, officials and experts should be empowered to establish:-

1. A Commission to frame a constitution for a Union Government of African States;
2. A Commission to work out a continent-wide plan for a unified or common economic and industrial programme for Africa; this plan should include proposals for setting up:
  - a. A Common Market for Africa;
  - b. An African Currency;
  - c. African Monetary Zone;
  - d. An African Central Bank, and
  - e. A Continental Communications System.
3. A Commission to draw up details for a Common Foreign Policy and Diplomacy;
4. A Commission to produce plans for a Common System of Defense;
5. A Commission to make proposals for a Common African Citizenship.

These Commissions will report to the Committee of Foreign Ministers who should in turn submit within six months of this Conference their recommendations to the Praesidium. The Praesidium meeting in Conference at the Union Headquarters will consider and approve the recommendations of the Committee of Foreign Ministers.

In order to provide funds immediately for the work of the permanent officials and experts of the Headquarters of the Union, I suggest that a special Committee be set up now to work out a budget for this.

Your Excellencies, with these steps, I submit, we shall be irrevocably committed to the road which will bring us to a Union Government of Africa. Only a united Africa with central political direction can successfully give effective material and moral support to our Freedom Fighters in Southern Rhodesia, Angola, Mozambique, South-West Africa, Bechuanaland, Swaziland, Basutoland, Portuguese Guinea, etc., etc., and of course South Africa



“

No nation has a monopoly of human genius, intelligence or the physical capacity needed to improve the lot of mankind. All nations, whatever the colour or the religion of their peoples, whatever the climate of the country they live in whatever the size of their economy, are a part of mankind. Yet efforts have been made to convince mankind that a natural inferiority characterized the African man and particularly the black man. In order to justify the shameful exploitation of a people by a people....

Is not African unity the means for the African peoples to ensure their presence not at the base of a pyramid built up through arbitrary action and injustice, but on an equal footing with the other peoples of all the other continents in the conduct of world affairs?

**H.E. SEKOU TOURE**  
President of the  
Republic of Guinea

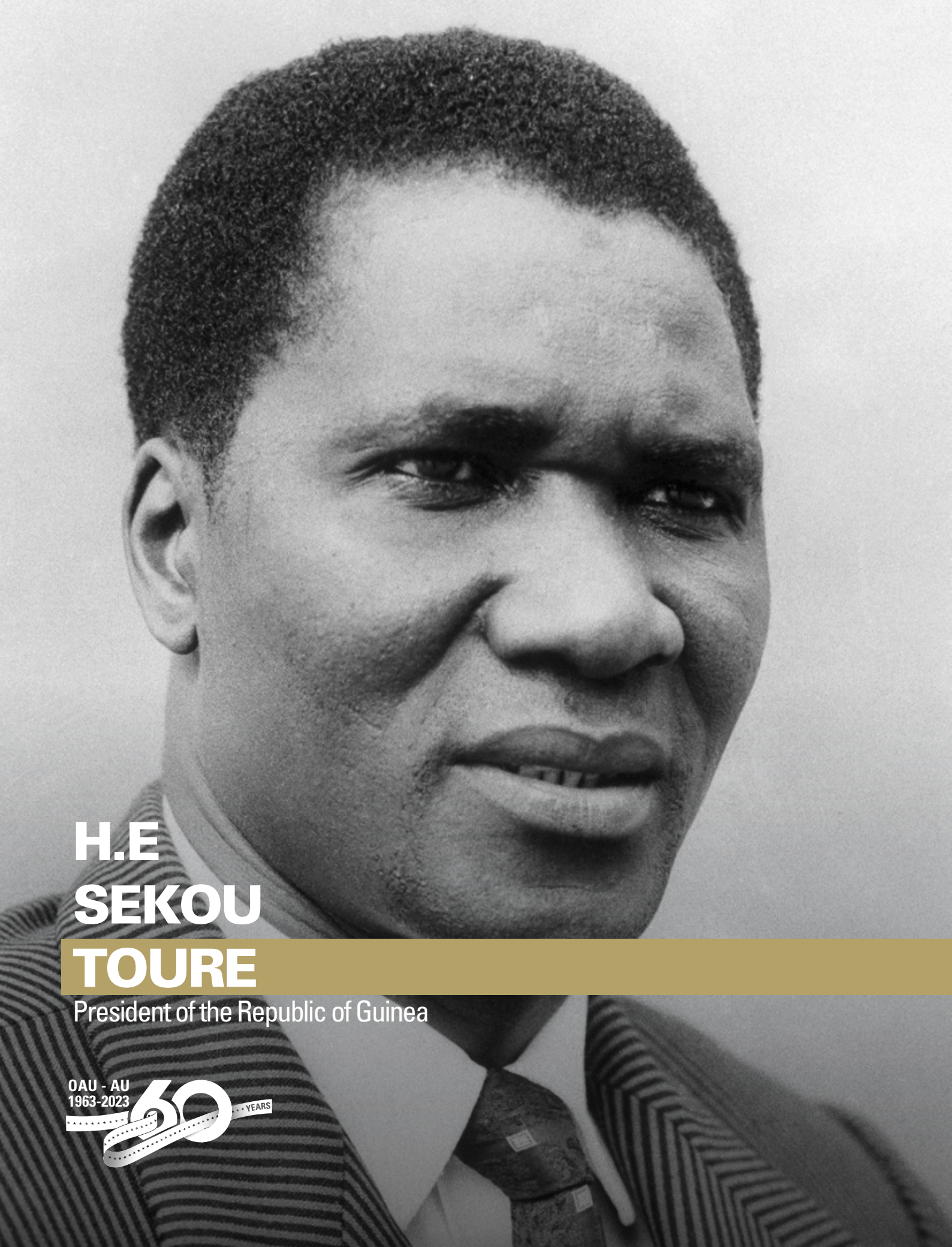
”



#OurAfricaOurFuture

au.int    





**H.E**  
**SEKOU**  
**TOURE**

President of the Republic of Guinea





In the history of the African peoples - the living demonstration of vitality the consequence of the multifarious activities of our societies that are constantly in search of freedom and happiness – this Conference of Heads of State or of Governments will stand out as one of the affirmations of their common destiny one of the solemn moments when they assert their existence and their joint and firm determination to put an end to the reign of arbitrary colonialism to eliminate the causes and the illegitimate means of subordinating the people of Africa and the material and moral wealth of Africa to alien interests and inhuman ends.

Addis Ababa becomes a moment in this history. a landmark with a date, a qualitative change in the African world. This moment is that of the complete decolonization of Africa, of its men and of its economic and social, military and cultural, moral and spiritual structures. This landmark is also that of an era of more intense creative activity, on the part of the African nations, more effective because more unified, aimed at achieving a more rapid advance through the full rehabilitation of their peoples, of their common civilization, of their human values and of their culture.

Ethiopia is a great people, an African people that have fought bravely for the independence of Africa, for the preservation of freedom and the normal exercise of the right of our peoples to guide their destiny with no foreign control or interference and to manage their own affairs in full sovereignty.

Because this African Conference is being held in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa and Ethiopia have become still more closely linked with African history; they are henceforth in the midst of this unbroken course of events end facts that are consciously induced and guided by the peoples of a whole continent in a manner consonant with their understanding of affairs and their desire for progress.

At Berlin in 1885, the European states with their anarchical economic development, motivated by an arbitrary feeling for power and for the horizontal expansion of a civilization, proceeded to divide Africa which was then regarded as a cake. But in May 1963, at Addis Ababa, city of freedom the qualified representatives, the authentic and worthy sons of the African people, met, under the banner of their awareness of their common destiny and fidelity to their personality and to the original character of their homeland. Africa - this time to undertake, legally and legitimately, the reunification of their States in a single and unique Charter, the Charter of their brotherhood, of their rights and interests to be defended and developed , the Charter of their solidarity henceforth indomitable, the Charter of freedom and peace, justice arid progress in Africa.

The Conference of Addis Ababa will not restrict itself to the solution of the current problems of Africa; it is aware that Africa is part of the world and it will rightly concern itself with all the international problems affecting directly or indirectly, the conditions of life, security, peace and progress of mankind.

#### **SOME OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF AFRICAN UNITY**

African unity has become a profound aspiration common to all our peoples. The conditions for the rapid achievement of this aim have demanded the attention and mobilized massively the energies and abilities of our various states, our parties, our trade unions, our associations of intellectualism, of women, of young people and all the organizations grouping serious-thinking men in Africa

African unity has its convinced adherents and its determined adversaries. While constituting a decisive means of enabling the African peoples and states to speed up the movement of African emancipation, it forms at the same time a powerful anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist force, an instrument of combat for our peoples against the causes of their poverty and of their economic and social backwardness.

Owing to the vast prospects for progress which it will enable Africa to attain under rapid and effective conditions, African unity' is being resolutely opposed in various ways by all the powers and interest groups hostile to the total liberation of Africa, to the rational and dynamic organization of its economic and cultural resources, and to the intelligent participation of Africa, seeking with its sister continents in dignity, just solutions to international problems.

**To conclude that African Unity is impossible to achieve is tantamount to justifying the unjust and humiliating convictions of Africa's enemies who throughout history, have tried to convince humanity that there are superior and inferior peoples...**

By subversion, lies, corruption, and pressures of all kinds, the enemies of African progress are directly influencing African life with the aim, if not of preventing the ultimate achievement of African unity, at least deferring it for as long as possible. That is why the foundations of African unity ought to be known by all those who sincerely desire to work to bring a new Africa into being.

Philosophically speaking, whether a man is black, white, yellow or red, he is the equal of every other man, obeying the same laws of human development and having, the same deep desire for a free and happy life, for security and continuous development. Since there is no spontaneous human propagation, one is forced to conclude that, from generation to generation and by virtue of the laws of multiplication of mankind, all men whoever they are, are directly linked with all the other men on earth. Hence the differences between men, between their abilities and potentialities, stem not from a difference in nature but solely from the difference that exists between human living conditions. For according to whether these are good or bad man can develop physically, intellectually and morally in continuous fashion, or else can remain deprived of all possibilities of full development. What is true of man is also true for society, since society is nothing more than the grouping together of persons acting within the context of certain communities whether family, village, regional or national ones etc.

At that level, the level of human societies, we find again, though in more complex terms of course, the same economic, social, cultural and political problems that condition the life of the individual. The natural equality between men, stemming from the fundamental similarity of their basic behaviour, also sanctions the attitudes of societies towards natural phenomena and towards the human relationships established within them. If there are no superior men and inferior men, there cannot be some superior, human societies and other inferior human societies. The equality of nations is a consequence of human equality. No nation has a monopoly of human genius, intelligence or the physical capacity needed to improve the lot of mankind. All nations, whatever the colour or the religion of their peoples, whatever the climate of the country they live in, whatever the size of their economy, are a part of mankind. Human creative genius, the human faculty of understanding and the capacity for achievement, will remain indistinguishably distributed among the nations and exercised by each of them. Yet efforts have been made to convince mankind that a natural inferiority characterized the African man and particularly the black man. In order to justify the shameful exploitation of a

people by a people. The idea of a hierarchy of societies was created the apex of which would consist of the European nations, and the base, called upon to bear inhuman burdens, being the African nations. Whose backwardness with regard to material resources was to be deliberately confused with an indication of their natural incapacity and inferiority.

Is not African unity the means for the African peoples to ensure their presence not at the base of a pyramid built up through arbitrary action and injustice, but on an equal footing with the other peoples of all the other continents in the conduct of world affairs?

In the course of their history, the African countries have all experienced foreign domination, which hampered the normal development of their civilization, of their personality and of their culture and also fostered the intensive exploitation of their wealth and of their peoples for the benefit of foreign interests. Hundreds of millions of men died in the colonial wars, in forced labour, slavery, deportation, etc... Colonization broke up most of the solid foundations of national unity that had existed in Africa. The enslaved continent placed in conditions incompatible with a normal development for its peoples saw the role of those peoples reduced and perverted to such an extent as to be identified with that of beasts of burden or mere commodities or raw materials, suitable, when used, for ensuring the happiness of a few usurpers in the other continents. By taking from us freedom and dignity, colonization deprived us of the potential flowering of our personality, of the development of our civilization and our culture. Each of our peoples resisted colonial penetration and, latter colonial exploitation and oppression. Each of our peoples fought and accepted all the essential sacrifices for regaining its freedom.

Today, most of the countries have been liberated and have built up states whose concerns are still the same. They have to eradicate from their present condition the consequence of foreign domination, the spirit of irresponsibility, the causes of social distress, and to return to Africa, and for Africa, all the structures and resources inherited from the colonial system: to provide a political and moral basis for the unifying action of their people, so as to facilitate the reconstitution, on an objective, sound and efficient basis, of states whose modern and dynamic action is to promote social and human progress and facilitate greater cooperation in Africa and internationally.

Is not the essential basis of the African unity which is to be constructed this growing awareness by our peoples of the identity of the destinies that they experienced in the past, that they have in the present and that they



will necessarily have in the future? Thus African unity is an essential factor in the human worth of every African and in the political and economic advancement of every African nation. For indeed the indignity, incapacity, tutelage and inferiority were, for a people exploited and oppressed by another people, the consequences of its state of irresponsibility in the conduct of its own affairs.

The most cultivated, intelligent and handsome man in the world would derive no advantage from those qualities if he belonged to a colonized society, to a people dispossessed and dominated by a foreign state which regarded its people as an object to be taxed and put to work unsparingly. That man would remain "inferior" despite his potentialities and abilities; he would still be under tutelage, an incomplete person because of being deprived of the essential basis of all human balance, freedom and responsibility.

National independence is for that man what African unity is for each of our nations, and what soil fertility is for a tree.

Indeed, none of our nations taken in isolation could validly represent Africa or completely rehabilitate its peoples. African civilization, African culture, African humanism in a word: the contribution of Africa to the life of mankind, demands of all the African peoples their intelligent awareness and their united action on the construction site of universal happiness.

If they remained disunited, torn by conflicts, incapable of organizing themselves and of solving the fundamental problems of our continent, the African states would have no opportunity to do other than sing the praises of liberty without being able to enjoy it, and of hoping for a life of dignity and responsibility without ever fully attaining it.

The identity of the conditions of life that marked the past and which mark the present and will mark the future of the African peoples demands that the African states should coordinate their activities for the achievement of goals freely chosen by them in



**Presidents Tolbert of Liberia, Touré of Guinea, Kountché of Niger and Traoré of Mali attend the Organisation of African Unity Summit in July 1978 in Khartoum, Sudan** *Image © Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images*

accordance with their joint desire for democratic progress and social justice.

If African unity can ensure to the African states a more harmonious balance and the participation of Africa in the construction of the world on just, egalitarian and interdependent foundations, it will make a surer contribution to the institution and maintenance of real international equilibrium, an equilibrium which will promote justice and strengthen fraternity between nations, the enemies of African unity, aware of the appositeness of these moral, philosophical and historical conceptions, of the legitimacy of our aspiration to this unity, are everywhere sowing the thought that such an achievement would be impossible. They speak of the differences between the political and social systems of African States. They stress the diversity of (customs, the diversity of our economic and cultural wealth and above all the diversity of our means of expression and conclude there from rather too hastily, that African States are incapable of surmounting all these factors, which they describe as contradictory.

The Addis Ababa Conference must resoundingly, give the lie to these predictions which aim only at deepening the division and even at making Africa incapable of effectively directing its destiny.

Have the peoples of Europe, Asia and America who have constituted continental units, adopted the same customs, the same ways of life, the same political and social system? Do they speak the same language? Are their economic systems the same? We do not think so. Their merit lies precisely in the political fact which has enabled them to transcend the diversity characterizing their political economic and social systems by establishing larger communities within which the coordination of their activities for the purpose of rapidly and harmoniously developing their personality and their common values is consistently assured. Why should Europe be able to build European unity, adopt political, economic and social objectives assuring the equality of its nations with each other and the respect of the institutions and personality of each one of its nations? Why should the American countries, which have different institutions and languages be able to build up vast political, economic and cultural communities, and why should Africa be incapable of such a feat?

To conclude that African Unity is impossible to achieve is tantamount to justifying the unjust and humiliating convictions of Africa's enemies who throughout history, have tried to convince humanity that there are superior and inferior peoples.

We think in consequence that here philosophical and political reasons meet up with the dynamic conceptions of an economic revolution of Africa. If indeed, independence and unity are essential to the expression of our peoples will and the condition of their rapid development independence and African Unity do not automatically become an end in themselves to be attained once and for all. Rather they both remain means at our disposal, means, the conscious use of which to attain our ever higher objectives will bring happiness, security, equilibrium and peace to our peoples. It is obvious that economic development is not possible for a people which does not enjoy freedom of action any more than consistent social and human development is possible for an economically deprived people.

The African States have all opted more or less dynamically for the complete emancipation of the Africa. Since the final goal of their actions is the same and the character underlying their development identical. It is quite natural that the conscience of our States rises to meet the dimensions and requirements of the mission they have set themselves.

The establishment of an African common market the industrialization of Africa, the pooling of its resources, the harmonization and rationalization of our

endeavours to avoid contradictions and overlapping, are the result of identical choices made by our States, choices calling for a realistic and honest attitude on the part of our Governments.

We are determined to build the happiness of our peoples to cooperate with other nations in erecting a more prosperous, more loyal and more humane world.

We know that the present is but an extension of the past and that the happy future towards which we strive will be the fruit of our creative activities. The new nature of the African position and the progressive and deeply human qualities of the conditions of political, economic, social and cultural life of our peoples will emerge from the pooling and harmonizing of our development efforts.

Discarding assimilation attempting to ensure for and through ourselves the balanced and dynamic development of our peoples and the unending growth of their 'means of decent existence, our States must organize themselves logically and methodically. Since the objectives of emancipation chosen by our States are just, legitimate and attainable, the quality of the new structures to be established to promote in a concrete manner direct co-operation between our sister nations, good faith, the loyal and firm attitude of our governments in applying the decisions the conference will enable us to formulate, will constitute the factors of our general success in the common work undertaken on behalf of and for the benefit of our peoples.

Africa realizes that she is lagging behind in the economic, technical and scientific fields and that this backwardness affects its social situation and cultural life. Our States our political parties, our trade unions, our various organizations have already accomplished much but and this 'We must recognize they have often lacked the spirit of organization and method in the progressive accomplishment of the tasks essential to the achievement of the objectives set.

The usefulness of our present debates will depend. On the importance and efficiency of the organizations we shall establish to ensure the regular functioning of the new unitary edifice we wish to build.

The conference should elaborate and adopt a Charter, lay down its principles and its fundamental objectives and set up an executive secretariat responsible for coordinating the activities of our States.

It would be harmful to African honour and to the success of our pan-African enterprises if the conference confined itself to preparing motions, resolutions



**H.E. Ahmed Sekou Toure (left), President of Guinea, walking with Egyptian President H.E. Gamal Abdel Nasser at Cairo Airport, circa 1965. Image © Keystone/Hulton Archive/Getty Images**

or declarations without also clearly defining the practical, means whereby they will succeed in suitable conditions. It is not enough to know and say what the African peoples want; henceforth we must achieve the objective of our States' options, bring about the success through an effective organization and dynamic action of the deep aspirations and just causes which our peoples defend.

The Casablanca Charter and the Monrovia Charter were attempts at African unity and means of accelerating the historic process of Africa.

The various Export Boards would adopt the following principles:

- Each Board would be set up for a particular product, admitting only those States that produced he

product concerned, each State being awarded share commensurate with its output.

- The States concerned would unify their duties and taxes, as well as their regulations governing the product in question. This unification should be achieved by stages and with great flexibility, in order to allow, progressive adaptation.
- The Board would have very far reaching powers with regard to marketing and sales, and could stimulate or restrict national production in the interests of trade and price maintenance. It would operate as a Co-operative of Producer States.

The same principles might also lead to the establishment of African Import; Boards which could place over-all orders with foreign industries for a particular product.

An African Automobile Board could be set up which, by ordering in bulk, could obtain much more advantageous prices from the firms concerned for the African purchaser. The same would apply to other goods brought into Africa.

Because of their purchasing-power, these Import Boards could deal with large international manufacturers on a basis of equality, and more readily arrange the establishment in Africa of assembly, or even production plants, by rationalization of trade and standardization of models.

In this way, instead of expecting too much from the rich countries, Africa could make its own investments and start up its own industries.

Working on these lines, a Common Market or Economic Union would be entirely beneficial to Africa. It is up to us to convince ourselves of this.

These means must be merged into a single and unique Charter, The Charter of United Africa.

This new Charter should, through its contents, be consistent with the new exigencies of the development of the African continent.

The Charter will constitute, through the community of purpose it will set for us, a frame- work and a motive force for our national and international action in the service of our peoples.

It will mark a turning point in the development of our continent and a common basis which will successfully bring to an end the movement for the decolonization of Africa and its human, economic and social realities.

Africa for the Africans is Africa reconstructed on authentically African bases by the thinking people of





📍 Ahmed Sekou Toure (2ndL), President of Guinea, and Leopold Sedar Senghor, President of Senegal (2ndR) sign a common communiqué, on May 5, 1963 at the end of Sekou Toure five-day official visit to Dakar, as Guinean minister of Poste, Information and tourism (L) Diop Alassane and Senegalese minister for Information Lamine Diakhaté (R) look on. Ahmed Sékou Touré (09 January 1922-26 March 1984) was the first President of Guinea (1958-1984) Image © AFP via Getty Images

Africa for the liberty and physical and moral well-being of the African masses.

African unity will not be built round one man, nor round one nation nor round one religion but round this Charter which itself will be a just and dynamic rational and realistic programme.

African unity should not signify that the institutions of our States become standardized or become the extension of any foreign economic, ideological or military block.

African unity will grow a little every day from now on; it will be a continuous creation, an irreversible work which will bind together all future generations to the generation which laid the foundation stone of unity at Addis Ababa.

Everything that can be done at Addis Ababa should be done for the future will bring us new and certainly more complex problems.

As regards African representation in the United Nations and its specialized agencies, it will suffice to point out that the world context of the San Francisco Conference is long since outdated, that the idea of the Great Powers which prevailed in 1945 no longer holds in our time so that it is necessary to revise the United Nations Charter, to place it on a just basis, recognizing our continents right to the place it deserves.

It only remains for Africa to coordinate its action at the United Nations to stimulate its effectiveness. In the economic sector more than anywhere else Africa has paid too dearly to ensure the happiness of other continents. We must only envisage the necessary coordination of our means and then the improvement of our relations with the rest of the world on the unitary basis. The establishment of an African common market, or of African economic groupings, should be the concern of our States whose complementarily cannot be denied.

The establishment of an African Development Bank will be the cornerstone of this economic organization.

In short, an economic conference at continental level would precede "the big world-level meeting whose purpose is to define the bases of international economic co-operation, at which Africa will no longer attend as the poor relation but, quite to the contrary, as a power with an inestimable potential which it could contribute to humanity's common heritage.

To rebuild our culture which contains a thousand and one virtues and to enable Africa to play its part in scientific co-cooperation should lead us to draw up a concrete, complete programme of general and technical education.

In this spirit the Conference should unanimously

support the excellent suggestion of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor concerning the establishment of African universities, whose chief mission would be to collect, develop and disseminate the authentic elements of African culture. In so far as decolonization is concerned, we must finish with declarations of intention and effectively free those parts of Africa which are still under domination by our own means: political and diplomatic struggle, economic boycott of the backward colonial powers. Finally, it is essential that this Conference lays down a deadline for foreign domination in Africa at which date our armed forces should intervene directly in the legitimate defence of the African continent against aggressors.

Similarly, the Conference should establish a national liberation fund and we formally propose that each independent African State contributes 10 per cent of its national budget to the fund at the beginning of every financial year.

The Conference should send a delegation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs:

1. to place before the United Nations Secretary-General the conclusions of this Conference with regard to decolonization
2. To request that the Security Council be convened to consider, with a view to finding urgent solutions:
  - a. the report of the Committee on Decolonization relating to the African territories still under Portuguese domination;
  - b. the report of the United Nations Committee on the apartheid policy of South Africa.

At the end of his masterly statement which had the great merit of clearly outlining the context of the African Charter to which we all aspire, His Majesty the Emperor HAILE SELASSIE wondered whether history would remember the Conference of Addis Ababa by its success or by its failure.

The reply to that question depends solely on the thirty-one Heads of State assembled in this hall.

For our part, the only reply required by the categorical mandate which the Guinean people has given us is both very simple and very clear "We must do all we can, accept all sacrifices whatever they may be to ensure that the Addis Ababa Conference leads to a completely successful result, so that it may be remembered by all our peoples today and by future generations as having marked the birth of a new Africa, an Africa for ever united and hence forth the master of its fate".

For this reason we invite our brother African Heads of State present at this Conference to give a solemn pledge here that they will not leave Addis Ababa without having given Africa an organization in keeping with our people's hopes, an organization defined in a Charter and guided by a permanent Secretariat.

African history, the destiny of our peoples is being played out day by day. The life of a man is counted in decades; the life of Africa is endless. The path that Africa must take no limit, each generation receives from the past a heritage that it is in duty bound to hand on enriched in its turn.

There is no doubt that our generation will count among its assets the decisions which are to be made by the Conference and the sum of intelligence, devotion and sacrifices, and the value of an unconditional commitment which it will undertake to do honour to Africa so as to make her happy and strong to rehabilitate her by giving her back her freedom, her unity and the key to the democratic progress of her peoples.

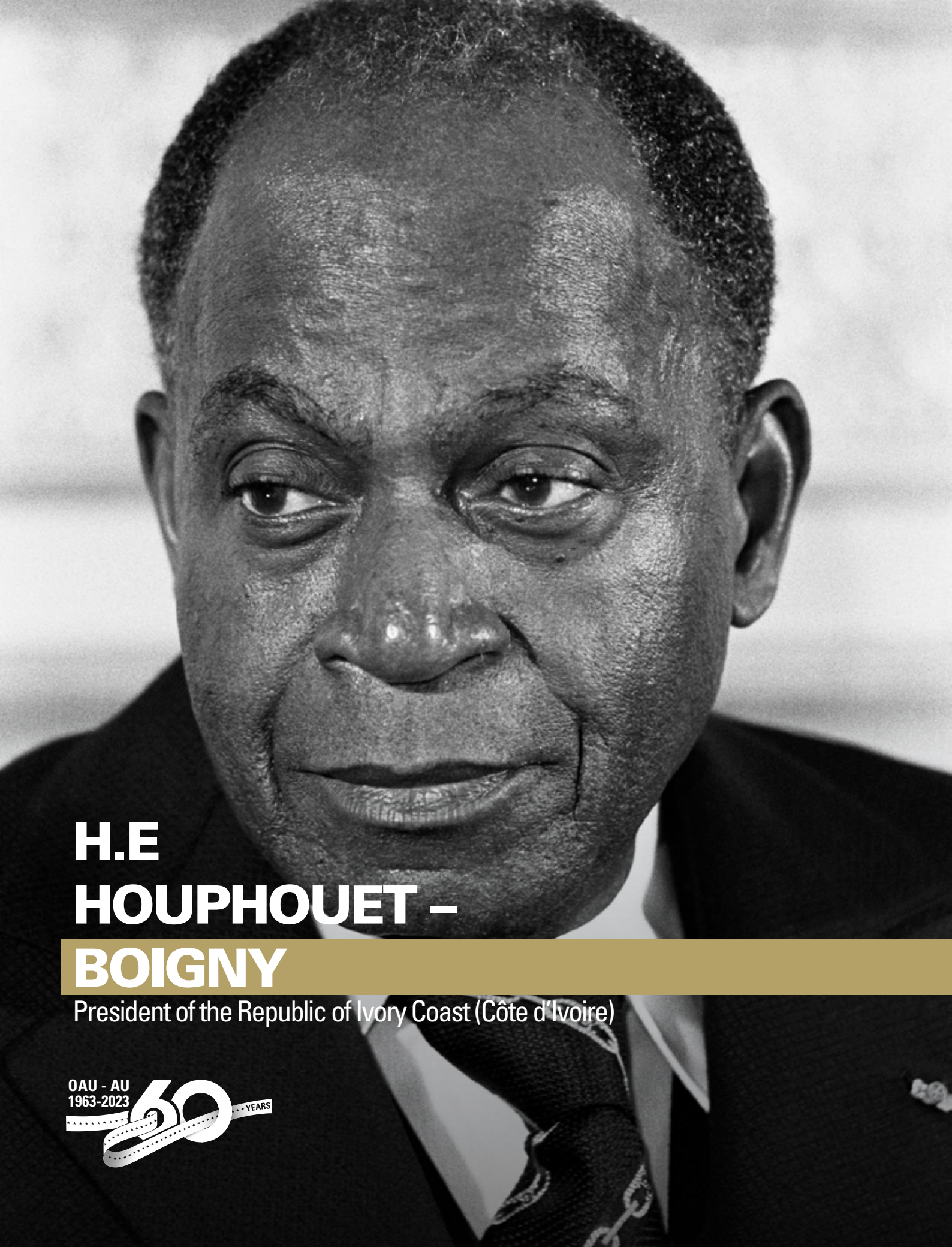
For peace and international friendship and cooperation.  
For the progress of Africa.

Long live African unity.



**H.E. Ahmed Sekou (Sekou) Toure (C), President of Guinea, the new independent state in South West Africa, announces 04 October 1958 in front of National Assembly, the independence of Guinea, as Diallo Saifoulaye (R), President of the Parliament, listens. Image © AFP via Getty Images**





**H.E**  
**HOUPHOUËT –**  
**BOIGNY**

President of the Republic of Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire)







our Imperial Majesty, Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having followed with growing interest the statements of my illustrious colleagues, I wondered as I came to this rostrum, whether it would not be extremely reasonable on my part to make the shortest speech of my whole political career, saying to you quite simply and frankly, in all friendship and in all confidence, and that in one single phrase: I have nothing to add, all has been said, and so well said, except that I must affirm to you that I am entirely in agreement with you on adoption in its entirety the common Charter of United Africa at the end of this moving debate - so moving and so rich in instruction.

But I know that you would not be in agreement with me if I acted in that fashion.

So in my turn, I should like first of all to be allowed to express to our host, His Majesty the Emperor Haile Selassie I, the feelings of gratitude awakened in us by his initiative in convening in Addis Ababa a Conference that is most certainly destined to mark an important date in the history of this continent.

We cannot doubt that the future will acknowledge the merits and the decisive role of that man who made himself the interpreter of the aspirations of all the African peoples to unity, and who, identifying himself with the course of events, was the first to succeed in bringing together all those bearing responsibility for this continent, thus allowing them to lay the foundation of their common destiny.

**Whether we wish it or not, the organization of the modern world is based upon the existence of several large groupings, and to hope that separately we shall find the key to our problems is to condemn ourselves not only to stagnation but also to slow asphyxia.**

**The salvation of all of us and the future of our well-beloved Africa depend on our unity alone.**

Here we have a positive action in the cause of peace, of which Africans, who traditionally attach a very special importance to discussion, are perhaps more conscious than others. Peace on this continent first, to the extent that this Conference is going to encourage the confrontation of doctrines and methods that are certainly more parallel than opposed, and to attempt to retain only that which can serve to unite us more closely. But peace in the world as well - for it is a fact that the establishment, consolidation and spreading of wide areas of tranquility can only aid powerfully in diminishing the risks of friction and in lessening international tension.

We are, likewise conscious of having within our grasp a chance of progress, and I should almost be tempted to say a chance of survival for Africa in this modern world the hardness of which - sometimes necessary, but always redoubtable and restrictive - we know well. And if there is a lesson to be derived here

and now from the more or less recent independence of our countries, is it not that of the discrepancy that appears between the natural aspiration of our peoples to happiness and the virtual impossibility of satisfying that aspiration within the too restricted and very often artificial limits of our frontiers? Whether we wish it or not, the organization of the modern world is based upon the existence of several large groupings, and to hope that separately we shall find the key to our problems is to condemn ourselves not only to stagnation but also to slow asphyxia.

I find it particularly significant that this first inter-African Conference - anxious to achieve unity, to facilitate the liberation of the whole continent, to consolidate peace and define the framework and means of progress of this continent should hold its meetings in the capital of a state which, thanks to the lucidity and untamed will of its Head, and thanks also to the uncompromising patriotism of a nation to which the people of the Ivory Coast expresses its profound admiration and its brotherly and affectionate greetings, was able to resist victoriously foreign conquest, thus preserving the independence of several thousand years. Who amongst us, indeed, did not follow with passionate interest, alas at that time impotently, the apparently unequal contest sustained by the valiant Ethiopian people? Who amongst us does not recall having heard with pride and hope the announcement of the ultimate success of this country, finally supported by the great democracies, against the totalitarian forces, although they were then at the height of their power?

Since then, Africa has not ceased to pay very special attention to the unceasing efforts of Ethiopia to promote African unity, to the economic development of this dear country and to the steady raising of the standard of life of its inhabitants, the fruits of the labour of a people and of foreign cooperation without discrimination. Such is the country which today lends our meeting the prestige of a glorious history, and sets for our desires for unity the

example of a syncretism that unites, without mixing them up, some of the most essential ingredients of the African patrimony.

I should like to take advantage of this historic and opportune occasion to convey likewise to all the Heads of State here assembled the brotherly greetings of the people of the Ivory Coast, which has always followed their victorious struggle for the total liberation of their countries from all forms of servitude and their unceasing efforts for the progress of the populations that have given them their confidence, not only

together. To begin with, two preoccupations, two grave preoccupations, hold our attention:

- First, to achieve unity, the primary and essential condition for our survival as a free and independent continent;
- Secondly, to liberate all Africa from the colonial yoke.

