



ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

**AFRICA AND THE OAU
FACE TO FACE WITH THE FUTURE**

**An Introductory Statement
by
His Excellency Mr. Edem Kodjo
Secretary General of the OAU**

**19th Ordinary Session of the
Assembly of Heads of State and Government**



ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

**AFRICA AND THE OAU
FACE TO FACE WITH THE FUTURE**

**An Introductory Statement
by
His Excellency Mr. Edem Kodjo
Secretary General of the OAU**

**19th Ordinary Session of the
Assembly of Heads of State and Government**

Addis Ababa, 6-11 June 1983

«Men think and feel before they act. The mistakes Governments and Peoples make are above all mistakes of the mind».

**Pierre Gaxotte
(French historian)**

Your Excellency the Current Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity,
Your Excellencies, distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellencies, Right Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellencies, distinguished Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

To speak before this Assembly of Heads of State and Government is indeed to be tangled in the web of emotion.

To address this august Assembly whereas all around the echoes of the hardly abated outcry and murmuring are still perceptible, and there is laceration and invective, whilst a morbid chilling swell permeates and petrifies our dear Continent, is indeed to venture a painful plunge.

To present the state of Africa before an Organisation following the ups and downs we all know, and by the man standing here in front of you is indeed truly dramatic, agonising and perhaps tragic.

What else then is there that I should do, what truth shall I tell, what message, other than an appeal to the conscience and sense of responsibility of one and all, as the whole world observes, and doubts about the future of our Continent, so that we brace ourselves up since this is inevitable, reawaken ourselves to ourselves since this is indispensable, so that our dear Africa can offer something other than the spectacle of a lacerated smile on a shattered face, as when an important hurdle threatens to fall.

Indeed we are meeting at a particularly preoccupying point in the history of our Organisation, if not in History itself. We are today assembled in Addis Ababa whereas the eyes of chaos still gleam behind the veil of seeming order, to obviate once and for all, the lava which slowly was creeping forth to paralyse

our efforts at unity, emasculate our will for solidarity, and even to eclipse our very presence in the world theatre where the destiny of peoples, indeed of our people is being played. It has been said, it is being said, it is being chanted for everyone to hear, that there is a crisis in the OAU. This I can concede, if a crisis is to mean the moment of judgement, the moment of questioning; the mement to choose, the final turning point. Indeed this is truly the moment of choice, the choice of being oneself and to settle ones own affairs. As Africa searches for her own bearings, this is the time to restore her vitality and confidence, to bring onto her through our intelligence and our faith summoned, those that had drifted away from the ample body of the Mother. Indeed this is the time when by accepting to listen to our divergences, we should show more selflessness and generosity; and convince ourselves of the community of our condition as Africans condemned to a common future, and thus avoid the direction of a disaster, and give sustenance and validation to yet another reason to live together.

Indeed, whilst the world conjuncture, dominated by the return to the strategic, encourages the exercebation of ideological rivalry, that international relations are caught in particularly acute convulsions, and that we with agony witness the resurgence of confrontation policies; we see Africa, which is yet being excluded from the world economy, drawn into sudden upheaval and becoming the special prey of covetousness from many sides. You would thus realize our concern about the future of our Continent, its unity and consolidation. You would also understand the magnitude of our anguish about seeing our States, made fragile by the economic crisis and hence ever more vulnerable, compelled more and more to suffer the deleterious effects of the multifarious actions of, the «masters» of the world.» This is the painful context that undeniably confers a particular character to this Session. Let there be no doubt about it. The crisis in the OAU is as well the crisis in international relations. It is a crisis that reflects the tensions in the world diplomatic scene with the abrupt return to a climate of cold war.

This is why, over and beyond our internal quarrels, which must not be minimized, over and beyond the contradictions

inherent to our societies, and which must be scrutinized; we must measure the weight of the vicissitudes of the past, ponder upon our present situation, better quantify the efforts we must make to safeguard and strengthen the mystique of African Unity, and with care and a sense of purpose rekindle the vivifying flame of Pan-Africanism. Once again, when we consider the reports of the Liberation Committee we will have to evaluate the necessary stages we must go through if we are to definitively liquidate colonialism and racism from the face of the African Motherland. At a time when the representatives of the freedom fighters of Namibia and South Africa come to us to bring us tidings about their tribulations, I cannot but humbly enjoin you to remember those African populations who have been banished in their own land, made foreigners in their own land, vilified and despised in their basic rights, turned into mere objects if not mineralised by brutal force and arrogant hatred. Their struggle shall be victorious, if independent Africa stands in solidarity and unity with them. In the face of the powerful organisations that are Imperialism, and second-fiddle Imperialisms, that use all the tools and resources of science and technology, and all the material riches of this world to secure supremacy, Africa must present a united front, and devise a global strategy of concerted and consistent action against South Africa, that hydraheaded, that really ugly monster. Africa from its depths must parry the anaesthetizing stings of those that want to continue to keep her in bondage and division, and attune herself to her identity, to demonstrate a new coherence through something other than mere words, a new composure commensurate with her dignity, her greatness and honour.

To see you here in Addis Ababa today in such great numbers overwhelms us with joy, and it is all to your honour. You that have spared no pains for the survival and the development of this Continent that is so dear to you; you that have overcome all obstacles; you that have placed the love of Africa above everything; you that have the fate of our ALMA MATER so much at heart.

Indeed it is survival that is the question; and the main challenge that the OAU is faced with today, and which it must surely pick up, is that of faithfulness to the noble

ideals enshrined in the Charter by the Founding Fathers, twenty years ago, on the morrow of independence attained through self-sacrifice, self-awareness and a fundamental and decisive political-cultural struggle. That was when they asserted, those makers of History, those movers of men, their desire to see Africa and all the Africans united thereafter to secure the well-being of their peoples, the direction to their own identity, and to mark with the seal of their past glory, the lives of men today and this world which has so many challenges for them today.

Ours is therefore the imperative duty to follow the distant echoes of their voices gone, and as we remember the difficult trials in the history of our scourged Continent, we must seek to see a better future for the Continent within an OAU rejuvenated and restructured.

Indeed our Organisation is young, but it has been able these past years to assert itself as an instrument of peace and development in the diplomatic community of peoples that dominate. It therefore becomes a sacred duty for all of us to nurse it to complete maturity, unparalleled influence and unquestionable success in all fields.

Indeed the OAU is young, but the OAU is solid, and it will become stronger and more dynamic if we remain rallied around it in unity and solidarity, if we extol the genesis of the joint ambitions we proclaimed yesterday, and not the wherefores of our divergencies today, and indeed love and protect our Organisation. The OAU which has achieved so many successes, can I am sure, improve upon them if we can yet consolidate the necessary alliance between our states; if we are able to put vain bickerings aside and found our essential solidarity on faith in our community which, for us, indeed for me, is a mystique; on an impregnable and earnest Pan-Africanism; I mean a rationalised Pan-Africanism.

