

A D D R E S S

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H.E. PRESIDENT MOHAMED HOSNI MUBARAK

PRESIDENT OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

AT THE OPENING OF

THE INTER-AFRICAN SOCIALIST DEMOCRATIC COLLOQUIUM

CAIRO, 15 - 17 NOVEMBER 1988

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MERCIFUL,
THE COMPASSIONATE

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His Excellency President Abdou Diouf,
Distinguished Party representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a source of great joy to welcome you all to this land of Egypt as cherished brothers, loyal partners and comrades of whom we are proud, on the path of the human African struggle.

In opening this major meeting of the General Council of the Socialist Democratic Inter-African and its symposium on the policy of Non-Alignment, we are overjoyed at meeting His Excellency President Abdou Diouf of our sister Republic of Senegal and head of Socialist Democratic Inter-African as well as the distinguished representatives of member parties in their second homeland: Egypt. We are also honoured that you should have selected Cairo to host this meeting of brothers which, without any doubt, deepens our common experience at present and enriches our common vision of the future. It furthermore assists us in sharing new ideas for the benefit of our countries and for the rights of our peoples to have their share of progress and contribute to the world's forward march towards a new, more equitable and secure world.

The Socialist Democratic Inter-African embodies the firm determination of African peoples to close the ranks of

all dynamic forces in our society with the object of mobilizing efforts and energies into one melting pot in favour of an African future to which we all aspire.

Our parties which include the greatest number of African masses aspiring to development and freedom, are called upon today - more than any other time - to pool their forces in order to achieve victory together. The close ties of fraternity and common destiny that bind us, as well as the tremendous challenges and complicated problems facing us, require of us that we concentrate our efforts to build up understanding between the peoples and States of the continent. They also make it incumbent upon our parties to devote themselves completely to their duties with unshakable confidence, a firm faith in the kindness of their peoples and an aspiration to a future that knows no limit and is not obstructed by any obstacle.

Our parties today are facing a major task, for they have taken it upon themselves to be at the forefront of the forces struggling to achieve our common goals. In this combat they have armed themselves with a solid faith, a close attachment to the masses and an ability to express their hopes, dreams and wishes through serious work, scientific endeavour and allegiance to truth.

The greatest problems facing out continent at the present stage are those relating to the economic difficulties clearly expressed by the accumulated development problems of our developing nations - Problems which are made more acute by drought, desertification and a shortage of available resources, in the context of an imbalanced world economic order and unjust international terms of trade. To this may be added the dwindling aid to development and the weak investments made by developed countries in African developing nations which has led to the tremendous increase of African indebtedness, a

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decrease in the food imports, equipment and machines, the spread of famine and malnutrition and diminished efforts to overcome poverty, disease and backwardness.

This major challenge requires of us a joint collective effort commensurate with the lofty goals which we are determined to achieve, namely, the establishment of African economic integration by the year two thousand, in implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action - a plan of action to which I was honoured to contribute.

Time has shown that it is imperative for us all to continue our action to increase our self-reliance, both individually and collectively. The economic cooperation within the African community could be intensified for it is not in our interest that trade exchanges among African States should constitute merely 4% of the volume of their foreign trade. This is happening at a time when major gains could be obtained by giving top priority to exchanges among ourselves, a course which Egypt has broadly followed and which it is determined to pursue to the maximum.

Egypt which has borne the banner of political liberation in Africa since the fifties, is the self-same Egypt which believes in the common future and destiny of the peoples of the continent. Egypt is striving with all its might so that efforts we jointly exert to confront the economic danger which threatens us all are crowned with success. Our National Democratic Party constantly stands by its pledge and commitment to contribute to all efforts aiming at achieving self-sufficiency and prosperity for all the African peoples.

The vanguard of our parties which are bound to their peoples by feelings of love and allegiance, must address the masses with modesty and candour, analysing their thoughts and aspirations, engaging with them in an enriching dialogue which would pave the way for new and genuine solutions to the development problems of our countries.

This could be achieved by acknowledging the realities of life, by harnessing the potentialities of millions of Africans for participation, by avoiding the snubbing of masses as well as the proclamation of theoretical slogans not in the least related to reality.

Beside economic backwardness, there are old sediments that have left many dark stains on the spirit of the African continent. They require that tremendous efforts be exerted in the fields of education and culture so that the African may be liberated from all the invisible shackles impeding his future and restricting his freedom.

Our great continent is replete with civilizations, cultures and human resources besides the abundant wealth and tremendous potential buried in its soil. We are certain that the year two thousand will dawn upon Africa, shining brilliantly since there are men who are able, through hard work and determination, to mold the future and realize the aspirations of African peoples to wellbeing, prosperity, security and peace.

There is no doubt that the Socialist Democratic Inter-African is a form of collective action which we seek to propagate and deepen notably among the cadres of our political parties but also among the cadres of youth, women and active elements in the various sectors of our rising African societies.

If our struggle for internal edification is at the core of our joint concerns and constitutes the pivot of our mutual cooperation, African and world peace is the appropriate environment in which to seek to bring it about in order to ensure the development and progress which we are seeking to

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achieve. The policy of Non-Alignment also constitutes a major common denominator for the policies of African States in respect of outside world and a pattern set for their dealings at international level.

The Non-Aligned Movement is a major moral force on the international scene aimed, since its emergence, at resisting the division of the world into blocs and alliances each wary of the other. It has pressed and still does, the aspirations of the Third World for peace and progress, while seeking to provide a democratic outlook as far as international relations are concerned.