This latter preoccupation is truly the major anxiety of all responsible Africans, as we are unanimous in recognizing that there will be neither effective

neutrality, nor peace, nor unity, nor happiness in Africa as long as others among our brethren continue to groan in the chains of slavery.

And in this connection, the solemn undertaking to which my country will subscribe in the struggle for the complete liberation of our continent and undertaking that will be honoured, you may all rest assured deserves an explanation from us, so that nobody may be misled as to its exact significance.

We know about the long, difficult, but peaceful struggle that numerous friends amongst you have conducted, as we have ourselves, for the liberation of our respective countries; we know our almost morbid hostility to violence, our passionate devotion to negotiation for the settlement of all differences, the pressing representations that we have made during our visits abroad and in the course of the numerous



📍 Arrival Senegal President Leopold Sedar SENGHOR, president of Ivory Coast Felix HOUPHOUËT-BOIGNY and Congo President Fulbert YOULOU (from left to right) for the Conference of the African Round Table, in Abidjan Image © Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images

with interest but with affection as well. These populations will be eternally grateful to them for having rehabilitated the African man by the restoration of his pride and human dignity.

And in conveying these greetings, I am all the more anxious to make manifest to the Heads of State my satisfaction that at last we have come together and that this meeting constitutes in itself a positive contribution to the unity of our continent, so much desired by all, by permitting us to get to know one another and to exchange ideas upon our common development.

“What are you going to do now that you are 20?” is a question that it is customary to ask an adolescent when he has reached that important stage in life.

We have come to Addis Ababa to seek the answer



📍 Hamani Diori (L), president of Niger, Maurice Yameogo (C) president of Upper Volta (haute Volta, now Burkina Faso), are welcomed by Felix Houphouët-Boigny (R), president of Ivory Coast, on January 15, 1964 at Abidjan airport Image © AFP via Getty Images

contacts that we have been accorded, so that an end might be made of foreign occupation in Africa.

Confronted, however, by the unspeakable conduct of the rulers of Portugal, by their systematic and irresponsible refusal to put a stop to the, tragic tale, by the inhuman sufferings inflicted by this country on our brethren in their struggle for liberty that prime necessity of mankind by the heroic resistance of the Angolans, without arms or resources, and of so many other brothers whose tale of martyrdom is an affront to our own liberty, a threat and indeed even a negation of our own independence, we solemnly declare that our country, overcoming the scruples of its devotion to negotiation, has requested us to seek, in concern with yourselves, the most practical means of putting an end to the criminal obstinacy of Portugal, to foreign occupation in Africa, and to the apartheid that is held in honor in South Africa that apartheid which is the great shame of our continent.

Thus the attention of the men in power in those countries, and that of their real friends, is called unequivocally both to our unanimous and unshakeable will to do all within our power to help our oppressed brethren to recover in their turn their independence and dignity, and at the same time to the risks that the anachronistic situation upon which we have dwelt entail for peace in this part of the world.

Must we accordingly await the complete liberation of Africa in order to lay the foundations for the unification of our continent, the dream of yesterday, the reality without doubt of the near future, the justification for the very existence and hopes of all responsible Africans.

The union of those who are already free, who know the intoxicating joy of liberty, can contribute efficaciously to the liberation of our still, oppressed brethren.

I shall not persist there in developing more than necessary the reasons that militate in favor of unity, so compelling do they appear to us, as they derive both from aspirations founded on affection that are common to our peoples, and also from the laws which rule the world around us. It appears obvious; in fact that the irresistible pressure of technology must 'lead to the constitution of economically powerful geographical groups, which will take the place of the partitions of the past: that is a fact, the major fact of the present epoch, which compels our recognition and which it is not in our power to alter.

In reality, we have only the choice between participation in the modern world as a solidly constructed group, and therefore as a respected partner, and standing aside from the main economic

stream, which would restrict us, probably for all time, to the role of supernumerary, a role which some people already tend only to often to assign to us.

We are too conscious of the impatience of the men who sent us there as their representatives, and of their thirst for greater well-being, too conscious also of the historic nature of what is at stake at this Conference not to set our steps resolutely on the road to unity.

Its construction will be difficult, essential, enthralling and intoxicating, all at the same time.

We should be doing ourselves an injustice if we doubted for a single instant the deliberate will of our illustrious colleagues gathered here, or if we doubted their acute consciousness of the obstacles that await us on the path of unity, a difficult path, but a path that offers salvation for all of us.

Some of our colleagues have stressed here and now with force and conviction the necessity of telling each other the truth as is fitting between the brothers that we are. That is the task to which I would address myself in my turn. Having always had a horror of the sterile polemics and ill founded, subjective accusations that divide us, I should like to say to you in all good faith, that if we venture to emphasize, before and after so many other, the difficulties that face us, this is in no way with the idea of evading our responsibilities or putting a brake on the infectious enthusiasm which WE are experiencing together on this blessed day, but on the contrary with the determination to bear them constantly in mind, so as to have a healthy appreciation of the errors to avoid, to measure judiciously the ingredients of wisdom, active patience, courage and realism essential to the success of this immense and grandiose undertaking.

Our common victory, difficult but certain, will be all the more precious in that we shall be able to seek together in brotherly comradeship the means adequate to overcome the difficulties inherent in this exceptional human achievement.

Indeed, the convergence of reasons of so many different kinds a theme that we shall develop later combined with the affective but powerful inclination that impels the African peoples to achieve their unity, should, as it seems, enable them to surmount all difficulties and overcome all obstacles.

That is what we think, in fact, and our presence here has no other justification. But we are also conscious of the fatal error that we should commit in letting ourselves be carried away by enthusiasm, and in underestimating the difficulties by attempting to pass



through the necessary stages too rapidly.

Words of disillusionment?

Certainly not ... Words of realism, rather, as we cannot doubt that there are certain kinds of wild optimism that lead straight to disenchantment. It is enough for us to turn our attention to the attempts at unification that are at present emerging in outline in the world to be led to exercise essential but constructive caution. On the one hand, we have nations which left behind them several decades ago the historical phase of nationalism, and which conceive their unity as being the culmination of long and delicate process. On the other hand, we find countries that are neighbours that have a community of language, religion, economy and ideology, that share an equal desire to achieve their unity, and that are nevertheless led by an accurate appreciation of certain realities to renounce the idea of immediate fusion and to provide for transitional forms of association in order to reach their goal.

We must, therefore, be clearly aware that if the union of Africa constitutes for us a new aspiration, the same sentiment has inspired other peoples before us – peoples whose experiences cannot be disregarded, but which must, on the contrary, be carefully analysed.

We cannot fail to recognize, first of all, the obstacle constituted in our case by the scarcity of human contacts that the rulers of this continent maintain between themselves. And it is already a first positive result of this Conference that we are breaking without isolation, and enjoying the opportunity for personal exchanges on the model of those exchanges which the greatest leaders of the world and the Heads of State of other continents try to establish between each other.

It has been said that frontiers are the scars of history. The magicians of plastic surgery, which certain persons would like to claim they are, will employ their supposed extraordinary talents in vain; they will not succeed so soon in effacing these scars from the surface of the earth. That operation is not indispensable to the achievement of the unity with which we are concerned.

Although we may hope that different nationalisms will rapidly lose their sharp outlines, it is impossible for us to disregard their present existence, sometimes indeed in the exacerbated forms which the struggle against colonialism has obliged them to assume. Furthermore, it is scarcely possible for us legitimately to disregard the difficulties of a linguistic nature, and all those other difficulties which, in a general way, result from the under-development of this continent and from the various temptations, both personal and collective, which are its deplorable ransom.

Even the desire of certain ideological blocs to draw Africa into their sphere of influence, and there to project their antagonisms, must be emphasized and considered as an important factor promoting division.

It therefore seems to us that our ardent quest for unity must be matched by the greatest discretion, and at the same time by the will to proceed by progressive stages, applying positive solutions to concrete problems, and leaving it to what I will call the “dynamism of unity” to settle later on those questions which may still divide us today. Here and now, it appears to us possible to enumerate the principles that should inspire our efforts.

The unity that we seek should not be confused with uniformity, which simplifies first of all that every country must have the opportunity of adopting the political and economic system which appears to it to correspond with a precise phase of its development, and which likewise implies that every country has the imperative duty to respect the different paths that brother countries may choose. This absolute tolerance constitutes both a prerequisite for more highly-developed unification later on, and at the same time contains a positive element to the extent that it will permit the comparison of varied experiences which, as we must recognize, are in their origins foreign to our continent, and which must accordingly be measured in terms of specific reality. The choice of different regimes, moreover, cannot but serve to enrich Africa in no uncertain manner in the realm of doctrines and methods, and to facilitate the working out of a system that would truly belong to our continent and that would borrow from each of these experiments its most positive aspects.

Absolute tolerance, scrupulously and religiously observed by all in their dealings with one another, will bring about the disappearance of the grave threat which hangs over the future of our young states: the subversive intrigues originating in third African States, which are the accomplices of foreign states hostile to our unity, and therefore to our real independence and happiness.

This is the place for us to condemn, energetically and in unison, political assassinations as a means of government or of assuming power.

Respecting as we do the popular will, it will not occur to us to defend from this rostrum regimes or persons condemned by their people.

But what we consider contrary to the spirit of unity that animates all of us, is assassination or murder organized from abroad, or with the tacit complicity of foreign countries, in order to overturn a government or regime

that does not enjoy the favour of the African States organizing or encouraging such actions.

It is the duty of our Conference, in such cases, to define their common attitude: this must be clear and without any possible ambiguity towards these false brothers, for otherwise Africa will slip, fall, plunge and flounder in those so called revolutions which have for decades torn certain countries to pieces on the instigation of a few ambitious men, thirsty for honours, to the certain detriment of the unfortunate industrious masses, who thus pursue their aimless existences in destitution, which is the inevitable consequence of such troubles – factors of political and governmental instability and of insecurity.

We should like to believe, moreover, that we, as responsible leaders, will condemn with firmness any resort to practices which dishonour their authors. Yes, we wish to believe it, because this frame of mind and these methods appear to us foreign to Africa, and because we also consider that improved well-being for the people constitutes for each of us a sufficiently inspiring and absorbing task to preclude our being tempted to pursue dreams of hegemony abroad, which we intend to leave to other continents or other epochs.

We would hope, furthermore, that the solution of such differences as may arise between certain brother states would be sought by means of peaceful negotiations. What is at stake is the harmonious development of this continent, which could not countenance the use of other methods, the value of the message of human peace and brotherhood, which Africa means to convey to a world that needs it sorely, is also at stake.

Whatever may be the extent of the difficulties, some of which we have mentioned, everything militates in favour of unity.

The salvation of all of us and the future of our well-beloved Africa depend on our unity alone.

Freedom, peace and happiness – do not these represent the ultimate goal of our common policy?

We are all agreed in recognizing that the development of Africa can only be achieved in a climate of peace. It is also necessary for Africa to eliminate all internal elements of discord, so as to be able to stand aside from the competition in which the two rival ideological blocs are engaged, and to ensure that they do not succeed in transposing their rivalry to this continent. We believe that Africa will be better able to win respect for its true neutrality by manifesting a complete unity of views, thus proving itself capable of negotiating on a footing of equality with the different blocs, which

would otherwise be tempted to link their assistance with political conditions such as would drive the isolated African States to choose between committing themselves – and indeed between accepting ideological subjection – and the withdrawal of essential foreign aid.

Hence the absolute necessity of achieving peace in Africa – total peace, indivisible peace, the foundation of true neutrality.

Yes, peace between ourselves, peace with other continents, those are the essential pre-requisites of true neutrality: that neutrality to which we aspire, as it alone will enable us to catch up with the long period we have lagged behind on the road of progress.

I am quite ready to concede that a conflagration would not directly concern our continent, at least in the early stages, and also to the extent it had chosen and won the chance of keeping to strict neutrality. But could anyone seriously believe that in the age in which we are living, and in a world the different parts of which are so closely complementary, and of which the dimensions have been so extraordinarily contracted by technology, could anyone seriously believe that a world dispute would not concern us in the long run, even if indirectly, and would not bring in its trail consequences that are easily imagined for the development, if not the very existence, of our states? And is it not clear that the behaviour of the world powers would be perceptibly transformed as soon as they ceased to have as interlocutors a mosaic of states having relatively negligible importance, and as soon as they were dealing with an entity of more than two hundred million men, with a united continent having at its disposal considerable natural resources essential to those world powers, a continent proclaiming aloud its right to peace – that is to say, to progress.

Although the reasons that lead us to aspire to unity are political, they are also of an economic character. For if it is true that the great world groupings have the appearance of political or ideological blocs, do they not, in the last resort, cloak economic realities? Are not the most solid and stable of unions those which are based upon a community and a coincidence of material interests, which very often appear as the prelude to the imperceptible harmony of policies and then to political unity? Because it appears to us that economic unity constitutes the best possible approach to political unity, because within the framework of the modern organization of world markets, it is becoming more and more essential for Africa to appear in the guise of a coherent whole, because ideological struggles can for the most part be reduced to fundamental divergences on the manner in which the utilization and distribution

of material resources are conceived, because the total liberation of African man now appertains, on the economic plane, to the increase of his purchasing power, we cannot remain insensible to the advantages that coordination, as a prelude to the much desired unification, would contribute to our progress in that domain.

Our Conference should turn its attention in particular to that economic coordination which everyone is agreed in recognizing as a vital necessity, and as the essential and indispensable support – I might even affirm, the primary conditions – of our unity.

Whether we are dealing with agricultural or animal production, or the disposal of such products, or with the industrialization of our countries, or with trade, or with lines of communication, with transport or with telecommunications, coordination proves to be necessary.

Our work must culminate in the definition of the framework and means of that coordination, and of the essential stages on the road, leaving to our economic experts the task of progressively fillings in the frame, the frame of our future economic community, in the overriding interest of united Africa.

If it is, in fact, true that our difficulties are essentially a result of the delays that have accumulated in our economic development, we shall only succeed in accomplishing our total liberation and in basing our unity on solid and modern foundations, to the extent that we tackle the real obstacles, and to the extent that together we find the solution to our main problem – that of the poor standard of living of the African people. We have said, in fact that political unions were generally preceded by economic Communities: so it is necessary for us to be able to pool our prosperity, so true is it that destitution can only engender hate and discord.

Our unity will thus in no way exclude outside cooperation.

On the contrary; and this cooperation will be all the more fruitful and confident, for being established on a basis of equality and of respect for all the interests represented.

I do not, moreover, consider it unprofitable to remind you of the necessity for an African culture, a harmonious synthesis of cultures coming from different continents and enriched by the contribution of our common patrimony, defined yesterday so excellently by our colleague and friend, our great poet, President Leopold Senghor, when he called it “African-ness.”

We are, in fact, convinced that no true progress will be made on the road to the unity of our continent if we do not dismiss fanaticism from our speech and actions, so as to open the way for fruitful exchanges between men, and in particular between young people coming from the most varied horizons, thus allowing the establishment of bonds of friendships, the comparison of different experiences and realities, a reciprocal enrichment designed to develop the feeling of jointly belonging to one and the same culture: African culture.

Africa awaits from the Conference of Addis Ababa reply to its impatient expectations: unity. From attentive study of the respective Charters of the two so-called groups, the Casablanca and Monrovia Groups, there emerges a common desire to crown the ardent hopes of our brother Africans: the unity of our continent.

When each one of us has explained precisely and with the most complete frankness the manner in which he conceives African unity, has formulated his reservations, stressed the mistakes to be avoided and the difficulties to be surmounted, and nevertheless induced acceptance of the necessity for and advantages of that unity which we so much desire, let us at last put to shame the many people who seize every opportunity to stigmatize what they consider the chronic and congenital trouble of the Africans: an immoderate taste for palaver.

Certain newspapers will tomorrow bear the headline: “African Conferences follow one another and are all alike”.

“A lot of speeches, very fine speeches (indeed, in Africa everything is song, symphony and poetry), resolutions, piles or resolutions, but no decisions at all.”

Agreed as we are on the goal, are we going to continue our discussions endlessly, to tear each other to pieces on the choice of means, thus ruining Africa’s chance of unity, a chance that is greater than that of all the other continents, and to prove our inveterate critics right by the same token?

No.

The moving admonition of His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia confronting us with our responsibilities, must be taken seriously – very seriously – into consideration.

Yes, history will condemn us implacably if the Conference of Addis Ababa, which has aroused so much hope in Africa and so much interest in the world, should end in pious hopes.

We remember a certain night – the 4th of August.

Let us act in such a way that history will likewise



consecrate the memory of the day of the 22nd May, the month of flowers at Addis Ababa, which means “The New Flower”, the day on which the new Africa was launched, an Africa united, fraternally united.

To bring this about, let us adopt before we separate, in unanimity and by acclamation, the draft Charter on which our responsible Ministers are working at this moment in the spirit that has emerged from our debates, a simple Charter which is flexible, and which consecrates the fusion of our groups on the altar of African unity, a framework to be progressively filled in, a framework the contents of which I do not require to deal with further, as it has been so eloquently defined by certain speakers preceding me on this rostrum.

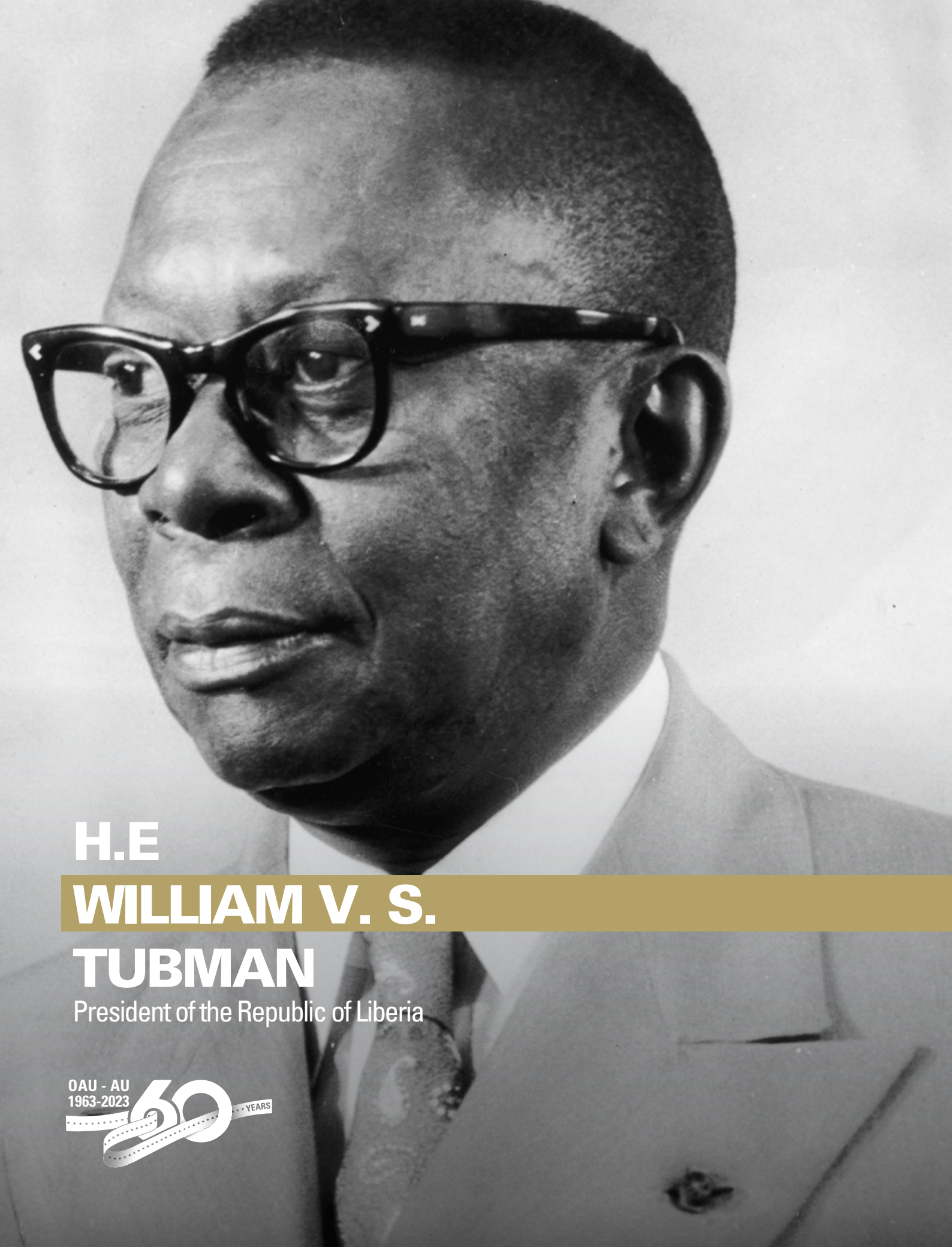
Yes, let us adopt it. But let us above all make it our first concern to apply the Charter honestly.

Only then will the dawn of that total unity, to which we aspire with all our being arise, only then – vindicating the poet’s words – “une teinte ineditée peuplera l’arc-en-ciel” (“an unknown tint will pervade the rainbow”). Then Africa’s voice will be heard, propounding a new humanism to the world, a humanism characterized by fraternity and the sense of solidarity, that special quality that has belonged to Africa throughout the millennia, that message which Africa’s present circumstances, have not yet allowed to prevail



**Felix Houphouët-Boigny Campaigning For The Elections In His Native Village, Yamoussoukro, In The Ivory Coast, Most Likely For The First Presidential Elections, In November 1960, Of The Ivorian Republic Which Became Independent On August 7 Of That Year.**

*Image © Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images)*



**H.E**

**WILLIAM V. S.**

**TUBMAN**

President of the Republic of Liberia





is Imperial Majesty, Excellencies, Honoured Delegates, My Fellow Africans,

The Addis Ababa Conference to which African leaders and governments have looked forward and on which world attention has been focused, has today brought together thirty-two Heads of African States and Governments in this historic City of Addis Ababa, in this beautiful setting to discuss and find practical solutions to some of the questions that may arise from the agenda prepared by the Foreign Ministers.

The magnitude and importance of this gathering, the efficiency with which preparations have been carried out and the personal attention which has been given by His Imperial Majesty and the Ethiopian Government deserve great commendation.

We extend to His Imperial Majesty and the Government and people of Ethiopia our grateful thanks and sincere appreciation for the magnificent and elaborate preparations which have been made for the Conference and for the gracious courtesies extended and the unbounded hospitality given to us since our arrival here. May we in this seat of the oldest independent African Kingdom be able to come near to the heart of the basic question so necessary to our survival in a divided world so that we may go away strong in the conviction that unity is not only desirable but feasible.

**In the great task to which we have set ourselves at this crucial moment in our continent's history, let us think like men of action and act like men of thought**

What will come out of the Addis Ababa Conference has been in the minds of Africans and on the lips of the peoples of the world and since the opening of the Foreign Ministers I meeting a listening world has turned in to Addis Ababa.

His Imperial Majesty has in His speech referred in very forthright manner and positive terms to the need for African Unity and presented the aims of the Conference to this body. How unity can be achieved and what steps can be taken towards its practical implementation so that it may bring us into a creative partnership in which we can live and work in peace for our mutual benefits and there make Africa strong in the economic, educational, cultural and technical phases of development, are issues to which much thought has already been given, various proposals made and plans of procedure advanced.

Now we are afforded an opportunity to create a synthesis of the whole for study and discussion to the end that there may be derived a useful effective and acceptable plan of procedure.

In these circumstances I would like to repeat the story narrated by one of the tribal chiefs of Liberia during an Executive Council where more than one thousand people were present. I had the occasion to relate this same story at the Accra Conference (Narrate story).

Never before has unity of action been more desirable and urgent; never before have independent nations faced such a challenging and splendid opportunity for concerted action; never before have our problems been graver and our needs more crucial.



July 1964 of Prime Minister of Kenya Jomo Kenyatta (C) and President of Liberia William Tubman (L), attending the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit conference, in Cairo Image © Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images



The Liberian delegation while having its own views, some of which will come up during the course of the Conference, has come with an open not a closed mind; a mind susceptible to reason and good judgment about the views of other States and groups. I believe that all who have assembled here today have come with the same attitude.

I crave your permission to refer to a practice sometime indulged in by delegations at conferences such as this walking out of committee or general assemblies during debates when the trend is contrary to their delegation's views. It appears to me that such actions are harmful to the success of a conference.

If a decision taken is against the view or interest of the delegation. The delegation might ask for its protest to the decision to be noted for the benefit of record and future generations because there may be other matters which may arise when the interest of the delegation may be affected or when advice, counsel and assistance of the delegation may be necessary and helpful. We lose the benefit of their advice, counsel and assistance if the delegation has walked out.

We earnestly hope that at such an historic and significant Conference, the general and not the personal or purely national interest will influence our thinking and action and thereby enable us to participate dispassionately and selflessly in debates designed to achieve the greatest good for Africa as pointed out by His Majesty. It is towards this end that we have assembled here; it is for this purpose that we have worked, planned and prepared for the Conference. Certainly, this is not a conference to end all conferences but it is one to which African leaders imbued with an avid desire for unity have come to find a way.

To His Majesty and the Government and people of Ethiopia we again pay high compliments for this great occasion in the annals of our continent.

In the great task to which we have set ourselves at this crucial moment in our continent's history, let us think like men of action and act like men of thought.



**His Royal Highness Hasan Rida, Crown Prince, representing His Majesty King Idris I and Head of the Libyan Delegation**

our Imperial Majesty, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this memorable and historical moment when we are all gathered there to reaffirm our unswerving solidarity and to lay sound and lasting foundations for our unity, I am extremely happy to express my most sincere and heart-felt thanks to His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie who, with his well-known love for Africa, has made strenuous efforts and undertaken such remarkable

**the African continent must be an undivided unit and that cooperation must be the objective of all African nations without distinction**

**...Fight and resist any imperialistic attempt to split Africa by using tendentious designations such "Africa south of the Sahara". Such a definition is aimed at separating Africa from its northern territories. African Sahara must be a bridge to unite us, not an obstacle to divide us.**

diplomatic activity to convene this historical conference in His glorious Capital of Addis Ababa. Our grateful thanks and deep appreciation go also to His Imperial Majesty and His Government and to the noble and friendly people of Ethiopia for their very warm welcome and most generous hospitality which they have extended to all of us.

It is both a great privilege and an honour to greet this assembly on behalf of the Kingdom of Libya and to convey to you all the greetings of H. M. King Idris I, together with his best wishes for your well-being and for a successful outcome of your deliberations. It is also my pleasure to bring brotherly greetings to the Government and people of Libya to the Governments and peoples of the participating countries.

I would like to assure you that the Libyan people place great hope on the purposes of this meeting, attended as it is by the prominent leaders of those nations which go to make up this great continent.



**HIS  
MAJESTY  
KING IDRIS I**

Libya

OAU - AU  
1963-2023



It is my earnest and sincere hope that our deliberations in this meeting be crowned with complete success and that we may at last unite the efforts of the African countries in achieving closer cooperation in all fields of human endeavour. These two factors are needed to bring about the liberation of those remaining peoples of our continent who are still suffering under colonial rule and foreign oppression.

Our ultimate aim must be this noble objective, for in it lies the destiny and hope of the African people. Indeed, all previous African meetings held at such high level had been dedicated to this common purpose.

It is with great joy and pleasure that I take advantage of this happy occasion to extend a very warm and brotherly welcome to the delegations of the African States who are participating with us for the first time. I would like also to extend a hearty welcome to the delegation of our sister country, Algeria, which has at last taken her rightful place amongst us, after attaining her freedom and independence through a heroic and bitter struggle. In her sacred struggle for freedom, African solidarity with our sister Algeria, was manifested itself in the finest possible form.

Your Imperial Majesty, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Libya has always believed in the close cooperation and understanding amongst African States. This cooperation and understanding are dictated by strong common factors: the struggle for freedom and dignity, as well as by common historical ties and the need to unite and to speak with one voice in world affairs.

We live in a world in which regional and international groupings play the greatest role and it is naturally difficult for any nation to proceed alone. In addition to this, there are geographical factors linking the African nations, also their common interests and their urgent need to stand together in close-ranks against hostile tides which prevent Africa from playing its natural role in the international field.

Most African peoples, having achieved their freedom and independence and having liberated themselves from the yoke of colonialism, consider that it is imperative for Africa to undertake her historical role by raising herself to the standard which she deserves. Africa must play an effective part in human civilization and scientific progress and she must catch up with the advanced nations so that she can contribute, together with the other free nations, to the advancement and welfare of the world.

Our beloved continent was for a long time deprived of

its right for freedom and dignity. What Africa has now achieved is mainly due to the zeal of her loyal sons who proved to be worthy of leading their countries towards the high standards now achieved by the other advanced nations.

In fact, the African nations occupy now a prominent position in the world and their international status has become very important. Therefore, these African States must promote more cooperation amongst their governments and peoples in order to contribute, through their sincere efforts, to the achievement of world peace and prosperity, and in this they will be discharging their responsibilities towards humanity.

It has always been the policy of Libya to promote close ties between all the African nations. My country firmly believes that the African continent must be an undivided unit and that cooperation must be the objective of all African nations without distinction. Guided by this noble spirit, Libya has always been happy to accept invitations to attend African meetings and conferences.

Libya still believes that the African countries must speak with one voice and unite their efforts. My country spares no effort in promoting cooperation and understanding among all African countries so that the African ship may reach the shore of safety. It is for this high and noble reason that Libya attends this great gathering here.

Today we happily meet under better conditions, perceiving - as we do - a glimpse of hope for the unifying of the voice of Africa. We earnestly hope that the outcome of this conference may be positive and fruitful for the welfare of all the African peoples, as well as complete settlement of all outstanding African problems.

We look forward, therefore, to seeing our conference formulate the bases for closer cooperation in a spirit of mutual understanding, which would permit all of us to serve our common interest. Thus we can unify the efforts of the African nations in the elimination of the remaining vestiges of colonialism in all its forms, including Zionism, racial discrimination and any other sort of tyranny and colonial rule.

Mutual understanding and closer cooperation among African states is a necessity. We must avoid at all costs, the formation of African groupings which tear and split the unity of Africa and create a real danger to our security and existence. Such disunity would only aid the imperialists - to sow the seeds of discord and dissention among the African nations, to the benefit of their selfish interests and colonial objectives.





 **The King of Libya, Idris I, broadcasting a speech after Libya's declaration of independence, 2nd January 1952.** Image © PNA\_Rota/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Libya was, and is the gateway to Africa. The amendments to the Libyan Constitution promulgated some weeks ago, and which brought about the complete unity of our country, clearly state that Libya is an integral part of Africa. Therefore, my country is determined to fight and resist any imperialistic attempt to split Africa by using tendentious designations such "Africa south of the Sahara". Such a definition is aimed at separating Africa from its northern territories. African Sahara must be a bridge to unite us, not an obstacle to divide us.

Your Imperial Majesty, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Agenda include many important items whose object is the realization of African unity. This unity, which we have cherished for to long time, is the greatest hope for all the peoples of Africa those eyes are focused upon our conference in the expectation that it is this noble goal will be given concrete form. It is, therefore, our duty towards all the African peoples to lay down the principles and the bases of our unity in all the fields of human endeavour, in particular close cooperation and solidarity in the fields of politics, economy, social activities and health.

I would like to conclude by expressing again my sincere wishes for the complete success of this blessed conference. We pray Almighty God that this conference may be a step forward

in the path of African unity. All the African peoples look to this conference with all hopes and expectations for a brighter future for them all. We must not forget that our brethren African peoples in South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Portugal Guinea, and South West Africa and in other African territories are still languishing under the yoke of imperialism. They appeal to us, in the name of brotherhood and Solidarity, to unite and cooperate for the interests of our beloved continent and against our common enemies - who persist in sowing the seeds of discord and dissention among us.

Thankyou

A black and white portrait of H.E. Philibert Tsiranana, President of the Malagasy Republic. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a dark tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a serious expression. The background is a blurred outdoor scene, possibly a beach or a coastal area. In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for the OAU - AU 1963-2023 60 YEARS anniversary, featuring a stylized '60' with a film strip and the text 'OAU - AU 1963-2023 60 YEARS'.

**H.E  
PHILIBERT  
TSIRANANA**

President of the Malagasy Republic (Madagascar)







our Excellencies, Heads of State, Your Excellencies, Chiefs of Governments, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the name of the Malagasy People, I have great pleasure in greeting the supreme authorities and the highest dignitaries of the States assembled for this historic Conference of Addis Ababa.

Your Excellencies, Heads of State, Chiefs of Government, Ministers, Honourable Delegates and observers, through your persons the Malagasy, separated from the continent not only by 250 miles of sea but also by many other elements, wish me to convey to all the peoples of the Independent African countries their profound aspirations for African and Malagasy solidarity, friendship and unity.

**I believe that Africa's strength in the world theatre will lie in her cohesion, and that the ideal to be attained is harmony through brotherhood**

The Malagasy people send also their brotherly greetings to the countries which are still dependent, fervently wishing that they may in the near future be free to settle their own destiny and assuring them of their effective sympathy, for there can be no real African Unity as long as there are dependent countries in Africa.

Lastly, I should like to express to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia the deep- felt gratitude of the Malagasy Nation for the welcome He has given us and the hospitality offered to us by His illustrious country.

I shall not indulge in demagoguery because we must devote all our attention to such an important matter as the establishment of Unity. Let us be objective.

Madagascar, lost in the Indian Ocean as it is, looks towards Africa and counts upon her affection. It observes, as his country has no common border with any other country, the child of the Great Island thinks he can hold a more objective opinion on what we, African and Malagasy people, really are.

He will try to give his opinion about this Unity by analysing the difficulties we have to overcome. Indeed, what I am going to say may not be agreeable to all present here. But it is necessary that someone dare tell the truth, however hard it may be, and lance the abscess.



