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ADDRESS BY OLIVER TAMBO, PRESIDENT OF THE  
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA,  
TO THE FIRST OAU ECONOMIC SUMMIT SESSION  
LAGOS, 28 APRIL 1980.

Mr Chairman,  
Honourable Heads of State and Government,  
Distinguished Leaders of Delegations,  
Excellencies,

It is a matter of great honour to the people of South Africa that the African National Congress is participating in the First OAU Economic Summit Conference of African Heads of State and Government which takes place at the turn of the decade of the 80's, and is hosted, significantly, by Nigeria, herself a rapidly growing economic power in Africa.

We would accordingly like to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, and his Government for inviting the ANC to this Summit, and the OAU Liberation Committee for making it possible for our delegation to attend.

The countries of Africa whose Leaders are gathered here today have spent the past eight decades of this century in bitter struggles to free themselves individually and collectively from the yoke of colonial domination which turned our people into voiceless chattels of European metropolitan powers.

Ten days ago, Heads of State and Government, and representatives of many countries and organizations from various parts of the globe were in Zimbabwe, very close to the southernmost tip of our continent, to celebrate together with the leaders and the heroic people of that country their accession to independence, after a long and gruelling liberation war. The Leaders of independent Zimbabwe are at this Lagos Summit today to pool ideas with the rest of independent Africa on the course of action the people of Africa should take to rid themselves of that twin evil of colonial domination, namely, economic deprivation and poverty.

The participation of Zimbabwe at this Economic Summit is a sharp reminder and a fitting affirmation that the struggle for the complete independence of Africa has yet to be won, country by country, region by region and on the continental front. It underlines the fact that the struggle for economic power on the continent must be predicated on the victory of the national liberation struggle everywhere on the continent.

In this connection, we are certain that, as the Leaders of the people of Africa address themselves to the economic problems and the economic future of this continent, the stark fact will not be lost to them that to the immediate south of independent Zimbabwe some 24 million people of Africa are struggling to break out of a colonial status and win liberation from a racist minority regime which, by a violent and vicious system of oppression and exploitation, has not only become a threat to the peace and security of Africa, and the independence and sovereignty of African States, but has also acquired the capacity to subject Southern Africa to economic domination no less brutal than that suffered by the oppressed within South Africa and Namibia. Not before this biggest and bitterest enemy of Africa has been defeated and power transferred to the mass of the people of South Africa and Namibia will Africa freely harness its rich human and material resources to the service of the people of Africa and the rest of the developing world.

His Excellency, President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, has expressed this truth in graphic language. Addressing the Economic Summit of the African Independent States of Southern Africa in Lusaka on April 1st, this year, he stated:-

"The bitter liberation struggles of Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe were part of the road we have had to travel to get to Lusaka today. .... These victories (of the peoples of Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe) are important milestones on the road to the economic reconstruction

of the region."

We make bold to add that the bitter struggles currently ranging in Namibia and South Africa are part of the road that Africa still has to travel, and that the people's victories in these countries will be further milestones on the road to the economic reconstruction of our continent.

It is a fundamental tenet in the principles of the OAU that Africa cannot be truly liberated until all countries on our continent are freed from the yoke of colonial, white minority rule. To use one of President Nyerere's familiar formulations: Either Africa is liberated everywhere or she is liberated nowhere.

It would therefore be unnatural if this historic Summit, the first of its kind in the history of the OAU, were to omit to affirm the continuation of the struggle for the total liberation of Africa; if it were to endorse the imperialist propaganda that Africa's preoccupation with the liberation struggle is the cause of her economic ills; and if, therefore, the Summit were to refrain from pledging that the people of Africa will not rest until Namibia and South Africa have been liberated.

Such a pledge, however, should not be understood to mean that Africa will continue, as in the past, to leave it to Angola, Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho, and now Zimbabwe and even Madagascar, to bear the brunt of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. Some of these countries virtually stood alone as they resolutely gave support to the liberation war in Zimbabwe and Namibia.

Thanks to the glorious victory of the people of Zimbabwe, the African independent States bordering on South Africa now stand face to face with a regime that is now fighting with its back to the wall. It feels more threatened than at any time in its brutal and

bloody history. It can read the ominous writing on the wall. For, after fascist Portugal and racist Rhodesia, it now stands alone, <sup>and</sup> surrounded and encircled.

