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STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, OLIVER TAMBO, DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AT THE 25th ANNIVERSARY SUMMIT OF THE OAU: ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA. MAY 25, 1988

Mr Chairman,

Distinguished African Heads of State and Government,

Your Excellencies Ministers, Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Comrades, ladies and gentlemen:

We are greatly honoured that on this august occasion of the 25th Anniversary OAU Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government we have been asked by our colleagues in the national liberation movements to speak on their behalf.

We thank them for this and extend our gratitude to the eminent African leaders gathered here for giving us this opportunity to address a few words to the Summit.

Fijpstr-crf-all, We would like to join the speakers who have preceded us to

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congratulate His Excellency ... on his unanimous election as current Chairman of the OAU. We are certain that, during this coming period, we shall benefit

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enormously from his wise leadership and his experience as an outstanding

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African statesman. We who are still struggling for the emancipation of our peoples will most certainly keep in close contact with our Chairman precisely

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to draw on that wisdom and experience.

We would also like to salute our outgoing Chairman, H.E. President Kenneth

Kaunda. We too have been greatly impressed and inspired by the amount of work he carried out and the level of devotion he displayed in pursuit of the decisions of the last Summit Meeting. As we all expected, when he was elected Chairman, he has further raised the prestige of this unique organisation both within Africa and the rest of the world. He has contributed to the elevation of its authority as a reliable instrument in the hands of the peoples of our continent, an indispensable institution for the solution of our common problems and a powerful African spokesperson in world affairs.

Thank you, Comrade President for all you have done for our beloved continent.

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It is most appropriate that this particular Summit Meeting which opens on Africa Day, and celebrates the 25th Anniversary of our Organisation, is held in this capital where it was formed a quarter-of-a-century ago. We extend sincere congratulations and thanks to the distinguished President

of Socialist Ethiopia, Comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam, the Party, Government

and people of this friendly African land for the excellent arrangements they have made to ensure that this historic anniversary is observed with the necessary joy, dignity and the sense of importance that is due to it.

We believe, Mr Chairman, that the fact that the OAU has attained the age

which it has constitutes an important victory for the peoples of our continent. When the founding fathers met here in 1963 and established the

Organisation of African Unity, our detractors and those who do not wish us

well were convinced that the OAU would not survive for very long. Indeed

some prayer for this result because they did not want to see our peoples

acting together in concert. These hoped to thrive on divisions among ourselves and thought they could best further their purposes by isolating one African nation from another and by setting our countries one against another.

But clearly, these prophets of doom made a grave miscalculation. They underestimated the sense of common belonging and a common destiny which

inspires the millions of people on our continent. They failed to understand

that, in addition, there are many issues that bind us together, that there are many important questions which are capable of correct resolution only

if we act together in unity.

Most important among these are the total liberation of our continent from colonialism and white minority rule, its economic emancipation and development

and Africa's assumption of her rightful place within the world body politic. This ancient continent, under the far-sighted leadership of its best sons and daughters, saw quite clearly and correctly that to achieve these fundamental objectives, Africa needed to act as one united force.

Thanks to that united resolve to act together and its translation into action, Africa is today free except for Namibia and South Africa. We say it here with confidence that the emancipation of our peoples is only a matter of time. That certainty derives in part from the fact of the

unswerving commitment of our continent to act together to attain this result - a commitment which was made at the very foundation of this organisation and which has remained one of its most sacred principles.

It derives also from the actuality that the peoples of our countries, including those of Palestine, are waging relentless and all-round struggles to liberate themselves, under the leadership of their respective movements for national liberation. The history of our continent during these last 25 years confirms the fundamental truth that no power on earth can defeat a people determined to free themselves.' That lesson will surely be confirmed once more, and sooner rather than later, when victory comes, as it must, to the peoples of Namibia, South Africa, Western Sahara and Palestine.

We are certain that this Organisation, the authentic representative of the peoples of our continent, will take advantage of this historic anniversary to reaffirm its commitment to the goal of the total liberation of Africa and the restoration of the legitimate rights of the people of Palestine.

We are convinced that from its deliberations will emerge a clarion call directed both to the peoples of our continent and to the rest of the world for action to achieve these victories which are long overdue.

We would also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the concern of our struggling peoples and our movements for the solution of all other problems that our continent faces. In particular, we support the struggle that the independent States, individually and collectively, are waging in favour of a new international economic order. We too, once political freedom is achieved, will face the same problems that the rest of our continent is grappling with.

It is therefore in the interest of our own peoples that our continent scores new successes in the struggle to construct a world order which will ensure that the African people enjoy the fruits of their labour and generate and retain the resources that will enable them to banish poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance, once and for all.

We too recognise the fundamental importance of world peace and the need to rid humanity of all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Therefore we salute the valiant efforts that this Organisation has made throughout



its 25 years to contribute to the realisation of this noble objective. Indeed, for us, the struggle for national liberation cannot be separated from the struggle for peace. Without justice, there can be no peace.

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As we greet the distinguished participants at this historic Summit, we are particularly conscious of the great contributions that have been made to Africa's victories by many who are not here today, including the successi on

of elected and other officials, we extend our respect and our tribute, in the knowledge that their contributions will never be forgotten.

On this historic occasion, we pledge that we shall not rest until we have achieved the common objective of the liberation'of our peoples and there fore

of our continent, the Middle East and humanity in general. The fact that we can count on the OAU as a determined participant in these struggles which

it recognises as its own, is not only a source of inspiration but also a guarantee of-our success.

LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA!

LONG LIVE THE OAU!

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES AND VICTORY IS CERTAIN!