**MADAGASCAR - MARCH 15: Round Table Conference on the issue of Belgian Congo, in Tananarive on March 15, 1961. From left to right : MM. Cleophas KAMITATU, President of the provincial government of Leopoldville, Jean BOLIKANGO, Vice-President of the Congolese government, Joseph ILEO, Prime Minister of the Congolese government, Joseph KASAVUBU, head of the Congo-Leopoldville state, Albert KALONJI, head of the autonomous state of South-Kasai, Philibert TSIRANANA, President of the Madagascar Republic, Moise TSCHOMBE, President of the state of Katanga and Barthelemy MUKENGE, head of the autonomous state of North-Kasai** *Image © Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images*

I shall not speak about the sufferings we had to endure in the colonial time, for we all know them too well. It would be demagogic for me to dwell upon this subject; besides we must not be too sentimental but realistic, and we have to look straight forwardly into the problems.

That we meet in a country so steeped in African History is to my mind of great significance. With its rich historical post, Ethiopia takes her stand among the very first, organized, independent countries in Africa.

As such, Ethiopia very soon came into contact with the outer world and



with her own genius had made her stamp on history.

For the Malagasy, this meeting in Ethiopia assumes a special significance. According to legend, Ethiopia and the Great Island of Madagascar have this in common that they belong to both Africa and Asia. Is it their common heritage that has led both nations to terrace their hill sides for arable purposes and build their strongholds on rocky summits? What truth is there in the traditions which link the Abyssinian and Malagasy races on the basis of anthropological, ethnological and Linguistic investigations?

Those still unanswered questions together with the particular prestige of our very eminent host, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I all this served to strengthen the support of the Malagasy for my visit to the ancient Empire of the Queen of Sheba.

But the Malagasy, deeply attached to the past though they may be, look towards the future and cherish great hopes for our African and Malagasy Convention which will be epoch making in the History of the Third World. (May I say in passing that I use the word "Convention" in the widest sense of the term).

We are assembled here and we can never over emphasize this fact if we are to have this objective firmly fixed in our minds we are assembled here, I say, to work out African and Malagasy Unity.

At the very moment when all our countries are freely shaping their own destiny, it is our aim to strengthen, within the framework of far-reaching solidarity, their respective and common positions in international affairs; for one, believe that this strengthening of our relations with the rest of the world will play its part in strengthening the national unity of each of our individual States.

For it would be unrealistic to cast our individual characteristics to the winds. In their past history, as far back as is known, and in their present history as well, the peoples we represent here could be distinguished from one another by many specific and original characteristics.

I am not unaware that, when our colonizers set boundaries between territories, they too often ignored the frontiers of race, language and ethics, though Madagascar did not suffer from this historical fact. I am not unaware either of the certain harmful effects of such a system on many African races and tribes.

The tendencies to uniformity which have prevailed in the past are, if they persist indefinitely, liable to do us further serious harm. Unity does not mean Uniformity.

I have looked with keen interest into a lengthy article published in a newspaper printed in the State of our friend His Excellency Kwame Nkrumah - dealing with the problem of African Linguistic unity: the writer develops the many delicate aspects of the question. Such an example of African diversity to which the Malagasy man are particularly sensitive, confronts them with a new problem, for their country has, time out of mind, known the existence of one single national language.

Most of us have inherited from the colonial powers, a distributing and re-grouping of nationalities, which whether they be good or bad, are evident realities. The colonizers also left behind them a linguistic distribution and re-grouping which enable us to expound our ideas and understand one another today in Addis Ababa.

If I may develop this subject awhile, I may point out that they also enable us to make ourselves understood outside the African continent and Madagascar, and even to make our personality felt throughout the world. I would remind you of an event of which you are certainly already aware: our friend, His Excellency M. Leopold Sedar Senghor has lately been awarded in France the "Grand Prix international de Poesie".

Groupings have thus been established, with or without our consent that are now stabilized. I do not feel that we can question the existence of unities thus created. It is no longer possible, nor desirable, to modify the boundaries of Nations, on the pretext of racial, religious or linguistic criteria, citing that unity based on uniformity which I have just denounced.

Indeed, should we take race, religion or language as criteria for setting our boundaries, a few States in Africa would be blotted out from the map.

Leaving demagoguery aside, it is not conceivable that one of our individual States would readily consent to be among the victims, for the sake of Unity.

A State, at any given moment in its history is composed of assembled races, religions or languages with the inevitable ethnical, religious or linguistic minorities: those minorities have the right to live and ought to be respected.

Madagascar was peopled by many races, both African and Asian. Mixed as they were, those races form today one people, of the same blood, speaking the same language, accepting all religions. Our insular position has no doubt made this fusion easier: I have no doubt that the races grouped within the present national limits can, if they have not already done so, rapidly merge thanks to the accelerating influence

on this phenomenon of different factors, in particular the development of all forms of communications and culture.

Therefore, in my opinion, our African and Malagasy Convention has to abide by realities and prove its awareness of present circumstances, for only thus will it inspire throughout the world the consideration and respect we wish it to enjoy.

This cannot be achieved without real sacrifice. Indeed, it seems to me that we must control and contain our deep sentimental aspirations; it is an appeal of the heart together with reminiscences of the past which inspires us in our very sincere and estimable quest for a closer rapprochement and as complete a fusion as possible we see there in determining elements for the defence of our ancestral heritage, our rights and our interests.

Yet, the Malagasy being deeply attached to their independence, which they attained recently and with difficulty, I would not have the support of my fellow-country men, were I to approve any project of association, federal or even merely confederal in character.

What we see in the different parts of our planet and why not say so - on the African continent itself, should give us matter for reflection. What is happening in the world, in its search for equilibrium, is not very likely to make us wish for immediate political unity, rigid in its principles and in the application of those principles.

I should like to be clearly understood: I believe that Africa's strength in the world theatre will lie in her cohesion, and that the ideal to be attained is harmony through brotherhood, in all its different forms. Here indeed is the summit - I am as sincerely convinced of this as anyone of those present here - to which we ought to lead the peoples, for whom we bear a grave and heavy responsibility.

But I am of the opinion that the goal is still remote; and because it is so, we have to start off as soon as possible; besides, unless the planned enterprise is prepared with the utmost care, it will fail.

When I consider the obstacles over which European unification stumbles and the price its builders have been paying for centuries, I cannot believe that the acceleration of the historical process and the lessons we have been able to draw from it can justify our contemplating hasty solutions.

In spite of our hereditary leaning towards solidarity and brotherhood, we shall be greatly mistaken if we think that we are going to decree the establishment of African Unity by means of legislative texts, and that by

our very will, it will come to life.

Along with many members of this distinguished Assembly, I wish for the Constitution of a Government and a Parliament covering the whole of Africa if this is what we mean by Unity; but it seems to me unrealistic to believe that this can be achieved in the near future.

Fortunately, there is one thing which brings us together and draws us close to one another i.e. our common ideal of unity. We should be able then, in able friendship, to size up the obstacles and determine the means of overcoming them.

The proof that this is possible is to be found in the existence of the Casablanca, Monrovia and Brazzaville Groups and in the three Charters which established them; out of former attempts is arising, strengthened and anew, the United Arab Republic.

The erection of such constructions is not achieved without prudent slowness, in spite of the tremendous effort of goodwill made by those associated with it. However such constructions do exist and they contribute towards the implementation of the plans they have established.

The dissemination throughout the world of declarations of intention is not enough to give force to a regional group and enable it to defend its ideals and interests. It is necessary to establish one's actions upon a concrete foundation. In the initial stage this foundation emanates only from the existing regional groups; in my opinion, it is at their level that the unity of ideal and action for which we are striving can be achieved.

Moreover, it will be necessary from the outset that it carry with it more than a political, cultural and social doctrine: in the first place, the precise outlines of its policy and particularly of its economic policy must also of necessity be defined, for no alliances could ever be lasting without a basis or economic provisions.

Once the policies and programmes of those three groups, formulated as precisely as is necessary, can be compared, a task of the utmost value in fact and I must insist on this point an indispensable task, will have to be carried out the maturely prepared rapprochement, harmonization and coordinated of those policies and programmes.

Only thereafter in my opinion, can our joint organization, the object of our meeting here, lay its foundations on a basis acceptable to all of us, and also to all the isolated countries which are still dependent, which will in all likelihood join us later.

I am well aware that this thesis of mine is in opposition

to the desire of several of us to hear talk only of the African Group without any consideration of the existing regional groupings. I know too that it is in apposition to the impatience of those who expect a complete community system, on a continental scale, to result from our first meeting.

To those objections my reply is that those Groupings exist and will continue to exist as long as their fusion has not been achieved and that this cannot be accomplished by merely expressing the desire.

If may use a metaphor, I would say that we are building a house; the foundations are our peoples, in other words Africa itself; the regional groups are the walls which should be firmly joined together by the bolts of concrete, and not only by a roughcast concealing the cracks; and African unity is the roof, as vitally necessary as the foundations, which we shall lay on top of the mutually reinforced walls.

My second reply is it is an illusion to wish for the immediate establishment of an African community. If we are thinking like some in terms of foreign policy and diplomacy, as well as economic planning - currency and the issue of banknotes, and lastly defence. Many of our States are not mature enough to bear the burden of such a community in their present stage of independent political and economic development. My colleagues from the States that were formerly French Overseas Territories can join me in asserting that we knew such a regime during the period of autonomy when we belonged to the French Community.

That regime is not without merits or advantages, but it restricts the independence of our States that independence we have all known for a long or a short period of time.

It is therefore acceptable only in as much as it brings to all and each of them, as immediate counterparts, unquestionable political, economic and social benefits, as regards the relationship between their strength and that of the other nations in the world.

It will very rightly be argued that the Heads of State and Government here present are fully empowered and competent to engage their countries in this. African crusade for the Continent's progress. Yet, can it be reasonably maintained that the outcome of this first contact will be the establishment of an Inter-African Common Market or of a common defence for Africa and Madagascar? Is it conceivable that at the end of this memorable meeting the three groups will have disappeared to give way to the Convention which it is our desire to establish.

On the contrary I maintain that the Groups will enable us to create the Group. They must draw up an inventory of what they have in common, then of what brings them close together, and lastly of the factors of their present oppositions and contradictions whose importance can be reduced.

I shall analyse only the factors favourable to a rapprochement which could lead us to a minimum programme founded on as large an identical of view as possible, admitting of unanimity and effectiveness.

The Convention, determined by the Nations whose Heads of State or Government are present, is open to all independent African States that consider themselves bound by the San Francisco Charter in their relations with one another.

It will welcome on the same condition countries that have just achieved independence, but could not accept the adhesion of States whose policy is based on racial discrimination.

We intend to uphold the entire sovereignty of our States in their whole sovereignty and negotiate with each other on an equal footing, irrespective of geographical or demographic importance.

We intend solemnly to guarantee the integrity of each State and its inalienable right to independent existence. This in turn leads us to guarantee mutual non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs of the other States, and to exclude and condemn subversion that would find shelter, sustenance or support in one of the Associate States.

We consequently advocate the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts which could arise between member States.

We are determined to erase colonialism and fight for the independence of brother States which are still under colonial rule, and we are determined to check any attempt at neo-colonialism, from wherever it may come.

I think, and I say repeat, that none of us will discard any of those principles the list of which is not exhaustive, and that we shall accept them as bases for our institution, if we wish to establish an Africa of brotherhood.

I must however clearly point out that our adhesion to such a formula dismisses ipso facto that of the Federation of African States, since federalism presupposes important surrender of national sovereignty.

Likewise, we shall reject the confederalist formula



because the authority we set above the States might impose directives unacceptable to some of us.

I consider then that, to ensure the success of our designs and the strength of an Africa of States, we must find at least in the initial stage - a more flexible and yet effective formula, as did the States constituting the Groups of Casablanca, Monrovia and the African and Malagasy Union. Although their respective affinities made them open to the most rigorous forms of re-grouping, they turned neither towards a Federal, nor even towards a Confederal system.

Like the member States of these groups, we shall achieve our purpose by bringing into play our common spirit of active cooperation. An Africa of States must be an Africa of cooperation.

Cooperation opens up for us a vast field foreign policy and diplomacy, defence, science and technology, education and culture, health and nutrition, are as many sectors where our desire for harmony, solidarity and efficacy can play its part.

What might be the fundamental institutions of all-African and Malagasy cooperation? In other words, what will be the very structure of our future Charter?

Madagascar would envisage it as follows: a Conference of Heads of States and Governments, a Council of Ministers – a General Secretariat, an African and Malagasy Group at the United Nations, the Permanent Conciliation Commission and an African and Malagasy Organization for Economic Cooperation. This list is not of course exhaustive.

The Conference of Heads of State might be convened at intervals still to be fixed, e.g. once a year. Being the supreme Authority, it would take decisions to be implemented immediately; the ideal procedure to respect the principle of the sovereignty of the different States would be for decisions to be taken unanimously, each State having, of course, only one vote.

The Council Ministers, meeting twice a year, might examine matters on which they are competent to decide, prepare and superintend the proceedings of the meetings of experts, and lastly prepare the ground for the meetings of the Conference of Heads of States and Governments.

The General Secretariat, the administrative organ of the Convention, might organise the meetings of experts and those of the Council of Ministers, be responsible for the execution of the decisions of the Heads of States and Governments and those of the Conference of Ministers, once directions for their implementation have been given. For I hope that the decisions taken at

all levels will not remain dead letters,

The African and Malagasy Group at the United Nations, composed of the Permanent Representatives of member States in New York, might constitute the permanent instrument for the Continent policy towards the countries or the groupings of countries in other continents. Representation in the specialised agencies of United Nations might be conceived along the same lines.

The Permanent Conciliation Commission might be the fifth basic institution, even if it is established by a separate treaty; since it guarantees African peace, it is of the utmost importance. It would be advisable, taking into account the importance we all set on harmony in our relations, for provisions regarding arbitration to be made in the same treaty: appeal to the International Court of Justice will be made only when all the means of African Conciliation have been used.

Those would be the instruments of our political action. The sixth might concern our second front, the economic front; I am alluding to the Organization for Economic and Social Cooperation.

We are all convinced that the strength of our entente depends on our economic strength; we know that cultural and social development is possible only if it is founded on economic progress. The different forms of cooperation, and their efficacies should not be weakened by excessive fractioning; far from distributing them amongst several autonomous organs, we should group them into specialised sections of the same organ.

We all desire the establishment of an African Common Market, and because we desire it eagerly, we must prepare it with the utmost care.

I do not think that it can, like the European Common Market, result from measures taken at the highest level, and then impose on its members far-reaching reforms which we know are difficult to put into effect. It seems to me that this must be tackled in the same way as our down-to earth programmes of action. More and more numerous are the countries of Africa and Madagascar where the individual, the family and the village are called upon to participate in the equipment of their territory in accordance with plans conceived by themselves, and forming integral part of the State's programmes.

We should use the same approach to achieve our economic integration which should start at the lowest level. Circumstances favour this formula: our countries' economies are not specialised to such a point that the

orderly distribution of production activities will impose on some of them reconversions which their economic systems cannot afford.

The first step towards widening the African economies should be to harmonise production plans and abolish customs barriers. It would be dangerous for its future that the Continent's industrialisation be continued amidst the confusion reigning at present.

Our effective or potential natural resources are numerous and diverse. Each of our countries must base its efforts on those which it stands the best chance of exploiting, and leave to the more favoured the exploitation of resources which for them are of secondary importance. It is by refraining from competition that we can establish a strong and competitive industry in relation to world trade. Since there is still time to do so, we should promote the development of our industries on the basis of specialization.

In this intelligent and broad regionalism will help us. We have already noted the existence in Africa of joint economic policies, which are applied to areas of relatively little importance in relation to the geographical scale of the Continent, which are not politically and demographically negligible: it is an ascertained fact that those ententes have already obtained excellent results.

Therefore regional re-groupings will initially be indispensable: they will be a means to an end not an end in themselves and we will have to aim at a later stage towards a fusion of the economic or 'other complexes they will have formed.

It is difficult for me to believe that regionalism can develop particularities: on the contrary, I think that it will favour cooperation and contribute to the flowering of African universalism. Each member State of a regional grouping can become an efficient intermediary for the new relations between that grouping and other member States of the Convention. The movement is reversible: it is conceivable that a State which is a party to the Convention may become a member of a regional grouping to which it does not belong, for one definite operation; another eventuality can even be contemplated: that a regional programme, strengthened by new adhesions may become the programme of the Convention for several groupings and perhaps even for all its members.

To sum up, I sincerely hope that in all the fields of our co-operation, the same procedure will be adopted, that the rapprochement of regional groupings will ensure our unity. I even believe that it will be necessary to

create new regional groupings to cover the continent with machinery for harmonious cooperation.

In order that the necessary rapprochements may be prepared on that basis, we should show realism and practical sense. It seems to me that a system of permanent connections and information, a network of interpenetration should be our first concern.

For, I ask you, how can we establish a Union if we have no means of meeting? It is not enough that we, Heads of State and Government, a few Ministers, and a few experts and Ambassadors of goodwill mutually know, understand and appreciate each other: it is also necessary that the technician and the businessman, the student and the sportsman, should be able to move freely and feel at home in all the countries of the Convention.

I wish therefore, that we could very rapidly work out a body of appropriate provisions so as to facilitate communications, and above all that our nationals might travel without hindrance through all of our countries; that merely by presenting a national identity card they can freely cross all our frontiers.

Secondly, it is necessary that we should agree on the languages to be used for official's purposes, which for the convenience of our relations are very few. It is of little importance that they should have come from sources outside our hereditary culture; I even think that one of our vernacular languages would stand no chance of being accepted as a common language by the other Nations which are parties to our Convention.

Lastly, we must with the least possible delay solve the problem of an inter-African network of communications and transport.

The central station for our telephone and telegraphic communications should be in Africa, and as far as possible at the geographical centre of the Continent. The same would apply to the airport which would serve as a centrifugal point.

Our roads, our railways, our sea-routes should be organised in networks to meet our particular purposes.

These purposes should not be limited to Africa and Madagascar shrinking within themselves so as to live in autarky. Unity should not create an impassable barrier around our countries as a whole, cutting them off from the other continents.

The modern world is one of mutual help and international solidarity and if we disregard this fact, our countries will be faced with serious dangers.

It is with the help of the whole world that we shall

build up our economies and make them prosperous; and let us not forget that a prosperous economy will consolidate the independence of each of our States and the Unity of Africa.

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The general outlines of our respective doctrines are in general no longer a secret to any-body. Most of them have been revealed during the last few weeks to the International Press in declarations, articles or communiqués.

My Government did not think it necessary to push itself any further forward. It made its general position known through the voice of its Foreign Minister. Since, on the other hand, I did not want to take up too much of your time, I limited my remarks, with very few exceptions, to the institutional aspects of our exchange of views. I have already been compelled to retain your attention for longer than I would have wished and I apologise most profusely.

May I sum up rapidly my remarks? In Africa, such as it is divided up in 1963, there exist independent States which we would wish to be strong and independent: the strength of each of these Nations depends on the strength of the whole.

The independence of Africa depends on her economic strength. She must present to the world a united front if she is to gain its respect; but for the time being she is made up of scattered fragments which have at least the

merit of existing.

We must consolidate the fragments and join them together: this programme will be achieved only if we have faith in its feasibility, confidence in our final success and a steady determination to be patient and pursue our efforts. Africa and Madagascar must become one vast building-yard open to all good workmen.

The task is an exalting but also an overwhelming one; we must make haste to ascertain where we stand. By the end of this memorable conference general trends will already be established which we shall have to classify and compare. Important diplomatic action should immediately follow; my wish is that it should be discrete so as to avoid the dangers of demagoguery.

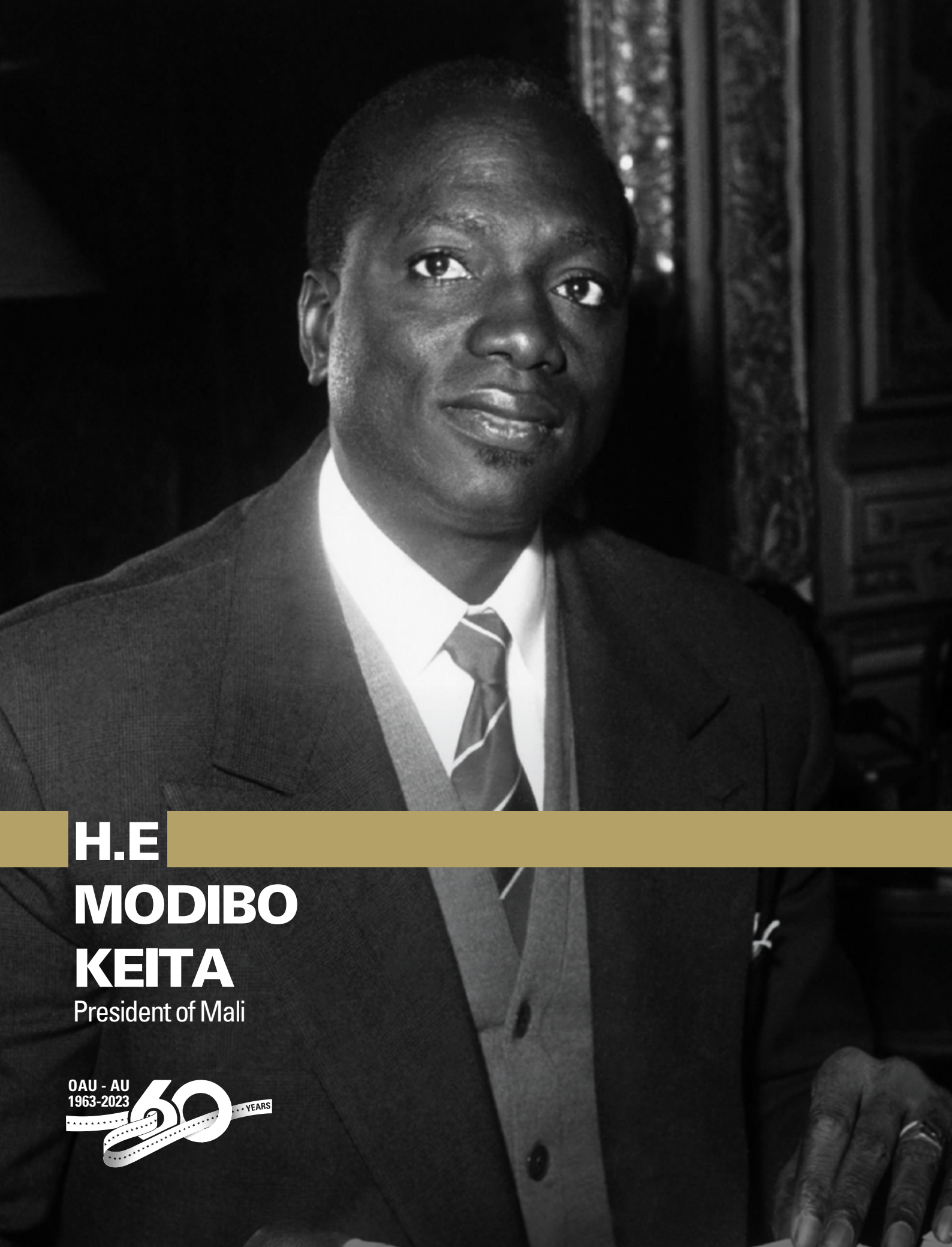
Thus will be born our African and Malagasy Convention, whose aspirations are the greatness of Africa and the welfare of its people. Our common aspirations have brought us together in the splendid capital of Ethiopia, following the acceptance of an invitation on which everyone had ample time to reflect. We are ready to discuss our differences with the view to wiping them out.

Being responsible to God, to our peoples and in our own conscience, we are duty bound to mark the way for an Africa free from hatred and all forms of religious, racial, tribal, ideological fanaticism and from internal disputes, an Africa which is from now onward to be an Africa of brotherhood and equality and an Africa of cooperation which may tomorrow be the United Africa for which the Malagasy Republic earnestly prays.



**▲ The members of the Government of the Malagasy Republic in December 1960 with, in the first row, in the light-coloured suit, the President of the Republic H.E. Philibert TSIRANANA. Madagascar's independence was proclaimed on June 26, 1960. Image © Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images**





**H.E**

**MODIBO**

**KEITA**

President of Mali





our Imperial Majesty, Mr. President, Honourable Brothers,

With my opening words I wish to pay a stirring tribute to the Government of Ethiopia, and particularly to his Majesty the Emperor, who have been able to arrange the best possible conditions for the holding of this Conference, by their brotherly hospitality and their enthusiastic and constant devotion to the African cause. If there are occasions when peoples are entitled to boast with justification of their own achievements, the Conference which brings us together at Addis Ababa is one of these. Assembled round one table, the great African continent – divided by several centuries of colonization – can claim a major victory over the diversity of peoples, languages and religions that characterizes our continent. To convene in conference at a round table thirty-one African States, still completely imbued with that ardent nationalism which led them a few years ago to independence, to organize cooperation between countries like ours that are firmly attached to their recently won sovereignty, will be hailed as an event unique in the history of the world. Here we see that the new Africa, before it has even achieved total liberation, is leaving its mark on the history of relations between nations by its wisdom, and love for its neighbour; an honour such as this makes it imperative for us to succeed in the name of the peoples who placed their confidence in us, to guide them towards unity. In the name of humanity to which our meeting has given new hope, in the name also, Mr. President, of our honour and pride as Africans, confronting those who continue to deny us all capacity for agreeing amongst ourselves, for conducting our own affairs, and for raising in common an enduring edifice – keeping these obligations in mind, the Republic of Mali intends to make a positive contribution to this meeting.

In order to promote and construct a united Africa, we shall gladly conjure up the danger that lurks behind a divided Africa. It is no longer possible to tolerate the opposition cleverly fostered between groups of states. We should be threatened by the cleavage of our continent into antagonistic blocs and should be preparing the most fertile ground for the dangerous transplantation of the cold war to the soil of our common homeland. The period through which we are living today, and which we want to leave behind us, should provide us with a lesson. Sterile opposition must now give place to that brotherly understanding and tolerance which have never ceased to inspire the relations between our populations.

The President of Senegal, Leopold Sedar Senghor, inviting President Modibo Keita of the Republic of Mali to address you, bears witness in the most striking manner to that which may be achieved by the will of men steadfastly attached to African unity. In these conditions, we are able to tackle the problems that continue to face us; and is it not, in fact, true that we have all set ourselves the objective, as have our peoples, of re-establishing and safeguarding our dignity, of rehabilitating our continent, and of giving to Africa the place that it deserves in the national arena and the world arena –so many noble aims cannot be fulfilled in conditions of division or distrust, or of completion for foreign support, which is a source of every kind of blackmail.

Your Imperial Majesty, Mr. President, Excellencies, although tradition may require it, we of the Republic of Mali will not adopt diplomatic language, which obliges us to conceal our real thoughts, and to say what we do not believe. If all of us here present are truly animated by the ardent desire to achieve African unity, we must take Africa as it is, and we must renounce any territorial claims, if we do not wish to introduce what we might call black imperialism in Africa. For in our eyes, imperialism is that manifestation of that will to domination of man over man, of a society over another society, of a people over a people, and the desire to impose at all costs one's own way of thinking, one's own way of life, and one's own method of political and economic development on others;

**...we must together make a solemn covenant to achieve African unity, and never to allow our organization to become the tool of a state or a group of states.**

**...Brushing aside every obstacle, contemptuous of all pressures, we must then proceed, stage by stage, to concrete actions, looking only to the ideals of liberation and African unity.**

and against this, African unity demands of each one of us complete respect for the legacy that we have received for the colonial system, that is to say: maintenance of the present frontiers of our respective states. It is therefore necessary, it is indeed, even essential that we should put an end in a concrete manner to factors promoting division; respect for the territorial sovereignty and integrity of each state should be made concrete by an undertaking, a multilateral non-aggression pact guaranteed by each of the states gathered here. The conclusion

of such an agreement would strengthen inter-African relations, reduce outside interference in this domain and open up happy prospects for African cooperation in the fields of defence and security. Within the framework thus defined, an inter-state conciliation agency, which we must set up, would be enabled to meet our expectations in settling the differences that arise between African countries. Mr. President, you have doubtless guessed my country's desire not to take advantage of the privileged position conferred upon it by Article 48 of our Constitution, which specifies the

partial or total relinquishment of sovereignty in favour of any viable African organization. With the prospect of attaining complete unity, the people of Mali has unanimously chosen to examine with discernment the realities of our continent and the experiences of brother nations. What are these realities? It has been affirmed here that the colonial system divided Africa; that is true in one sense, but it may also be said that the colonial system permitted nations to be born.

Indeed, if we take certain parts of Africa in the pre-colonial period, history teaches us that there existed a myriad kingdoms and empires, which took their form according to tribal and ethnical characteristics, but which today have transcended, in the case of certain states, tribal and ethnical differences to constitute a nation, a real nation. These are also realities that we must take into consideration, and we believe, for our part, that African unity must also take these facts in consideration if unity is to become a reality. I venture to cite an example if we desire that our nations should be ethnic entities, speaking the same language and having the same psychology, then we shall find no single veritable nation in Africa. The Republic of Mali consists of about ten races, which have transcended ethnic and tribal differences to constitute today the Republic of Mali; but we do not have Songhois, who have found their way to the Niger and elsewhere as a result

of great movements of humanity; do we not have Fulbes of all colours who have made their appearance, as a result of the processes of development of their societies, in Guinea in the North, in Cameroon and in Nigeria? Well, if it were necessary to insist that the Republic of Mali, on the basis of the definition of a nation, should be composed essentially of Mandingos, or Fullbes or Songhois, then we should have problems – and plenty of problems – with our neighbours. It is that reality that we must bear in mind, and another reality too: The African states, depending upon the colonial system, that they knew and also the development of popular organizations, have followed more or less this or that to pursue their economic development along the lines traced by the former colonial power, other have turned to a different form of construction – I refer to socialist construction. Others, finally, have chosen a middle course, and all this taking into consideration the realities of their states.



➤ **AFRICA-TREATY-BORDER-MALI-MAURITANIA**  
**Moktar Ould Daddah (L), president of Mauritania welcomed by Modibo Keita (R), president of Mali during his official visit in Mali to sign the Treaty of Kayes, a boundary agreement between Mauritania and Mali, on February 16, 1963 at Kayes** *Image © AFP via Getty Images*



Well, it is not possible for us to obliterate with a stroke of the brush, like a painter, from one day to the next, all these realities of our states. If we wish to do so, we are storing up for Africa difficult days to come; and I am all the more in a position to speak to you freely on this subject, as I have had two or three experiences in the spheres of both political and state organization; but I do not regret these experiences, as they have been a school for myself and my friends. This will permit you, Excellencies, to guess already, here and now, what is the attitude of the Republic of Mali towards African unity. This unity which each of us, our respective states, has put at the top of our programmes of action, what does it really mean? In our opinion, the pooling of our possibilities and potentialities so as to achieve progress, while respecting the free choice of each of us. That is what the people of Mali and its party, who have resolutely and irreversibly turned their steps along the path of socialist construction of the country since the Congress of 22 September 1960 demand. Honourable brothers, our common undertaking cannot be divorced from the will to dignity for human personalities that animates us, and which must find completely new expression in this respect at Addis Ababa in our support and, should I say, our material, moral and military commitment within this crusade that we have opened against the colonialists.

It would indeed be illusory for us, in our positions of responsibility, to wish to play the hoped-for part, while close beside us, sometimes at our very frontiers, our own brothers are reduced to slavery or to the levels of beasts, at the mere wish of our-of-date colonialists, who have understood nothing of history, or of the racialists of South Africa. The problem here is a grave one, and affects the conscience of the whole of humanity; certainly the unanimous opprobrium of the members of the United Nations Organization and the constant and courageous aid of the anti-imperialist states, particularly of our Asian brothers, bear witness to this. This does not alter the fact that the problem is first of all and essentially our own, and that what is happening in Angola, in Mozambique, in Southern Rhodesia, and in South Africa, challenges the validity of all that we proclaim, opposes the most legitimate aspirations, and obtrudes itself as an insult to all our African soul. It is time, it is high time to put an end to it; our common organization must make that aim its first preoccupation, and must decide here and now to recruit volunteers in our countries for the liberation of these territories; and must induce governments to ensure the unrestricted transport of arms and munitions intended for the patriots, and also to contribute to a common solidarity fund to support our brothers engaged in

the fight for liberation. Dear brothers, in this field as in that of the common organization that we are undertaking to set up, the Conference of Addis Ababa has a duty to avoid the well-worn paths of those hollow international forums, which has hitherto, alas, been a fair description of many African conferences. The dignity of Africa and the earnestness of our common organization are at stake. I could not continue without drawing your attention to the danger of subversion in Africa. Indeed, you are aware that in certain states, there are living nationalists of other states, even of states that are already independent. If we really desire to achieve African unity, based essentially in the first instance on confidence between one another, it is essential that this situation should be solved; we can recommend that African unity be preceded by national unity. It would be desirable for those African states of which certain citizens have been obliged to take refuge abroad, to extend to them the hand of friendship, and facilitate their return to hearth and home in their common native land. Dignity for the colonized Africans, and also the unity of the states represented here: the task is not easy. The experiences of some of us, and those of others, produce rival views in recognizing that harmonization must be brought about wherever that is possible, and in the most highly-development form attainable. As far as we are concerned, our delegation salutes with joy the results of the work of the Foreign Ministers' Preparatory Conference and its recommendations, which have set forth in clear terms the varied-aspects of inter-African cooperation; I, for my part, shall forbear to repeat them from this illustrious rostrum. Our attention will, however, be directed her to the setting up of an economic and social committee to consider and organize cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields, as well as in those of communications and transport. A happy solution to the problems preoccupying us with regard to the organization and methods of granting foreign aid might be found within the framework of this Committee's functions; thus in the field of foreign trade, the Committee would work for a rapid harmonization of customs nomenclature, and for an international transit system, and would also encourage administrative cooperation in Customs matters. The Economic and Social Committee would undertake the study of possibilities for harmonizing commercial legislation in order to avoid double taxation. At the same time, it would set up a civil aviation organization, and could convene a conference with a view to establishing an African maritime navigation company. This Committee, too, could assume the responsibility for establishing an African banking organization. It would pay particular attention to studying the possibility of setting up an

African economic community, as well as the effects of foreign economic groupings on the economy of our continent. Similarly, it is a task of top priority to organize defence of the prices of our primary products, by the establishment of a common price stabilization fund. Systematic investigation of the means of coordinating development plans both at continental and regional level in the fields of industrialization, transport and energy, remains one of the most important tasks of this Committee.