But that would indeed mean that we remember that after twenty years of existence, the OAU has reached the crossroads. The time has come that it be redefined in its configurations, that its structure be reviewed, as well as its organs, its very purpose and its Charter; that it be conceived to be more reflective of the realities and the concerns of the African

peoples; and since life is but constant recreation, that it be re-created!

This would also mean that we are able to revert to that old African virtue that is «cognisance of the meaning of the other person»; to accept the other person at a time when tolerance to be stealing away from the Continent and intransigence gains supremacy.

This would mean indeed that we see our Organisation as belonging to us, now more than ever before, that we cease to see it as some very distant entity seated in some situs of indifference where our rejection of dialogue amongst ourselves becomes ever more conspicuous.

Addis Ababa, the capital of ancestral Ethiopia, this cradle of our Continent, in many respects is appropriate for this profound thinking. The history of this country and people stands as a symbol of the efforts required today by our Continent, and as well as the resulting success we will secure, if we can, from within ourselves, draw the vital force and creative energy necessary to overcome the obstacles of the moment, by abiding by what is essential, by drawing from what is positive in us, to avoid the pitfalls of History, and find our course once again.

We cannot therefore, Your Excellencies, distinguished Heads of State and Government, but express admiration for the host country, Socialist Ethiopia for the place it today holds in Africa and in the world, and for the hope it symbolises, for Africa.

Under the enlightened leadership of Comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam, this country can boast of progress in many areas. . . under leadership of Chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam the Ethiopian people have turned out to become the unflinching buttress of peoples oppressed by colonialism, racism, and zionism ... under the direction of Chairman Mengistu, Socialist Ethiopia declared itself the bed-rock of African Unity. Indeed in this very place where History started, perhaps that of mankind indeed but certainly that of united Africa, Comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam has once again surely taken up the torch of Pan-Africanism.

We cannot remain mute thereby failing to hail the decisive action of all the Heads of State, be they Heads of State of the Contact Group, the enlarged Bureau, the Bureau of the OAU, those who attended so many meetings and sessions and deployed so much effort; we must hail the commitment of those who, through various actions, made to-day's meeting possible.

We must finally express our profound gratitude and that of the entire peoples of Africa to President Moamar Kaddafi and to the People of Socialist People Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for the enormous sacrifices made twice in 1982 for the 19th Summit to be held in Tripoli.

Your Excellency, Mr. Chairman. at a time when fate has called upon you to serve as Current Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, I enjoin you to fathom together with your peers, and by the yardstick of the past five years, the distance covered by the Organisation of African Unity, the trials it has met, for a clearer understanding of the progress it must make in the interest of the peoples of our Continent.

Mr. Chairman,

When on the 25th of May 1963 the Founding Fathers created the Organisation of African Unity, the mission they laid down for it, as they proclaimed in the Charter, was that of securing the welfare and legitimate aspirations of the African Peoples. For the success of that mission, two tasks were set forth: on the one hand to free Africa from the yoke of colonialism and of its scourges which, for centuries long, and in many ways had trampled upon and oppressed our Continent, and drained it of its children and its resources, negated its values and its civilisations; on the other hand to build an Africa, independent, strong and able to occupy her place in the world, and to respond to the constant challenges of development and progress. Having for a long time been the «terra incognita», the Continent of deserts and of impenetrable forests, an exclusive supplier of raw materials and slaves, the Continent without a voice, the Continent of emptiness, the time had come for Africa to move into the tide of History, with independence and dignity.

Almost twenty years have passed since that memorable day, almost one generation the historians would say. Need we narrate the story of those years of sweat, of blood and tears, when with arms or the votes of the people independence was won? I will leave it to others to narrate the exaltation, the deceptions and finally the success of the liberation process. Today that this mission is almost accomplished, Africa turns to the second phase of her struggle, that is, to build herself, to build an Africa prepared for all the exigencies of tomorrow.

This second mission of the OAU, though neither bellicose nor does it produce visible heroism, it is nonetheless vital. It requires that we clearly identify the objectives, which were all the more difficult to circumscribe as they were shrouded in pervasive complexity. Firstly the question was to secure the survival and development of Africa in spite of the hard times that were ours: twenty years ago the world was yet in a period of abundance that was the aftermath of the second World War; there was will for peace on all sides despite a few skirmishes; economies flourished and the atmosphere was relaxed; in short it was a state of euphoria. Today the general upsurge of perils due to blunted economic and political tensions, has hardened the egotisms of the rich nations to the detriment of the «proletarian nations», and given rise to unbearable pressure by the countries of the Northern Hemisphere on those of the Southern Hemisphere, especially through the deterioration of the terms of trade. The survival of Africa must therefore be defined in terms of the global economic situation. It is also survival against an imbalance increasingly worsened, between raw materials and manufactured goods. It is also a matter of survival against the resurgence of the Cold War which blunts the appetites of powers through insidious and brutal action against the African countries.

This last reality is the danger most threatening to our Organisation: the end of the First Cold War allowed the regrouping of African States despite the obvious political, not to say ideological divergencies that opposed them on another plane; the New Cold War, can if we are not careful, by amplifying our antagonisms, lead to the desintegration of the Organisation of African Unity.

Seen from this vantage point, what then is the OAU, our Organisation of African Unity? the OAU, I may be tersely told, without reflection, is the political Organisation of the African States, with its Assembly of Heads of State and Governments, its Council of Ministers, its General Secretariat, its Committees, its Regional Offices, its Institutions, in short, its meetings, its colloquia its seminars and symposia, etc. . . Indeed the OAU is all that, but the OAU is above all and especially, over and beyond the material and finite elements, the expression of the will of all the peoples and states of Africa to live together to form a nation, the African Nation. The OAU is the crystallisation of that will, such as the Founding Fathers solemnly and explicitly reaffirmed in the concluding words of the Preamble of the Charter in which they proclaimed their resolve «to reinforce the links between our States by establishing and strengthening common institutions». The OAU is therefore, over and beyond its weaknesses, visible or hidden, that invincible force within us all, to prevent the recompartimentalisation of Africa that has already been programmed by the geopoliticians of the countries of the Northern Hemisphere, a hundred years almost, after the Berlin Conference. The OAU, such as I see it, is the instrument created by the African Heads of State and their peoples, to accomplish the two-pronged mission they set out for themselves as we have mentioned: that of Liberation and Nation-Building.

