

H.E. Mr. Ph. Tsiranana  
President of the Malagasy Republic

Address 17

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*President Tsiranana of Madagascar expressed doubts about the possibility of establishing a Union government of African States due to existing rivalries and divisions among African leaders. He emphasized that eliminating these divisions is essential for realizing a united Africa in the future, although he sees such a goal as unrealistic in the short term. He noted that a common ideal of unity serves as our connecting force, urging the necessity to collaboratively identify and address the barriers to unity. The Addis Ababa Conference reflects the willingness of leaders to engage in dialogue and resolve their differences. Until that vision is realized, the Malagasy Republic fervently hopes for an Africa characterized by equal sovereign states, brotherhood, and cooperation.*

*Questions of consideration: What specific obstacles to achieving unity of African States are listed in the speech? Can you think of general or specific reasons why as African states began to attain independence, they immediately created numerous rival groups and cross-national organizations that make it difficult to achieve unity desired by the peoples of Africa? Why does President Tsiranana believe that achieving unity would be difficult and unrealistic in the short term? If African leaders united in their struggle for independence but failed to unite in post-independence era for a better life for the peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa, what will they have proven to Africans and to their posterity? What is the difference between independence or sovereignty applied to a group of state and independence or sovereignty applied to a group of people?*

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Your Excellencies, Heads of State,  
Your Excellencies, Chiefs of Governments,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the name of the Malagasy People, I have great pleasure in greeting the supreme authorities and the highest dignitaries of the States assembled for this historic Conference of Addis Ababa. Your Excellencies, Heads of State, Chiefs of Government, Ministers, Honourable Delegates and observers, through your persons the Malagasy, separated from the continent not only by 250 miles of sea but also by many other elements, wish me to convey to all the peoples of the independent African countries their profound aspirations for African and Malagasy solidarity, friendship and unity. The Malagasy people also send their brotherly greetings to the countries which are still dependent, fervently wishing that they may in the near future be free to settle their own destiny and assuring them of their effective sympathy, for there can be no real African Unity as long as there are dependent countries in Africa.

Lastly, I should like to express to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia the deep-felt gratitude of the Malagasy Nation for the welcome He has given us, and the hospitality offered to us by His illustrious country. I shall not indulge in demagoguery because we must devote all our attention to such an important matter as the establishment of Unity. Let us be objective. Madagascar, lost in the Indian Ocean as it is, looks towards Africa and counts upon her affection. It observes as his country has no common border with any other country, the child of the Great Island thinks he can hold a more objective opinion on what we, African and Malagasy people, really are. He will try to give his opinion about this Unity by analyzing the difficulties we have to overcome. Indeed, what I am going to say, may not be agreeable to all present here. But it is necessary that someone dare tell the truth, however hard it may be, and lance the abscess. I shall not speak about the sufferings we had to endure in the colonial time for we all know them too well. It would be demagogic for me to dwell upon this subject; besides, we must not be too sentimental but realistic, and we have to look straight forwardly into the problems.

That we meet in a country so steeped in African History is to my mind of great significance. With its rich historical past, Ethiopia takes her stand among the very first, organized, independent countries in Africa. As such, Ethiopia very soon came into contact with the outer world and with her own genius had made her stamp on history. For the Malagasy, this meeting in Ethiopia, assumes a special significance. According to legend, Ethiopia and the Great Island of Madagascar have this in common that they belong to both Africa and Asia. Is it their common heritage that has led both nations to terrace their hillsides for arable purposes and build their strongholds on rocky summits? What truth is there in the traditions which link the Abyssinian and Malagasy races on the basis of anthropological, ethnological, and linguistic investigations?

Those still unanswered questions together with the particular prestige of our very eminent host, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, all this served to strengthen the support of the Malagasy for my visit to the ancient Empire of the Queen of Sheba. But the Malagasy deeply attached to the past though they may be, look towards the future and cherish great hopes for our African and Malagasy Convention which will be epoch-making in the History of the Third World (May I say in passing that I use the word "Convention" in the widest sense of the term). We are assembled here - and we can never overemphasize this fact, if we are to have this objective firmly fixed in our minds - we are assembled here, I say, to work out African and Malagasy Unity.