Honourable brothers, the activities that I have mentioned will help, I am sure, to promote the progressive emergence of a common attitude towards world economic problems, and will lead to the formation of a common front at international economic conference for defence of the interests both of our people and our states.

Your Majesty, Mr. President, if I have seemed to dwell with insistence on the question of economic coordination, I do not under-estimate for that reason the social importance of other structures. Above all, I do not wish to neglect political and economic conceptions in a world and in a sphere wherein the assimilative tendencies with which we are familiar, become daily more clearly defined. I have good hopes that in all our debates we shall remain vigilant, so as not to become a prey to such manoeuvres. Africa will find its salvation by the scrupulous daily application of non-alignment between the two great blocs. The African states, pooling their efforts, must work out an independent African policy in all domains, in face of which a non-African state, a power or a group of powers, will be free to define its own position. At the same time, we must together make a solemn covenant to achieve African unity, and never to allow our organization to become the tool of a state or a group of states.

I do not at all wish either to ignore those other fields in which, whatever the difficulties, our countries can work together and unite their efforts; but there is one field in which cooperation has been fruitful – it is that of our peoples, and particularly of our mass organizations. The coordination of their actions throughout the whole of the continent has been a powerful leaven in the struggle for the liberation of our countries; and their collaboration with their Asian brothers has already over a period of years impresses the image of the 'tiers monde' upon the international conscience. Cementing the unity of our still colonized peoples, tomorrow they will constitute quite naturally the fermenting agent in the new Africa. Our meeting can and should suggest a formula for cooperation in this field in which alas, our affiliation with international organizations appears to be

the principal obstacle to be surmounted. A horizontal alliance at first on the African level, afterwards vertical cooperation with the other international organizations, such is the position of the Republic of Mali.

Your Majesty, Mr. President, and dear brothers, I know how deeply you feel with me the honour entrusted to us by history of building a free, united and prosperous Africa, for which aim so many of our comrades have paid with their lives. That is why throughout all the work before us, my delegation and I will join our enthusiasm to yours for the honour, liberty and unity of Africa. Several days from now we shall separate, having voted for resolutions and taken decisions which will arouse many hopes in Africa, as well as much apprehension in other parts of the world, but which will also provoke many sceptical smiles. In the name of our peoples, we shall have assumed obligations for the cooperation of our states, and for the benefit of our brothers, crushed beneath the yoke of colonial domination or racial humiliation.



**Joshua Nkomo, Boubakar Gueye Malian Minister, Modibo Keita Malian Prime Minister, H.E. Leopold Sedar Senghor Malian Assembly President And M. Zinzou Senato at a Press Conference, France, January 19** Image © Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images

Brushing aside every obstacle, contemptuous of all pressures, we must then proceed, stage by stage, to concrete actions, looking only to the ideals of liberation and African unity. In this inspiring task, your Majesty and dear brothers, you will find at your side the people of Mali, its party, its popular organizations and its government, because the truest expression of the feelings of honour and dignity for the free peoples that we are, consists in the faithful performance of the undertakings to which we have freely subscribed.



“

We should forget our former quarrels and dissensions. History reminds us that small conflicts...involve dangers of balkanisation that are too serious of us to take lightly

”

**H.E. MOKTAR OULD DADDAH**

President of the Islamic  
Republic of Mauritania



OAU - AU  
1963-2023



#OurAfricaOurFuture

au.int    



A black and white portrait of H.E. Mokhtar Ould Daddah, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. He is an older man with short, graying hair, a mustache, and a goatee. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a light-colored striped shirt, and a dark tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera.

**H.E**  
**MOKTAR**  
**OULD DADDAH**

President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania





our Majesty, Your Excellencies,

I take pleasure in beginning this brief statement, for the inadequacies of which I ask you to forgive me, by thanking our illustrious host The Emperor Haile Selassie I. and the Ethiopian Government and people for the warm welcome they have given us and for their unsparing efforts to make possible this meeting, in which we are all proud to take part, in Addis Ababa. Capital of the oldest independent African country.

The fact that our meeting is being held in this distinguished capital is a happy augury and the surest guarantee of the success of our work.

I am happy to be able to proclaim today, before all Africa assembled together what I have been saying at every opportunity for many years on behalf of the Mauritanian people: namely your belief in the need to build African unity, and our constant determination to accept all the necessary sacrifices in order to achieve that unity. The Mauritanian people are convinced that its independence will not be complete until the day when all the peoples of the continent are free and united. It regards itself as an integral part of the great African homeland which we must build at all costs if we do not wish to perish. The victims of isolation and senseless disputes.

**The immediate setting up of the most important of these bodies: an organization of economic and technical cooperation, ... whose role will be to constitute an African front to defend the interests of our continent, ... this calls for firstly, the setting up of an African common market ... and secondly, the establishment of an African development bank.**

Ever since Mauritania acquired the right to express its point of view, that is, since it acquired internal self-government, and more especially since it became independent. it has been unceasingly asserting, its attachment to African unity; the best proof of this is that the Mauritanian People's Party lays down in article 2 of its statutes that the achievement of African unity is one of the fundamental aims of its activities. Hence the Mauritanian delegation feels great joy today on the occasion of the meeting of this historic Conference which

brings to fruition a long-cherished hope.

African unity is our essential concern: for as I have often explained, our geographical position makes us a natural crossroads, a "hyphen" between Black Africa and White Africa. Mauritania is connected with the Arab countries by ethnic ties and by a precious cultural heritage. It is also attached to Black Africa not only by solid ethnic links but also by geography and, from time immemorial, by its economy. For this dual reason, the Mauritanian people cannot repudiate either of its two origins, or cut itself off totally from them. It takes pride in symbolizing, by the harmony of the elements that compose it, an Africa united in its diversity, and in thus being an example of that unity which is our common goal.

**Dear Brothers,**

The work of our Ministers of Foreign Affairs has paved the way, leaving to us the responsibility of determining, in the last instance, the means that will bring about the consolidation of African and Malagasy Unity.

The Mauritanian delegation would be overjoyed if it proved possible to achieve complete unity immediately, and we would be willing to subscribe to it at once. But we have to recognize that there are great difficulties, owing to differences in economic and political conditions, differences in civilization, etc. For all these reasons, we feel that the best method is to proceed by stages, provided that the first stage is reached here and now, and that the foundations for unity are laid at once, and in such a way that the process may henceforth be irreversible.

The eyes of the world are upon us, particularly those of the African peoples. The greatest crime we can commit against those peoples is to fail. This conference must succeed and must fulfil the hopes placed in it. In my view it will suffice if we make a list of the points on which immediate agreement is possible, and if that agreement is consolidated without delay. Here are some of these points.

The immediate preparation of an African Charter, defining the principles on which unity should be established, and also the aims and the means;

The establishment of a permanent secretariat, responsible for coordinating the work of the pan-African bodies that exist or are to be created, which should be given the necessary powers;

The immediate setting up of the most important of these bodies: an organization of economic and technical cooperation, the need for which is obvious, and whose role will be to constitute an African front to defend the interests of our continent, particularly in such matters as the stabilization of commodity prices, the processing of the largest possible quantity of these raw materials on the spot, and joint action to force the developed countries to respect our continent and its interests; this calls for firstly, the setting up of an African common market, the design and achievement of which will be one of the main tasks of this organization, and secondly, the establishment of an African development bank;

The creation of a cultural body responsible for promoting and disseminating the African cultures. There is a particularly urgent need to found an African university. It is also important to encourage meetings under the auspices of popular organizations political parties, trade unions, women's associations, youth movements, students' organizations, so as to eliminate the causes of that isolation of which we have for so long been harvesting bitter fruit.

In the struggle against colonialism and racial discrimination, we must coordinate our efforts and the aid to be given to liberation movements; this coordination must be ensured by a bureau which will centralize and allocate all the contributions. I take the opportunity to ask the Conference of African and Malagasy Heads of State and Government to address a solemn appeal to the nationalists of each country, asking them to form united front so that the struggle does not suffer from the quarrels dividing them and so that the assistance supplied to them may attain its object.

In the international field, a consistent African group should function both in the United Nations and in all the other international organizations. This does not mean that the Afro-Asian group ought to be abolished: there are in fact very many links between us and the Asian countries: community of interests, past and present struggles against colonialism, the active part they are taking in the liberation of Africa, etc.

Hence there is no question of Africa, even if united, isolating itself beyond the necessary solidarity with the countries of the "Third World" it must seek to lay the foundations of a fraternal co-operation with all states,

in the interests, of course, of the development of our continent, but also so as to help to bring peace and harmony into the world.

I am aware that most of the points I have made have already been mentioned by other speakers, but I do not think that a bad thing; Everyone must express, in this forum, his ideas on African unity and the means of achieving it: so much the better if the same ideas are frequently repeated: that is a good sign. I have further endeavoured to make a personal contribution by formulating simple proposals that are easy to apply.

#### **My dear friends,**

I wish to express, before concluding, that the African and Malagasy unity for which we all laying, the foundations demands sacrifices from us, not the least of which is that we should forget our former quarrels and dissensions. History reminds us that small conflicts of this kind involve dangers of balkanization that are too serious for us to take lightly.

As far as the Mauritanian people is concerned, it feels no resentment or bitterness against anyone not even against those, who at one time did it harm or tried to do it how. On the contrary, it extends to them a friendly hand. as 'to long-lost brothers, repeating in the words of Joseph: "God will forgive you". Not only that, but in order to demonstrate our good faith and help to bring together all the members of the great African family, I declare to this historic meeting that we are willing to establish friendly relations with Morocco, such as we have with our other sister countries, as soon as Morocco has recognized our independence and national sovereignty.

#### **My dear friends,**

The Mauritanian delegation is certain that the results of our work will not disappoint the hopes .of the African and Malagasy peoples and that this Conference will see the birth of a constructive and lasting African and Malagasy unity. How could it be otherwise, when the simple fact that we are assembled here in a friendly atmosphere, despite innumerable tasks and responsibilities, despite all the obstacles and all the factors making for division, is already proof of our unshakeable determination to succeed?

May God bless our efforts and guide us towards the better path, for the sake of our peoples' happiness.





“

**It is important to remember that independent financing and independent development cannot take place without an independent currency. A currency system that is backed by the resources of a foreign state is ipso facto subject to the trade and financial arrangements of that foreign country.**

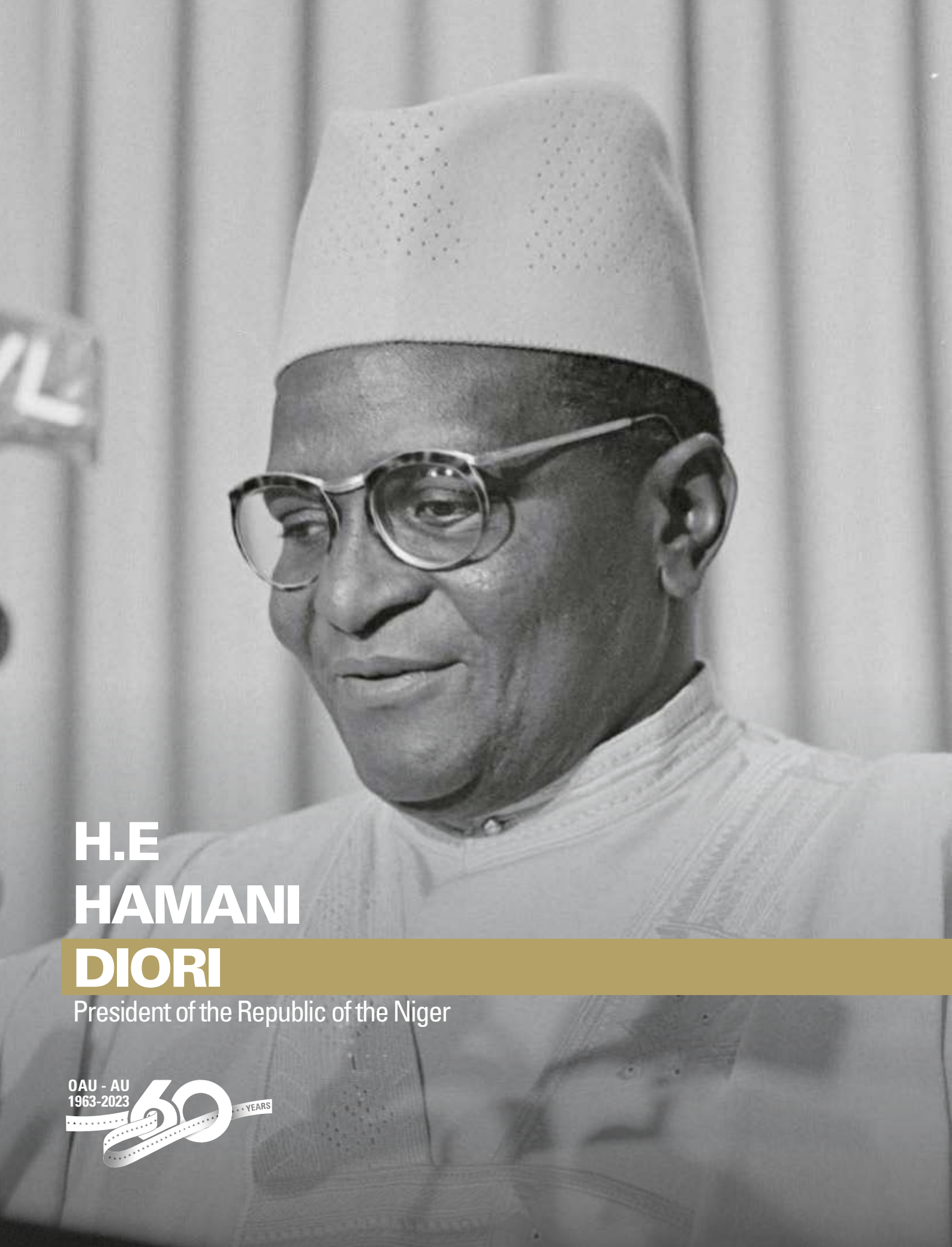
”

**H.E. KWAME NKRUMAH**  
President of the Republic of Ghana



#OurAfricaOurFuture

au.int    



**H.E  
HAMANI  
DIORI**

President of the Republic of the Niger





our Majesty, Excellencies,

I must first of all thank His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia, his Government and the people of Ethiopia for their magnificent hospitality. I wish to see a happy augury for the success of our work, and a symbol of the solidity of the work of African Unity we have undertaken, in the welcome to this admirable capital, perched on the highest plateau of Africa, and in which reigns one of the most ancient dynasties of the world, has reserved to this "Conference of Hope", as some of the speakers who preceded me have so aptly named it. This Conference bears witness to the deep desire, common to all the people we represent and whose mandate we bear, that in the course of this historic meeting this great hope for African Unity may become a reality.

Hope and Reality, two contrary terms, two poles between which our action as Heads of State and Government must be situated.

A realistic view of the African conjuncture enables us to perceive this first crying fact, the great diversity of situations within our continent. People of the black, white or brown races, whose ways of life languages, beliefs, and ethics are very different alternatively separated, opposed, confronted, sometimes even regrouped by the accidents of history, particularly by the "colonial fact", these peoples are today situated at superimposed levels of economic and cultural development; and their membership of large world groups, such as the monetary zones, seems to condemn them to divergent fates.

And behold, in the course of recent years, these Africans, either through the force of arms, or through the ways of law, cease to be foreign dependencies and enter, with heads high, the assembly of free nations, as modern States, henceforth open to the life of the whole world.

Must we, in the name of African Unity, abolish our differences, make uniform the elements of those differences, and tend to produce an average, standardized, depersonalized "home africanus"? That would be pure fantasy.

On the contrary, proceeding from the same realistic view of matters and basing ourselves on this new fact which is the national fact, it is appropriate that we should become clearly aware of some other facts:

In the first place, the demographic growth of our countries; despite the considerable losses from the internal wars which preceded colonial domination; despite the cruel bleedings of the slave trade; despite murderous participation in world conflicts on the battle fields of Europe and Asia. African vitality has been maintained and asserted.

Then, the dislocation of traditional economic and social structures, the

**...Cold reason demands awareness of what there is in common in the situations of our peoples and in their vital interests. African Unity is essentially this awareness of our solidarity which must in the first place demand us to take common and energetic action in favour of our brothers**



**LIBERIA-SUMMIT-AFRICA-CONFERENCE**

President of the Republic of Niger Hamani Diori (2ndL), President of Gabon Gabriel Léon M'ba (2ndR) and President of Côte d'Ivoire Félix Houphouët-Boigny (R) in Monrovia to attend an African conference, in Liberia. Image © AFP via Getty Images



**TOGO-ANNIVERSARY-  
INDEPENDENCE**

**From left, Gabonese President Omar Bongo, President of Niger Hamani Diori, President of Togo Gnassingbe Eyadema, President of Ivory Coast Felix Houphouet-Boigny and President of Upper Volta Sangoule Lamizana attend the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the Independence of Togo on April 27, 1970 in Lome**

*Image © AFP via Getty Images*



over-throw of customary moral values, provoking the political awakening of the masses, fanning their desire to secure, they too, a decent material and cultural life justified by the accelerated progress of modern techniques.

Demographic expansion, expansion of needs however natural they may be, these phenomena contribute to the worsening of the present situation. Here we are, we, countries known as “developing”, threatened with a halt to this development, threatened with stagnation and even with retrogression.

The facts are there, drawn from statistics: in international trade, be it with the countries called of the Free World, or with the countries of the East, third countries, to which we have the dubious privilege of belonging, derive their essential resources from export earnings, which are, almost in their entirety, from 50 - 90 per cent, exports of agricultural products

(oilseeds, bananas, cocoa, coffee). These earnings are constantly declining, despite increased productivity and production, and that because of the general fall in world prices fixed by the buyers of the western world, following, in principle, the hard law of supply and demand. The price support policy and the organization of markets, practiced by certain major European powers is nothing but a superficial mechanism and, moreover, only provisional.

Then the decline in the monetary income of the African producer is matched by a decline in the

budgetary earnings of the States, which aggravates deficits, consolidates economic dependence and outs back the equipment needed for industrialization. Specially, the consequences are already tangible: in many African countries the precariousness of national financial resources (account being taken of population growth) tends, to the detriment of cultural development, the motive power of technical development, to keep steady, if not cause a decline in the school attendance ratio.

In short, if international relations are not fearlessly revised by the parties concerned, the gap between the living standards of the rich and powerful countries and those of the inadequately equipped and economically dependent African countries will inevitably widen.

For each African nation, threatened with asphyxia and anaemia, the problem is no longer that of development in a calm conjuncture; it is, in the more or less long run, the problem of survival.

In addition, however, to the danger of being reduced to penury there is also the not negligible danger of an offensive return of various imperialisms.

These opinions, which may seem pessimistic, should nevertheless guide our action: The hard struggle which each human grouping carries on, more or less consciously, to maintain its place in the sun, in liberty, dignity and well-being, cannot be conducted in verbal euphoria.

Cold reason demands awareness of what there is in common in the situations of our peoples and in their vital interests.

African Unity is essentially this awareness of our solidarity which must in the first place demand us to

take common and energetic action in favour of our brothers still under the foreign yoke. I affirm that none of our nations can pride itself on having attained real independence before the whole of our continent is free. It is for this reason, that I suggest, that we take here the firm resolution to make joint use of all means to facilitate the accession to independence of the African peoples still living under colonial regimes. And one of the immediate measures we must take the establishment of an inter-African solidarity fund to assist liberation movements.

Our solidarity must also manifest itself by the setting up of an organization for wide African cooperation, based on reciprocal respect and esteem, brotherly trust, excluding all desire for ethnical, ideological, religious or economic pre-eminence, Sincerely repudiating any attempt to settle possible differences by force, any interference in the domestic affairs of nations, any direct or indirect support of subversion.

This cooperation must set itself, as its primary aims, to establish a sound communications system, to draw up rules facilitating trade, to coordinate development plans, to organize the common peasant producers front for the defence of agricultural raw material prices.

It is a question, in sum, of seeking and putting into effect the means which will enable the African to participate actively in the life of men of other continents. No longer as a second-rate citizen, a poverty-stricken producer, a subject client, or a servile imitator of foreign ways of life, but as a free man, a physically healthy and technically qualified producer, having not only attained his maximum development but also having retained his cultural patrimony, his moral values, his soul.

Most of us are convinced that the bouquet of Africa nations will blossom to the extent that each of the flowers composing it blossoms while yet preserving its original perfume.

To this end - and in conclusion - the delegation of the Republic of the Niger proposes that the members of this Conference should not separate without having taken the following concrete measures:

1. A decision to elaborate, within as short a space of time as possible, an inter-African Charter (the name is of little importance), the basic principles of which would be:
  - respect for the sovereignty of each State and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other independent States;
  - the establishment of advisory and coordinating

political institutions, with a permanent secretariat;

- the organization of a collective defence and security system;
  - the establishment of a body responsible for settling differences which may arise between our States.
2. The establishment here and now, to give this political union economic basis, of a body responsible for coordinating and harmonizing the development efforts of African States.
  3. A decision, in the sphere of cultural co-operation, to establish that African University of which there has already been talk which should intensify cultural exchanges between our countries and work for a better knowledge and restoration of the cultural values proper to our continent.
  4. The establishment, to provide African liberation movements with immediate and effective assistance, of a Solidarity Fund and an office for the co-ordination of inter-African assistance, which would be responsible for centralizing requests and distributing relief funds. As a means of drawing attention to this joint action an African Solidarity Day must be instituted, with a collection which will add to the fund's resources.
  5. The undertaking by each State, insofar as the fight against the apartheid policy of South Africa is concerned, to put into effect immediately, the sanctions decided upon at previous inter-African conferences.
  6. Finally, a decision that the African Group of the United Nations which meets for consultation whenever a problem concerning our continent arises, should abide firmly only by decisions taken in common.

If we reach understanding on these few concretes we shall be able to leave each other satisfied, and with the conviction that this historic Addis Ababa Conference has marked the beginning of a new era for Africa.

Long Live the Fraternity of African Nations!



**H.E**

**ALHAJI ABUBAKAR**

**TAFAWA BALEWA**

Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria  
(Present day Federal Republic of Nigeria)

OAU - AU  
1963-2023







our Imperial Majesty, Mr. President, Your Excellencies,  
 First, I want to express the thanks of my country to your Imperial Majesty, the Imperial Majesty's Government and the people of Ethiopia for the warm reception which they have given to my delegation and myself. The presence of almost all the Heads of African States and Government in Addis Ababa is a great tribute to your Imperial Majesty personally. The history of the new Africa will always have your name in the forefront because the unity which we are trying to build in this conference is going to have quite a lot to do with the name of the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa.

Mr President, His Imperial Majesty sustained a double loss not long ago in the death of her Imperial Majesty, the Empress, and Prince Sahle Selassie. During your period of sorrow which you have sustained with very great fortitude, our hearts were with you. Mr. President, may I ask all of you, your Excellencies, to rise and observe two minutes silence in memory of her Imperial Majesty, the Empress, and Prince Sahle Selassie.

Mr. President, it is very difficult, after so many eloquent speeches which have exhaustively dealt with the subject, for me not to make some repetition of the points made. However, Sir, I will try to explain the views and the stand of Nigeria as far as African unity is concerned. I feel that the mere presence of all the Heads of African States and Governments here shows the success of the Conference, and I have no doubt that all of us will leave Addis Ababa satisfied that we have done something.

It has always been our view in Nigeria that personal contacts and the exchange of ideas are the basis of mutual understanding. I am pleased to say that, from now on, there will be no question of the so-called Monrovia and Casablanca Blocs. We all belong to Africa.

There are have been quite a lot of views on what we mean by African Unity. Some of us have suggested that African Unity should be achieved by political fusion of the different states in Africa; some of us feel that African unity could be achieved by taking practical steps in economic, educational, scientific and cultural cooperation and by trying first to get the Africans to understand themselves before embarking on the more complicated and more difficult arrangement of political union. My country stands for the practical approach to the unity of the African continent. We feel that if this unity is to last, we must start from the beginning. Nigeria's stand is that if we want this unity in Africa, we must first agree to certain essential things: The first is that African States must respect one another. There must be acceptance of equality by all States. No matter whether they are big or small, they are all sovereign and their sovereignty is sovereign. The size of a State, its population or its wealth should not be the criterion. It has been pointed out many times that the smaller States in Africa have no right to exist because they are too small. We in Nigeria do not agree with this view. It was unfortunate that the African States have been broken up into different groups by the Colonial powers. In some cases, a single tribe has been broken up into four different States. You might find a section in Guinea, a section in Mali, a section Sierra Leone and perhaps a section in Liberia. That was not our fault because, for over 60 years, these different units have been existing, and any

**We must take every care to know who we invite to assist in the development of our resources, because there is a fear, which is my personal fear, that, if we are not careful, we may have colonialism in a different form. Our countries can be colonized economically, if we are not careful. It is also important that we fight against economic domination by other countries**



**AFRICA-OUA-SUMMIT-OAU**  
 Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser (R) welcomes Prime Minister of Nigeria, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (L) for the OAU summit from 17 to 21 July, 1964, in Cairo. Image © STRINGER/AFP via Getty Images

attempt, on the part of any African country to disregard this fact might bring trouble to this continent. This is the thing we want to avoid and, for this reason, Nigeria recognizes all the existing boundaries in Africa, and recognizes the existence of all the countries in Africa. This I think, Sir, is the basis of the unity which we in Nigeria pray for on our continent.

As I have said, we have to start from the beginning. I have listened to speeches in this conference, and there have been only

a very few members who spoke on the desirability of having a political union. Almost all the speeches indicate that a more practical approach is much preferred by the majority of the delegation. I am glad to say that the stand we have taken right from the beginning is the stand of nearly almost all the countries in this conference. It appears from the speeches as if we were just sitting idle and doing nothing towards the achievement of this unity. For our part, in Nigeria, we are already cooperating with some of our neighbours. For example, the other day, my friend, the President of Malagasy said he could not contact Lagos by telephone from Cotonou. This is no longer the case. Now he can speak direct. What we are trying to do is to link up with all our neighbours by means of telecommunications and by exchanging more postal facilities; and we are already entering into bilateral agreements with many of our neighbours. We are discussing this matter with the Republic of Cameroon, discussing our common problems with Chad, Congo (Leo) with Dahomey, and also we have direct link with Togo. We hope to continue in this work because we feel that, if we are to unite, it is important that our communications system should be excellent and transport facilities should be such that it would enable us to move freely around, to move not only ourselves but to move our goods to different parts of the continent. Also, we have been trying in Nigeria to join other states in trying to discuss common problems – educational and scientific problems

We feel that it is very important for the nationals of



#### COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

From left to right, Sir Albert Margai, Prime Minister of Sierra Leone, Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana, Dr Hastings Banda, Prime Minister of Malawi and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1912 - 1966), Prime Minister of Nigeria, at Marlborough House in London for the opening of the annual Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, 17th June 1965. Image © Keystone/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

different African countries to have the opportunity of mixing at all levels, not at the Heads of State and Government level, not only at the Foreign Ministers level, but also at all levels. Let our peoples travel to different countries in Africa; let them get to know themselves and to understand themselves. This, I am sure, will bring great understanding among all the peoples of this continent. So far, our communications system is not what we would like it to be; our transport is bad. This is not our fault. It was the fault of the Colonial Powers because they designed everything for their own purposes. It is up to us now – those of us who shape the destiny of our countries – to do what we can to improve matters.

Many of the speakers have told us that mere resolutions, mere condemnation is not enough; it is time for action. I would call upon the conference that we now start on the real work. It is in our hands to build, to create and to develop a new Africa for which all of us are anxious to do.

Now, Mr. President, the Hon. President of the Sudan, I think, when he spoke, told us that we should be frank. I think it was the President of Malagasy who said that we in Africa do not want to speak the truth. We have a saying in Nigeria, which is that "Truth is bitter". Mr. President, I want to be frank, I want to tell the bitter truth. To my mind, we cannot achieve this African unity as long as some African countries continue to carry on subversive activities in other African countries.

Sir, many of the members have spoken very strongly on the decolonization of the continent. I want to say that we in Nigeria are prepared to do anything to secure the freedom of the continent of Africa. There has been a suggestion that we should pull our resources together, that we should make arrangements, if necessary, to help the nationalists in different countries in Africa, which are still dependent, to fight their way to independence. We in Nigeria are prepared to do anything towards the liberation of all African countries. I have observed that, when we give assistance to another country which is fighting for its independence, some of us are in the habit of imposing obligations on those States. That is wrong. If we give assistance to African people in any dependent territory, we should not ask for any obligation on their part; because that would come almost to the same point that many of the speakers have made that they would only accept foreign aid without any strings attached.

I do not believe that any aid, no matter from where it comes, is without strings attached to it. Let us not fall into the same trap. If we assist any dependent territory in Africa, we must see to it that we do not attach conditions to our assistance. This is very, very important if we want to establish the solidarity of the continent of Africa, to make sure that any form of assistance we give is free.

It is good Sir, that we have a common pool, but a conference like this cannot discuss the details of such an organisation; and it is our view that, immediately after leaving this conference, or before we leave, we should appoint a committee - a standing committee - to go into the details of this matter. On the question of colonialism and racial discrimination, I am afraid that we in Nigeria will never compromise.

Now, I come to a very vital matter, which is the development of the continent. The African continent is very rich in resources but, unfortunately, these resources are not developed yet. We are born at a very difficult time: We have not the necessary capital, the necessary equipment, or the necessary know-how for the development of our continent. Therefore, we find it absolutely necessary to rely on outsiders for the development of the African territories. I would like to tell the conference that we must take every care to know who we invite to assist in the development of our resources, because there is a fear, which is my personal fear, that, if we are not careful, we may have colonialism in a different form.

Colonialism can take many different forms. Our countries can be colonized economically, if we are not careful. Just as we have fought political domination,

it is also important that we fight against economic domination by other countries.

Let us not forget that we in Africa are part of the world. We have our international obligations as well. Whatever we do, we cannot isolate ourselves from the rest of the world. Therefore, in all that we do, and in all that we say, we should be careful because we belong to one human society. Mr. President, I always tell people that I do not believe in African personality, but in human personality. The African is a human being and, therefore, we have to see to the development of human personality in Africa. I think any talk of African personality is based on inferiority complex. I do not regard any human being - red, white, brown, yellow or green - as superior to me. I regard myself as equal to anybody. I am a human being.

Now, some people have suggested, and this is a thing which is already underway, the establishment of an African Development Bank. I hope that, when the Ministers of Finance of different countries of Africa meet in Khartoum, they will be able to produce something which should be of benefit to all of us. Also, a suggestion has been made for the establishment of an African Common Market. This is a very good idea; but I must say that we in Nigeria feel that it is a very complicated matter. We want an African Common Market. But, can we do it by taking the continent as a whole? Or can we do it by certain groupings in Africa? What appears to us to be more practical is that we should have an African Common Market based on certain groupings. We are thinking, Sir, of a North African grouping which will include the Sudan; a West African grouping which will extend to the River Congo; an East African grouping, which will include almost all the Central African countries. If we base our examination on these groupings, I think we will arrive at a very successful establishment of an African Common Market, because I think it is good for the trade of Africa. For example, the inter-State trade in Africa is 10 per cent, and 90 per cent is done with countries outside Africa. There is no reason why we should not increase the inter-State trade on this Continent. I think, Sir, that if we are able to establish an African Common Market, we shall overcome many difficulties and we shall be in a position to stand on our own in relation to the other parts of the world. My fear of our being colonized will disappear if we are able to establish this African Common Market.

The question of disarmament was raised by several speakers. I think all of us feel strongly about this question. Although some feel that disarmament can never be achieved, still others feel that it is most



important that the great Powers will continue to talk about it; because the more they talk about it, the less danger there would be of an open clash. I am glad they have seen fit to invite some of the African countries to participate in their disarmament talks. The most essential thing, which is desirable, is to effect disarmament. It is desirable to ban nuclear testing; it is most important that we exercise every possible influence we can upon the great Powers to destroy those bombs which they have already got. If there is a war now, there would be nothing – everything would go. We are now just starting to develop our countries. The mere fact that Africa has been declared a nuclear-free zone will not make Africa free in the event of a world war. If there is war, we in Africa will be directly involved. It is our concern that there should be peace in the world, and that there should be understanding among the great Powers. Some people have suggested that we should organise ourselves into a Defence Bloc. Well, Mr. President and Your Excellencies, all of us have been talking about the bad nature of the armament race. It has been suggested that we should embark on an arms race in Africa. All of us know very well that we are at present incapable of joining in such a race. Our idea is that we should not be talking about an arms race. All we should talk about, Sir, is how to stop it, and I would not suggest that we should join in that race at all.