Mr. Chairman,

When on the 25th of July 1978 you honoured me with your confidence by choosing me as Secretary General of the OAU, such was my understanding of the mission you entrusted to me. I undertook this mission, incidentally, during that sociological moment of transition when our Continental Organisation was moving from its phase of liberation wars to that of nation-building. It was therefore necessary to determine new directions of action, to assert new ways for Africa to live in this new world faced with the original challenges of the turn of the century: geo-strategic challenges, challenges of technology and biological sciences, challenges of identity which now beset all the peoples of the planet. . . The OAU was to move from the era of resolutions to that of attainments, from the era of resentment to that of self-confidence, from yesterday to tomorrow.

What means did I choose for the accomplishment of my mission? The basic postulate was that the OAU as the expression of a common will, must be strong and respected in the world; and in the service of this postulate, two directions were followed with constancy, without compromise, and without deviations: on the one hand to succeed in divesting Africa of crises that could paralyze her, and on the other, to build a well structured and effective General Secretariat.

Concerning crises, I took all sorts of initiatives and proposed as many solutions, even if one has sometimes refused to recognize this, for the rapid elimination of tensions and conflicts that could develop between sister States. It was thus that the OAU indefatigably stood at the frontline in the Chadian tragedy, and in the many situations of conflict that arose in our Continent. I remain convinced that whereas in unity lies strength, the evil of interminable recriminations among our States is the surest maker of our weakness and decadence. Indeed an Africa that can keep the monster of false military glories, and fratricidal and suicidal rivalry at bay, can talk with one confident voice, in the Community of Nations, and concentrate on what is true glory, that is, no longer to depend on others, and to feed her 480 million sons and daughters.

At the level of the *General Secretariat* which is the permanent wing of the Organisation, far-reaching reforms appeared to all to be necessary; such reforms had been expected for ten years. I saw them through in 1979. It was urgent to create a machinery capable of handling the gigantic task of building Africa: It was created. What is Africa's response to the fantastic developments in science and technology that are unfolding under our very eyes? At the General Secretariat we have built the foundations of an answer to that challenge. For the other challenges to the sons and daughters of Africa, we have begun the setting up of think-tanks and projects in the socio-cultural and industrial fields with the ECA, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNDP and other agencies in the United Nations System. Whether I have succeeded in transforming the offices of the Secretariat from a skeletal and routine-type administration into a proud and enterprising high command, from one of elephantine bureaucracy into a power-house of ideas and projects, is for the future to tell; but we can already establish a first balance-sheet of action undertaken.

Indeed there are times in the lives of institutions and of men, when it becomes necessary to stop walking or running, and to serenely look back over ones shoulder, and this is what we have done. Today we stand at such a crucial moment, one such essential stage.

Five years already! indeed five long years since that day in Khartoum when you entrusted me with the mission, the outlines of which I am discussing today. An arduous task indeed, under the circumstances Africa is going through, bedevilled as she is by growing underdevelopment, threatened by hunger, burdened by the injustices of her exploiters, balkanised and strained by the growing pressures of the great powers that are consolidating their zones of influence, and losing through the implacable drain of its best brains who go elsewhere to look for the conditions of fulfillment that they need, and especially and above all, as Africa has to suffer the blunted sting, without any protection whatsoever, of the generalised economic crisis that stifles the world economy. Over these hidden rocks and swells, and even at times of tempests of fratricide ever more ferocious, the frail ship of the OAU has sailed unsunk, steadfast in its direction, to arrive at this port today.

Yes, five years at the helm, and what can we boast of today?

Bred as I am, from a very young age, in the dream of the greatness of Africa recovered; given unfailing sustenance during my formative years by the glorious though often painful memories of the heroes and martyrs of this Continent, the mother of all continents, Chaka, Zulu, Ousman Dan Fodio the incomparable, Abdel Kadar the Magnificent, El Hadj Omar Tall the visionary Behanzin the Shark that will play with the rudder and helm, Samory the Empire Builder, Menelik the Great, and Rabah the indomitable, and so many other heroes of our rich history; I as my faith dictated endowed our action, at the level of the General Secretariat, with a guiding thought which was and shall always be, to put Africa's destiny in her own hands, in all fields, so that she becomes today and in the future, a Continent that counts and carries weight.

In an attempt to materialize this essential idea, we have had to initiate a fundamental thinking process, endow ourselves with a strategy, delineate an objective, to give solace

to our peoples in their freedom and pride, and restore Africa's single voice.

The fundamental thought you would all remember: It was in Monrovia in February 1979, despite the incredulity of some, the repulsion of others, some determined sons of the Continent chose to come together to undertake far-reaching collective thinking, which at the beginning appeared to be yet another voice in the desert: What type of Africa by the year 2000? Today, honest minds concede the capital importance of that meeting which must be underlined with golden ink in our annals. For the first time for a long time, this Continent which for ever seemed to be doomed to remain in the backwaters of the past began to move into the future, into its own future, and beckoned all its vital forces to that new direction.

That appeal was not the «Vox calamantis in deserto». It was heeded by you, the Heads of State and Government, and it took the dimensions of a clarion call that resounded in the four corners of Africa: thanks to it we were able to endow Africa with a strategy, the Monrovia strategy: what was there to be done? Why should it be done? and how must it be done? In order to change the face of Africa, turn the course of the disquieting prediction of prophets of all sorts, restore respect and glory to our motherland which and insolent explorer once audaciously called the «cursed Continent», to build an Africa strong and proud, we now have the necessary guidelines.

The following phase consisted in delineating a scheme of action, a programme in time. With the extraordinary summit in Lagos, the Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act were produced. The customary detractors of Africa firstly attempted to minimize or to discredit your work by describing it as a catalogue, incomplete, incantations, and pious wishes; but let them talk, let them laugh. Today already those who laughed, laugh no more. Great projects are being designed all over the Continent, regional agreements are being arrived at, and a new language is being spoken that can only strengthen our sinews. Our friends refer to the Lagos Plan of Action when they assist us, our enemies refer to it only to avoid it. But our direction is clear and even if persons come and go there can be no confusion about it. Men come and go, action is permanent, Africa shall remain, eternal, just as ever.

Moreover, despite the detractors, this Plan is being implemented. Everywhere in the Continent economic communities are being planned or formed: I wish to refer to the Preferential Trade Area set up among the States of Southern and Eastern Africa under the aegis of the ECA, which is the foundation of a veritable economic community that will stretch from Luanda to Djibouti. I shall also underscore the Libreville Declaration adopted on the 19th of December 1981 as the reflection of the will of eleven Central African countries to create a true community between themselves. Today the preparatory work has been completed and all things being equal, by the end of this year the Economic Community of Central African States will be born in Libreville.

Everywhere, priority is given to Agriculture in national plans and programmes, and the concept of self-reliant and self-sustained development is today accepted by all, even if the results are not yet perceptible, even if famine is rife, and even if the drought persists.

I wish to refer to the many contacts that I personally developed with the leaders of most international organisations to explain the Lagos Plan of Action and to arouse and secure genuine interest in the implementation and materialisation of what has become an ardent obligation for all of us.

