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STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ANC AT THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF
OAU SUMMIT MEETING OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT: 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;

~~Permit me at the very outset, on behalf of the national liberation movement to~~
~~convey, on this historic occasion our revolutionary greeting to all the distinguished~~
~~participants in this solemn meeting.~~ ^{fraternal} On this occasion we should also like to place
on record our deep-felt gratitude to the party, government and people of Ethiopia
for enabling us to come to this ancient capital in order to mark an important land-
mark in the life of our continental organisation, the OAU.

Indeed the almost legendary hospitality of the Ethiopians people can truly be testified
to by all of Africa's sons and daughters who over the years have had to come to the
birthplace of the OAU.

~~Let me~~ ^{we should like} ~~allow me to pay special tribute to the great son of Africa under whose wise guidance~~
~~and leadership Ethiopia and Africa have been and continue to be indebted beneficiaries~~
~~-- Comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the~~
~~Workers Party of Ethiopia, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia~~
~~and Commander-In-Chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.~~ ^{until}

~~It is with a feeling of special privilege and honour that on behalf of the national~~
~~liberation movement, we stand up to address this august and historic Silver Jubilee~~
~~of our organisation, the OAU. As we stand here today, we can sense the presence among~~
~~us of many outstanding sons and daughters of our continent who were, some in person~~
~~and others in spirit, with us 25 years ago in this historic city.~~ ^{As} ^{we} ^{body}

~~We speak of those who should have been here on this momentous occasion, except for~~
~~the fact that they have since departed from our midst, having made their own indelib-~~
~~le contribution to the realisation of the objectives that the OAU set itself and our~~
~~peoples at its foundation. We speak of both the famous and the unacclaimed who, through~~
~~their sacrifices, enabled us to look at the destiny of our continent and our~~
~~own respective countries with confidence, hope, and the certainty of a bright and~~
~~glorious future.~~ ^{but are not} ^{because} ^{The contribution they made to the cause of Africa in forming the OAU, with its objectives} ^{more} ^{indelible than} ^{these}

It is beyond our power to make up Africa's roll-call of the heroes and heroines who
were the architects of our victories, who laid the foundations for other successes
that we have yet to achieve. But on this historic day on the African calendar, we
do recall with pride and passion and pay our humble tribute to the great galaxy of
leaders of the African Revolution in which are to be found ^{many of the continent's great} ^{famous names} such titans as Kwame Nkrumah

Nkrumah, Abdel Gamal Nasser, Jomo Kenyatta, Modibo Keita, Sekou Tuore, Almocar Cabral, Murtala Mohammed, Agostinho Neto, Eduardo Mondlane, Hourri Bommediene, Sanora Moises Machel, Seretse Khama, King Sobhuza, Leabua Jonathan, Chief Albert Luthuli, Herbert Chitepo and many others.

To them all, we owe an undying debt which we can only discharge by persisting in the struggle for the realisation of the vision they shared - the vision of a united, free, prosperous, progressive and peaceful Africa. In a sense, we have a right to stand here and address this Silver Jubilee only to the extent that by our deeds we defend, uphold and promote that vision.

The goal of a united Africa is one that has been handed to us by all the African patriots who have gone before. It is the good fortune of the peoples of our continent that it has been pursued with determination and exemplary vigour by many with whom we have the honour to share this hall today.

This singular dedication and unswerving commitment to Africa's cause ^{is demonstrated by one} embodied ~~in~~ ^{more} in no other than the current chairman of our organisation, His Excellency Comrade Kenneth Kaunda, President of the Republic of Zambia and Chairman of the Frontline States.

^{to recall} ~~His Excellency, Comrade Kaunda,~~ For us in the liberation struggle, it is ^{illustrative} highly significant that when the OAU was formed, before the independence of Zambia, ^{you} ~~you~~ were the President of PAFMECSA, a unique political organisation in which independent African states shared a common and equal membership with non-independent territories represented by their respective liberation movements. Today, as current chairman of the OAU, ^{he is} ~~you are~~ presiding over the celebrations marking its 25th anniversary. This speaks eloquently of ^{his} ~~your~~ tremendous staying power as a leader of the African people.