A suggestion was also made that we should come together as a bloc in the United Nations. Well, that is a very good idea; but I must tell the conference that we in Nigeria hate the idea of blocs, and we do not like it. If we can't find some name for it, such African Committee or an Africa 'something', it will be much better, because the whole idea of blocs is revolting. I think we should try to find better names for these different groupings. I think that we have been working for sometime now in United Nations where our different representatives meet and discuss matters of common interest. May I suggest to the conference that it is time now that we find a permanent small secretariat for such an African Committee in New York? That does not mean, of course, that we will instruct our delegates to close their eyes to the wider issues of world problems. But, as a Continent which has suffered for so long and also as a people who have suffered for so long. I think

we have to do everything to get our proper position in the United Nations Organization. Some of us have suggested that we should seek greater representation in the Security Council and also in all the bodies of the United Nations Organization. Well, this has been our stand all the years we have been independent. I said so in New York, I said it in Monrovia. It is absolutely essential that the African continent must have more appropriate representation in the Security Council and all the bodies of United Nations, because we have more to gain thereby. That world organization, I have always maintained, is a sure guarantee of the independent sovereignty of our African states.

Mr. President, many of the points have been made. Many members have said that we cannot leave Addis Ababa without a charter. I hope we shall not leave here without some kind of charter. I hope our Foreign Ministers will produce a charter before we leave this city.

May I thank your Imperial Majesty again and may I ask the conference to forgive me for being a little bit frank. I think that is the only way by which we could achieve understanding among ourselves. It is important that, when we meet on an occasion like this, we try to tell each other the hard facts, the truth about matters, instead of speaking about them behind. It is most important that we become frank in Africa. We are just beginning to know ourselves; and I am very happy, Mr. President, for having the opportunity to meet the very distinguished members from all parts of Africa. I hope that this conference will pave the way to the unity and solidarity of the African continent.



**H.E. Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria, reads the formal address at the Nigeria independence celebrations, 7th July 1964** Image © Popperfoto via Getty Images/Getty Images

“

**We must take every care to know who we invite to assist in the development of our resources, because there is a fear, which is my personal fear, that, if we are not careful, we may have colonialism in a different form. Our countries can be colonized economically, if we are not careful. It is also important that we fight against economic domination by other countries**

”

---

**H.E. ALHAJI  
ABUBAKAR  
TAFAWA BALEWA,**  
Prime Minister of the  
Federation of Nigeria  
(Present day Federal  
Republic of Nigeria)



#OurAfricaOurFuture

au.int    





**H.E**  
**GREGOIRE**  
**KAYIBANDA**

President of Rwanda







H.E. Habemeushi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rwanda representing H.E. Gregoire Kayibanda

our Imperial Majesty, please allow me in the first place to convey the most sincere thanks of the delegation of Rwanda for the warm welcome and charming hospitality we have enjoyed ever since our arrival in the capital of the oldest of Empires of independent African States.

Mr. President, Honourable Heads of State and Government, Excellencies, Gentlemen,

It is with intense personal joy, but also with great apprehension that I take the floor before this august assembly in order to explain, in broad outline only, the Rwanda Republic's position with respect to African Unity. An intense joy, what a noble task it is to make a modest contribution at the historical moment when the whole African continent, freed from the colonial yoke, becomes aware of itself, at the moment when the leaders of this great continent, after having freed, one by one, nearly all parts of the land of Africa, meet for the first time at a summit conference in order to deride the famous Berlin colonial pact of 1885.

**What a noble task it is to make a modest contribution at the historical moment when the whole African continent, becomes aware of itself, at the moment when the leaders of this great continent... meet for the first time at a summit conference in order to deride the famous Berlin colonial pact of 1885**

But it also calls for great temerity to dare, mere Minister for Foreign Affairs that I am, to take the floor in the midst of Heads of State whose names and authority inspire respect in Africa. One must be courageous if one is not to become dizzy. That being so, I should like to state here and now, Mr. President, that the Rwanda Republic, which I have the signal honour of representing here, has always come out in favour of African Unity. And you will find this position in the letter, dated 9 May, which His Excellency President Kayibanda addressed to all Heads of State. There is no doubt that the present movement responds to our aspiration to African Unity. The different political unions, the various inter-African organizations for technical, economic and cultural cooperation, and periodic regional conferences at which, as here, all the leaders of African and Malagasy States meet, constitute a first step towards the desired unity. We have in the past encouraged these meetings, these unions, these organizations, these conferences; that was Rwanda's intention in joining the African and Malagasy Union.

Today, all the independent States of Africa and Madagascar seem to have decided to go beyond that stage. The Government and the people of Rwanda's cannot but congratulate themselves on this great step unanimously taken by the leaders of free Africa. What, then, remains to be done? Why so many speeches to say that we are agreed, to recognize the necessity of a Charter? This Charter – let us draw it up: that is why we have come.

Mr. President, I shall not lose myself in enumerating the basic structures which must be set up in the beginning, but I see the Heads of State and Government meeting periodically, Ministers more often, and a permanent Secretariat appointed by the Conference of Heads of State in accordance with criteria to be specified. Men being what they are, in the words of a great man, we must provide for an institution for the peaceful settlement of differences, using all means of negotiation, conciliation, mediation and arbitration.

Mr. President, I cannot pass over in silence the problem of our African brothers who are still stagnating in the darkness of colonialism. On this point, I am precise and clear: Africa for the Africans! Anyone who has read the history of my country knows how revolutionary Rwanda is, how much it condemns the domination and exploitation of one man by another. Thus, Rwanda is agreed that we should condemn once and for all these impenitent and incorrigible colonialists and grant facilities to our brethren who are fighting for their independence.

Mr. President, my country, people with poets and writers, knows how to appreciate speech- es on their just merit; but it willingly grants priority to something concrete, tangible, realistic. Thus, I would add myself to the list of those who ask that before we separate we should accomplish something and continue our progress towards African Unity, a Unity which will be useful to Africa and Africans.

Mr. President, I have no more to say.

A black and white portrait of H.E. Leopold Sedar Senghor, President of the Republic of Senegal. He is wearing glasses, a suit, and a tie, with his hands clasped in front of him. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

**H.E  
LEOPOLD  
SEDAR SENGHOR**

President of the Republic of Senegal







our Majesty, Your Excellencies, My Dear Brothers,

We are at last living, here and now a dream that we have long dreamed: the dream of a Conference which should bring together fraternally the Heads of all the independent States of Africa. It is a great step forward. You are agreed; we have no right to fail. This dream that we are living is for us to put into effect, now if we are not to be guilty of treason: treason toward our own countrymen, treason toward Mother Africa. How we are to put it into practice is what I propose to discuss.

I will begin by stressing the choice of the method. For the success of our grand design, the effectiveness of the method counts for more than the strength of our feelings. This strength of feeling, this passion is one of the features of African-ness. It has been expressed, all too often, in speech in motions, whose virulence is exceeded only by their lack of realism. It is time to build on our land: on our realities. It is the essential condition for our success.

I would like, as briefly as possible, to express my thoughts on the three points on which we must fix our attention the first is the foundations of African unity; the second its object; and the third is the way and means of achieving it.

### **I. The Foundations of African Unity**

Most of us feel that what brings us close to one another and must unite us is our position as under developed countries, formerly colonized. Nor is that wrong. But we are not the only countries in that position. If that could be said objectively to be whole truth, then African Unity ought one day to dissolve with the disappearance of under-development.

I am convinced that what binds us lies deeper; and my conviction is based on scientifically demonstrable facts. What binds us is beyond history: it is rooted in pre-history. It arises from geography, ethnology, and hence from culture. It existed before Christianity and Islam; it is older than all colonization. It is that community of culture which I call African-ness. I would define it as "the sum total of African civilized values: Whether it appears in its Arab-Berber aspect or its African Negro aspect, African-ness always shows the same characteristics of passion in feelings, and vigour in expression. I recognize an African carpet among those of all other continents. It is no mere chance that some mosaic in Bardo Museum resembles some Mali "pagne".

**...What binds us lies deeper;...**

**...What binds us is beyond history: it is rooted in pre-history.**

**...Whatever the difficulties of the undertaking, I am convinced that we can succeed if we want to. But to feel that want, we must think of, accept and be conscious of what we have in common - our being African**

know our languages are diverse. From North to South from the Arab to the Hottentot, they show a series of links which join them one to another. Our races are diverse. Since pre-history, they have mingled.

The consciousness of our community of culture, our African-ness, is a necessary preliminary to any progress along the road to unity. Without it there can be no will, let alone an effective effort to reach unity. I do not deny that another thing we have in common is our situation as under-developed countries, characterized by a certain number of traits which I would sum up thus: under-nourishment and under-productivity because of lack of capital and technically trained personnel. But in order to emerge from this situation, though its nature is material and technical, it is on spiritual energy that 'We must call. We must forge together a common soul. We have a common soul, which is embodied in our African-ness. All that is needful is to recognize it and take it on. That means we must begin by rejecting all fanaticism, whether racial, religious or linguistic. Then, and then only can we define our aim lucidly.

### **II. The Aim of African Unity**

The aim we must assign, which we do assign, to our action can, obviously, only be the very aim which other nations and continents have set themselves: development through economic growth. I say development. By that I mean



**OAU SUMMIT IN SIERRA LEONE**  
**Senegalese President Leopold**  
**Senghor at the OAU Summit:**  
**the Organisation of African**  
**Unity, in Freetown, Sierra Leone,**  
**5 July 1980. Image © Alain**  
*Nogues/Syigma/Syigma via Getty*  
 *Images*



bringing each and every African to full worth. It is a question of man.

In the past the Colonizer thought we were sub-humans, and they treated us as such. Let us be bold enough to admit it, our situation at that time, as I have defined it above explained if it did not justify such disdain. Only the strong are respected. If the cold war has led the Great Powers to court us it is, of course, because international morality has grown in minds and hearts; above all, it is because the "trois monde" has united its weaknesses to make of them a force. But we must not create illusions, fear is not respect, and Africa is not even feared.

That means that we must do more. It is not enough that the union of our weaknesses should appear to be a force. It is not important to frighten people. The Important thing is that we transform each of our weaknesses into strength that we make of every African a man who eats and educates himself to his fill: a developed man: - because he has consciously cultivated in himself, in body and soul, all the virtues of African-ness. What that means is that every African must be brought, by means of and beyond economic growth and by means of and beyond greater welfare to the limit of his capabilities: to his optimum state.

Now, according to the economists, Africa could feed three thousand million people: I say that then, reviving the virtues of Saint Augustine and of Ibn Khaldoun, reviving the virtues of our builder's, our sculptors, or painters, our poets, north and south of the Sahara.

Africa will contribute powerfully to the building of a Universal Civilization. By its unity it will have been previously a factor for Peace: of that Peace without which there is no civilization.

### III. Ways and Means of African Unity

It is easy to define our aim. It was more difficult to discover the solid foundations of our unity. It is more difficult still to discover our ways and means. If it were easy we should not have divided ourselves into several groups. The specific purpose of this Conference is, in my opinion, to merge these groups into one by agreeing on the ways and means of our unity.

At first sight, there are obstacles to overcome. While they are clearly visible we ought to pay attention to them. I would remind you of the fanaticisms - racial, linguistic, religious - of which we must rid ourselves for a start. Then there are the micro-nationalisms. Think! European nations of 30, 50, 60 million inhabitants have come to discover that they have not enough land or sufficient people to organize an economy, or rather build up a civilization that is not distorted. What shall we say of our countries, the most populous of which numbers no more than 40 million souls?

And yet, if we do not wish to meet with disaster, we should consider the European and American examples. We must be cautious, moving forward step by step and stage by stage. I fear that we should be heading rapidly for disaster if we tried to construct a federation - or even a confederation with its own parliament and military command at the first attempt.

If we can overcome our religious differences fairly easily, bearing in mind that we are all believers, that we all belong to revealed religions, let us at last dare to say

it, the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences will not be wiped out, I don't say that - that would impoverish us - but they will be brought into harmony tomorrow.

As a first step, we should recognize these complementary differences. We should even help to organize them into regional unions. I can envisage three: - North Africa, West Africa and East Africa. - Until such time as South Africa is liberated. Each of these unions could, in its turn, be divided into smaller unions.

But at this Conference we must establish above the regional unions, the organization of Independent African and Malagasy States - the titles is of little importance - which will be the main instrument of our unity.

What Institutions should make up the Organization? To my mind, they should be very few to start off with. I can envisage four:

#### **1. The Conference of Heads of States and Heads of Government**

This would be the supreme institution of the Organization. Its decisions alone would be binding. It would meet every year or every two years, on the one hand to consider the Organization's activities during the previous period and on the other hand to define new objective for it. Each State Member would dispose of one vote. It is understood that the Charter of the Organization and the Rules of Procedure of the Conference would have been drawn up, if possible, at Addis Ababa.

#### **2. The Conferences of Ministers**

These conferences would be made up of ministers nominated by States according to the problems to be examined. Their object would be to study those problems in the different fields of our co-operation and to draw up drafts for discussion by or recommendation to the Conference of Heads of State and Heads of Government.

#### **3. The General Secretariat**

This would be an administrative body and not a political one; a body which implemented decision but did not make them. The Secretary General, nominated by the Conference, would have assistants and as many directors as was required by the

**Ahmed Sekou Toure (L), President of Guinea, and Leopold Sedar Senghor, President of Senegal (R) pose in the official car, on May 5, 1963 during Sekou Toure official visit to Dakar. Image © AFP via Getty Images**



number of specialized agencies. The assistants and directors would be chosen in such a way as to ensure that all the regions and all the linguistics groups were represented.

#### **4. The African Group at the United Nations**

There is an African Group at the United Nations at present. But unfortunately, it is a fictitious one. A certain solidarity does, of course, link the non-aligned countries. But, it is no less true that our problems are not the same as those of Latin America or even of Asia. The proof of this lies in the fact that the Great Powers only reserve a small part of their international assistance for Africa.

If then we really desire African unity, if we want our action to be efficacious, it is essential that the African Group in the United Nations becomes a living reality, and that its deliberations be respected by all the African States without exception.

Similar African groups might be constituted in all the specialized agencies of the United Nations.

As I said earlier, our cooperation should extend to every field, and especially to that of economics. Our struggle for the political independence of all the African territories is far from being finished, as I well know I will even go further: until now we have, used words

more than deeds against Portuguese and South African colonialism. It is time that the diplomatic and economic blockade that was recommended should be methodically organized, and still more applied.

It remains to be said that there will not be an African Community without an Economic Community. This is the place to draw a distinction between the Common Market and the Economic Community. Too often, in Africa the "Common Market" has come to be regarded as a magic Instrument for curing all the ills of under-development. Now the Common Market is, in a modest way, a customs union like those that existed here and there under the colonial regime. The "Economic Community" is far more and far better. It will have a common economic and financial policy, with harmonized planning and free circulation of goods and persons, in addition provisions like; those governing the Common Market.

As you may guess, the African Economic Community is not planned: for tomorrow. But we must give it thought already today; and better still, direct our steps and stages in that direction. The first step could well be the African Common Market. We do not dissimilate the difficulties. In effect, the Common Market presupposed the fixing of a common external tariff, with the elimination of customs duties and quotas. Now, as you know, our budget are mainly financed by customs duties as well as by import and export duties. As the same time, part of these dues protects our emergent industries. Even in this field, we shall like- wise proceed in stages.

I have dwelt upon the obstacles that confront us on the road of African unity. You will forgive me for this. I thought that is was the best method. Now we must establish the dimensions of these obstacles and then remove them, or at least reduce them in order to progress. We shall do so by giving our institutions rational and realistic structures.

Above all, we shall do so by accepting, each one of us some sacrifices. By accepting and applying in practice the general principles which are the strength of all international institutions: the equality of Member States, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, no resorting to violence to settle differences, and effective solidarity between all the African States.

I leave off where I began. Whatever the difficulties of the undertaking, I am convinced that we can succeed if we want to. But to feel that want we must think of, accept and be conscious of what we have in common - our being African.

Long live eternal Africa!



our Imperial Majesty; Your Excellencies,

I must first of all join-in the expressions of thanks to Your Imperial Majesty and to your Government and people for the warm welcome with which we have been received in this lovely city, for the gracious and generous hospitality which has been provided for us, and for all the care and thoroughness with which preparations have been made for this historic SUMMIT Conference of Independent African States.

We in Sierra Leone have never believed that Africa could not be united. We have always held the hope that the differences of approach which seemed to have the appearance of creating different groups or blocks on our continent were only temporary differences. Now we are happy that we did not hold this hope in vain. We are happy that, by the simple fact that we are meeting here from over thirty independent states, we have been able to prove to ourselves and to show to those outside Africa who, for their own reasons, would like to see us divided, that there is only ONE Africa, and that in this one Africa, we are all brothers.

I would like also to express our thanks to our foreign ministers and their delegations; who have worked patiently and well this past week to prepare our Agenda.

It is my view, Your Majesty and Your Excellencies, that if we were to go home from this Conference having reaffirmed the fundamental basis of our Unity, and having set in motion the machinery for the structural aspects of our: Unity, and having declared that we WILL stay united and WILL cooperate in every way towards the full economic, Social, educational, scientific and cultural development of this our potentially great continent, our meeting will have been crowned with success. In order, therefore, to achieve this success, I am prepared to enter into our discussions with a spirit of understanding of sympathy with views which may be different from my own views, and with a willingness to reach agreement through honourable compromise.

Your Majesty; Your Excellencies: The whole world is watching us, and eagerly listening for the good news from Addis Ababa, that a UNITED AFRICA is ready to lead in the path towards world peace and security.

I thank you.



We are happy that, by the simple fact that we are meeting here from over thirty independent states, we have been able to prove to ourselves and to show to those outside Africa who, for their own reasons, would like to see us divided, that there is only **ONE Africa**, and that in this one Africa, we are all brothers

**H.E  
MILTON  
MARGAI**

Prime Minister of Sierra Leone

OAU - AU  
1963-2023







**H.E  
ADEN**

**ABDULLA OSMAN**

President of the Somali Republic  
(Present Day Federal Republic of Somalia)





feel deeply privileged and honoured to have been afforded the opportunity of participating in this historic Conference in which, for the first time, all the Heads of African States and Governments have assembled together with the object of realizing the unity and well-being of Africa.

It is an inspiring experience to see in this hall men whose vision and influence extend far beyond the African Continent, and it is our sincere wish that by combining our efforts there will emerge from this Conference positive and constructive proposals for the achievement of African Unity.

I need not emphasize the value which my Government and people attach to meetings of this nature. In these dynamic and momentous times circumstances demand that African leaders meet more frequently to discuss matters of common concern, to exchange views on problems affecting the destiny of our Continent, and to align policies on international issues which bear upon the unity and well-being of Africa.

In dealing with our problems, it is necessary that we heed the lessons which history has taught us. We must bear in mind that the interests of Africa will best be served by those who belong to Africa, and whose primary loyalties lie with Africa. It would be prudent to remember that African States share a common destiny, and that no state can hope to prosper in isolation. We must be resolute in our efforts to maintain a united front, and to counteract all attempts at the establishment of permanent rival political blocs or grouping in our continent.

There is an aspect of African independence that is perhaps unique in history. Having recently conquered our freedom and national identity, often at an immeasurable price in human lives and hardships, we are naturally proud of our sovereignty and independence. And yet, we do not regard nation independence as our final goal. We are aware that in the second half of the twentieth century to grow into independence means to grow into inter-dependent. We strive for the consolidation of our national societies, and at the same time we strive for African Unity. We lift our eyes beyond our boundaries and identify ourselves with the struggle of those African brothers who are still under colonial domination.

**In dealing with our problems, it is necessary that we heed the lessons which history has taught us. We must bear in mind that the interests of Africa will best be served by those who belong to Africa, and whose primary loyalties lie with Africa**

When we speak of African Unity we beware of clichés and empty words. Our guiding principles should be idealism, tempered by realism, vision and imagination accompanied by a sober concern for practicability. We should not be afraid to acknowledge that any form of association, federation or union implies a voluntary limitation on each State's sovereignty. Recognizing this necessity, the Somali Constitution provides that the Republic "accepts, on conditions of parity with other States, these limitations on its sovereignty as may be necessary to ensure peace among nations".

As a result of past conferences and the preparatory meeting of the Foreign Ministers here, considerable progress has already been made in the direction of African Unity and Solidarity. Several important documents, "which have emerged from these combined efforts, provide excellent working material for the preparation of an African Charter.

One of the major tasks confronting us today is to articulate our common aspiration for unity into a political framework acceptable to all.

Three main alternatives should be considered. The first is to develop a system of periodic consultations among African Governments for the purposes of concerting their foreign and military policies, and raising the economic and social level of the African people.

The second alternative is the establishment of an Inter-African Organization dedicated to the same purposes, and having its own budget and legal personality.

The third alternative is the creation of an African Union or Federation with a single foreign policy and diplomacy, a common defence system, a common economic planning, and a unified currency.

There are very important differences among the three alternatives.

Under the first, each member State, while committed to cooperate with the others, remains free to decide its policies according to its own judgment.



Under the second, each member State, within the limits of the Charter of the Organization, is bound by majority decisions, and undertakes to contribute to the expenses of the Organization in proportion to its national budget.

The third alternative is radically different from the others in that, while the degree of autonomy and sovereignty retained by individual States depends upon the terms of the Constitution, each of them is represented internationally by the Federal or Union Government.

What is then the solution best suitable to Africa today? The right answer to this question cannot be improvised or lightly given. I stress that the answer should be the right one; that is it should take into account the present stage of development of the Continent and project it forward realistically in the foreseeable future; it should express, if at all 'Possible the unanimous conviction of the African States.

No doubt the vision of an African Union speaking with a single voice in the councils of the world reflects the aspirations of the peoples of Africa. As a final goal, we should all strive for the realization of this objective.

At this stage however, I wonder whether the African States would be prepared to surrender their recently acquired sovereignty to a central government. In our view, such a momentous decision should be reached only at the end of a process of evolution. We should begin with less binding forms of association. These would enable us to acquire the habit of working together towards the solution of common problems, and would gradually prepare us for the adoption of closer bonds.

It seems to us that at this stage of development, our common desire for greater unity among African States would best be expressed by the formation of a new Pan-African Organization. The Organization would have its own juridical personality, and would be parallel to the regional agencies already existing in other continents, in full accord with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

In our view, such an organization should have four principal organs:

- a) A Pan-African Assembly which should normally meet once a year and decide the general action and policy of the organization;
- b) A Council, which should meet whenever necessary, deal with urgent matters, and be responsible for the implementation of the policies laid down by the Assembly;

- c) A permanent Conciliation and Arbitration Commission which should deal with the settlement of territorial and other disputes between African States;
- d) A Secretariat responsible only to the organization which, should be entrusted with the performance of the administrative and technical services.

An organization of this nature would provide a forum for periodic contacts among the leaders of African States. In particular, it would serve to reach a peaceful settlement of controversies and disputes among African countries; to coordinate the policies of the African States at meetings of the United Nations and of other international organizations; to promote the economic and social progress of the African Continent.

The Permanent Conciliation and Arbitration Commission which I have in mind should consist of a panel of highly qualified Africans who command universal respect. The Member States of the Organization should be urged to submit inter-African disputes to the Commission. The success of this machinery for the amicable settlement of State differences would strengthen mutual confidence and would prepare the ground for closer forms of association.

In the economic and social fields the Organization should be concerned with raising the standard of living of the African people; in particular it should examine thoroughly and promptly the existing projects and recommendations, such as the creation of an African Common Market an African Investment, Fund an African Development Bank and others.

Permit me, however to sound a note of caution. There are matters which must be dealt with by each individual nation; others may be most effectively dealt with on a regional or continental scale; others still should be tackled on a world-wide scale. Before embarking on a course of action such as the creation of a new African technical agency, it should be ascertained whether the proposed organ would provide the best solution to the problem at hand. Any decision should be preceded by a thorough study of the financial technical and other practical aspects of a proposal. It should be borne in mind, for example that the African States here assembled are members of the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, and we all contribute to their budgets.

It is important therefore to avoid unnecessary duplication and expense. In deciding whether a new project should be launched or a new agency established, we, should be satisfied that there is a real

need, and that the function is not already effectively performed by existing agencies.

I have considered it necessary to touch upon the organizational requirements of African Unity because the soundness or otherwise of its structure will affect profoundly the success of our endeavours. To ensure that our organization develops soundly it is important that we build on solid foundations, and the strength of those foundations will, in the last analysis, depend on the degree of understanding and good will which bind the member states. It follows, therefore that those problems which hinder the development of relations between African States must be attended to without delay. If they are left unresolved they could well harm relations and consequently imperil the foundations of our unity.

The kind of problem which we have in mind is that concerning territorial disputes between African States. We are aware; of course that this is not the forum for discussing individual disputes between countries but territorial disputes are issues that go straight to the hearts of the people.

History has shown that the most serious obstacle to African Unity originates from the artificial political boundaries which were imposed on large areas or the African Continent by Colonialist Powers. We have seen how traditionally integrated societies were torn apart and how their land was cruelly partitioned to serve the selfish interests of others.

It has been suggested by some that any attempt to adjust existing boundary arrangements would aggravate rather than ease the situation. and for that reason matters should remain as they are.' We do not subscribe to that view for several reasons. It would amount to us condoning actions and policies which we know very well are wrong and unjust. It would too, admit a defeatist attitude and imply a lack of courage to solve African problems. Finally, it would show that we are short sighted to think that African Unity can be achieved by side-tracking contentious issues that are the realities of the African scene.

It is for this reason that we seek in the friend list spirit, the indulgence of this great Assembly for a better understanding of the territorial problems which face the Somali people. In doing so, our purpose is not to promote hostility between the states involved, but to seek recognition of the fact that the problems deserve the attention of the whole family of African Nations.

Briefly the Somali problem is this: unlike any other border problem in Africa, the entire length of the existing boundaries as imposed by the colonialists,

cut across the traditional pastures of our nomadic population. The problem becomes unique when it is realized that that no other nation in Africa finds itself totally divided along the whole length of its borders from its own people.

These, who oppose the reunification of the Somali territories, attempt to portray the Somali people's desire for unity as a form of tribalism. Such opponents use every means at their disposal to rank the Somali people as an ordinary tribe without any rights to nationhood. The Somali people are a nation in every sense of the word.

A nation has been defined as "a people, usually inhabiting a distinct portion of the earth, speaking the same language, using the same customs, possessing historic continuity, and distinguished from other like group, by their racial origin and characteristics. It is constituted by inborn qualities which render it indissoluble".

The Somali people share all these common bonds', and in addition, share a common religion. There is no doubt, as scholars have universally acknowledged that the Somalis constitute a nation.

This concept of nationhood is profoundly felt by all Somalis, those living outside the territory of the Republic, as well as those living within it.

An eminent expert on the peoples of the Horn of Africa has recently written: "The hap- hazard partition of Somali grazing lands by Britain, Italy, France and Ethiopia towards the end of the nineteenth century separated, quite literally, brother from brother, by a series of artificial and often disputed frontiers across which Somalis as nomads have to' move" .

By becoming united, the Somali people feel that not only would their welfare be secured. "but that as a single entity they would be able to contribute effectively to the ideals of African Unity. In their present situation they cannot do so. They cannot develop into a coherent whole, while one-and-a-half million of them are still living in areas administered by Britain., Ethiopia and France.

The Somali area administered by Britain is known as the Northern Frontier District. Last October when an impartial commission was charged with ascertaining the view of the in- habitants living there, it found that 87 per cent of them were in favour of union with the Somali Republic. By expressing themselves overwhelmingly in favour of joining their brothers the people of that region have demonstrated that they emphatically do not consent to be governed by the

authorities in Nairobi. Furthermore, by boycotting unanimously the Kenya elections, they have demonstrated that they emphatically do not consent to participate in the government of that country. It is because Britain has refused to recognize the will of the inhabitants of the N. F.D. that a dangerous state of unrest has arisen there.

The strong desire expressed in the N. F. D, towards union is shared also by Somalis living under Ethiopian and French rule.

It is not our wish, at this stage to go deeply into the Somali territorial dispute with our host country Ethiopia, We shall simply summarise our stand on this matter by saying that Ethiopia has taken possession of a large portion of Somali territory without the consent and against the wishes of the inhabitants.

The present state of agitation and ferment in those areas will continue to fester, unless an equitable solution is found. If the wound is not healed, it will constitute source of trouble in the region, and may affect adversely the friendly relations between the Somali Republic and her neighbours.' Let there be no misunderstanding about our intentions. The Somali Government has no ambitions or claims for territorial aggrandizement. At the same time, the people of the Republic cannot be expected to remain indifferent to the appeal of its brethren. The Somali Government, therefore, must press for self-determination for the inhabitants of the Somali areas adjacent to the Somali Republic. Self-determination is a cornerstone of the United Nations Charter, to which we all subscribe. If the Somalis in those areas are given the opportunity to express their will freely, the Government of the Republic pledges itself to accept the verdict.

Before concluding, I should like to summarize in a few words the position of the Somali Government on other important issues.

We share the strong feeling of all Africans that the liquidation of the last vestiges of colonialism from the African continent must be accelerated. We urge, in particular, that the people of French Somaliland be given an opportunity to determine their own future freely, without pressure or intimidation. French Somaliland, as you may have noted, enjoys the unamiable position of being the last French colonial outpost in Africa. Whenever the question of independence for Africa is raised, there is a tendency to devote most attention to the larger colonial territories and overlook the struggles of the smaller ones. In our opinion, all colonial occupied territories should be considered in the same light. It would give

encouragement to the people of French Somaliland and also to other smaller territories if this Conference could endorse the proposition that the indigenous populations should be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination without further delay, and that moral and material help will be provided by African States.

The continuing anachronism of colonial regimes in Angola, Mozambique and South West Africa is intolerable. It is equally anachronistic that the democratic principle of "one man one vote" should not yet have reached Southern Rhodesia.

We are looking forward to the early independence of the peoples of Kenya, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Zanzibar, and will welcome them warmly in our community.

The South African Government's policy of apartheid and racial discrimination has been universally condemned. We can never rest as long as this outrageous contempt for the dignity of man persists.

We continue to subscribe to a policy of non-alignment, in that it enables us to examine dispassionately the merits of each issue, with prejudice towards none.

We fully support the efforts made by all peace-loving nations towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament.

We believe that the creation of a nuclear free zone of the African Continent, similar to that recently proposed for Latin America, would be a significant contribution to the lessening of world tension. For the same reason we are opposed to foreign military bases in Africa.

We reaffirm our belief in the principles of the United Nations Charter, and our confidence in the Organization as an indispensable and effective force for the improvement of the human condition. As the United Nations now has twice as many members as it had when it was created, we will continue to press jointly with other African countries, for the structural changes necessary to reflect more adequately the present membership of the organization.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank His Imperial Majesty, the Ethiopian Government and people, for the warm hospitality accorded us in their capital. May this green plateau fragrant with eucalyptus and ringed with noble mountains, be the birth place of a new era of understanding and unity for the African continent.





“

**We cannot logically denounce the Foreigner for having divided us, nor can we continue to complain of the division if, once having become masters of our destiny, we prove ourselves incapable of restoring this Unity...**

”

---

**H.E.  
AHMADOU  
AHIDJO**  
President of  
the Republic  
of Cameroon



#OurAfricaOurFuture

au.int    



**H.E**

**TSEHAFI TEZAZ**

**AKLILOU HABTE-WOLD**

Prime Minister of Ethiopia







our Majesty, Mr. President,

I must apologize for intervening at this stage in the debate, but the honourable Head of State of Somalia leaves me no alternative. It is with genuine regret that I intervene, in view of the events of the last two days, the high standard of debate, the purpose for which the eminent Heads of State have gathered together, this high purpose, this dream that all Africans have been dreaming for centuries.

At a time when we are about to realize African unity, I deeply regret that I am obliged to enter into the minor differences between two States. The purpose of our meeting is African unity, collaboration and reconciliation. Our purpose here is not to emphasize our minor differences, but to bring out our points of agreement. In view of the unthinkable accusation made here against my country, I had no other choice than to take the floor I shall be as brief as possible, and it is not my intention to enter into polemics. The President of the Republic of Somalia stated that Ethiopia has seized a large part of Somali territory against the will and desire of the Somalia population. The Somali delegation apparently wishes to apply in all conferences the well-known adage "If you throw enough mud, some of it will stick", but I had not expected him to apply it at this major conference, attended by great Heads of State from our continent. Whence comes this accusation? I shall restrict myself to a few facts only, so that everyone may know the truth for once and for all. Ethiopia has always existed in history for centuries as an independent state and as a nation, for more than 3,000 years. That is a fact, second fact: the historical frontiers of Ethiopia stretched from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, including all the territory between them. Third fact: there is no record in history either of a Somali State or a Somali nation. That too is a fact. I apologize for stating it. During the 19th century, when Europeans colonialists decided to share out Africa, as two eminent Heads of State have here pointed out, Ethiopia, though robbed of all its coast line Eritrea, Somalia and so on resisted as a symbol to our African brothers, a symbol of the will to independence of Africa. It has resisted alone for centuries. Fellow Delegates, there is no need to recall here that it was at Adwa in colonialist power. In doing so, it was defending its independence, the independence of our brothers. At the Paris Peace Conference after the Second World War, we obliged the colonialists, and particularly the Italian aggressors who used our Ethiopian coast-line of Eritrea and Somalia to carry out attacks against the only independent African country, to abandon their former colonies, and also to abandon their colonies in North Africa and elsewhere. With our friends from Egypt and Liberia, we struggled alone, the three independent states of Africa, on behalf of the whole continent. Afterwards I was myself delegated by His Imperial Majesty in 1949, when the future of the Italian colony of Somalia was discussed. Ethiopia was among the first states to support the independence of Somalia. I myself asked for this. There was a proposal to place Somalia under Italian mandate for 25 years. We refused. It was proposed to place Somalia under Italian mandate for ten years, Ethiopia alone said no, and demanded immediate independence. After a mandate has been granted to Italy, during these last ten years, before Somalia obtained its independence, my Sovereign, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, invited the Somali Head of State who is here present to come to Addis Ababa and granted him the honours with which all the Heads of State were here received two days ago.