All this was imperative, for the economic situation of our Continent is so difficult. One knows today that per capita income has declined in more than 15 African countries since 1970, and that in 19 others such income only rose by 1%. One also knows that during the sixties agricultural production in Africa fell at a rate that has doubled during the last few years. One knows that in several African countries it became necessary, because of the crisis «to make drastic reductions in the standards of living of people already living in conditions of absolute poverty» (Mac Namara). It is in order to arrest that trend, and to dissipate these dark clouds that we must implement the Plan of Action. It is for that reason that we spared no pains, and that we covered more than 800,000 Kms in five years, to make Africa's voice heard and her aspirations well understood.

This is the reason why we have consolidated our co-operation with the ECA, a necessary tool for the attainment and materialization of our ideals.

In handing over my office, I would go with the satisfaction of having at last in a durable manner made the situation healthy, and the ambiguous, if not openly hostile relations that had hitherto characterized the collaboration between the two institutions better, and this especially by the signing of a Protocol of Agreement on the 21st of February 1982 with the Executive Secretary of the ECA, the terms of which have so far been scrupulously respected. Today, between the OAU and the ECA there is full co-operation and perfect understanding.

Having mapped out the economic direction, and defined the Community objective, it was necessary to go even further; and indeed further we did go.

In Africa henceforth, men have acquired new pride, new dignity, a new faith in their individual and collective prospects, thanks to the African Charter on *Human and Peoples Rights*. Some saddened minds will still claim for sometime to come, that Africa is the Continent of darkness and death, where natural or manmade calamities still swell the haggard masses of refugees, where the individual, the judge and the exigencies of State, far from joining to form a healthy symbiosis, are so many concepts that are mutually exclusive and nullifying. . . others minimise this Charter and find it quite insufficient. But their sarcasms will soon wither away in the face of the rapid advent of the new dawn being prepared for the African peoples by their leaders, through the Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, an admirable and rich document, that in a harmonious synthesis secures, all at the same time, the exaltation of profession of the law, and the building of nations. That too, and perhaps especially that, is part of the action carried out by our Organisation during the last five years.

How can we conclude this overview without underscoring the multi-faceted action we carried out with our specialized agencies, and mention the first steps of the youngest of these institutions? The Pan-African News Agency, PANA was born in 1979, during our term of office, following 15 years of resolutions and cold feet. In the decisive battle being fought for

the New World Order of Information, Africa will no longer be free for all to take, mute and reduced to accepting information from elsewhere, or shall I say from the cold. From Algiers, the white City to the militants of SOWETO, from Dakar to Dar-es-Salaam our hearts will throb in unison whilst we listen to the victories of Africa tomorrow. But for that purpose, PANA must work in the right direction to fulfil its true mission in the service of the peoples of Africa.

How can we forget the efforts deployed during this term of office, to free mother Africa from the cultural blackout that some have striven to continue to impose. Having been the victim of the assaults of the predators of History, Africa had to be reborn, firstly by asserting the primacy of culture which is fundamental. This task we were able to accomplish, as is testified by the Libreville Conference on Science and Culture as a Basis for Development in Africa, the gradual establishment of the African Cultural Fund, the Scientific and Cultural Renaissance Prizes that we proposed, and by our participation in the initial activities of the Centre for Bantou Civilisation.

It is because we are aware that at the time of the new but silent industrial revolution that is presently unfolding under our very eyes through the development of telematics, micro-computers, molecular biology, genetic engineering, bio-industry and nuclear science, it is because we are worried about seeing Africa once again miss the bandwagon of History as was the case in the 15th century, it is because we are convinced that today the question is to create or to perish, that we decided to organise the First Congress of African Scientists which was unfortunately to be postponed sine die because of political developments. This is however an existing idea that deserves to be revived, now that the political obstacles seem to have been cleared. Concerning Afro-Arab and South/South co-operation suffice it to say that we have devoted constant attention to them throughout our term of office, and perhaps to deplore the fact that the limited time allowed for this report does not permit us to dwell on them at length; but there can be no gainsaying the fact that during the last five years I have striven to promote Afro-Arab co-operation through efforts and considerable imagination together with my friend Chedly Klibi, to lift it from the doldrums and to keep this noble idea alive. Subjective and objective reasons dictate such co-operation, and our common

destiny points to that direction in a manner that is crystal clear.

Indeed whilst we worked for development we also strove for peace. Peace and development are indeed the complementary facts of Africa's basic dyptic today. However, over the last few years the political situation in our Continent went through the most preoccupying developments which because of their complexity and inextricable ramifications, gave particular colorations to the activities of our Organisation. It must be recognized that the responsibilities handed down to me have been burdensome, and the odds on the chess-board were galore! If there has been any difficult term of office, it was mine by far!

It should be recalled that it was as we took up office that the Western Sahara conflict was taking a sharp turn in the North-Western part of our Continent, inspite of the efforts of the successive committees set up to contain it. In Chad, the various political and military factions were tearing at one another with unprecedented fierceness, despite the numerous attempts, short-lived as they were, at reconciliation, and more than ever before the freedom fighters of the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe, SWAPO in Namibia were carrying the war to the very heart of the entrenched hideouts of the enemy forces. In South Africa, the ANC and PAC continued to intensify the struggle against the atrocious system of apartheid, while the Comoros justifiably pursued the question of the fate of Mayotte Island, Madagascar the questions of Juan de Nova, Bassas Da Indias, Europa and others, and Mauritius the Diego Garcia affair. Relations between a number of Member States of our Organisation were far from being the relations of mutual understanding that should exist between brotherly countries. Almost everywhere jingoism generated conflicts fratricidal and useless. (I counted about twenty odd conflicts and disputes of some degree of seriousness during my tenure of office). In the Middle East, the situation had been particularly compounded by the fact that Israel, in pursuit of its aggressive and expansionist policy, refused to accept the application of the United Nations resolutions calling for the fulfillment of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Indeed I have had to face a plethora of situations of conflict, an unprecedented outbreak of antagonisms of all types,

a permanent imbroglio caused by the dense rumblings of our contradictions, and faced them with determination, often in great doubt, but sometimes in a spirit of joy and great satisfaction.

Thus in 1980, the vistas brightened, and there was light to fill the void of a dream, and Africa and with her the rest of the world burst into the brightness of a smile.

Zimbabwe became independent.

The facts of the matter are still fresh in our memory. It was firstly the firm action of the Frontline States, and then the Summit Conference of Heads of State of the Commonwealth in Lusaka in August 1979 where, the British Government under pressure from several Member States, especially African, agreed to shoulder its responsibilities in Zimbabwe. Thus a period of a thaw in the Southern African situation was ushered in. The subsequent events are well known, from the protracted Conference at Lancaster House on the Constitution for, and cease-fire in Zimbabwe. The Agreements were arrived at not without many vicissitudes. At long last the people of Zimbabwe «themselves liberated».