Notoriously aggressive and murderous, it is now desperate and dangerous. The member countries of the OAU which form the geo-political frontline with this fascist and tyrannical regime must not be expected to do less than recognise this reality in the way they relate to the liberation forces engaged in the struggle.

This situation calls for, on the one hand, a greater measure of self-reliance on the part of the liberation forces, and on the other hand, a much greater degree of active participation by the rest of Africa.

It should, for example, be the OAU rather than ~~Zambia~~ or Angola, which takes up with the UN Security Council the question of the armed aggression by the South African racist forces against the Republic of Zambia and the People's Republic of Angola.

We have no doubt whatever that Africa stands ready, as ever, to take up the challenge of ridding this continent of the last vestige of colonial domination. His Excellency, Alhaji Shehu Shagari spoke for all Africa, for the progressive world, and directly into the racist ears of the South African fascists, when, on the occasion of the Zimbabwe independence celebrations in Salisbury on April 19, he declared:

"As far as we in Nigeria are concerned, we will continue to give our total support to the uncompleted struggle for the total liberation of the continent from the clutches of minority regimes and all the vestiges of colonialism."

It is a measure of the tremendous impact of that declaration upon the entire people of Southern Africa and the racists themselves that the Botha regime screamed back at President Shehu Shagari, describing him as a war-monger, even as their



troops were occupying Zambian territory, launching air and ground attacks against Angola, terrorising the Namibian people, stepping up violent repression in South Africa and raising their military budget to unprecedented levels. And yet President Shehu Shagari was indicating no intention to send Nigerian troops across the Limpopo. The people of South Africa are taking on the fascists. But in its conduct of the struggle -- a fact that is perhaps little known -- the ANC has consistently taken, and will continue, to the best of its ability, to take into careful calculation the requirements of security for the neighbouring countries. We have asked of our brothers for barely more than a recognition that we are the victims of a brutal form of colonialism, the objects of an intolerable insult to Africa and a crime against humanity; victims of vicious oppression and ferocious exploitation, and that we owe it to ourselves, to Africa, to mankind and to history to fight for our liberation from this internationally notorious system.

We shall make the sacrifice our situation demands of us. The rest of Africa, the rest of mankind will support us because our cause is their cause, our victory is their victory and because peace is indivisible.

In addition to the question of commitment to the total liberation of Africa, we believe, Mr Chairman, that this Summit will also raise to a new level of prominence another basic tenet in the principles of the OAU, namely, that Africa cannot be truly liberated until the national and international economic relations which are the product and a legacy of colonial domination have been fundamentally altered and abolished.

These economic relations constitute the basis for the economic ills that confront our peoples. And here, Mr Chairman, I am speaking from the vantage point of a South African who has lived under a system of colonial, political domination and the corresponding economic subjugation and exploitation of the black colonised people of our country that is as naked and brutal as any that we have experienced in Africa, and anywhere else for that matter.

From the economic point of view, it is a system which aims at the concentration of wealth in the hands of the white colonial minority. It is a system therefore which treats the black majority as objects for the expansion of that wealth - a vast labour reservoir to be exploited for the benefit and enrichment of the white mine-owners, industrialists, bankers and landowners.

At their recent Summit, the Heads of State and Government of Southern Africa pointed out, in our view correctly, that: "The development of national economies as balanced units, let alone the welfare of the people of Southern Africa, played no part ...." in the strategy of incorporating the countries of Southern Africa in the economy of racist South Africa. This assessment applies as much to the economic relations between South Africa and the rest of Southern Africa as it does to the economic relations between the white minority and the black majority within South Africa itself. The welfare of one part is predicted on the impoverishment of the other. Such is the basic characteristic of a colonial system of economic relations.

Of course no people can accept such a situation of enslavement. Sooner or later they will rise against it and establish an economic system which does aim at advancing their welfare. In our country it is in part for this reason that the racist minority ruling group holds our people in subjection by means of armed terror and fascist tyranny - to stop us rising up to establish an economic system which aims at advancing the welfare of the people of our country as a whole. The political victory of the people of South Africa in our struggle against white minority domination is therefore a prerequisite for the economic reconstruction of our own country.

Part of the stock-in-trade of the ideology of the South African racists is that the black people of our country are economically backward because they are incapable of uplifting themselves. The insulting allegation is made that our cultural traditions serve as an obstacle to our ability to comprehend modern science and technology and to our capacity to run and manage a modern industrial society. The conclusion of course is that we shall for some

centuries yet need white tutelage in order to be able to survive at all.