Before there was an independent Somali Republic, the Emperor Haile Selassie extended his hand to our Somali brothers, offering them economic collaboration; proclaimed his support for their independence; and did everything possible to reach a rapprochement, in spite of frontier questions, because questions of frontiers between Ethiopia and the Somali Republic are regulated by an international treaty. If the Somali Republic does not recognize the treaty, then the Somali Republic will not even exist. There is an international treaty, but on the ground there is no demarcation. We could spend much time one discussing that demarcation in order to reach agreement.

When the Honourable President came here, he was very satisfied. He went away; it was only after Somalia became independent that all these polemics came about. Now immediately after independence, there was immediately a terrific campaign aiming at territorial aggrandisement at the expense of Ethiopia and Kenya. It is not for me to reply for Kenya. The President of the Somali Republic said "We are not seeking territorial aggrandisement". Then what is he seeking? What does he base his statement on? On what does he base this territorial claim? On linguistic reasoning or on religious reasons?

Even if, as was said in this very Chamber by the eminent Heads of the State of Madagascar, of Nigeria, of Ghana, if we are to re-draw the map of Africa on religious, racial and linguistic. I am afraid, as everyone has said, that many States will cease to exist. It is in the interest of all Africans now to respect the frontiers drawn on the maps, whether they are good or bad, by the former colonizers; and that is the interest of Somalia, too, because if we are going to move in this direction, then we, too, the Ethiopians will have claims to make: on the same basis as Somalia, and



for more on historical and geographical reasons. Let me say in conclusion, the policy of Ethiopia, as its history shows, while never allowing an inch of territory to be given up, the following: non-interference in the internal affairs of the State, respect for the sovereignty and integrity of every State, a peaceful settlement of all disputes on the established basis, co-operation between African brother states in all fields: economics, cultural, and social, and to work actively for African unity. I beg the Government of Somalia to work on the same principles, as I hope it will, for the greater benefit of our two fraternal peoples.



Dear Friends,

We are gathered together today under the glow of a new dawn which makes the advent of a new era in our Continent. This Africa the cradle of Mankind, where glorious civilizations have blossomed on the shores of mighty rivers, has been for long the prey of colonizers who enslaved her sons, disdained her cultures and exploited her wealth.

We are gathered today to strive for the liberation of those parts of this dear Continent where colonialism wages its last desperate battle and also to encounter another challenge- that of reconstruction, of combating vestiges of economic and social backwardness, and of readapting foreign system of Government to suit our national temperament and traditions. Furthermore, our multiple and complex problems have to be set in a wider perspective. We have to face them in the midst of ideological conflicts and foreign interests that threaten Africa.

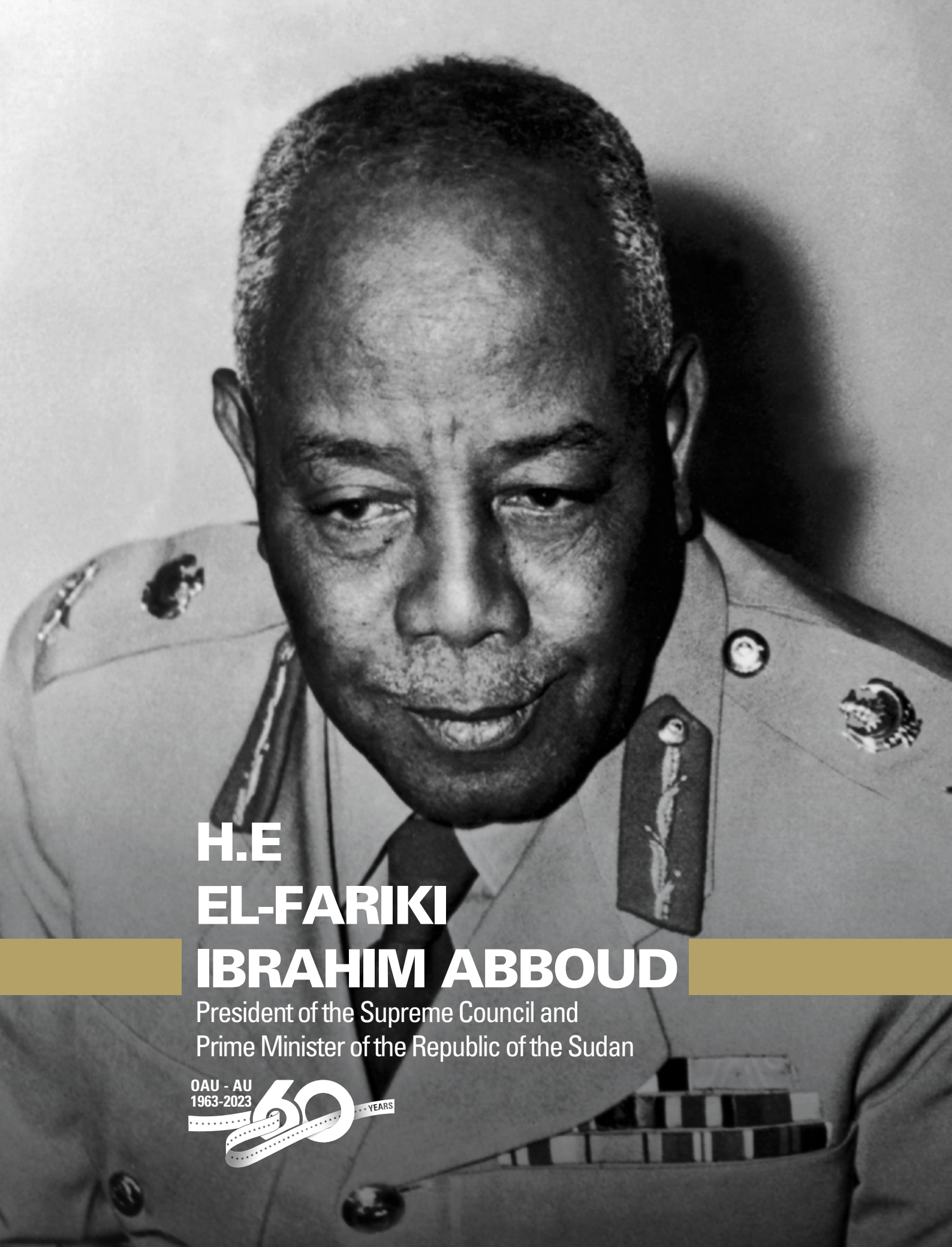
**... Unity is an imperative necessity for Africa today. Our problems stem from a common root and have, we believe, a common answer. Unity is not only our most effective answer but it has for us a message that is essentially and intrinsically different from a plea for Unity by others. Colonial and industrially developed countries may regard Unity as a method of preserving the status-quo. We regard Unity as an endeavour for the creation of that which should be both ideal and practical.**

This is why we meet, Dear Friends, on the outbreak of a new era, the era of African Unity - an idea that has begun to crystallize, having for long been cherished as an ideal by African Leaders and nourished as a hope by the African Peoples.

We meet in this climate of hope to defy these internal and external challenges. We meet, inspired by confidence to rally our internal resources and by faith among African Peoples and Governments. We are here to analyse, to resolve and to overcome all external obstacles; for we are inspired by this sense of the oneness of Africa.

I greet you all in the name of this Unity to which the People of the Republic of the Sudan have always aspired. The Sudanese People have longed and worked for this historic meeting through previous Conferences in which the Sudan participated; fully convinced that artificial differences cannot stand against this Continental surge for Unity.

The importance of this Unique Conference is therefore not only one of magnitude, for one of a quest for the definition of complete Unity disregarding blocks and internal divisions. It is also an expression of our determined efforts to wield this Unity as an effective means of constructing an African edifice which will reflect our multiple economic, social and political endeavours and which will equally effectively contribute towards World Peace and stability.



**H.E  
EL-FARIKI  
IBRAHIM ABBOUD**

President of the Supreme Council and  
Prime Minister of the Republic of the Sudan



All our peoples are anxiously watching us lay the cornerstone of this magnificent edifice today. They fully realize that the choice of words in drafting charters, proposals and resolutions is meaningless without the dedicated spirit with which they are to be implemented. Our Peoples expect frankness when details are discussed, and when issues are resolved. They pray for an atmosphere of confidence so that a long cherished dream may be realized. Unity is an imperative necessity for Africa today. Our problems stem from a common root and have, we believe, a common answer. Unity is not only our most effective answer but it has for us a message that is essentially and intrinsically different from a plea for Unity by others. Colonial and industrially developed countries may regard Unity as a method of preserving the status-quo. We regard Unity as an endeavour for the creation of that which should be both ideal and practical.

Dear Friends,

Having set African Unity as our ultimate goal we may agree to differ as to the forms in which this Unity may be expressed. It may acquire various and changing shapes. Only by trial can we embark upon the most congenial and durable form. Nevertheless it is important to declare from this rostrum our dedication to this Unity, both in principle and as an instrument of policy.

I am therefore proud and pleased to announce, in the name of the People of the Sudan, our unwavering determination to bring about and realize this Unity. We are more prepared to fulfil our obligations towards this ideal than to enjoy any rights that may accrue.

We are prepared to harmonize our foreign economic and social policies with other African policies. We are equally prepared to expand our various means of communications to strive for closer physical proximity with our neighbours and with other African States. We are equally dedicated to revive and promote spiritual and moral affinities so that a unified African public opinion may emerge. We are fully prepared to work for closer cultural, technical and social cooperation with all African Governments and Peoples.

Dear Friends,

The Sudan does not understand Unity as an attempt to isolate Africa from the rest of the world; or to absolve ourselves from our international obligations. We believe that the reverse is true. We believe that, with Unity the African Voice will carry more weight that our role will be more constructive; and our contribution more positive at this critical juncture in the affairs of Mankind.

We hope thereby to constitute moral force which will direct the world towards peace and good will - a role which will be in keeping with our cultural, spiritual and moral heritage. We believe that we can best fulfil this role by adopting the policy of non-alignment by rejecting foreign military pacts, foreign military bases and by the outright condemnation of armament.

Through preparing to undertake this constructive role; we believe that the rest of the world will be impelled to



📍 **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: H.E. El-Fariki Ibrahim Abboud, Premier of Sudan, close up, while meeting with African Heads of State. Image © Alain Nogues/Sygma/Sygma via Getty Images**



fulfil its obligations towards us. We do not ask the Big Powers merely to refrain from interfering in our affairs or to desist from meddling in our inter-African relations. We demand that these Powers undertake and fulfil their responsibilities towards bridging the gulf which separates the haves from the have-nots. We demand fair returns for our primary products in world markets, returns which are commensurate with our efforts and which cannot be achieved by fluctuating prices. If they are truly desirous for world peace, we believe that these same Powers should devote more of their technical resources to enable us to industrialize our raw materials in order to raise the economic and social standard of our Peoples.

This campaign for national construction should not, however, divert us from an equally imperative task - The task of liberating the rest of our Continent from these remaining pockets of colonialist and racialist domination.

The Sudan is of the view that measures to achieve these ends must be practical and coordinative. We believe in the establishment of an all Africa organization through which material aid to Liberation Movements should be channelled and training facilities for Freedom Fighters in our respective countries should be organized. We believe in the application of complete and effective boycott of the Governments of Portugal and the Republic of South Africa.

Brothers and Friends,

This first Meeting between the Heads of Independent African States should spell a new page in our inter-African relations. We should delve into the past only to cement our new - found Unity and open up new vistas for genuine future co-operation. The keynote for this cooperation lies within us; it stems from our faith in ourselves and trust in our neighbours and brothers.

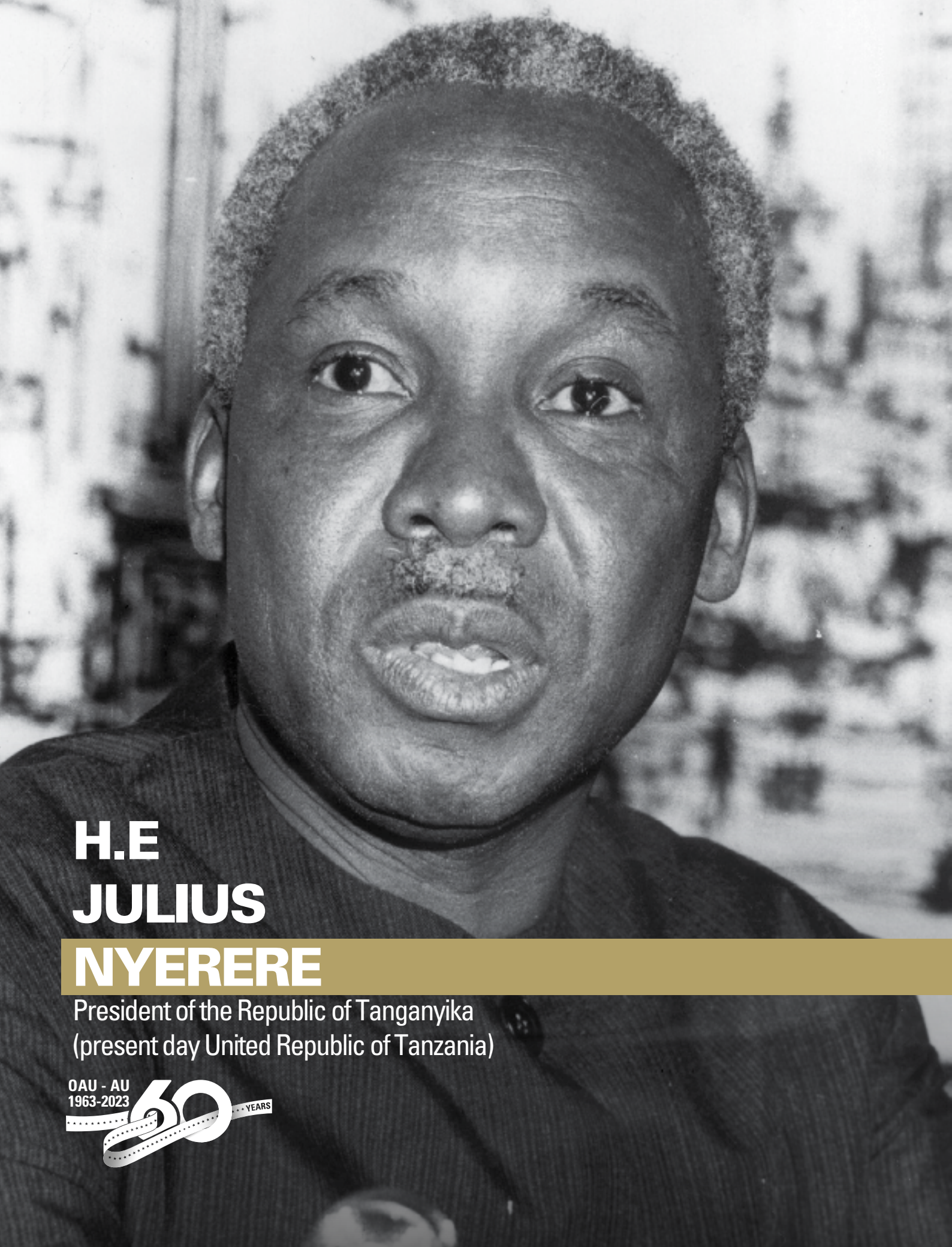
I hope you will bear with me while I undertake a congenial and pleasant task. May I, on behalf of the Government and People of the Sudan, express our sincerest thanks to His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie the First. His personal sympathy and support the dedication of His Government and People have made this Conference possible. Its resounding success is a tribute to the whole of Africa.

May I finally, on behalf of the People of the Sudan convey to the People of Ethiopia our wishes for their continuous happiness and prosperity. The bonds between us are an ancient and living reality which is forever strengthened by the eternal flow of the Nile.

Thank you all.



**H.E. El-Fariki Ibrahim Abboud, Premier of Sudan, receives a warm welcome in New York.** Image © Paul Popper/ Popperfoto via Getty Images/ Getty Images



**H.E**  
**JULIUS**  
**NYERERE**

President of the Republic of Tanganyika  
(present day United Republic of Tanzania)







**T**his conference has been faced with one task, it is the task of finding a common denominator, which will guide us in our determination to rid our continent of the remaining vestiges of colonialism and in our determination to see an Africa speaking with the same voice.

The eyes of Africa and the world are turned upon this conference. They are anxiously waiting for its outcome. Some are praying for its failure; others are praying for its success.

We did not come here to discover whether we all want a free Africa. Even the greatest enemies of African unity know that the one thing on which there can be no doubt that the whole of Africa speaks with one sincere voice, it is our desire to see an Africa completely freed from foreign domination and racialism. We came here to find out what we should all do now in order to bring about the final liberation of Africa.

We did not come here to discover whether we want African unity. Again, even our enemies know that we sincerely desire unity. It is their fear of the consequences to them of complete African unity, which makes them emphasize our differences and hope – wishfully – that these differences will make it impossible for Africa to unite. No, we did not come here to find out whether we desire unity. We came here to find out our common denominator in our approach to African unity.

**...We did not come here to discover whether we want African unity. ...even our enemies know that we sincerely desire unity. It is their fear of the consequences to them of complete African unity, which makes them emphasize our differences and hope – wishfully – that these differences will make it impossible for Africa to unite. No, we did not come here to find out whether we desire unity. We came here to find out our common denominator in our approach to African unity.**

I do not propose to bother you by stating why Africa should be free and why Africa should be united; why Africa should unite in achieving its freedom and free in achieving its unity. Your Imperial Majesty and those of my brothers who have spoken before me have stated that case much better than I can. It has been even better stated by the suffering of our people; by the blood which our people have shed and are still shedding at the hands of their oppressors; it has been better stated by the millions of our people who died in the slave raids organised all over Africa by those powers whose prestige was built upon the humiliation of Africa; it is still stated by those monuments of European, American and (let's say it) Asian glory, which to us are symbols of humiliation and oppression. I repeat then, that I do not propose to bother you with reasons, why Africa should be free, and why Africa should be united. We came here simply to discover our common denominator, in our approach to freedom and unity.

Because of the good fortune that I have had to speak last I can honestly say that we have discovered this common denominator. In our approach to the final liberation of Africa, we are all agreed without a single exception that the time for more words is gone; that this is time for action; that the time for allowing our



**Nairobi, Kenya, 1966 - African members of governments and heads of state gathered in Nairobi for the East and Central African "summit" meeting. They are (L-R): Minister Nkundadajengi of Rwanda; Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia; Abdul Razak of Somalia; President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya; Mwami of Burundi; Mahgoub of Sudan; General Joseph Mobutu of the Congo; Julius Nyerere of Tanzania; Dr. Milton Obote of Uganda; and Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia. Image © Getty Images**



brethren to struggle unaided is gone; that from now on our brethren in non-independent Africa should be helped by independent Africa.

In order to complete this picture of unanimity let me add Tanganyika's voice then. I ask you to look at the map of Africa. You will immediately realise why in a very real and special sense we in Tanganyika, as indeed our brethren in the Congo cannot be comfortable or complacent in our freedom as long as our neighbours to the south are not free.

At present, not because of any greater dedication to the



**Nairobi, Kenya, 1964 - Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta (R) of Kenya waves his plumed symbol vigorously to a crowd before entering the East African Heads of Government Conference held in Nairobi. Sharing the delight of the cheering reception are Dr. Nyerere (L) of Tanganyika and Dr. Obote (C) of Uganda. Image © Getty Images**

freedom of Africa, but because of our proximity to non-independent Africa, we are already making a humble contribution to the liberation of Southern Africa, but we are prepared to do more. In particular, we are prepared to support the proposal made by our brother, President Sekou Toure, that one percent of our national budget should be set aside for the purpose of liberating non-free Africa. I want to assure our gallant brother from Algeria, Brother Ben Bella, that we are prepared to die a little for the final removal of the humiliation of colonialism from the face of Africa.

In our search for a common approach to unity the way the United States of America came into being has often been mentioned as an example open to us to follow. But let me say in this connection, that the United States of America did not come into being by the signing of the American Constitution. This was rather the culmination of a common endeavour by thirteen colonial countries. The real unity was forged and sealed by the Declaration of Independence and by a comradeship in arms for the achievement of that independence. Let us not avoid that task now facing us by waiting until Africa is under one Government.

I ask Your Imperial Majesty and my brothers assembled here that we collectively should now view the continued occupation of Africa by any foreign power with the same gravity and in the same seriousness as each one of us would have viewed the occupation by a foreign power of a part of the country that he has the privilege and the honour to lead. We can no longer go on saying that Angola is not free or Mozambique is not free, etc., and that we are helping Angolans or Mozambicans to free themselves. Such statements are hiding the truth. The real humiliating truth is that Africa is not free; and therefore it is Africa which should take the necessary collective measures to free Africa. This is the clear and serious message that should go from here to the Security Council of the United Nations.

In our approach to unity we have also discovered a common denominator. We have all repeated our dedication to the achievement of a fully united Africa. But we have all said in effect that just as African independence has been a process, African unity is about to be a process. There is not going to be a God who will bring about African unity by merely willing unity and saying "Let there be Unity". It is not in the nature of human action that the will and the fulfilment should be simultaneous. That is not in our power, that is only in the power of the Gods. In human action, there is an inevitable progress between the will to do and the fulfilment of that action. What is required is that immediately after the will, the first step should be taken

– I repeat then that African unity cannot come by divine will, “Let there be unity”. And none of us is prepared in the name of unity to invite a Napoleon to come and bring about such unity by conquest. We are therefore left with only one method of bringing about African unity. That method is the method of free agreement. That is why at the beginning of this speech I said our task is to discover how to bring about our freedom in unity and our unity in freedom. This means that at any given point we must discover our highest common denominator. Having discovered that highest common denominator our duty is to take it without waiting till tomorrow.

We have, I believe, reached such an agreement here for the initial step to be taken. I believe that one can pick upon any proposal made by our brother President Senghor as such an example of common denominator. Taking the various proposals already made our Foreign Ministers are now drawing that common denominator in the form of a Charter.

There will be some who will say that this Charter does not go far enough or is not revolutionary enough. This may be so. But what is going far enough. No good mason would complain that his first brick did not go far enough. He knows that a first brick will go as far as it can go and will go no farther. He will go on laying brick after brick before the edifice is complete.

And what is being revolutionary? A true revolutionary is not an unrealistic dreamer. A true revolutionary is one who analyses any given situation with scientific objectivity and acts accordingly. This is what this conference has been doing. Examining realistically what it is that we have in common in our approach to unity and then act accordingly.

The enemies of Africa are now praying. They are praying for the failure of this conference. The people of Africa are also praying. They are praying for the triumph of PAN-AFRICANISM OVER NARROW NATIONALISM AND REGIONALISM. They are specially praying for the triumph of an all embracing Africa Charter over a Monrovia or Casablanca.

It is unnecessary for me to prophesy that it shall not be recorded in history that, “BUT FOR THE STUBBORNNESS AND NON-COOPERATION OF TANGANYIKA THE ADDIS ABABA CONFERENCE WOULD HAVE BEEN A SUCCESS”. Our National Motto is “UHURU NA UMOJA” (FREEDOM AND UNITY). Our National Anthem is “GOD BLESS AFRICA”.

Finally, let me say this:

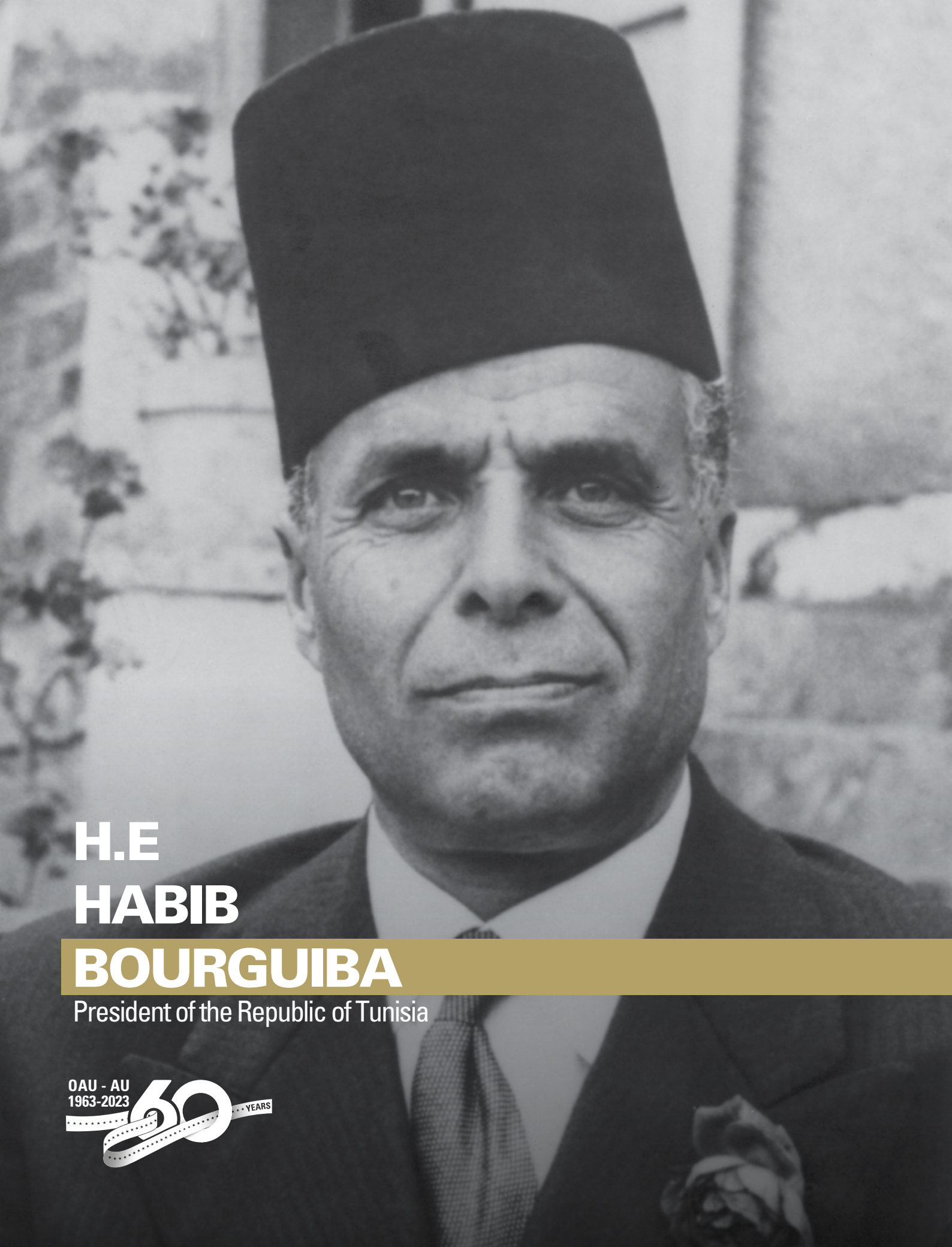
We reciprocate the good wishes and prayers of the

friends of Africa wherever they may be.

To those enemies of Africa who will want to belittle the significance of this conference by saying that it did not achieve very much we ought to send this challenge. That if when the nations of the world reassemble at the United Nations, they will approach the problems of the world in the same spirit of goodwill and cooperation as the nations of Africa assembled have approached their African problems here, the human race, like the African people, shall have taken an immense step towards universal brotherhood.



**Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere (L) is greeted 04 March 1968 by Senegalese counterpart Léopold Sédar Senghor (R) prior to his departure from Dakar after four day official visit to Senegal.**  
*Image © AFP via Getty Image*



**H.E  
HABIB**

**BOURGUIBA**

President of the Republic of Tunisia







our Majesty, Your Excellencies,

It is my pleasant duty to convey to your august assembly the fraternal greetings of the Tunisian, people, and their wishes for the complete success of our work. For the second time within a few years the independent States of Africa have met in Addis Ababa, that heroic bastion of African liberty. I cannot evoke the epic story of Ethiopia without pride and emotion. There began a decisive battle which was destined to end, in Africa and elsewhere, with the final and inevitable defeat of colonialism. Allow me, from this tribune, to pay a whole hearted tribute to the inflexible will and indomitable courage of His Majesty, the Emperor Haile Selassie, the man who yesterday saved the honour of Africa and who, today, is placing his wisdom and experience at the service of its great designs.

We have come here desirous of, examining and, if possible, resolving together problems of common interest. Our problems are numerous and difficult; of that we grow each day more vividly aware. But these problems, amount essentially to three predominant concerns; to complete the decolonization of the continent.

To mobilize all material and moral resources in order effectively to combat under development.

To lay the foundations of that African unity, which is taking shape naturally.

To set the seal on the political and economic emancipation of Africa.

The three propositions are closely complementary. On the universal scale, they represent three necessary stages in man's internal struggle for human dignity.

### I. THE DECOLONIZATION OF AFRICA

The majority of African countries represented here are independent, sovereign states. Like "peau de chagrin", the shadow of colonial domination is shrinking visibly away. Thrust back upon its last redoubts, colonialism exhausts itself in savage and useless rear guard actions, or flounders in blind hatred. Repression is rife in Angola and South Africa. The fires are smouldering in Mozambique and Southern Rhodesia. Confronted with such an alarming situation, the duty of the independent countries of Africa is clear.

We must strengthen by every possible means action taken under the aegis and auspices of the United Nations, provide sufficient continuous aid to the peoples who are fighting for their freedom, and made untenable the position of the last colonial enclaves in Africa, until liberation is achieved.

It is not perhaps out of pace to mention here that, as we see it, decolonization implies not only the end of all forms of colonial domination, but also the elimination of all those consequences which tend to perpetuate the influence of colonialism

**...the people of Africa are aspiring towards a certain unity of purpose. Such unity of purpose is possible here and now. It may emerge from our debates. It may help us to take up a common stand in international affairs, to identify our aims, to coordinate our efforts and harmonize our trends in the fight for economic and social progress.**



**The Exile On Groix Island And The Triumphant Return Of Habib Bourguiba In Tunisia. Tunis- June 5, 1955- After his exile by the French authorities, the triumphant return of Habib BOURGUIBA to Tunisia: Habib BOURGUIBA, founder of the Neo-Destour, spearhead of the movement for the independence of Tunisia, wearing the traditional fez, a scarf tied around his neck, standing in a jeep, greets the enthusiastic crowd that has come to acclaim him in the streets of the city. Image © Philippe Le Tellier/Paris Match via Getty Images**

and to encourage its aims, avowed or clandestine. It often occurs that when, political emancipation is won, there is no clear-cut frontier between dependence and freedom. Firm and persevering action is then called for in order to eliminate, one by one, the consequences of colonial status, and restore its full meaning and all its prerogatives to independence.

Such action is not without risks. But we have judged it necessary, whatever the price, as in- dependence - the first stage in the reconquest of human dignity makes people the masters of their own destiny. After independence, all things become possible; and in particular, methodical, coherent and sustained action to improve the moral and material condition of men.

## II. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST UNDER DEVELOPMENT

In such a perspective, independence no longer appears as an end in itself, but as the solemn proclamation of an irresistible aspiration of the peoples towards well-being and progress. Independence establishes claim to dignity but does not entirely satisfy that claim. Because dignity is really only accessible to people freed from hunger, sickness and ignorance. In these conditions, the political emancipation of Africa can be no more than the necessary prelude to the mobilization of energies and resources with a view to raising men to a higher moral and material level.

The struggle against under-development which has been begun on the whole African continent is an undertaking of exceptional scope.

It calls for:

1. Thorough and vigorous action on mental structures with a view to reforming the economic and social structures.
2. Outside assistance in the form of capital and cadres, and 'therefore as well-balanced co-operation as possible with the industrialized countries.
3. Active and fruitful cooperation with the other countries of the African continent.
  - a. Action on structures and habits built up over a long period of stagnation reflects, in each case, the economic and social orientation of local policies. A fairly general effort to explore the African way to socialism may, however, be perceived. The aim of that action is to bring about a condition of world consciousness and to prepare humanity to tackle the tasks of development.
  - b. Cooperation with the industrialized countries, rich in capital, cadres and technical experience, is

not only desirable but inevitable for developing countries. There is no alternative. The refusal of such co-operation through fear of a revival of colonialism is a position which can be justified from the sentimental point of view or that of pure logic. But all the same the attitude is unrealistic. Accepting the assistance of former colonial powers does sometimes means running a real risk, I admit. But refusing it means isolating



📍 **Tunis - 24 March 1961 - At El Aouina airport, Tunisian President Habib BOURGUIBA, (L) alongside Ghanaian President Kwame NKRUMMAH, (R) on an official visit, attend a ceremony together. Image © Georges Menager/Paris Match via Getty Images**

oneself and condemning oneself to stagnation.

I think it is possible to find a way out of this dilemma provided one is really determined to put an end to dependence as soon as one is in a position to do so, one must accept co-operation even if that cooperation is not always balanced to start off with. If one accepts it all the same in full understanding of what it means, it is because it is the only way of freeing oneself of dependence. Otherwise, the paralyzing fear of neo-colonialism might well keep newly liberated countries in a state of chronic weakness and therefore of prolonged dependence.

Between cooperation accepted as a means of attaining freedom through economic and social progress and cooperation which serves as a façade for neo-colonialism, the difference is not of kind but of the final objective. It is above all a matter of conscience for those in authority, who accept it. It is because we know what we want and where we are going that we have never had any complexes. The independence of Tunisia has never suffered thereby. On the contrary:

If cooperation between African countries and industrialized countries on a bilateral basis is the most usual in spite of the risks it may entail co-operation with economic unities has a chance of bring better balanced and less suspect.