For Namibia, our Organisation which had hitherto been side-stepped in negotiations relating to the fate of the continent, upon our insistence asserted itself as a full-fledged partner in the Geneva Conference of January 1981, and went on to closely follow the negotiations at the level of the valiant Frontline States at a time when there were more complications in the talks, whilst South Africa in its blindness plundered and massacred the peace-loving African people on their own soil and prepared to undertake a kind of «Lebanonization» of Angola. Then it was Paris, and the recent debate of the United Nations Security Council whose conclusions you know : the condemnation of South Africa for its illegal occupation of Namibia, the demand for the application of resolutions 385 and 435 of the United Nations, the acceleration of the process to hasten the independence of that country.

Indeed to save, to save Chad. . ., to save Chad which has been one of the main strangleholds of political action during our term of office. As this is simply an overview, I shall recall

with relative brevity the many efforts deployed both by the Heads of State and the Secretariat of our Organisation to restore peace and security in that country. From the Lagos Accords to the Nairobi Summit, with the numerous meetings held at Lome we had covered considerable ground and made progress in leaps and bounds that gave rise to the dispatch of the Pan-African troops to Chad, with contingents from Nigeria, Senegal and Zaire. As a sort of a first attempt in the History of our Organisation, the setting up, the dispatch and the mission of the force was to turn out to be particularly difficult, jeopardized as it was by the absence of logistical and financial support, but was to be carried out as scheduled thanks to the perseverance of the contributing countries. The recent developments concerning this question are known to you and I therefore need not say more.

Peace in Chad, and indeed peace in the Sahara.

The North-West African conflict was to become particularly acute with its ups and downs over the last five years that I was in office. From recommendations to resolutions, from an ad hoc Committee to an implementation Committee there were obstacles, pitfalls and stumbling blocks and impediments all the time. . . the difficulties generated by the admission of the SADR last February was to become the culminating point in this affair. Today despite considerable upheaval the vistas seem to be clear. This is the opportunity to pay tribute to the Maghrebian countries for their efforts at durable co-operation between all the countries and peoples of the region.

Having said this, I cannot hide my continued embarrassment; for, in this matter, wounds are still fresh and feelings still painful. However, wisdom and perspicacity will dictate my attitude: that of silence; especially as a complete memorandum addressed to all Heads of State and Government has been written on this issue. I shall say nothing more about this, other than to humbly and solemnly state that it was not the Secretary-General who admitted the SADR into the OAU, but the majority of Member States as was said by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere during the Bureau's April meeting in Nairobi.

However, I refuse to go into any details whatsoever, for, the wise counselling lavished on me by some of our illustrious

elders should be taken into consideration and, aware as I am of the sensitivity surrounding this issue, the less one speaks about it, the better.

Mr. Chairman,

The search for peace, the tight bonds that bind us with the PLO and the Arab world, the identity of our causes, of our goals and objectives have always dictated that we monitor the situation in the Middle East and Palestine. At each of your sessions throughout the last five years I have had to report the situation to you. The whole gamut of resolutions you have adopted has always stressed that the Palestinian question conditioned the problem of the Middle East and the return of peace in that region. But indeed one cannot talk about this painful problem without evoking Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights, the zionist colonies and the stubbornness and arrogance of Israel, and the tragedy of Lebanon. The tragedy of that nation which culminated in the massacres of Sabra and Chatilah has disturbed all peace-loving minds and abundantly demonstrated that we live in a world where truth is of two types, and where there are two sets of values. The blood spilled here does not have the same value as the blood spilled there. The life of a man in the Middle East or in Southern Africa does not have the same value as that of a man elsewhere.

Decidedly this world, this century is drifting away, drifting into horizons where Morality and Right shall be nothing other than notions fossilized, abandoned, and downgraded in some dusty museum of the History of Civilisations, and the present developments in the situation in Lebanon have nothing that would appease and reassure our peoples.

It is thus obvious, that inspite of political vagaries, the Organisation of African Unity, within a transitional period of five years, has been able to lay the necessary groundwork for the rise of our Continent. It must be said: the tree of our troubles today must not blind us from the dense forest of our action past. It was our will, it is our collective will, and we shall build this Continent, the Continent of the future.

Mr. Chairman,

How do we look at our problems from this vantage point? These contrary winds that blew against our direction, to hold us back and to make us stumble. Let small minds frolic with manoeuvres dishonorable, short-sighted manipulations and unbecoming accusations. Let us forget rancour and resentment. The question here today is Africa. The main stumbling block has been, and shall continue to be the ferocity, latent and explosive of new world tensions. In these renewed dark days of daggers drawn, each predator, disguised as a friend, has chosen its victims from among our states. And thus by accentuating natural divergencies, encouraging traditional oppositions and offering arms and counsel mendacious, they shall pitch brother against brother, state against state, and the OAU against itself. But thanks to your legendary wisdom, there is no doubt that Africa shall rise to shun these unenlightened manoeuvres, and resolutely turn to plod the difficult but unavoidable road to unification.

In spite of fleeting bitterness, we shall overcome.

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, allow me now to beseech you to look at the map of the world and to see the great schemes of the forces thereon.

It is the powers of the northern hemisphere all by themselves that command the destiny of the planet. Thanks to an industrial revolution generated by breath-taking scientific and technological progress, they have changed the former world order, geared the forces of change to their favour, to better influence the course of history. By applying technological and scientific progress to military arts, they have infinitely refined their strategy, and stand as powers of considerable military might to impose upon the proletarian peoples that we are, their own will in all spheres of international life.

But yet, although the northern hemisphere, thanks to its present supremacy today dictates world policy, the future of humanity, the destiny of planet-earth is decided in the southern hemisphere where on the earth and under the seas lie untold resources in concentration.

In the southern hemisphere, Africa constitutes considerable geo-political stakes: her mineral raw materials, agricultural potential, sources of energy, and underpopulated territory constitute an ideal outlet for Europe whose most perspicacious politicians are so aware of it that they make it a duty of irreversibly adjuncting Africa to their economies.

In the southern hemisphere, between Asia and Latin America, Africa as a landmass stands as the central continent that controls overland, by sea and by air, all communication channels between the Asian landmass on the one hand, Europe and atlantic America on the other: two demographic masses, two industrial poles of capital importance on the world geo-economic map.

The strategists who for the benefit of their governments work out global doctrines and their tactical application have so well grasped the geo-strategic importance of the African Continent that they purely and simply integrated it not only to their «New Strategic Map» as Geoffrey Kemp calls it, but as well to their probable military campaign Plans.