We believe, Mr Chairman, that the situation we have described, indicating the nature of the economic relations between black and white inside apartheid South Africa, has its parallels in terms of the relations between the peoples of Africa as a whole and the industrialised countries of the West, the former colonial masters who had imposed themselves on our peoples.

The poverty of our peoples is still ascribed in certain circles in the West to our supposed laziness, the absence of a spirit of enterprise and our alleged inability to manage our affairs. All this is used to camouflage the true causes of the impoverishment of our peoples.

In all spheres of economic activity, the relations between ourselves and the developed countries of the West remain unequal. They are relations which, once more, are predicated on the enrichment of the West at the expense of the peoples of Africa. At the base of these relations are the fundamental features that the West constitutes the market for our raw materials and the source of our imports of both producer and consumer goods.

It is this objective reality which makes impossible the discussion of the material conditions of life of our peoples without addressing ourselves to our relations with the Western world. It is also this objective reality which has compelled the OAU continuously to address itself to the question of the defence of the independence of the free states of Africa, because in their striving to maintain the unequal economic relations of domination and exploitation that we have referred to, the Western powers are prepared to, and actually, employ all means and methods to ensure that we do not use our political independence to bring about a new international economic order, characterised by equal relations between ourselves and the West and ensuring the advancement of the welfare of our peoples.

The situation we are confronted with is that the absolute volume of the raw materials we sell to the West and the prices of such raw materials are determined exclusively by the buyers, guided by their own self-interest. Equally, the price we have to pay for the producer and consumer goods we import from the West are decided exclusively by the sellers, once again guided by their own self-interest. The end result is that we sell our own produce cheap and buy the output of the West dearly.

Since the end of the Second World War we have seen the terms of trade moving continuously in favour of the West and against the poor countries, including Africa. One result of this process has been a continuously worsening balance of payments situation and the wiping out of surpluses which could have been used as investible funds, giving the possibility to diversify and develop our production activities. All this takes place side by side with a rising population and the consequent need for more jobs, food, health and educational services, housing and the other amenities of ordinary living.

These factors of course force us to go back to the Western governments and the Western national and international financial institutions to negotiate for aid in the form of loans and grants. Such is the peculiar nature of this aid that the developing countries in general are now confronted with the situation that it is they who are aiding the developed West rather than the other way round. The debt servicing charges that we have to meet in the form of interest payments and amortisation transfers to the Western countries are at least double what we receive as so-called aid from these countries.

The result is that we are compelled to produce more in order to buy the same quantity of imports. To make up the shortfalls we have to borrow from the same people who are buying our products cheap. This necessitates our having to produce even more to pay back our debts. Given the low prices for these products, we are unable to meet our debts and have to return to our creditors to make more loans. We consequently live under a mounting pile of debts.



The situation we have described, Mr Chairman, is of course one of the reasons for the holding of this Summit. As a people living in the bowels of an aggressive and expansionist economic system which by its nature seeks to dominate and exploit all those whom it can, without regard to national boundaries, we, in South Africa, feel it is our duty to join all those who say that the time for such economic systems is past.

By its nature, the imperialist economic system of South Africa, like those of the Western countries of which it is a product and a partner, must seek to secure other, less developed countries as its exclusive market for its products, its capital and its technology. It must also, as it does, seek to rivet these countries to itself as sources of cheap raw materials, energy sources and exploited labour. These exploitative aims are being pursued with renewed vigour by the apartheid regime under the guise of a so-called "constellation of Southern African States" which racist Prime Minister Botha is promoting.

In a situation in which the independent states of our region are taking steps to intensify the struggle to break the economic stranglehold of apartheid South Africa over their countries, a heightened conflict between these countries and racist South Africa is inevitable. A situation of peace and stability, and the prevalence of conditions favourable to the economic emancipation of the peoples of the region, including those of South Africa and Namibia, can only be established after and as a result of the defeat and overthrow of white minority rule in Southern Africa and the political emancipation of all our people.

Inspired by the historic victory of the Zimbabwe people and the accession to power in that country of a Patriotic Government, we cannot but pledge before this august assembly of leaders of countries who have done so much to bring about this result, that our own people, under the leadership of the African National Congress, are more than ever determined to liberate themselves and their country.