Thus the Social Democratic Inter-African today faces a historic turning point as the entire world is passing through a stage of transition from one century to another, perhaps even from one era to another. It is therefore necessary for the vanguard African parties represented here today to approach that turning point, which will influence the whole world, through analysis and study as well as a far-reaching vision into the future. Thus it should be able to lead African public opinion so that Africa could keep abreast of world developments, generously contributing to them. Thus would the interests of all nations of our continent be served and their rights in a fast changing world preserved.

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The present conference of the Socialist Democratic Inter-African on Non-Alignment has come at the right time. The point of departure is sound, insofar as African countries account for half the membership of the Non-Aligned Movement; and so is its timing, for the world is witnessing speedy developments which we should always follow-up. We cannot simply adopt the position of an onlooker or a bystander, but should be effective participants in these developments.

We are witnessing now, fortunately, active attempts at strengthening the role of the Non-Aligned Movement, a quarter of a century after its creation and when its membership has widened to include two thirds of all countries and more than half of the world population.

I cannot on this occasion but commend the ideas and the role of the early pioneers who raised high the banner of Non-Alignment, who had a genuine historical vision, a profound insight, and an infallible sense of struggle, as well as the ability to read the pages of both present and future correctly.

Hence the Movement set out to work consistently for the elimination of all forms of domination, discrimination, exploitation and inequality. It has also endeavoured to ensure the free expression of a genuine national culture and civilization, and the establishment of a new order of international relations based on independence, equality, justice and cooperation among all States with a view to consecrating human rights and basic human freedoms.

Generally speaking, it is the Non-Aligned Movement, in which our parties believe and to whose principles they adhere, that resorts to dialogue and negotiations rather than confrontation and conflict. It is this Movement that calls for

the peaceful solution of international crises and disputes in accordance with the U.N. Charter, the O.A.U. Charter, and the norms of international law. It is this Movement which shows utmost resilience and perseverance in standing up to domination and in opposing all repressive, colonialist and racist practices.

Brothers and Dear Friends,

The events in today's world will constitute a basis for new international relations, and a completely different stage which might end concurrently with the 20th century, when the 21st century, only a few years away, will begin. I am of the opinion that we could expect a developed, dynamic international order which might be different from the present one, founded as it has been, on the ruins of the Second World War. Therefore, it is up to us, countries of the Third World, especially the Non-Aligned countries, to measure up to the level of events. By making an accurate analysis of today's developments, we could as accurately understand future events. We may have a specific point of view on this matter, and a clear and definite attitude to the current juncture. In this regard I should like to propose:

First. That regional problems be provided with just solutions to which all parties to the dispute should contribute. No party should be ignored, especially if that party happens to be the one both directly concerned with the problem and its victim at the same time. On the other hand, I cannot see the reason why certain regional problems should receive more attention than others. If there is indeed an international trend to solve regional problems, then all regional problems without exception should be dealt with and without observing certain priorities stemming from the vested

interests of a limited number of States which are incapable of reflecting the ambitions and requirements of the family of nations, as an indivisible whole.

Secondly. It is only fair that, in the light of the current international political developments, a reappraisal is made of the world economic situation, whether in respect of the terms of trade, the transfer of technology, investment and loans, and the relation between the prices of raw materials and those of manufactured goods.

Thirdly. The problem of debts, which has reached a highly serious stage, has political, economic and social repercussions. If we are talking about edifying a new world, such a world cannot be based on fragile economic foundation, where the debt problem constitutes a great burden forcing most countries of the world to remain the captive of commitments obstructing their growth and development. Indeed, this problem makes it extremely difficult to maintain even current standards. I can state, without exaggeration, that if the situation remains unchanged, without seriously appraising the present situation and future prospects, our whole edifice will collapse. This makes it imperative to attach the greatest possible importance to the debt problem on the agenda of our contemporary international community. It is noteworthy that the OAU was ahead of all other organizations in calling on the Non-Aligned Movement last May to initiate an appraisal of the international situation and a study of the impact of the afore-mentioned developments on Third World countries at present and in the future.

The O.A.U. was therefore the first organization, at regional or world levels, to anticipate future development with such a degree of seriousness and vigilance. When the O.A.U. Summit called on the Non-Aligned Movement to resume

its historical role as the genuine mouthpiece and the political expression of Third World countries, it was in fact calling on that Movement to reconsider its course and method of action, and to rise to the level of the great events taking place at world level. It is no longer acceptable for the Non-Aligned Movement to adhere to its out-dated slogans and concepts, or to fall prey to the policy of polarization at a time when the big powers are trying to put an end to that policy and to turn a new leaf of which the importance could hardly be under-estimated. This attitude has been echoed within the Non-Aligned Movement, as recently witnessed at its last Ministerial Meeting in Cyprus.

I am confident that your discussions at this symposium, which is devoted to the study of Non-Alignment and the new relevant developments, will enable us to undertake bravely and clearly, a wide-ranging study of the future developments needed if our Movement is to advance confidently into the Twenty-First Century. Should we fail to adopt the path of serious study and thorough examination, we shall be unable to translate our genuine experience into persistent work and fruitful effort for the good of our nations.

Wishing you every success in your work, I am certain that our continuous work together, in the context of solidarity and joint responsibility, should provide the means of approaching a more human world, and that it should reinforce our nations' self-confidence and faith in their creative ability to bring about a better future.

May God guide our steps and grant us success. Victory to our glorious Continent and our struggling peoples.

Allah's peace and mercy be upon you.

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