In the face of these potential threats over the Continent and its peoples, Africans because they are confronted with the solution of the innumerable difficulties that assail them do not seem to be aware of the magnitude of the risks they run by leaving the African geo-strategic space unorganised.

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, in measuring the magnitude of the menace on the future of the Continent, and the stakes that the African Continent constitute for the great powers in their universal rivalry appeal, most agonisingly and ardently, that Africa on her own, comes up with a clear global strategic doctrine defined in terms of the whole Continent.

Such a doctrine must entail an ideology, for we have resources that we must transform into sources: philosophical sources, sources of the intellect, and of our hearts. No society has ever achieved progress without a philosophy of action. What is lacking in Africa today is a true philosophical basis, and the emergence or the creation of a new coherence.

This is why, as I have consistently postulated over the last five years, the rebirth of Africa implies the assertion of her own personality; and the time has come for Africans, within the context of the main currents of universal thought, to come up with a conception of this world, a research methodology and a programme of action, in other words an *African ideology* that stands apart to embody the great ambitions of the African youth and peoples.

Let there be no doubt about it! I believe that Africa has everything to gain in creating its own ideology inspired by deep rooted tradition and the positive inputs of other civilisations, all clearly weaving together in a harmonious symbiosis, our cultural backgrounds, the exigencies of true development, and the dictates of a solidarity well understood and experienced.

There is not as much frustration, as many disappointments when Africans allow themselves to be torn apart by short-term interests and plunge head over heels into internecine strife which more often than not serve the interests of the big powers. . . And what of those adjectives that they instill into our sub-conscious minds and whose power is more formidable than is imagined; those insidiously inhibiting phrases? Away from that deadly and wasting disease of such semantics that will label us as «Moderates» and «Progressives», the semantics of slavery that nullifies and petrifies our spirits, and steals into our consciences to broaden our divergencies, to the greater joy of those peoples that dominate us!. . . We are Africans, yes we are Africans, from North to South, from East to West we are Africans and Africans only!

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Heads of State, on the threshold of the third millenium, Africa and Africans are condemned to operate a reawakening to be alivened to who we are, lest by refusing the opportunity, the very last one, they now accept for ever to remain in the backwaters, for ever remain the wretched of the earth that was already rejected by the late Franz Fanon, those that they consult about their destiny only when their destiny is already decided.

The pioneers of African Unity were not wrong when they affirmed that Africa had the duty to unite after independence...

History yesterday and History today all glaringly point to that direction. We must not turn a deaf ear to that profound revelation; let us not turn our backs on the future of Africa.

Look at the great powers of yesterday. Think about those of today. The country that was the first to secure its territorial unity in Europe was for a long time to influence the affairs of the world. . . was it not German unity, and Italian unity that transformed those noisy small states, and city-states into formidable modern industrial powers? and indeed the United States and USSR and China; and Japan so bewildering and prodigious in its silent but colossal leap forward! It is unity that guarantees their power, supremacy and pre-eminence.

Look on the other hand at the evils of division and disunity: I shall refer to the Central European country that in the past endangered its independence because of division among its ruling classes?

Indeed here with us is the Arab world, of yore great, with an incomparably brilliant and superior civilisation under the Oméyadés flamboyant, and the Abbassidés prestigious; beacon of the world and an unquestionable pole of attraction, which disintegrated with the multiplication of principalities, califates and other emirates all of which wanted to be the centre of the Umma.

In Southern Asia, prestigious India stooped, and was dominated only through the colonial policy of divide and rule and dismantle, which was the cynical creation of General Clive.

In South America, that immense subcontinent that Simon Bolivar that incomparable visionary of Latin-American unity; wanted to establish as a federation of states; today, for having refused to follow and understand is weltering in immensurable difficulties.

Here is Western Europe at last, this Europe of jealous nationalisms with its history so turbulent, and a past so fraught with bitter antagonisms, which yet through the spasms of history discovered the virtues of unification as the only chance of survival for her peoples.

Truly indeed, Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Heads of States, Africa has the duty of resolutely and irreversibly embarking on the road to territorial unification: that will be the great crusade in which the youth of Africa all over the African Continent will participate with enthusiasm, and which will give rise to that Federation or Confederation of African States which is the only framework for the fulfillment of our peoples, and the development of our economies.

The future generations undoubtedly expect to see this Continent, which has every thing to succeed, restored to its intrinsic dignity. And it is for me painful, most excruciating in the intimacy of my human heart, that by a cruel irony that abounds in History, I should be the one that was there during this crisis of the OAU; yes I, an incurable fanatic of Pan-Africanism at the sick-bed of a tormented Africa, of an ailing Africa; a crisis that will yet give rise, I am sure, to a more acute awareness of the exigency for a Community.

God knows, we all know that come what may, against all odds this imperative shall triumph, and that Africa shall unite.

Such is the lesson I have learnt from this office that you have been kind to entrust to me and my colleagues the Assistant Secretaries General; and such a lesson would dictate that we attempt to propose some future action.

It is, to our minds, clear that the destiny of Africa and her people will be decided during the 17 years that separate us from the year 2000, and in order to prepare a bright future for our children, our grand children and for all the future generations, we must as of now redouble efforts and imagination to make the Organisation of African Unity an instrument that is better adapted to the activities required by our great ambitions of tomorrow.

Thus the time for concrete conceptual and structural proposals seems to have come, and so far as we are concerned, we think that it is a matter of duty to play what we believe to be our part, our responsibility to you and before History.

Now is the time more than ever, that we must forge an Organisation of African Unity that is more dynamic in terms

of activities of conceptualisation, that is more effective when it comes to operational activities.

Twenty years ago when the Organisation of African Unity was born, the general feeling was that the African countries thus catapulted into the world political scene with the attributes of independence and sovereignty could develop, mature and serve as acceptable frameworks of life for the African populations.

It was in this respect that the constituent Conference of the OAU in 1963 rejected the Pan Africanist theses of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, and adopted a Charter that promoted the State sovereignty of new nations as was consecrated by the consensus formula of decision-making in the organs of the Organisation of African Unity.

Today 20 years of palpable experience has shown that the OAU has scored undeniable successes in the area of liberation, but it must be recognised that in the essential field of the building of powerful States, prosperous economies, modern and dynamic societies, success has been quite relative. None of our States has hoisted itself up to the dimensions of a modern, respectable and formidable power, for there is hardly any state which individually has the potentialities, human and natural, and the geographical space that go to the making of great powers. . . We must therefore, within the prospects of the creation of Federations or Confederations of African States modify the Charter, review it, revise it to make it more constructive so that it becomes an instrument of action for unification.

Over and beyond the classical proposals for the reform of this Charter geared to the strengthening of machineries of the Organisation, the consolidation of the authority of its Organs, the revitalisation of some of its commissions, there is today an imperative need for a new and basic philosophy.