Your Excellencies, to us who are ^{fighting} ~~oppressed~~ by one of the world's most brutal regimes, the decisive issue of the unity of our continent assumes a special meaning and sense of urgency.

^{The statement, often repeated,} All who have fought for their liberation, arms in hand, consider the sentiment that no African country can be free until all Africa is free, not only ~~as~~ ^{is} eminently profound, but ^{is} also ~~as~~ a vital guide to action which has made victory over the forces of colonialism possible. In our region of Southern Africa, daily events ~~emphasise~~ the point that to guarantee the freedom of the member states of this Organisation, the people of South Africa and those of Namibia must be free. ^{Thank Africa}

We are therefore convinced that as we mark the 25th Anniversary of the OAU, Africa will renew its commitment to unite in action for the total liberation of our continent and adopt as well as ensure implementation of the necessary decisions for the realisation of this noble objective which we set ourselves collectively and individually a quarter of a century ago.

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Your Excellencies, twenty five years ago, the Pretoria regime felt confident that it would remain in power for all time. It was steadily building the apartheid structures, certain that it would produce a social system that would guarantee the permanent subjugation of the black majority and the perpetual domination of the Namibian people through the system of violent repression.

Intensify
our
effort

Thus if the struggle against the apartheid regime 25 years ago was a formidable one, it has become an increasingly enormous one today. In pursuance of its sinister objective, the apartheid regime has over the years built up a colossal military machine, perfected its repressive machinery in both Namibia and South Africa and has as a matter of state policy, continued to wreck havoc in the neighbouring territories with contemptuous disregard for life and property.

It would, however, be incorrect to view the events of our region purely through the prism of the apartheid regime's mounting repression. Indeed the forces of liberation in our region have not only grown in strength but have also registered important victories

Today, the apartheid regime is steeped in a general permanent crisis from which it cannot extricate itself. Its arrogant confidence is a thing of the past. The white population which the racist regime had hoped to keep united behind the ruling fascist party is a diminishing minority and is divided as never before. The belt of colonised territories that it had hoped would ring its borders as a protective perimeter securing apartheid South Africa from the impact of the African revolution has vanished for ever, for all its much vaunted economic strength.

As the struggle in both Namibia and South Africa continues to rage with increasing intensity, the apartheid regime is further weakened by the existence of that unique political grouping, the Frontline States, which is itself a product of the anti-apartheid struggle and an important defence line against Pretoria's attempt to halt and reverse the onward march of the African revolution.

These results are some of the most important achievements of the persistent struggle of the peoples of our continent to destroy the apartheid system. Their true import lies in the challenge they pose to us. For they point to the task we face collectively as we celebrate this Silver Jubilee of the OAU: Not only do they indicate the possibilities to advance, but even more, they emphasise the necessity for us to act decisively and consistently in pursuit of victory.

Your Excellencies, our commemoration is taking place when Africa and our region are waging an all-out offensive to rid our continent of the last bastion of colonialism. The Pretoria regime, in an effort to make the last-ditch stand has itself embarked upon a massive counter-offensive characterised by a new wave of terror unleashed against its opponents in Namibia and South Africa.

Having failed to quell the popular political upsurge in South Africa through the zealous application of ~~the~~ State of Emergency, the regime has now clamped-down on 18 non-violent democratic organisations, imposed severe restrictions on the media and threatened to take serious action ^{even} against even religious leaders.

Haunted by the spectre of the ANC, the apartheid regime has now set up in Africa, Europe and North America, assassination units, the so-called Z-squads to physically eliminate ANC leading officials. The recent cold-blooded murder in Paris of Comrade Dubele September, ANC Chief Representative, is evidence of Pretoria's sinister designs.

The Pretoria regime has transplanted all the evils of its apartheid policy with all its viciousness on to ~~the territory of~~ ^{the territory of} Namibia, which it illegally occupies in defiance of international law. In the brutal war that this regime is waging against the Namibia people it has now entered a new phase, wherein it is reportedly murdering systematically, new born male children. This comes at a time when Africa and the OAU are deeply concerned and pre-occupied with the survival of children.