At the very moment when all our countries are freely shaping their own destiny, it is our aim to strengthen, within the framework of far-reaching solidarity, their respective and common positions in

international affairs; I, for one, believe that this strengthening of our relations with the rest of the world will play its part in strengthening the national unity of each of our individual States.

For it would be unrealistic to cast our individual characteristics to the winds. In their history, as far back as is known, and in their present history as well, the peoples we represent here could be distinguished from one another by many specific and original characteristics. I am not unaware that, when our colonizers set boundaries between territories, they too often ignored the frontiers of race, language, and ethics, though Madagascar did not suffer from this historical fact. I am not unaware either of the certain harmful effects of such a system on many African races and tribes. The tendencies to uniformity which have prevailed in the past are, if they persist indefinitely, liable to do us further serious harm. Unity does not mean Uniformity. I have looked with keen interest into a lengthy article published in a newspaper printed in the State of our friend His Excellency Kwame Nkrumah - dealing with the problem of African linguistic unity: the writer develops the many delicate aspects of the question. Such an example of African diversity to which the Malagasy men are particularly sensitive, confronts them with a new problem, for their country has, time out of mind, known the existence of one single national Language.

Most of us have inherited from the colonial powers, a distributing and re-grouping of nationalities, which whether they be good or bad, are evident realities. The colonizers also left behind them a linguistic distribution and re-grouping which enable us to expound our ideas and understand one another today in Addis Ababa. If I may develop this subject awhile, I may point out that they also enable us to make ourselves understood outside the African continent and Madagascar, and even to make our personality felt throughout the world. I would remind you of an event of which you are certainly already aware: our friend, His Excellency M. Léopold Sedar Senghor, has lately been awarded in France the "Grand Prix international de Poesies." Groupings have thus been established, with or without our consent, that are now stabilized. I do not feel that we can question the existence of unities thus created. It is no longer possible, desirable, to modify the boundaries of Nations, on the pretext of racial, religious, or linguistic criteria, citing that unity based on uniformity which I have just denounced.

Indeed, should we take race, religion, or language as criteria for setting our boundaries, a few States in Africa would be blotted out from the map. Leaving demagoguery aside, it is not conceivable that one of our individual States would readily consent to be among the victims, for the sake of Unity. A State, at any given moment in its history is composed of assembled races, religions, or languages with the inevitable ethnical, religious or linguistic minorities: those minorities have the right to live and ought to be respected. Madagascar was peopled by many races, both African and Asian mixed as they were, those races from today one people of the same blood, speaking the same language, accepting all religions. Our

insular position has no doubt made this fusion easier. I have no doubt that the races grouped within the present national limits can, if they have not already done so, rapidly merge thanks to the accelerating influence on this phenomenon of different factors, in the development of all forms of communications and culture.

Therefore, in my opinion, our African and Malagasy Convention has to abide by realities and prove its awareness of present circumstances, for only thus will it inspire throughout the world the consideration and respect we wish it to enjoy. This cannot be achieved without real sacrifice. Indeed, it seems to me that we must control and contain our deep sentimental aspirations. It is an appeal to the heart together with reminiscences of the past which inspires us in our very sincere and estimable quest for a closer rapprochement and as complete - a fusion as possible: we see therein determining elements for the defense of our ancestral heritage, our rights, and our interests. Yet, the Malagasy being deeply attached to their independence, which they attained recently and with difficulty, I would not have the support of my fellow-country men, were I to approve any project of association, federal or even merely confederal in character.