Confident of the continued support of independent Africa and the rest of progressive mankind, we know that our victory is certain. When that victory comes, the economy of our country will reinforce Africa in her titanic struggle to break the economic stranglehold of the transnational co-operations and the western powers over our peoples, to exploit the full economic potential of our continent for the welfare of our peoples and to advance, with the rest of the developing world to the establishment of a new international economic order.

Mr Chairman, let me conclude by saluting the great Nigerian people in their numerous millions. We salute also, our brothers-in-struggle, our comrades-in-arms, the PLO of Palestine, the POLISARIO of Western Sahara, SWAPO of Namibia, and all peoples fighting for **justice**, peace and social progress elsewhere in Africa and the world.

The struggle continues!

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The participation of Zimbabwe at this Economic Summit is a sharp reminder and a fitting affirmation that the struggle for the complete independence of Africa has yet to be won, country by country, region by region and on the continental front. It underlines the fact that the struggle for economic power on the continent must be predicated on the victory of the national liberation struggle everywhere on the continent.

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bloody history. It can read the ominous writing on the wall. For, after fascist Portugal and racist Rhodesia, it now stands alone, <sup>and</sup> surrounded encircled.

Notoriously aggressive and murderous, it is now desperate and dangerous. The member countries of the OAU which form the geo-political frontline with this fascist and tyrannical regime must not be expected to do less than recognise this reality in the way they relate to the liberation forces engaged in the struggle.

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It should, for example, be the OAU rather than Zambia or Angola, which takes up with the UN Security Council the question of the armed aggression by the South African racist forces against the Republic of Zambia and the People's Republic of Angola.

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troops were occupying Zambian territory, launching air and ground attacks against Angola, terrorising the Namibian people, stepping up violent repression in South Africa and raising their military budget to unprecedented levels. And yet President Shahu Shagari was indicating no intention to send Nigerian troops across the Limpopo. The people of South Africa are taking on the fascists. But in its conduct of the struggle -- a fact that is perhaps little known -- the ANC has consistently taken, and will continue, to the best of its ability, to take into careful calculation the requirements of security for the neighbouring countries. We have asked of our brothers for barely more than a recognition that we are the victims of a brutal form of colonialism, the objects of an intolerable insult to Africa and a crime against humanity; victims of vicious oppression and ferocious exploitation, and that we owe it to ourselves, to Africa, to mankind and to history to fight for our liberation from this internationally notorious system.

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In addition to the question of commitment to the total liberation of Africa, we believe, Mr Chairman, that this Summit will also raise to a new level of prominence another basic tenet in the principles of the OAU, namely, that Africa cannot be truly liberated until the national and international economic relations which are the product and a legacy of colonial domination have been fundamentally altered and abolished.

These economic relations constitute the basis for the economic ills that confront our peoples. And here, Mr Chairman, I am speaking from the vantage point of a South African who has lived under a system of colonial, political domination and the corresponding economic subjugation and exploitation of the black colonised people of our country that is as naked and brutal as any that we have experienced in Africa, and anywhere else for that matter.

From the economic point of view, it is a system which aims at the concentration of wealth in the hands of the white colonial minority. It is a system therefore which treats the black majority as objects for the expansion of that wealth - a vast labour reservoir to be exploited for the benefit and enrichment of the white mine-owners, industrialists, bankers and landowners.

At their recent Summit, the Heads of State and Government of Southern Africa pointed out, in our view correctly, that: "The development of national economies as balanced units, let alone the welfare of the people of Southern Africa, played no part ....." in the strategy of incorporating the countries of Southern Africa in the economy of racist South Africa. This assessment applies as much to the economic relations between South Africa and the rest of Southern Africa as it does to the economic relations between the white minority and the black majority within South Africa itself. The welfare of one part is predicted on the impoverishment of the other. Such is the basic characteristic of a colonial system of economic relations.

Of course no people can accept such a situation of enslavement. Sooner or later they will rise against it and establish an economic system which does aim at advancing their welfare. In our country it is in part for this reason that the racist minority ruling group holds our people in subjection by means of armed terror and fascist tyranny - to stop us rising up to establish an economic system which aims at advancing the welfare of the people of our country as a whole. The political victory of the people of South Africa in our struggle against white minority domination is therefore a prerequisite for the economic reconstruction of our own country.

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