The ideal would obviously be for external aid of whatever origin to be distributed by the United Nations and under its aegis. If aid to under-developed countries were given an international character, it would no longer be suspected of serving the ends of the cold war. Unfortunately, there does not seem much possibility of such a solution being adopted. In the present state of affairs and due to the urgent needs of developing countries, we cannot do otherwise than accept assistance from the developed countries while insisting on the fact that such aid is in the recognized interest of those who supply it and those who receive it. It is a bridge thrown across the abyss of inequalities. The better-off countries must be aware of the dangers menacing world peace so long as Humanity is divided into the un-fed and the well-fed and so long as the gap between these two sections of humanity is only accentuated by the results of a population explosion affecting the under-fed section.

- c. In so far as cooperation between African countries is concerned we are still at the

approach stage. Divisions, differences in tradition and language" inherited from the Colonial era, inadequacy of transport and communication systems, particularisms, mental reservations and sometimes misunderstandings have hardly furthered the progress of inter-African cooperation. In its principle and effects however that co-operation remains eminently desirable.

Everyone recognizes the urgency of concerted action on foreign markets. No one seriously questions the necessity of organizing domestic markets large enough to support a drive towards industrialization, which is still the surest way of rescuing African economies from under-development.

Everything, therefore, encourages us to come together, to explore in common the prospects of a necessary and fruitful cooperation to confront our experiences and ideas, to multiply our trade and contacts, thereby indefinitely extending the field of common interest.

Encouraging results have already been noted, thanks to the effective and methodical action of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Such action must be supported and its field of application extended to precise spheres in such a way as to emphasize the solidarity of interests and furnish proof of inter-dependence, which alone will prepare the way for unity.

### III. AFRICAN UNITY

In a continent barely emerging from the colonial era, enfeebled and divided, unity has, of necessity, a penetrating resonance and great power of attraction. But it is still an ideal towards which we are tending and for which we must act.

Speaking for ourselves, we prefer to see things as they are. We hardly know each other and we have barely had time to draw up an inventory of the things which bring us together and those which divide us. We have to break down all divisions inherited from the colonial era. It must not be forgotten that for a very long time Africa was a continent open to the world and closed to itself.

To postulate unity as an imminent, straightforward thing, which will be achieved by adopting a motion, or Manifesto, or by elaborating a constitution, may lead to disappointments.

We must build on reality, and reality is that the people of Africa are aspiring towards a certain unity of purpose, expression of a common awareness of the



continent's problems.

Such unity of purpose is possible here and now. It may emerge from our debates. It may help us to take up a common stand in international affairs, to identify our aims, to coordinate our efforts and harmonize our trends in the fight for economic and social progress.

Let us, all together, serve our apprenticeship to unity. Know ourselves better, hold each other in esteem, understand each other's problems and the interest of all. Minds must become accustomed to the idea of unity and its practical and moral implications. A sober psychological preparation is necessary, without which nothing of value can be done

For unity, in the final analysis, can only come from the consent - the real, profound and freely expressed consent, - of the people. It can never be imposed by means of force or subversion, serving a desire for supremacy. The desire for supremacy is the worm in the bud. When one partner wishes to dominate a group, sooner or later that group will fall apart. The experience of recent years bears witness to this fact.

We do not believe that it is in Africa's interest to invite misfortunes of that sort. Unity is a work that takes time. The pace of history must not be forced. We must build solidly on a basis of popular consent, mutual esteem and respect for all sovereignties. Nothing lasting can be forged in the fire of hasty improvisation or and lambent sentiment. African unity will be built by frank collaboration, honest negotiation and democracy. This is my wish for the future of our continent.

Tunisia, which hopes to have won your respect by its realism, its sense of moderation and its constant devotion to the cause of liberty and progress in Africa, is still prepared to do anything that may help us to take the first step on the road to African unity.

Experiments are-in progress in certain regions of Africa which, through periodic contacts, are helping to organize limited co-operation in certain technical fields, or the progressive establishment of an integrated economic unit. Moreover, we have seen more ambitious and more spectacular attempts in Africa towards a greater degree of integration. They fell short and eventually led to a slight retreat in the concept of unity.

Whatever the case, regional agreements have an important part to play in the development of Africa. We know that the industrial countries, which provide technical assistance and capital, would rather deal with groups than with separate countries. Moreover, it is easier for countries combined in a unit to harmonize

their economic and social policies within the framework of joint programmes. Thus regional agreements further both the planning of external assistance and that of their own development.

For all these reasons and for others arising from the many affinities existing between our people, we long ago planned to set up in North Africa the great Arab Maghreb. However, we had to wait until the end of the long Algerian war.

With time, we hope to be able to overcome the final obstacles, and set up a valid and liable Maghreb unit, which can greatly reinforce that African unity whose foundations, we must here lay.

This Conference, like many before it, may well conclude, after many eloquent speeches and lively debates with a number of motions forthright statements of position and declarations of intention, which will in no way alter the situation in Africa.

But if you are willing, our Conference can be the exception to the rule.

In that case it will be decisive for the future of our continent. We must transcend our differences, realize our solidarity, and definitely and sincerely base our relations on understanding, trust and respect for sovereignty.

Concrete proposals have been made, discussed and drawn up by our Foreign Ministers. We shall not separate until we have perfected them. Then it will be our task to implement them methodically.

It is not out of some vague feeling of scepticism that we, for our part, wish to proceed gradually. On the contrary, it is because we have faith in African unity, because we regard it as a precious possession; because we share the great hopes placed in our work for its success that we wish to avoid haste and the errors which often lead to disappointment and finally to despair.

If we can avoid these dangers, the African union of countries may provide an original solution to the problem of "unity in diversity".

At a single stroke, our efforts towards well-being and progress will be accelerated, and our collective work in defence of peace throughout the world will be strengthened.

These are great tasks which await us.

The Tunisian delegation approaches them with a firm will to succeed.

“

**We have a common soul, which is embodied in our African-ness. All that is needful is to recognize it and take it on. That means we must begin by rejecting all fanaticism, whether racial, religious or linguistic...**

”

**H.E. LEOPOLD  
SENGHOR,  
President of the  
Republic of Senegal**



#OurAfricaOurFuture

au.int    





**H.E  
MILTON  
OBOTE**

Prime Minister of Uganda







The meaning I attach to this Conference is that we have gathered here to find a basis as to how we can advance the two revolutions which are running together in Africa. There is the revolt against foreign rule and economic and social domination. There is also the revolutionary upsurge which aims at giving Africa a new creed, a new certainty, a new sense of belonging by transforming the mental attitudes and orientation of our peoples and by giving them a political, economic and social standard which would ensure a better life than we have today anywhere in Africa. To me, these goals can only be achieved through a continental and a joint effort by all of us. There seems to be no disagreement that we should collectively work together to achieve these goals.

What appears to me important in this agreement is the quantum and the total effectiveness of the joint effort we are prepared to put to the task. I am in favour of wielding a heavy hammer to give a definite and meaningful shape to the things that we intend to do thus ensuring that our own people and the world at large are left in no doubt whatever as to our intentions. It is, of course, very encouraging that the mere presence of all of us in this city and in this great country is in itself an indication of the beginning of a further step in the continental re-awakening and desire to unity Africa. This in itself is important as a definite step forward, but I submit that it must be backed with bold decisions and that we must not leave this city with a decision that will be interpreted by the outside world and by our peoples to mean that we have met here only to agree to meet again. I do not say that we must not meet again but the basis of our future meetings must be different from what it is now.

**The continent of Africa and her peoples seek a new orientation... I am convinced that any assistance which tends to make us stay away from one another is against Africa and African peoples**

My understanding is that we have met in this Conference so as to explore those areas of agreement which will form the basis of our future discussions and guide our action in such a way that Africa will be able to project her image as a single unit. I do not think it is beyond our ability and powers to establish such a basis. Once this basis is established at this Conference, our future meetings would then take the role of framing what Africa must say and do both within the African continent and in her relations with other countries.

I say all this in full understanding of our history and the effect of that history upon each of us. We have been ruled by other people but the colonial period in Africa which began with Western Europe explorers is rapidly coming to an end. Direct western rule on the Continent of Africa has outlived its historical functions and is now perishing in a fermentation caused by our bid for freedom and independence. We are now developing new ideas and new movements. We are also unleashing new energies in order to give expression to what Africa is. The continent of Africa and her peoples seek a new orientation. Our main difficulty lies in the links we still have with the powers which shattered our culture and exploited our resources human and material. We cannot run away from the fact that the economies of our new states are still dependent on external powers. But our peoples remain sensitive and proud and they look to a day when their leaders will give them full freedom. In my case, the experience is only a few months old and apart from Ethiopia and Liberia, none of us can reckon this sort of experience in terms of decades.

As a heritage from the colonial era, our people are disease ridden and poverty stricken and this has led to a vicious circle of malnutrition disease and low productivity. A decision at this Conference to agree to meet again is a decision which does not wage a continent-wide war on the evils that we have inherited. This is a common problem to all of us and its solution calls for joint and bold effort through a machinery which we must establish a certainly not through consultation good though that may be.

There are also new and ominous symptoms of the danger that we face. Unless we are able to establish a strong central machinery, the tendency to stay away from one another and to form groupings against ourselves will grow. The growth of this tendency will help our ex-colonizers and other powers desirous of having a foothold in Africa. And when this becomes a reality the whole basis of our revolt against foreign control will be destroyed.

Our revolution must succeed. This Conference has the task to lay down the foundation for its success. I know that there are great difficulties which we must overcome in order to take a bold step forward. Several centuries of close contact with our ex-colonizers have left deep marks on us. Even in this Conference we can only communicate with one another with the help of the former colonial powers' languages. But we cannot forget or overlook the fact that the labour and products of Africa still lay a decisive part in the national economies of our former colonizers and

also the fact that those countries still depend on the raw materials they obtain from their former colonies and on the textiles, machines, and consumer goods which they still sale to such ex-colonies. What we have to decide at this Conference is whether our manners and even our temperament will continue to be dominated by our long association with our ex-rulers.

We have also to bear in mind in making that decision the problems of poverty and ignorance of our peoples and the back-log of administrative problems which we individually seem to have accepted as incapable of solution without external aid. I do not say that there is no need for help, nor do I say that we should not welcome any assistance, but I am convinced that any assistance which tends to make us stay away from one another is against Africa and African peoples.

I am one of those who believe that this Conference would be a failure if we are to return to our capitals having only stated principles and having only disclosed, however eloquently, our intentions in respect to the need of African unity. The time for high sounding words, slogans and clichés, and good intentions has come to an end; this is the time for concrete proposals and for action.

I hold the view that however nice one may feel as complete master in one's own house the time has come, indeed almost overdue, for African Independent States to surrender some of their sovereignty in favour of an African Central Legislature and Executive body with specific powers over those subjects where divided control and action would be undesirable. I refer to such subjects as the establishment of an African Common Market, Economic Planning on a continent wide basis, Collective Defence, a Common Foreign Policy, a Common Development Bank and a Common Monetary Zone: The list is by no means exhaustive, and I hope that the Conference will agree to the appointment of a Committee of experts who will investigate the matter of closer economic and political union among African Independent States and report to the Heads of States within a period not exceeding six months.

I also consider that the question of exchange of students both at the Secondary and at the University



► **Nairobi, Kenya: Attending a “Big Four” meeting, are African Leaders (left to right) Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, Northern Rhodesian Premier; President Julius Nyerere, United Republic Tanganyika and Zanzibar; Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya Premier; and Dr. Milton Obote, Uganda Premier. Image © Getty Images**

levels merits far greater consideration than has hitherto been accorded to it. I need not recite the concrete and imponderable benefits that would accrue to the cause of African unity. I may mention the clear advantage that French speaking Secondary School students would derive out of a year's studentship in an English-speaking school and vice versa. We have got to learn each other's language and ways of living and we must catch the future citizens of Africa at the most plastic and most impressionable stage of their lives, and this is one easy and cheap way of going about it.

On no single issue has Africa ever been so solidly united as on the question of apartheid and colonialism and Uganda bows to no one in her determination to see that colonialism in all its form's is liquidated. I would go to the extent of offering Uganda as training ground for the land forces that are necessary for the liberation forces which are needed in the struggle against colonialism. I suggest that Uganda is eminently well suited to serve the three major trouble spots of Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and, if the need should arise, Southern Rhodesia. I suggest that to bring the colonialists to their senses vituperative condemnations have ceased to be effective in the struggle against 20th century colonialism in the context of the cold war. Their pockets should be hurt by the imposition of economic sanction of different for aims. I venture to suggest that if the white minority of Southern Rhodesia should be permitted to declare themselves independent, the African States should promptly counter this by severing trade and other relations with the United Kingdom and



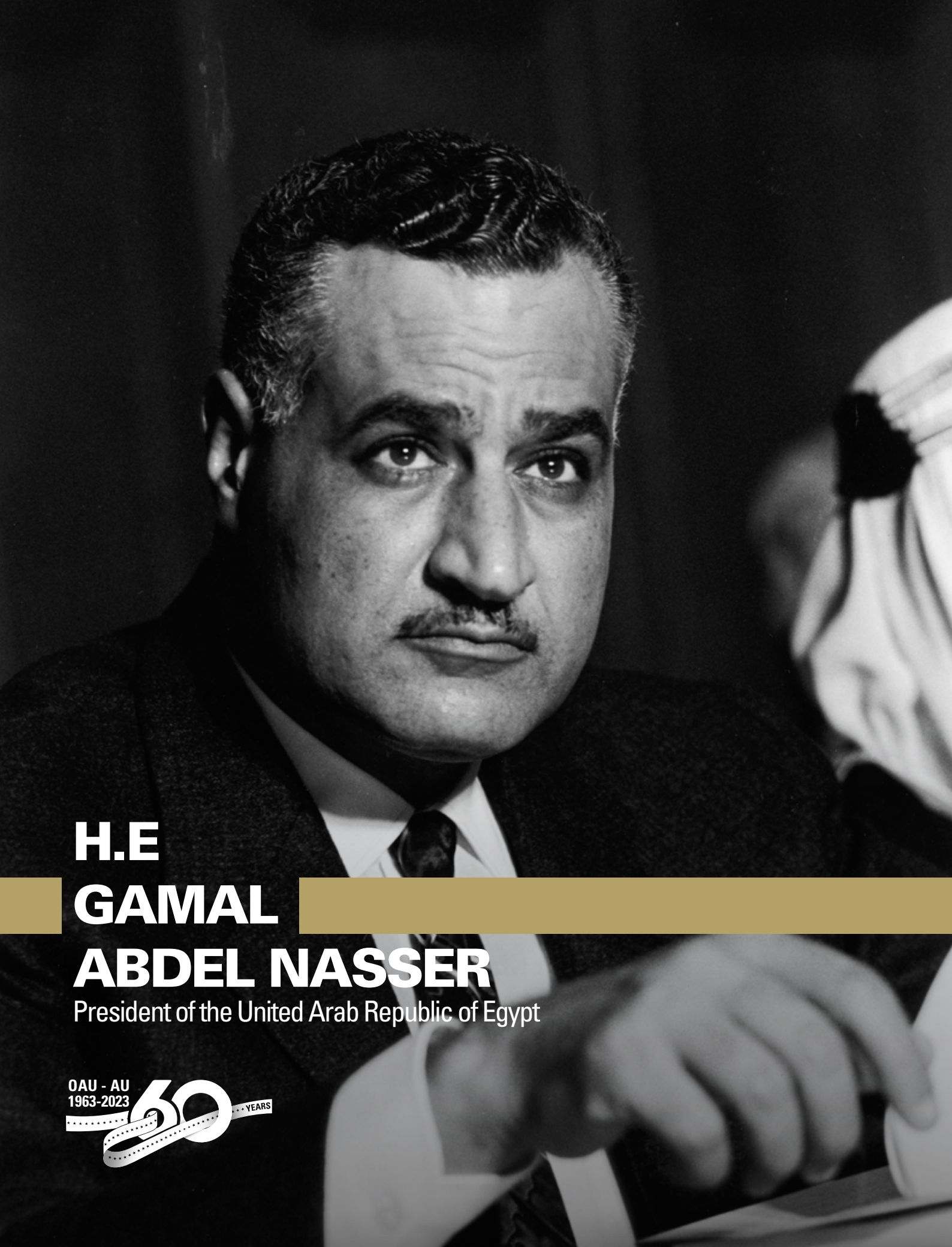
▶ **Malawi Prime Minister Hastings Banda and Ugandan Prime Minister Milton Obote, in the gardens of Marlborough House, London, June 17th 1965** *Image © Roger Jackson/Central Press/Getty Images*

her fellow travellers.

The principle driving force that motivated our ex-colonizers in their colonial adventure was economic and political power. The predominant consideration in their present attempt to maintain their influence in Africa is still the same.

We all know the humiliation suffered by our people under foreign rule and influence. We are not unaware of the battle we still have to fight to free those parts of Africa still under foreign domination and indignity. Above all, we still have the task of translating political freedom in our states into social and economical freedom. Agreement that we shall meet again and even setting up consultative Committees of Ministers will fall short of the great task. Uganda will support the setting up of a strong political, economic and social machinery to direct our next effort to free Africa, to give African peoples a continental security and to give our continent the pride and dignity she deserves.





**H.E**

**GAMAL**

**ABDEL NASSER**

President of the United Arab Republic of Egypt





Dear Friends,

From the vicinity of the shores Where the Nile ends, came here the United Arab Republic Delegation, following the course of the creative River, proceeding to one of its most important sources here in this great country.

While here are among you - friends - those who have, in this hall expressed their admiration for the hospitality of the glorious Ethiopian People who played host to this Conference, and for the precision of the organization and efforts exerted to enable the Conference to accomplish its mission smoothly, we would recall that long years ago, in times as old as the history of mankind, we have known the generosity of this country and the systematic precision which reaches us in an annual flood with the course of the life-giving Nile and which comes to us always at the right time without failure or delay.

Such is Ethiopia, its land, its people and its Emperor, who has devoted to this Conference the care and efforts which we all behold, appreciate and receive with deep thanks and gratitude.

Dear Friends,

Allow me to make my speech as brief as it possibly can be, for it is evident from what I have already heard up till now that all our thoughts are focused on the same horizon and our views are converged on the same subjects

**... There exists that insistence on making of the continent a mere warehouse for raw materials at prices which fail to satisfy the hunger of its people while the total benefit goes to the importing countries which try to make of their industrial and scientific progress a quasi-colonialism of a new form, that of unjust exploitation of the wealth of others without a fair share**

of importance. This was clear in the quick agreement reached by our foreign ministers who preceded us to here and who deployed efforts worthy of appreciation, allowing them to reach the draft agenda which includes a good number of issues commanding our attention, preoccupying our minds, engaging our thoughts and on which our views met during these sessions.

Thus, we now feel that it is time for us to put all our thoughts and aspirations into a plan of action. If you allow me, I would say that my conception of the task which awaits us here should proceed along the following lines:

#### **FIRST**

The U.A.R. feels that the African Continent faces today the most serious phase of its struggle. If we should say that the banners of independence which have been hoisted on the continent throughout recent years are a testimony to the fact that the birth of freedom has taken place, the birth alone, even with its spectacular miracle is not enough; freedom must grow and its growth must be sound and complete, and capable of facing the responsibilities of life in our age.

Hence, following the miracle of birth, in our view, the continent now faces the challenges of life and it should, amidst difficult circumstances, prove its fitness for survival and development much further, its ability to renew and evolve life itself.

I hardly believe, I need detail those difficult circumstances. I believe it would be enough for me to refer to those which hover over the continent from outside and those which lurk on the soil of the continent itself.

#### **OUTSIDE THE CONTINENT**

- There exists that colonialism which has not totally and fully been eradicated from all parts of the continent and which clings stubbornly and brutally to some of these parts, and in others, attempts to disguise itself behind false masks.
- There exists that racial discrimination and apartheid imposed on some parts of the continent by those who loot its riches, and enslave its labour; and in spite of that would not scruple at trampling over its dignity in its most

elementary human forms.

- There exists that disguise behind military pacts to make of the people's soil, bases by which to threaten them.
- There exist those attempts at forging new colonialist tools which infiltrate under the banner of the United Nations and which brought to the Congo, during its violent crisis that appalling tragedy whose victim was that African revolutionary martyr Patrice Lumumba; even in the guise of offering aid to the peoples of the continent, Infiltration attempts took place.
- There exists that insistence on making of the continent a mere warehouse for raw materials at prices which fail to satisfy the hunger of its people while the total benefit goes to the importing countries which try to make of their industrial and scientific progress a quasi-colonialism of a new form, that of unjust exploitation of the wealth of others without a fair share.
- There exists the extent even of making of the lands of the peoples of the continent a field for nuclear test without the consent of those peoples, contrary to their aspirations for peace and in direct threat to them even in the air they breathe on their native soil.
- There exists that usurpation of the land of peoples, denying it to its legitimate owners and allowing it to settlers who came from afar, refusing to enjoy only the rights of guests and with arrogance and terror they imposed the despotism of the master.
- There exists that deception through slogans; even justice and even peace were harnessed to the necessities of the fait accompli. There can be no peace without justice; accepting the fait accompli without justice means the acceptance of submission and this is as remote from peace as can be.
- There exist in the continent itself other difficult circumstances. If the African continent in all fairness - does not bear the responsibility of these circumstances it nevertheless, is duty-bound to seek the best solution, irrespective of the sharing of responsibilities.
- There exists for instance - the problem of terrifying under-development, within the confines of which live the majority of the peoples of the continent and which provides the frightening gap between the living standards in this continent and those in other continents which proceeded in progress. This is a problem which does not only affect the dignity and legitimate rights of the continent, but also has a

perilous bearing on world peace, How can peace be stabilized between excessive wealth and appalling poverty in a world where distance counts no more.

- There exists that problem of social inequality within the one country this is a state of affairs that should remedy itself by applying fair measures which afford the citizen within the one country an equitable opportunity for life.
- There exist the problems of development to face the effects of underdevelopment and meet the needs of social justice, among which are the problems of planning, financing, and experience. In all those domains the continent is in need of extensive aid. The U.A.R. has its view on the matter of foreign aid. It finds it to be an obligation upon those who preceded in progress, towards the underdeveloped peoples a right based on human interdependence and the consolidation of peace. Rather, the United Arab Republic considers this aid to be a tax due to others by the big powers with a colonial past, in compensation for the looting to which numerous peoples in Africa and Asia have and are still being exposed, peoples who have their wealth systematically removed so that prosperity might be a monopoly by others, while they would be left with the monopoly of poverty. If there are those who ask us to forgive the past, we are prepared to forgive from the bottom of our hearts, but we are not ready to forget. We forgive but we do not forget. We turn the old age in forgiveness but we would be wrong to turn it in native.
- There exist the border problems between numerous African States frontiers we all know how they were sometimes traced and how they were laid down.
- There exist the residues of the past which left behind numerous dark stains on the continent and which now call for massive efforts in the fields of education and culture to achieve the liberation of the African man from all the unseen shackles which bind and impede his movement. And even in facing those difficult circumstances from outside and within the continent, we find ourselves in an atmosphere which increases the intensity and gravity of the strife against it. We wage our struggle for the evolution of life in the face of violent currents.
- There exist those forces in whose interest it is to impose on us underdevelopment; they do not hesitate to go as far as to instigate one brother against another, sowing the seeds of doubt and leaving us to reap hatred.
- There exist the cross currents of the cold war



with their stresses and strains. We live in a world where distance counts no more following the extensive scientific progress particularly in means of transportation. a matter which has brought the battles of the cold war to our very homes and to the hearts and minds of the people in those homes.

As a result, we live in a world full of expectations a world in which the rightful and legitimate demands of man have increased without an active and effective increase in his potentialities which may afford those demands. We cannot set close enough to realizing the wide aspirations of mankind except through converted action which calls for national mobilization and which implements the democratic will of peoples and imposes on them willingly and with consciousness sacrifices which are heritable before the stage of the upsurge; all this within the circumstances and dangers of the cold war.

## **SECOND**

The United Arab Republic feels that this stage of the African struggle of which I have exposed to you some glimpses of its different aspects, with the objectivity at my disposal - an objectivity that does not resort to wonder and does not allow itself to indulge in dreamy optimism - requires and foremost a free and one African will.

There is no doubt that this conference is in itself proof of the existent of a free and one African will. Thus, the mere convening of this conference is not less important than any resolutions issued there from. This scene around us in this beautiful capital Addis Ababa is historic and to be remembered: the continent will look back on this conference for many generations to come as a decisive during point in the progress of African endeavour.

The mere holding of this conference is proof of the existence of a free and one African will.

We have not arrived here by chance, neither have we arrived quickly. We have come through various paths and our coming was subject to endeavours which finally succeeded because they emanate from an overwhelming call for unity, which neither we could resist nor were others able to keep us away from.

This is confirmed by the fact that all the organizations and groupings which emerged in the continent to face preceding stages of the evolution of African effort in its various circumstances and situations have become conscious that it was time they met together without reservations so that the meeting may provide the one and free African will.

This is also confirmed by the fact that all the traditional divisions which imperialism tried to impose on the continent to rend it apart to North of the Sahara and South of the Sahara, to white, black and coloured Africa, to East and West, to French -speaking Africa and English speaking Africa have all collapsed and were swept away by the genuine African reality. There remains but one language on African land..... the language of the one destiny no matter what the method of expression.

## **THIRD**

Finally, I come to a third and last point. First I mentioned that the continent faces the most dangerous stage of its struggle and that following the miracle of birth it faces responsibility of life, growth and strong survival.

Secondly, I mentioned that the mere holding of this conference is proof of the existence of a free and one African will.

Thirdly, I would say : This free and one will requires an organizing mind and dynamic nerves so that it might be able to face the challenges and proceed efficiently towards the sub- lime African aspirations.

This is the mission which awaits the endeavours and efforts of this conference. To perceive the limits of our responsibilities is an important stop.

It is more important that our one will and these responsibilities should converge. Yet the decisive and final step is to equip this one will with powerful engines which penetrate the creative power and drive it together with the sensitive nerves towards the practice of the great change by which we seek the evolution of life on our African Land.

It is not enough to identify our problems. Neither is it enough for us to meet before them, what is important is to combat them on all levels and according to the needs of the circumstances, Colonialism will not withdraw from the Parts it still occupies in our African continent, just because we scream that the continuation of its presence humiliates us.

We screamed against colonialism in our country for seventy years hoping that the logic of negotiations would induce it to leave, until we were finally compelled to bear arms.

We were surprised only months after its withdrawal from our land the first time in June 1956, to see it return to us once again in the form of total invasion on October 29th concentrating the forces of three countries alleging that our restoration of the Suez Canal and our

removal of that monopoly remaining from the piracy of the Nineteenth Century, was a violation of international law and the sanctity of treaties. We had to carry arms once again reluctantly we carried arms in a battle imposed on us.

Then came the Suez victory, victory for freedom in Africa and everywhere and a symbol of emancipation which heralded hope for numerous peoples in the struggling continent. I do not say that there should be a Suez in every place where colonialism is centred, but I say our good intentions alone are not enough even if they are supported by world conscience which is becoming stronger day after day; thus, our responsibilities impose on us readiness for all eventualities. Readiness calls for an organizing mind and dynamic nerves. To eradicate racial discrimination and apartheid, it is not enough to brand them as a humiliation to mankind as a whole in this and every other age but it is imperative that there should be a valiant resistance by all means and ways until we reach the weapon of total boycott by which we can change the state of affairs and transform those who sought to impose isolation on the African peoples in their land, to pockets isolated from mankind, ousted from the framework of international cooperation.

For effective boycotting by all means and ways we are in need of an organizing mind and dynamic nerves.

Other problems we face from outside the continent call for the same thing. Military pacts will not fall by themselves as autumn leaves. Looting of raw materials will never end and the looters will never be satisfied. The settlers will not accept willingly the rights of guests and give up the despotism of the masters' but in everyone of those problems Africa faces the battle which calls for an organizing mind and dynamic nerves.

Likewise, problems lurking in our continent the problems of underdevelopment in all African countries problems of social disparity within every African country and the development border and education problems all mind call for the same thing and organizing mind and sensitive nerves so long as we all view them with the same eye and believe in the necessity of finding solutions to them.

The same measure applies to the responsibilities of Africa towards world peace.

This does not mean for one moment that Africa should become an international bloc or that African endeavour should be isolated from the march of human progress as whole.

This is the last thing we can think of or ask for. Rather

we consider reaching that extent to be fanaticism the responsibility of the outcome of which we cannot bear. Fortunately, our meeting at this United Nations Hall brings constantly to mind the fact that what we look forward to, is an extension of the aspirations of the countries which established them and stood up for their safeguard in the face of every danger threatening them.

But as I have already mentioned what we need are an African organizing mind and an African dynamic nerve to guide the free and one African will facing the problems and challenges 'which stand in front of the Continent and hamper its potentiality for the evolution of its life, and as a result; reduces its contribution to the drive of human progress. This is the mission awaiting this Conference the measure of its success in this mission is the measure of its fulfilment of its historic responsibilities towards Africa and towards humanity.

A mind and nerves for the free and one African will.

A Mind that is both wise and bold at the same time it fights as a builder and builds as a fighter it fights with the ability and patience of the builder and builds with the enthusiasm and drive of the fighter.

Nerves which are bold and imaginative' they face perils. They can rise with their vision to see wide and new horizons of the potentialities of creative development.

This before any other is our responsibility here.

Our problems are not in need of new definitions' we all recognize them. Our one will is not in need of proof of its existence we are all in this hall.

What we need are powerful engines, to generate the power from our great aspirations and unlimited potentialities and to direct this power. Here lies our need for an organizing mind and dynamic nerves.

Let it be an African League.

Let there be a Charter for all Africa.

Let there be periodical meetings of the African Heads of State and representatives in the continent.

Let there be anything.

One thing the United Arab Republic does not want: namely to leave this place with more enthusiastic words or with formalistic institutional facades.

In this case we would be deceiving ourselves and not deceiving others. In this case we would be harming Africa and peace.

Rather in this case we would be losing what we actually have namely the recognition of our problems and the unanimity of our will.



**Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie I (R) greeted by President of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser (L) at his arrival in Cairo to attend the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit conference. Image © AFP via Getty Images**

**Dear Friends,**

Let there be an African League. This has been proclaimed by the working Charter issued by the National Congress of Peoples Powers elected democratically in the United Arab Republic and which was adopted in June last year.

Let there be a Charter for the whole of Africa

Let there be meetings at all official and popular levels as we have heard from a number of friends.

Let there be anything~ but it should be something real.

Let us entrust it with whatever plans we wish. Let us fix a final date for the liquidation of colonialism let us lay down projects for cultural and scientific cooperation; let us embark on the coordination of our economic cooperation towards an African common market- all these and much more awaits our efforts but all is in

need of the organizing mind and the dynamic nerves.

Let us always recall that any organization on we establish as the mind and nerves for the African will, shall not lead to African unity overnight. But will, always derive its aspirations trace the plans for their realization from its potentialities and follow up their implementation with attentive awareness. In this, it does not only express its unity but also deeper its feeling for unity in other words, it emanates from the aspiration for unity and spontaneously adds to its effectiveness through living experience.

**Dear Friends,**

The United Arab Republic has come here with an open heart, an open mind and an appreciation of the responsibility infused with goodwill and she is ready to bear to all limits her historical responsibilities towards our African Continent.

We have come here without selfishness; even the problem which we consider to be one of our most serious problems, namely that of Israel, and on which the Casablanca Member States rightly share our view that it is one of the tools of imperialist infiltration to the continent and one of its bases of organization we shall not submit this problem for discussion at this meeting in the conviction that the progress of free African endeavour will, through trial, reveal the truth, day after day and lay it unmasked before African conscience

Thus, we came here without reservations, without demands.

We believe that the joint work will remove our need for any reservations and we believe that the success of this joint endeavour will satisfy all our demands.

**Dear Friends,**

At this conference, which merely by its convening represents the existence of a free and one African will, the United Arab Republic delegation is ready to exert its utmost, honestly and sincerely, for the sake of reaching the formula which provides the free and one Africa an will with an organizing mind and dynamic nerves.

Thus, Africa would achieve all its African hope for freedom and dignity. Rather, Africa would achieve all her human hope for peace based on justice.

May your efforts be blessed.



A black and white portrait of H.E. Maurice Yaméogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta (present day Republic of Burkina Faso). He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, a light-colored tie, and glasses. He has a mustache and is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background features a large, ornate, carved wooden structure, possibly a chair or part of a building's interior.

**H.E**  
**MAURICE**  
**YAMEOGO**

President of the Republic of Upper Volta  
(present day Republic of Burkina Faso)





our Imperial Majesty, Honourable Heads of State and Government,

The name ADDIS ABABA will henceforth be associated with one of the outstanding events in the human history of our century.

The fact is that today's rendezvous will have been not only that of logic and good sense; it will also have been that of will and, we all hope, of good will.

It is not for me to trace the course of that history, still so recent but so rich in happenings, which will have made it possible to transcend scepticisms and sterile divisions; in short, to transcend this accumulation of preconceived ideas, of false images and permanent out-rages against human solidarity.

A big breath of pure air, a new definition of man, a new ethic, a new way of imbuing human relations with humanity has been born in Africa this flame has sometimes flickered: for a long time it remained spluttering, but today it sets aglow a whole heaven of hope. We, Heads of State, have the very formidable privilege of hallowing a destiny, the destiny of Africa; but, at the same time and of necessity, the destiny of universal peace, the destiny of a humanity delivered from the course of self-destruction.