What we see in the different parts of our planet and why not say so - on the African continent itself, should give us matter for reflexion. What is happening in the world, in its search for equilibrium, is not likely to make us wish for immediate political unity, rigid in its principles and in the application of those principles. I should like to be clearly understood I believe that Africa's strength in the world theatre will lie in her cohesion, and that the ideal to be attained is harmony,' through brotherhood, in all its different forms. 'There indeed is the summit — I am as sincerely convinced of this as any one of those present here - to which we ought to **load** the peoples, for whom we bear a grave and heavy responsibility. But I am of the opinion that the goal is still remote; and because it is so, we have to start off as soon as possible; besides, unless the planned enterprise is prepared with the utmost care, it will fail.

When I consider the obstacles over which European unification stumbles and the price its builders have been paying for centuries, I cannot believe that the acceleration of the historical process and the lessons we have been able to draw from it can justify our contemplating hasty solutions. Inspired of our hereditary leaning towards solidarity and brotherhood, we shall be greatly mistaken if we think that we are going to decree the establishment of African Unity by means of legislative texts, and that by our very will, it will come to life. Along with many members of this distinguished Assembly, I wish for the Constitution of a Government and Parliament covering the whole of Africa if this is what we mean by Unity; but it seems to me unrealistic to believe that this can be achieved in the near future. Fortunately, there is one thing which brings us together and draws us close to one another, i.e., our common ideal of

unity. We should be able then, in all forms of friendship, to seize up the obstacles and determine the means of overcoming them.

The proof that this is possible is to be found in the existence of the Casablanca, Monrovia and Brazzaville Groups and in the three Charters which established them; out of former attempts is arising, strengthened and anew, the United Arab Republic. The erection of such constructions is not achieved without prudent slowness, in spite of the tremendous effort of goodwill made by those associated with it. However, such constructions do exist, and they contribute towards the implementation of the plans they have established. The dissemination throughout the world of declarations of intention is not enough to give force to regional group enable it to defend ideals and interests. It is necessary to establish one's actions upon a concrete foundation. In the initial stage this foundation emanates only from the existing regional groups; in my opinion, it is at their level that the unity of ideal and action for which we are striving can be achieved.

Moreover, it will be necessary from the outset that it carry with it more than a political, cultural and social doctrine: in the first place, the precise outlines of its policy and particularly of its economic policy, must also of necessity be defined, for no alliances could ever be lasting without a basis of economic provisions. Once the policies and programmes of those three groups, formulated as precisely as is necessary, can be compared, a task of the utmost value in fact - and I must insist on this point - an indispensable task will have to be carried out: the maturely prepared rapprochement, harmonization, and coordination of those policies and programmes. Only thereafter in my opinion, can our joint organization, the object of our meeting here, lay its foundations on a basis acceptable to all of us, and also to all the isolated countries which are still dependent, which will in all likelihood join us later.

I am well aware that this thesis of mine is in opposition to the desire of several of us to hear talk only of the African Group without any consideration of the existing regional groupings. I know too that it is in opposition to the impatience of those who expect a complete community system, on a continental scale, to result from our first meeting. To those objections my reply is that those Groupings exist and will continue to exist as long as their fusion has not been achieved and that this cannot be accomplished by merely expressing the desire. If I may use a metaphor, I would say that we are building a house; the foundations are our peoples, in other words Africa itself; the regional groups are the walls which should be firmly joined together by tie-bolts of concrete, and not only by a roughcast concealing the cracks; and African unity is the roof, as vitally necessary as the foundations, which we shall lay on top of the mutually re-enforced walls.

My second reply is, it is an illusion to wish for the immediate establishment of an African community if we are thinking like some in terms of foreign policy and diplomacy, as well as economic planning currency and the issue of banknotes, and lastly defense. Many of our States are not mature enough to bear the burden of such community in their present stage of independent political and economic development. My colleagues from the States that were formerly French Overseas Territories, can join me in asserting that we knew such a regime during the period of autonomy when we belonged to the French Community. That regime is not without merits or advantages, but it restricts the independence of our States that independence we have all known for a long or a short period of time. It is therefore acceptable only as much as it brings to all and each of them, as immediate counterparts, unquestionable political, economic, social benefits, as regards the relationship between their strength and that of the other nations in the world.