Within such a perspective it is necessary that we outgrow the consensus formula of decision-making which promotes the individual interests of Member States and envisage a more binding formula, a formula that would give supremacy to the

common interests of all the African Peoples; and decisions made must be binding, in the supreme interests of all the African peoples and all the Member States; and Member States must accept to apply them even when they did not participate in their making.

It is thus that we can envisage a certain delegation of authority and a certain relinquishment of our respective sovereignties in favour of a new Organisation of African Unity,

renovated and endowed with transnational functions, with specialised agencies able to work along the lines of a new African policy for the economic recovery of Africa, for the development of a modern African Civilisation, and for the restoration of the power of Africa.

Several African Heads of State have suggested and we had also proposed in 1979 - the creation of a crisis handling machinery, something more than a Security Council which will be a political decision-making organ. Such an initiative must be pursued by your august Assembly, because we believe that such a crisis machinery, at the same time as it resolves disputes between Member States, can and must serve as a framework for the making of a common foreign policy for all the African States vis-a-vis the outside world. In a world organised in political alliances with concerted diplomacy it is necessary for our states, if their voices must be heard, to harmonize their diplomacy in the real sense of word.

The same would apply for the economic recovery of Africa. The economic record of the last twenty years of independence is too well known to deserve expatiation. The usual meagre results we have attained amply demonstrate that the formula of development through external trade is the wrong formula.

Moreover, Frederic List the German, and Carey the American, in counteracting Adam Smith in the last century had already demonstrated the limitations of development based on external trade, and for Germany and the United States they had as history has now justified, advocated a self-sustaining and self-centered development based on the growth of internal productive forces for the priority satisfaction of the needs of the internal markets.

Experience has shown, and Orio Giarini, in a recent attempt at renewing contemporary economic thought said so: «The great industrial nations began by producing for their national markets, then they consolidated their international trading power thanks to over-production. In certain developing countries, he added, the process was reversed; it was the «modern sector» that was firstly developed to satisfy international demand for the purpose of obtaining foreign currency. The result is that national production for local needs is too often relegated to the second, if not the third order».

Today more than ever, in the face of the economic difficulties that overwhelm us, which difficulties are due to the ravages of the free trade order which exploits us, which difficulties are a result of a world strategy of domination which prevents us from developing, it must be our duty, that whilst we continue to denounce the deterioration of the terms of trade, we organise and protect our budding industries if we do not want them to be strangled before they attain maturity. Moreover those who preach free trade are the very first to take the most drastic protectionist measures as soon as their basic interests are threatened.

Such a task of organising and protecting our geo-economic space must be based on certain axioms: Refusal to import goods that we can ourselves manufacture, (we must remember the spinning wheel of Mahatama Ghandi); never to entrust ones future to one product only, for as was so well said by José Martí «the people that entrusts its destiny to one product commits suicide, since the country that buys the primary product shall give the orders».

In order to arrive at this, we must not hesitate for one single moment just as it is done in other continents where they are working for a real co-ordination of economic policies in order to perpetuate present domination, (remember the recent Williamsburg Summit), to create on the side of the OAU, an African Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which will be an organisation for the co-ordination of economic policies and a real decision-making centre for integration and development at continental level. Its role will consist of working under the *exclusive* responsibility of the African States to implement the conceptual and operational

measures capable of hastening the process of an integrated African economy within a community to cover a purely African Monetary Zone, as was recently suggested for ECOWAS, and which inside Africa will control all the possible sources of capital formation and marshal them for the financing of the Lagos Plan of Action. Such an Organisation will integrate the highly positive and appreciable inputs of the ECA, ADB and other sub-regional organisations in order to endow Africa with a prosperous, powerful and self-centered economy. We must cease to be total consumers, consumers of food, of cars, of clothes, of refrigerators, of air-conditioners, of technology, of science, of ideas, and of concepts, to become producers ourselves.

But in order to succeed in this new economic venture we must have peace and security, and in the face of mounting dangers, in the face of the exacerbation of international tensions and the growing threat posed by the colossal military potential of the foreign powers over Africa, we call for the creation of an African Defense Community.

I have advocated an African Defense Community, and many will tell me that the question of the defense of the African continent is of unspeakable complexity, they will conjecture about the divergencies among African countries in terms of the identification of the potential enemy, which is the basis of any coherent strategic doctrine; they will brandish differences in defense policies, which are the consequences of agreements of military co-operation between our states and extra-African powers; they will argue about differences in the training of our troops, and the variety of the origin of their arms; all this to conclude that it is impossible for independent Africa to set up an African Defense Community for her security.

And yet all these considerations militate, on the contrary, in favour of the creation of such a Community; universal diplomatic history has shown that any national collectivity that does not control, and command its own security is doomed to enslavement.

Just as the Arabs for whom the potential enemy is the zionist and expansionist state of Israel, for us Africans, our

potential enemy is the racist and expansionist state of South Africa, which for its part considers all of us without any exception, opposed as we are to apartheid, as its enemies against whom it does not hesitate to fire rockets, shells and bombs, whilst it waits, why not, to use nuclear arms.

See what is happening in Southern Africa: Today Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, tomorrow Swaziland, Zambia, Botswana, Tanzania perhaps! Look at Seychelles! Pretoria does very well know its enemies, and the bombs that pour on the peaceful populations of Southern Africa are a pointer to what is coming for the populations of Zaire, Somalia, Senegal and those of Algeria, why not, in other words for all the peoples of Africa, if we are not organised in a Defense Community capable of deterring Pretoria from any aggressive policy against our states and peoples.

Such moreover, is to my mind, the best form of effective assistance that the rest of independent Africa can offer the Frontline States in their confrontation with Pretoria, whereas today we have the tendency of leaving them alone to face the potential enemy.

The time for verbal solidarity and pious wishes has passed and we must, within the framework of the OAU after the manner of the Non-aggression and Defense Agreement (ANAD) for the security of the CEAO countries and Togo, create the African Defense Community, in which we can elaborate a common strategic Defense doctrine against all types of external threat, produce a harmonious policy for training and for the development of our military potential both in terms of men and equipment.

And let us not be told especially about denuclearising Africa when South Africa already has a nuclear arsenal! Against whom is it manufacturing its atomic bombs? Against us of course; and the duty of the African States that can, is to resolutely embark on the nuclear. Such will be easier done within the framework of a community.

Such an African Defense Community is in accordance with the pertinent provisions of chapter eight of the Charter of the United Nations on Regional Agreements, and I believe that everything militates for its creation.

Consider the formidable forces deployed by the NATO countries during their large-scale exercises in spring, look at the troops and armament of the countries of the Warsaw Pact during their large-scale exercises in autumn, look at Israel with its enormous military potential, and South Africa with its 500,000 strong army with sophisticated weapons! Believe me, Africa, for her security, for the survival of her populations is condemned to giving herself the means to deter external aggression, and the only way is to set up the African Defense Community that I advocate with all my heart for the protection of our continent.