I have the great pleasure of greeting here each of the Heads of State whose lucid vision and far-seeking ideas of our common future have made it possible to convene this very high assembly of honourable representatives of independent States of the African continent.

Thirty-one Heads of State and Government are meeting, mostly for the first time, each with preoccupations heretofore marked by the geographic area to which he belongs; but also anxious to go beyond the artificial division of Africa into groups foreign to each other, and in any case lacking the osmosis necessary to enable the great breath of African liberty to circulate without obstruction. Better still, thirty-one Heads of State and Government are providing the whole world with the spectacle, comforting for some and astonishing for others of the sacrifice they are making to raise themselves to the highest level in the world.

The time has now come to confront, to weigh, to discuss, to understand each other and to take hands; the time has come to find out not who was right and who was wrong, but to seek out that which must unite us and to abolish that which might divide us; the time has come for us to achieve complete fulfillment.

On that point, indeed, agreement is unanimous and profound and there is no point in further developing the spirit common to us since it has made it possible for us to meet at ADDIS ABABA; perhaps conditional trust and mental reservations will continue to rule until the discussions have been concluded; but we shall certainly have the surprise of noting the deep identity of the aims we are pursuing and of the methods we consider the best.

The difficulties facing us are no less than the lofty designs we have planned; the terms of the discussion may well be technical but their substance is in the elements common to us all.

Without in the least wishes to give an exhaustive enumeration of them, the beginnings and the end are I believe, to be found in the definition of our relations with the groups outside our sphere, in the definition of economic options common to us all and, finally, in the definition of that philosophy which must serve as the true instrument of our action: and, in the long run perhaps, the essential thing is to succeed in finding the formula which will ensure us respect, consideration and efficacy; I in no way underestimate the compelling power of some options, I in no way underestimate the blinding dullness of certain preconceived ideas; but our conference will mark the essential rediscovery of our common will to live in true liberty and in true dignity.

These direct contacts between Black Africa and White Africa, and the more specifically oriental world, will certainly be a rediscovery for us all; it is a rendez-vous of truth whence we are entitled to expect that the light, the beneficent light of fraternity, will break forth.

The difficulties in our relations with the outside world on our forthcoming regrouping will derive from the fact that words have ended by acquiring, in the situation of today, very subjective values with respect to those who utter them and it will not be the least of our triumphs if we succeed in stabilizing the quick sands of vocabulary.

We are not responsible for the division of the world into ideological blocs, awaiting extinction by an atomic accident;

**The time has now come to confront, to weigh, to discuss, to understand each other and to take hands; the time has come to find out not who was right and who was wrong, but to seek out that which must unite us and to abolish that which might divide us; the time has come for us to achieve complete fulfillment**

the important thing is that we must be able to place this situation as alien to us from the day when we shall have built our regrouping and our unity into a moral force that will prevail: ours is the number and ours must be the strength.

Remembering the technical means displayed by this one and that one, this expression may raise a smile but it certainly will not if our strength lies in the deeply human value of the principles we defend, in the objective and serene reprobation our action will bring to bear on all threats at acts of folly that will end in bloodshed; if we have the strength and the will, in short, to be what we ought to be. We are in the situation of enforced solidarity; let us try to be the group of effective, freely chosen solidarity.

Nothing is served by burying our heads in the sand and denying certain facts: we, Africans of Black Africa, who have been forged in the crucible of the same historic, geographic and political- facts, are already driven to recognize, while congratulating ourselves thereon, the profusion of divergent ideas which upsets all those who wish to project the future.

Africa is not monolithic in thought, it obviously cannot be so in politics; and this affirmation becomes a fortiori even more obvious from the moment when we leave the geographical area of Black Africa and enter the realities of the modern Arab world. There again the profusion of ideas, the will to renovate and make progress, the richness of the philosophic vision have nothing to envy in those of any people or any continent; but this at the same time shows us the importance of elements to take into account for the synthesis, the power of imagination, the will for tolerance which must preside at the birth of the community spirit of our future regrouping.

It is not even necessary to recall the factors of dispersion, the factors of misunderstanding accumulated over the centuries.

The people of this same Arab world know us only as we know them, that is to say through the gravely distorting prism of public information, indifferent if not inaccurate.

The new element, the bridge of new knowledge between our two worlds, has been thrown by three of our Black African brothers, Presidents KWAME N'KRUMA, SEKOU TOURE and MODIBO KEITA; for us their names are the best reference, they are the sublime children of a land of pride which adversity has been able to keep on the leash but has never been able to break.

I am convinced that the contacts, the spirit in which

they were the spokesmen

For the Casablanca Group, have already provided the members of that group with evidence concerning the deep identity of the objectives of our action; and the only proof I want is the fact that we are all met here today.

In consequence, it is not a sign of complacent optimism to consider that the ADDIS ABABA meeting should not be classified among artificial and publicity seeking improvisations but rather constitutes the meeting of lucid men who know what they want.

Perhaps I ought to make myself the interpreter of some downcast spirits by raising the question of the optimum geographic area for our regrouping! Well, I think I should find unanimous approbation if I were simply to say that the ultimate aim of our regrouping should be to gather all the outcasts of the earth round one and the same faith and one and the same ideal of human self-respect.

But we have not reached that stage: we must be realists and see, at the given moment, what is possible and desirable; in the same way as we must build as solidly as possible what already exists, so we must grant sufficient flexibility to the permanent organs of our future Union so as to enable it to withstand all shocks without the danger of falling to pieces.

Our new Union, although it must live and set an example, should, above all, maintain the spirit of tolerance and neighbourly love; for each woman and each man of the countries it embraces, our Union should mean a constant forgetfulness of self for the future of the common good in the absolute desire for joint success, in the total disdain of the spirit of domination under any form.

Unity is strength; that is an eternal maxim. If, therefore, we want to be strong we must achieve Unity.

But how can we achieve Unity with the numberless obstacles impeding our path? It is sufficient to want the means - and that with determination of being quite simply African in the full sense of the word.

Obviously a drowning man cannot choose which branch he will hang onto; on this apocalyptic sea over which we are sailing, African Unity is the only haven.

It is unity, rather than violent speeches, which will hasten the departure of the impenitent colonialists who still wish to preserve possessions in Africa. It will at the same time eliminate all ambitions and resulting subversions.

The colonial powers will never take us seriously if we leave ADDIS ABABA without adopting the outlines of



our Pan-African Charter.

There has long been speculation on our ability to unite because of the aged being within each of us.

By unanimously approving the ADDIS ABABA Charter we shall display unquestionable political maturity. We shall cut short all causes of division between us, to the advantage of Africa and not of those who keep those differences alive.

In Africa there are not, as the divisionists would wish, revolutionaries on one side and reformists or moderates on the other; there is simply one Africa, revolutionary in the highest degree throughout its length and breadth.

We shall therefore silence all those evil prophets of misfortune, who expect our conference to result in timid decisions liable to serve as easy nourishment for their propaganda against African Unity.

I must now raise the more delicate problem of the common economic future; guiding ideas, whether premature or technically interesting, in short, opinions at least meriting study have been submitted and advanced; I cannot but leave to the specialists the task of discussing these matters.

What I should like to say, however, is that just as in the beginning the idea of African Unity appeared as a dream and has yet made its way, so it is possible to conceive that our economic confrontation will open up new ways and perhaps that way left to unaligned countries of dinging, on their own, the real direction of their economic progress of establishing in the perspective of their special interests that which will not only be the AFRICAN COMMON MARKET but sooner or later, the Market of the Unaligned countries; perhaps all that placed us more than ever before the obligation of African Unity enlarged to its widest dimensions.

That, honourable Heads of State and dear colleagues, is the message I wish to bring you on behalf of my country, Upper Volta.

May I be permitted to convey my fraternal greetings to you all; you have all succeeded in affixing your signatures to a stirring page of African history; I cannot cite you all by name but I must address a special message of brotherly friendship to Prime Minister BEN BELLA; the people of Algeria has at last emerged from the period of terrible trials and started to blaze the trail along which all African may now proceed. We extend special greetings to Prime Minister BEN BELLA because we know he cannot disappoint the exceptional destiny which must be Algeria's.

It now remains for me - and I do so with very special

joy - to address my very sincere thanks to the Ethiopian Government for the magnificent welcome it has given my delegation. We beg HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I to accept the expression of our highest consideration and deepest sympathy.

YOUR MAJESTY, please allow me, in conclusion, to evoke the memo of the beautiful and noble Queen of Sheba, wife of the great King Solomon. This prestigious and charming image, of the Union of two great people brought about by the love of their sovereigns, pleasingly illustrates the work of builders, which we want to be.

On the other hand, in an even more distant past there floats another image from childhood also from Holy Scriptures; that sombre disquieting erection, the Tower of Babel. May this evocation discourage us from over ambitious designs; convince us of the necessity of building slowly but surely with union of hearts and minds. May it also allow us to evoke what His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia represented for the world, in the sad and tragic year which in Africa marked the end of an era and the beginning its renaissance, may be said that His Majesty HAILE SELASSIE was and is the most prestigious personality of old Africa.

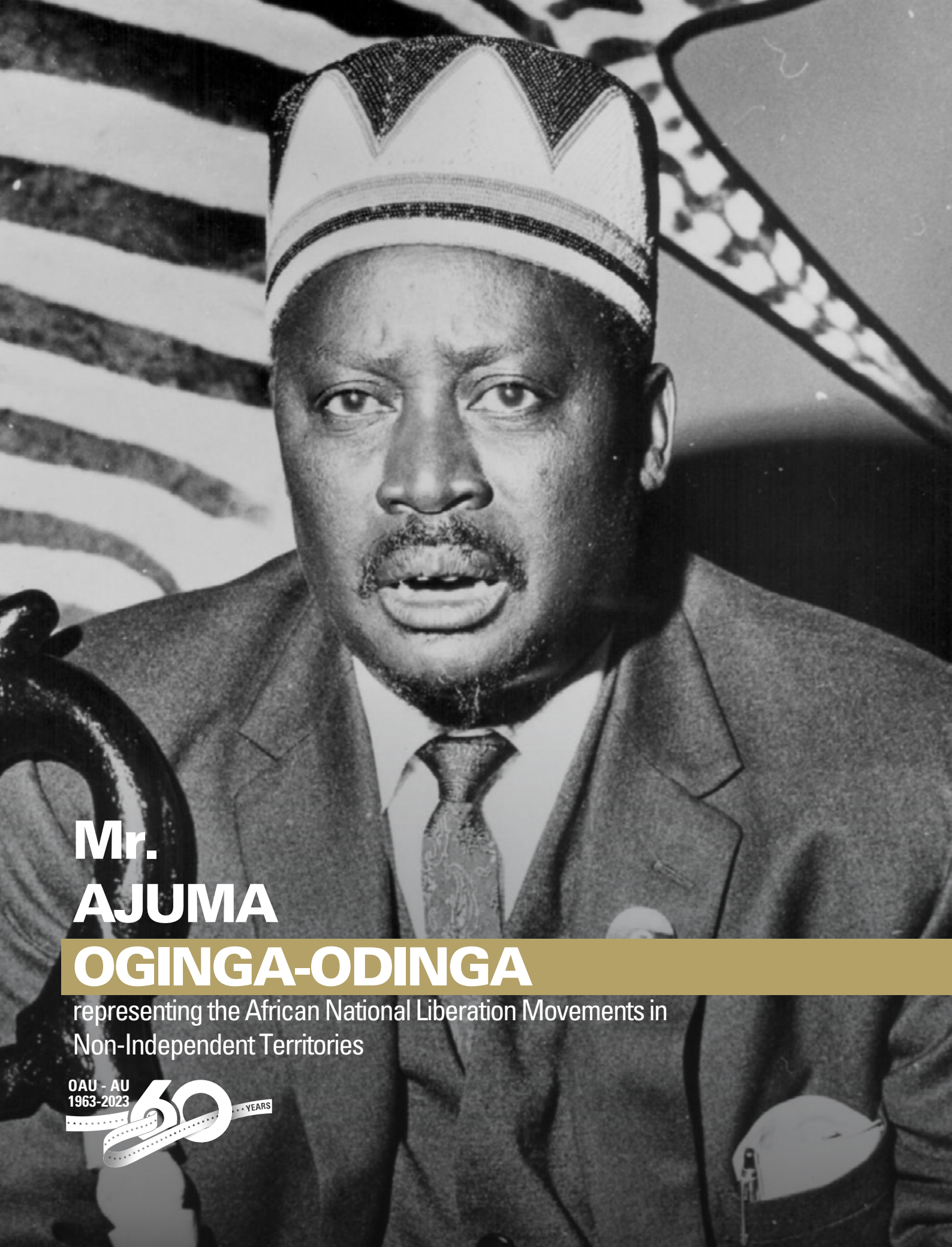
The impressive serenity of His Imperial Majesty, the tranquil assurance which emanates from the whole of his great personality, the simplicity and sweetness of his expression, all this, joined to a sublime faith in God, cannot but augur the success of the Summit Conference.

It is for this reason that I am confident that at the end of our work the first African bomb will burst in Addis Ababa; a super-atomic bomb it will be, both beneficial and deadly; beneficial for our peoples, deadly for colonialists, even the most stubborn of them; it will be the bomb of AFRICAN UNITY.

In any case, the mandate I bear from the people of Upper Volta obliges me, under pain of deceiving them, to take back from this illustrious conference, not merely initialled, but well and duly signed, the Charter of AFRICAN UNITY.

Then the name of ADDIS ABABA will remain, for the greater glory of us all, connected with the achievement of a fundamental and masterly work permitting that hitherto under-estimated human category to see each day rise with a little more confidence: to witness each day more certainly, the building of the effective and objective conditions of dignity and liberty!

Long Live Africa United and Free!



**Mr.  
AJUMA**

**OGINGA-ODINGA**

representing the African National Liberation Movements in  
Non-Independent Territories

OAU - AU  
1963-2023





## Joint Memorandum to the African Summit Conference of the Heads of States by the Representatives of African National Liberation Movements in Non-Independent Territories

We, the representatives of African national liberation movements in the non-independent territories of our motherland, Africa, humbly submit this Joint Memorandum to our brothers and fellow freedom-fighters, the Heads of African Independent States meeting here in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

All Africa must be liberated now! Empty words and pious resolutions will not suffice. This Summit Conference of African Independent States should issue an ultimatum to all colonial and racist powers in Africa to start immediately the transference of power to the African peoples in the respective non-independent territories or else face the consequences. It should be made absolutely clear that where the ultimatum is not heeded the African Independent States shall intervene directly.

No African country or nation is really free until all Africa is free. Accordingly, we urge most strongly that in all African Conferences, no forms of discrimination or differentiation of status should ever be entertained among us African people. We are all African freedom fighters. The fact that we are not yet free is not due to any lack of the revolutionary spirit in our movements. It is due to the oppressive tactics of the imperialists as well as some historical and political realities in our territories. We urge sincerely that in this Summit Conference we be accorded a status commensurate to our position as brothers and comrades of the other African freedom fighters who have already won their independence. We request that the opportunity be given to us to participate in and address the Summit Conference as associate members.

We propose that a body known as the African Liberation Bureau be now set up in an agreed Capital of an African Independent Nation. The functions of the African Liberation Bureau would be the following:

- a. To coordinate the struggle for African liberation in all non-independent territories.
- b. To receive, distribute and transport funds and other forms of aid, including military equipment and personnel on behalf of the African National Liberation movements.
- c. To administer the Refugees Relief programme for our African brothers and sisters and their children from war-torn and otherwise victimised African territories. These refugees are in desperate needs for food, housing, medical attention and schools for the children. We urge that aid to alleviate these hardships be pledged at their Conference.
- d. To ensure the security and protection of leaders and personnel of African National Liberation movements operating outside their respective countries due to harsh conditions at home.
- e. To organize the training of personnel for administrative, military and diplomatic services.
- f. To coordinate information, propaganda and research for total African liberation.

The site of the African Liberation Bureau should be geographically close to the still non-independent territories to facilitate the movement of equipment and personnel to the



**Mr. Oginda Odinga (right) leaves meeting, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 1963**  
Image © Getty Images





Kenyan Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta arriving at talks in London to discuss the independence of Kenya. Left to right - Oginga Odinga (Minister for Home Affairs), Jomo Kenyatta (Prime Minister) and Tom Mboya (Minister of Justice) 1963. Image © Edward Miller/Keystone/Getty Images

theatre of liberation operations. The African Liberation Bureau may organise regional offices as needs for such offices necessitate.

We request that every political party in power in an independent African country should pledge a specific sum of money or material aid, including military equipment for specified value, to be delivered at regular intervals to African national liberation movements through the African Liberation Bureau. We believe, of course, that giving such sums of money or material aid through the African Liberation Bureau does not necessarily absolve the African Independent States from giving further aid directly to individual movements as needs arise. We also urge that all African Independent Governments must be prepared to permit the transportation of military equipment through their respective countries to the theatres of liberation operation, and to receive and store such equipment on behalf of the liberation movements should situations so necessitate.

We propose that a Committee whose members are drawn from the Independent African States and working through the African Liberation Bureau should

be set up to confer with the leaders of the African National Liberation movements of all shades of opinion in Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea, Cape Verde Islands, Sap Tome and and Principe, South- ern Rhodesia, the Republic of South Africa, South West Africa, French Somaliland, the Comoros Islands, Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland with a view to enhancing the formation and strengthening of united liberation fronts in these respective territories for the rapid achievement of the goal of total African liberation.

Shortage of manpower is a most serious handicap in the liberation movement and in the struggle against neo-colonialism both in the independent and non-independent countries. Training institutes for administration, military personnel and diplomatic services as well as schools for the refugees' children are most desperately needed. We propose that every university, training institute or academy in Africa should also be re- quested to set aside at least 100 places every year for youths from the non-independent territories.

The power of the Press and all other forms of information must never be overlooked. All least one

nationalist paper printed and published by the political liberation front or movement in each non independent country is absolutely essential. We urge the African Independent States to pledge that they shall donate at least one press and make available after information media to the non-independent territories through the proposed African Liberation Bureau. We also call for an African Freedom News Agency to be organized by the African Liberation Bureau. At the same time we request the African Independent States not to allow dissemination of news and press releases against African liberation.

We urge most strongly that all African countries be vigilantly on guard against neo-colonialism which continues to mar the Africans' hard-won independence. To this end, we fully support the steps being taken to establish an African Common Market and Payments Union as well as common defence arrangements and the harmonization of monetary zones. We also welcome the proposal to establish an African Development Bank and propose that another Bank to be known as the All African Central Reserve Bank be established to come to the aid of deserving African Nations that may from time to time find themselves in recurrent Budget difficulties.

We would like to remind the delegates to this Summit Conference of the African Heads of State of the resolution passed in 1960 by the Conference of African Heads of State calling for the economic diplomatic and consular boycott of South Africa as well as the refusal of landing rights and servicing of South Africa's aircrafts and vessels. We urge our brothers to implement the spirit and the letter of that resolution as indeed all the resolutions to be passed at this Summit Conference. We further urge that the terms of this resolution be extended to include the fascist regime of Portugal, the racist settler regime of Southern Rhodesia and the imperialist Britain. We also recommend strongly that African member-nations of the British Commonwealth withdraw from that organization if the United Kingdom continue to suppress the African people. Also, those African nations with bilateral relations with France should sever those relations unless France liberates her remaining colonial areas.

Lastly, we wish to call the attention of the Heads of African Independent States to the existence of political organizations sponsored by colonialist powers and functioning within African Independent States. We urge strongly that steps be now taken to eradicate such organisations immediately.

**This Joint Memorandum is Signed By:**

1. THE KENYA AFRICAN NATIONAL UNION
2. PROGRESSIVE PEOPLES PARTY OF THE GAMBIA
3. FRONTE de LUTA PELA INDEPENDENCIA NACIONAL de GUINEA "Portuguesa" (FLING)
4. FRONT NACIONAL de LIBERATION de L'ANGOLA
5. POPULAR MOVEMENT FOR THE LIBERATION OF ANGOLA
6. UNITED NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY
7. MOZAMBIQUE LIBERATION FRONT
8. ZIMBABWE AFRICAN PEOPLES UNION OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA
9. NOTHERN PROVINCE UNITED ASSOCIATION (affiliated to KANU)
10. MOUVEMENT DE LA LIBERATION ANTIONALE des COMORES
11. COMITE de LIBERATION de SAO TOME et PRINCIPE
12. PARTI AFRICAIN de L'INDEPENDENCE de La GUINEE et CAP VERT
13. SOUTH WEST AFRICA PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION
14. UNIAO NACIONAL DEMOCRATICA de MOZAMBIQUE
15. BASUTOLAND CONGRESS PARTY
16. SWAZILAND PROGRESSIVE PARTY
17. PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS
18. AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
19. SOUTH WEST AFRICA NATIONAL UNION
20. ZANZIBAR NATIONALIST PARTY
21. SHIRIF OTHMAN Zanzibar Afro-Shirozi Party



Distinguished Colleagues,

On behalf of myself, the Government and the people of Ethiopia, I take this great occasion to thank all of you for your kind words you so generously offered to me, my government and my people. On our turn, I would like to state that the initiative, effort and success of the Conference is due to the initiative and labour of each one of us. Indeed, the spirit of understanding and dedication to the cause of the African people has given us all courage and faith for the future.


When all of you decided to meet here, you came with the determination to succeed. And succeeded – we did. For, together we have cleared the grounds for concerted action on all our common problems. For our part, experience has taught us that no matter how much one would sustain hardship and struggle by oneself, one would not survive or solve one’s problem alone. Only in the determination of our purpose and our will to solve it together can we discover strength and wisdom to guide us beyond the horizon wherein lies a better life for our people. We are indeed proud and happy to be host of so many far sighted leaders of Africa; a credit to your people; a pride to us and to those who needed your sacrifice to attain their God given liberty.

As this Conference, which will stand as a shining landmark in African history concludes, let us once more resolve, in the same spirit of cooperation and fraternity which had made today’s achievements possible, to work together in unity and singleness of purpose for the future growth of this great continent, for the freedom, the prosperity and the happiness of the peoples we lead, and for the peace and brotherhood of all mankind.

May God be with us in our great undertakings, and may this Covenant of Union last many a thousand years.

# Closing Remarks by HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAILE SELASSIE I Emperor of Ethiopia

Delegations from 30 independent African nations get together at OAU Summit. The conference, which opened May 22, was climaxed May 25 by the signing of a charter for a new organization of African unity. The charter was designed to weld a new force dedicated to economic development and to total liberation from a colonial rule.

 Image © Bettmann via Getty Images





“

**This is indeed a momentous and historic day for Africa and for all Africans. We stand today on the stage of world affairs before the audience of world opinion. We have come together to assert our role in the direction of world affairs and to discharge our duty to the great continent .....**

**Africa is today at midcourse, in transition from the Africa of Yesterday to the Africa of Tomorrow. Even as we stand here, we move from the past into the future. The task, on which we have embarked, the making of Africa, will not wait. We must act, to shape and mould the future and leave our imprint on events as they slip past into history.**

”

**HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAILE SELASSIE I**  
Emperor of Ethiopia



#OurAfricaOurFuture

au.int    



our Imperial Majesty, Distinguished Presidents, Prime Ministers,

This has been a great and Historic conference. We have, I think, established a basis of a clear mission to carry with us to our various capitals and countries. We have also

established a mission which we are leaving here in Addis Ababa with the Provisional Secretariat that we have established in this conference. We have talked here of understanding and cooperation between one another and collectively. We have talked and given and showed great respect to one another. We have done all this in order to erect a strong foundation for the liberation of Africa from foreign domination and influence in order to fulfil our determination and desire for the welfare and advancement of our peoples. In ordinary circumstances I would not have the honour to address this August-Assembly immediately after yourself, Your Imperial Majesty. But I have the opportunity because I am the baby of the Conference. My State, that is the State of Uganda, has been the youngest in this great decision. Uganda, of all the countries of Africa represented here, has been the last to gain her independence, and I take it that my having this opportunity to address this Assembly has a very important and deep meaning and that is that Uganda is not only being initiated into independence that many of us have enjoyed and certainly Your Majesty and your illustrious ancestors and the peoples of Ethiopia have enjoyed for centuries. Uganda has been initiated, but at the same time beginning from Ethiopia running through the United Arab Republic, Liberia and all our countries represented here through the door of Uganda having gained independence only a few months back, we look behind Uganda to see who else is to come through this door and join us in the next Conference.

Africa as a whole has, and is sometime described by our former colonial powers as composed of young countries. This is not because in God's creation the continent of Africa was created last of all continents; this youth refers to the age of coming out of colonial rule. The ex-colonial powers when they speak of this continent as young do not simply see that that very description is in itself a sufficient ground to convict them of acts of humiliation, acts of indignity and piracy committed by them in Africa. We have talked in this Conference and made decisions against colonialism. Being the latest African state to come out of the mouth of that monster we call colonialism Uganda's experience is limited, but within our limited experience we have learned a great deal. We have learned before we came here and we have learned greatly in this Conference. All of us having come out of the mouth of this great monster, lurking everywhere in Africa, we now find that the monster we thought was gone is still with us. Of course its mouth is now shut, as far as we here are concerned, but its claws are wide open. I take this to be the technique which colonialism uses, if it cannot swallow one alive, it adopts the technique of using its very powerful sharp and poisonous claws to draw the blood out of you. In this Conference, we have agreed with the illustrious President of the United Arab Republic that there must not be anymore looting in Africa. We have also agreed with the gallant Prime Minister of Algeria to face realities in a practical way and have resolved to remove the red colour we can still see on that map hanging on the wall. We have resolved that it is our determination that those patches join us in our future conferences. But we went further and here I am proud to say that in future years all of us can go to North and West Africa, feel the air and feel the hospitalities of our peoples living in the great African towns of Casablanca and Monrovia, but forgetting completely any other Charters that had contained the name of Casablanca or Monrovia. We have therefore agreed and firmly resolved to renounce the Casablanca and Monrovia Charters. Instead we have adopted and signed for the first time in the history of Africa one Charter to guide our cause and action. Addressing this august house, the President of Tanganyika told us of the enemies of Africa, he said they were praying and he said that the African peoples were also praying. Now this is the time of reckoning, we do not know whose prayer has been heard by God. I, of course, cannot put words into the mouths of those enemies of Africa, but I do know that they foresee one thing and that is doom. I know that they will begin to change the tactics and sow seeds of discord amongst us, but I say that Africa is marching ahead to her goal of destiny and honour. Free Africa, for the first time, has met and agreed on what to do. Your Imperial Majesty, this was the deep desire that brought all of us here, and it is indeed of fundamental importance that we should be able to say that at least what we wanted we have found and

# Closing Remarks by H.E. MILTON OBOTE Prime Minister of Uganda



“

The time for high sounding words, slogans and cliches, and good intentions has come to an end; this is the time for concrete proposals and for action.

”

---

**H.E. MILTON OBOTE**  
Prime Minister of Uganda



#OurAfricaOurFuture

au.int    



we are taking with us.

Your Imperial Majesty and colleagues, it is most grateful that this continental reawakening of Africa should have taken place in this country. The geometrical shape of Africa is that of a question mark. Africa has been putting questions to her sons and daughters and also to colonial powers. It has taken years and ages to answer some of those questions. Let us leave Addis Ababa hoping that we have at long last found some of the answers. And I believe that this Conference will go into history as the first beginning by free Africa to find some of the answers to the questions that Africa as a whole has been asking throughout the ages. During the nineteenth century, European explorers called Africa a dark continent. The explorers who were in any case after Africa's wealth and human resources knew of course of the Ethiopian and Egyptian civilizations to mention only a few but they decided to shut their eyes from these hard facts. They therefore refused deliberately to answer some of the questions that Africa was putting to them. The consequence of this has been that every year and let us hope that it will soon be every month, they have been sent out of Africa and very often in disgrace.

Your Imperial Majesty and fellow colleagues, the lion feared by many so long is reawakening; we who have been privileged to witness the grand awakening have a bounded duty and obligation to remain true witnesses and I do urge all my colleagues that we regard what

we have signed as a declaration of a continental independence and interdependence.

Lastly, Your Imperial Majesty, I wish to thank you and all your subjects. On behalf of my distinguished colleagues, for Your hospitality and Your support and interest You personally gave to the conference. At a time like this and for the problems that are facing us, I cannot imagine a better host to lead us to the great success we have met with in this conference. Also, on behalf my colleagues, I pay tribute to Your Majesty's Government for the efficient way in which this conference was organized and conducted. Very often reasons are advanced in parts of Africa, not yet independent, that the African is inefficient; I think all of us leave Ethiopia fully convinced that we have seen efficiency at its highest degree. Allow me, Your Majesty also on behalf of my colleagues to express their thanks to the Secretary General of the Conference, the Secretary, the interpreters, all the officials and aids who have made our work easy and very interesting, and to the Ethiopian people who cheered us and kept us happy day and night and we all still remember when we went to plant the trees that they were there in heavy rain. We acknowledge their cheers and we send them all our greetings and well wishes.

Your Majesty, all this made this historic conference the resounding success that it has been. It only remains for me to say, God bless Africa.





our Imperial Majesty, Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Brothers and Friends,

We have come to the end of a historic and momentous Conference. The decisions we have taken here have made African Unity a reality and we can see clearly a Union Government of Africa in the horizon.

# Closing Remarks by H.E. KWAME NKRUMAH

President of the  
Republic of Ghana

His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia (R) in conversation with Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah (L) at the OAU Summit in Addis Ababa, 1963. Image ©

Keystone-France/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images



This is the goal which we set ourselves when we struggled in our separate State for Independence. It is also the compelling force which brought us together in Addis Ababa.

As I have said over and over again, the independence of our separate States is meaningless, unless the whole of Africa becomes free and united.

The resolutions we have made here are a symbol of our determination to become united and to remain united in an African Community with common aspirations and common objectives.

Freedom Fighters in all parts of our Continent can now be assured that they are not alone in their struggle. The whole weight and power of a united Africa is behind them.

After centuries of colonial exploitation and domination Africa has been re-born. We have discovered our common identity, a force with which we can re-assert our African personality.

We shall from now on think, plan and work together for the progress and development of our great Continent. In this way, we shall eliminate completely the handicaps, set-backs and humiliation we have suffered under colonialism and imperialism.

We should be happy that at long last by the adoption of this Charter, we have seen the end of the various groupings and regional blocs.

It only remains for me, Your Majesty, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, to convey to the Government and people of Ethiopia especially to His Imperial Majesty, my sincere expression of gratitude for a happy and memorable stay in Addis Ababa.

To conclude, I would like to read to you a short poem, a tribute to Ethiopia, just composed by Ghanaian poet:

### ***Ethiopia Shall Rise***

*Ethiopia, Africa's bright gem, Set high among the verdant hills  
That gave birth to the unending*

*Waters of the Nile Ethiopia shall rise, Ethiopia, land of the  
wise;*

*Ethiopia, bold cradle of Africa's ancient rule And fertile School  
of our African culture;*

*Ethiopia the wise shall rise*

*And remould with us the full figure of Africa's hopes and  
destiny.*



“

We face neither  
East nor West;  
We face Forward

”

---

**H.E. KWAME  
NKRUMAH,**  
President of the  
Republic of Ghana

0AU - AU  
1963-2023





Agenda 2063 seeks to deliver on a common and shared set of 7 aspirations:



**Aspiration 1:**  
A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.



**Aspiration 2:**  
An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance.



**Aspiration 3:**  
An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.



**Aspiration 4:**  
A peaceful and secure Africa.



**Aspiration 5:**  
An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics.



**Aspiration 6:**  
An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children.



**Aspiration 7:**  
Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner

Flagship Projects of Agenda 2063

<p><b>African Virtual E-University</b></p> <p>Increasing Access to Higher Education</p>	<p><b>Africa Outer Space Strategy</b></p> <p>Harnessing Space Technology for Development</p>	<p><b>Single African Air Transport Market</b></p> <p>Towards one African Sky</p>	<p><b>African Economic Platform</b></p> <p>Africa's Premier Business Forum</p>	<p><b>Grand Inga Dam Project</b></p> <p>Africa's Energy Powerhouse</p>
<p><b>African Commodities Strategy</b></p> <p>Value Addition for Global Competitiveness</p>	<p><b>African Passport</b></p> <p>Free Movement of Persons in Africa</p>	<p><b>African Continental Free Trade Area</b></p> <p>Creating One African Market</p>	<p><b>Silencing The Guns</b></p> <p>Towards a Peaceful &amp; secure Africa</p>	<p><b>Pan African E-Network</b></p> <p>Transforming Africa Through Innovative Technology</p>
<p><b>Integrated High Speed Train Network</b></p> <p>Interconnecting Africa</p>	<p><b>Encyclopedia Africana</b></p> <p>Documenting Our History, Culture &amp; Contributions</p>	<p><b>Great African Museum</b></p> <p>Preserving &amp; Promoting Our Cultural Heritage</p>	<p><b>Cyber Security</b></p> <p>Data Protection &amp; Safety Online</p>	<p><b>African Financial Institutions</b></p> <p>Accelerating Economic Integration</p>

**0AU - AU  
1963-2023**



**MIAKA 60 YA SUA-UA**

.....  
**60 عاماً على منظمة الوحدة الأفريقية-الإتحاد الأفريقي**

.....  
**60 ANS DE L'OUA - UA**

.....  
**60 ANOS DE OUA - UA**

.....  
**60 AÑOS DE LA OUA - UA**

**AFRICAN UNION UNION AFRICAINE**

**African Union Common Repository**

**<http://archives.au.int>**

---

Directorate of Information and Communication (DIC)

DIC Publications

---

2023-05-12

# AU Echo;2023 Special Edition 60 Anniversary issue

Information Communication Directorate

Information Communication Directorate

---

<https://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/10471>

*Downloaded from African Union Common Repository*