This new wave of terror is not in the least fortuitous. It is the unfolding of a declared programme whose basic tenets were announced by P.W. Botha himself who recently made clear that the regime was determined to eliminate the ANC and all extra-parliamentary opposition in order to pave the way for ^{so-called} moderate blacks to participate in his bogus reform schemes.

At the regional level the regime has been pursuing the same twin-track policy viz, the ^{attempt to impose} ~~imposition~~ of its hegemony through the intensification of its destabilisation of the neighbouring states as in the case of Angola and Mozambique whilst simultaneously seeking to project itself as being in search of peace through negotiations.

For all those who are closely following the political events in Southern Africa it is abundantly clear that contrary to all appearances the regime has entered into negotiations with Angola from a position of weakness rather than strength. A major contributing factor that has pushed Pretoria to the negotiating table is undoubtedly, the humiliating defeat it suffered at the hands of Angolan forces in the great battle of Cuito-Cuanavalle. At Cuito-Cuanavalle, the Popular Armed Forces of Angola (FAPLA) successfully defended not only the territory of Angola against a marauding invader but have also defended the dignity and honour of Africa.

Thus whilst Angola has entered the talks from a position of military strength she still need all the support that we can muster. There can therefore be no better platform than the 25th Anniversary commemoration for Africa to commit itself to the defence of Angola and all the other Frontline States which are carrying the brunt of the struggle in South Africa and Namibia.

✓ This 25th Anniversary commemoration also serves as an appropriate platform for the national liberation movements of Southern Africa to pay tribute to Africa and to people of conscience world-wide, who have exerted their energies towards the total isolation of the apartheid regime and who have actively participated in the campaign for the imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against this regime. PLO

✓ Their commitment to this noble cause is vindicated by their conviction that apartheid is not only the root-cause of conflict in our region but that it is also a crime against the entire humanity and a grave threat to world peace and security.

indebted HAM We in Southern Africa are therefore greatly inspired by and indebted to the world-wide anti-apartheid movement particularly in those countries whose governments, such as those of the United States, United Kingdom and the Federatal Republic of Germany which collaborate with the racist regime. From this rostrum we urge them to intensify their noble efforts. It is through that effort that the debate on sanctions has now been transformed from "whether to apply sanctions against Pretoria" to "what type of sanctions to apply".

It is for this reason that in the coming month our attention and the attention of Africa will be directed towards the US Congress in Washington where the Sanction Bill is being debated. We call upon the OAU to urge the US Law-makers to take a positive position on this bill, that must surely lead to the end of the conflict in our region.

In the same vein, Africa must call upon the US Presidential candidates, to commit themselves in favour of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against apartheid regime; economic assistance for the member states of the SADC; the establishment of diplomatic relations between the USA and the People's Republic of Angola; the cessation of US aid to UNITA. The candidates should also be urged to provide material assistance to the frontline states to enhance their defence capabilities against South Africa's state terrorism, if elected.

✓ The valuable support of the international community, combined with the determined resolve of the peoples of Southern Africa, guarantee our victory against the white minority ^{domination} ~~rule~~.ix Regardless of the resistance that this common enemy may offer, the victorious outcome of our struggle can neither be stopped nor denied. The march of history cannot be reversed. The historic destinies of the peoples cannot be negated. The oppressed people will attain their emancipation, however strong the oppressors might appear to be.

✓ Your Excellencies, on this occassion of the Silver Jubilee of the OAU we make bold to say that the Organisation of African Unity has established itself as a mighty force in world politics. Its voice carries such weight as none of our peoples can attain individually. Our struggling people expect that on this historic occasion all who are gathered here will renew the timeless vows ^{by} to which this organisation is bound, to liberate the oppressed, feed the hungry, assert the dignity of those

who are despised, and position our mother continent in its rightful place among the community of nations.

Above all, we have to repeat that Africa must be free. Africa must be prosperous. Africa must be at peace with itself and thrive in a universe that is free of nuclear weapons, ~~at~~ and governed by civilised norms of friendship and cooperation among the peoples.

Thank You.

*Long Live Africa
Long Live the O.A.U.*

Addis Ababa - May 25, 1988.