But a prosperous economy and a powerful army can only be built by a population that is morally and intellectually strong; in other words, Africa, thanks to a better conceived moral and intellectual reform, must give herself the means to operate her renaissance.

To this effect we suggest the creation of an African Cultural Organisation whose essential function will be to conceive and carry out under the aegis of the OAU, that moral and intellectual reform which alone can promote the training of our manpower, a principal factor in the African renaissance.

Moral education requires that Africans understand that they belong to the same area, that they rise above the narrow framework of the borders of their countries, and see the continent as their common land, and to arrive at that, our States have the responsibility of creating the conditions for the expansion of Pan-Africanism based on the mystique of unity and fruitful work. . . I suggest that the 25th of May which is the anniversary of the creation of the OAU be declared a holiday in all the continent, and that that day be marked with cultural, sporting and political events geared to the Pan-African mystique; and it is still along the lines of the Pan-Africanist moral education of the African populations, that I propose the creation of large-scale universities, centres, institutes and laboratories of subregional or regional scope in which the cadres of tomorrow will be trained together with the same methods; for it must be recognised that our cadres today no longer know each other.

Thus, the African Cultural Organisation that I propose that you create, will work for the emergence in Africa of a new culture based on a new philosophy of action, and geared to a prodigious development of scientific knowledge and technological invention; it will promote the emergence of a new elite, of a class that will build, along with and for the people of Africa, a rich and prosperous society.

Thus therefore, the Political, the Economic Defense and Cultural matters are precise areas in which African states can as of now work together; and we go along with President Sekou Toure of Guinea, who in his constant search for African Unity has always, and with the tenacity and pugnacity he is known of, preached the establishment of four great ministries of continental scope. And he is right indeed! In 1963 the Founding Fathers intended to proceed by stages towards the attainment of a gradually built unity. . . Twenty years after that, what are the stages we have gone through? This is the African problematique today. Indeed we all agree to proceed by stages, and this clearly means that from time to time one step forward must be made. What is the step we ought to make today? Twenty years after? Are we always going to be happy with an Organisation that is but a juxtaposition of sovereignties jealously guarded, with functions that are purely normative, non-compulsory or if so only a little for the Member States?

It is my humble belief that Africa today needs something more than that, in other words, an institution that is nearer to the problems of the peoples of the continent, which are: unemployment, under-employment, disease, famine, drought, illiteracy, etc. . .

Regional economic communities do exist or are being set up indeed! But their limitations are glaring. No true economic integration can preclude political co-ordination. The example of the European Economic Community is there to guide us and show us what we have the duty to do.

Well then, whereas from all sides we are being encouraged to create nation-states, in other words to lend structure to the Berlin compartmentalisation, it is evident that it is quite the contrary that we must do, as Africans that are convinced and are

aware of our History. The Empires of Mali, Ghana, Songhai, Kongo, and Monomotapa were quite different from what our states are today. . . and they did flourish those empires! «The governing of men is a difficult art and it is always useful to know how those that were able to brilliantly succeed in it proceeded about it» (Benoist Mechin).

History is the teacher of Statesmen. It is up to us to ponder upon its lessons. It is up to us to draw inspiration from it and get the sources and resources necessary for a radiant future for this continent of the future.

Mr. Chairman,

I shall now conclude.

A Secretary General of the OAU does not only have functions. He must also fulfill his mission in conformity with the objectives of our Charter. With this task goes an honour: that of being in the service of Africa, working for the unity of the states to secure the well-being of their peoples, intensify their co-operation, eliminate colonialism, and work for the advent of peace here, in the world.

But this arduous task has a beautiful compensation, for my colleagues, for all my collaborators, and for myself, and it is that of having worked together and of having enjoyed your precious assistance and why not. . . a little of your friendship and confidence. I recall the proliferation of ideas and initiatives that we together worked out, and the results which are already perceptible. I think of the hours of toil, but as well as the moments of satisfaction, moments of agony and doubt as well.

What shall I say then, to say farewell?

Almost nothing, other than that the mission you entrusted to me, when Five years ago I solicited your choice and your support, that mission, I believe I have fulfilled: such as you ordered me to go about it, such as I conceived it. In this task, at times gratifying, at times uneasy, and sometimes dramatic, I have been emboldened by the criticisms of some, honoured by the support of others, always accepting the fact that points of views expressed from whichever side are as many contribu-

tions to the permanent debate about Africa, just as in anything vital, anything of any importance to men that share by weaving into the general fabric that delicate mysterious thread that ones life is made of. In faithfulness to the oath I made before you, I have worked throughout my term of office to serve Africa, only Africa.

At a time when as a proud and passionate servant of Mother Africa, «this red-hot iron tile placed on the bosom of the world», I surrender my mantle of light, brightened by what I have endeavoured to do, but enlightened as well by the blows dealt on me, this dreamer mind of mine stands at a cross-roads of differing feelings.

I could have been tempted by bitterness, that of someone who had laboured for nothing, as if to plough the seas; but I recall Rudyard Kipling in his famous passage which described to his readers a road strewn with difficulties, and which ended: «you shall be a man my son».

I could have succumbed to fatalism, but Shakespeare teaches us that life is but a stage wherein each one comes to play his role and then humbly goes.

I could have been seduced by pride, and remember that other servant of his brother Thesius of Athens. André Gide showed us at the end of his days; having grown grey under the yoke, having lost his only son by his own doing, in meditation under the dazzling attic skies, but with serenity regained said «I am thinking that through me, thanks to me, in this beautiful city of Athens, men shall live free and happy. For the good of future Humanity, I have accomplished my task. I have accomplished my task. I have lived».

But I shall rather express gratitude. Far from bitterness, and the fateful, and pride; I express gratitude indeed, gratitude to all that have accepted me, just as to all that rejected me, gratitude to all those who despite the vicissitudes of the moment have all the same preserved their friendship and their

consideration for me; the gratitude of the one who will soon cease to perform the functions you conferred upon him, and who for five years, come rain come sunshine undertook activities of rare intensity, with pride, absolute integrity, honesty and determination in the service of Africa, maternal Africa, eternal Africa, Africa that is ours, Africa is mine, Africa that we shall, I assure you, forever serve.

Thank you.

Litho in United Nations, Addis Ababa, UNECA.

083-417-o Aug 1983 O 2,000

1983-06-06

Africa and the OAU face to face with
the future An Introductory Statement
by His Excellency Mr. Edem Kodjo
Secretary General of the OAU 19th
Ordinary Session of the Assembly of
Heads of State and Government Addis
Ababa, 6-11 June 1983

Organization of African Unity

Organization of African unity

<http://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/5938>

Downloaded from African Union Common Repository