It will very rightly be argued that the Heads of States and Governments here present are fully empowered and competent to engage their countries in this African crusade for the Continent's progress. Yet can it be reasonably maintained that the outcome of this first contact will be the establishment of an Inter-African Common Market or of a common defense for Africa and Madagascar? Is it conceivable that at the end of this memorable meeting the three groups will have disappeared to give way to the Convention which it is our desire to establish?

On the contrary I maintain that the Groups will enable us to create the Group. They must draw up an inventory of what they have in common, then of what brings them close together, and lastly of the factors of their present oppositions and contradictions whose importance can be reduced. I shall analyze only the factors favorable to rapprochement which could lead us to a minimum programme founded on as large an identity of view as possible, admitting of unanimity and effectiveness.

The Convention, determined by the Nations whose Heads of State or Government are present, is open to all independent African States that consider themselves bound by the San Francisco Charter in their relations with one another. It will welcome on the same condition countries that have just achieved independence but could not accept the adhesion of States whose policy is based on racial discrimination. We intend to uphold the entire sovereignty of our States in their whole sovereignty and negotiate with each other on an equal footing, irrespective of geographical or demographic importance. We intend solemnly to guarantee the integrity of each State and its inalienable right to independent existence. This in turn leads us to guarantee mutual non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs of the other States, and to exclude and condemn subversion that would find shelter, sustenance, or support in one of

the Associate States. We consequently advocate the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts which could arise between Member States.

We are determined to erase colonialism and fight for the independence of brother States which are still under colonial rule, and we are determined to check any attempt at neo-colonialism, from wherever it may come. I think, and I say repeatedly that none of us will discard any of those principles the list of which is not exhaustive, and that we shall accept them as bases for our institution, if we wish to establish an Africa of brotherhood. I must however clearly point out that our adhesion to such formula dismisses ipso facto that of the Federation of African States, since federalism presupposes important surrender of national sovereignty. Likewise, we shall reject the confederacies formula because the authority we set above the States might impose directives unacceptable to some of us. I consider then that, to ensure the success of our designs and the strength of an African of States, we must find - at least in the initial stage — more flexible and yet effective formula, as did the States constituting the Groups of Casablanca, Monrovia and the African and Malagasy Union. Although their respective affinities make them open to the most rigorous forms of re-grouping, they turned neither towards a Federal, nor even towards a Confederal system.

Like the member States of these groups, we shall achieve our purpose by bringing into play our common spirit of active cooperation. An Africa of States must be an Africa of cooperation. Co-operation opens for us a vast field: foreign policy and diplomacy, defense, science and technology, education and culture, health and nutrition, are as many sectors as possible where our desire for harmony, solidarity and efficacy can play its part. What might be the fundamental institutions of all- African and Malagasy Cooperation? In other words, what will be the very structure of our future Charter? Madagascar would envisage it as follows: A Conference of Heads of States and Governments, a Council of Ministers- a General Secretariat, an African and Malagasy Group at the United Nations, The Permanent Conciliation Commission and an African and Malagasy Organization for Economic Co-operation. This is not of course exhaustive.

The Conference of Heads of States might be convened at intervals still to be fixed, e.g., once a year. Being the Supreme Authority, it would take decisions to be implemented immediately; the ideal procedure to respect the principle of the sovereignty of the different states would be for decisions to be taken unanimously, each state having, of course, one vote. The Council of Ministers, meeting twice a year, might examine matters on which they are competent to decide, prepare and superintend the proceedings of the meetings of experts, and lastly prepare the ground for the meetings of the Conference of Heads of States and Governments. The General Secretariat, the administrative organ of the Convention, might

organize the meetings of experts and those of the Council of Ministers, be responsible for the execution of the decisions of the Heads of States and Governments and those of the Conference of Ministers, once directions for their implementation have been given. For I hope that the decisions taken at all levels will not remain dead letters.

African and Malagasy Group at the United Nations, composed of the Permanent Representatives of member States in New York, might constitute the permanent instrument for the Continent's policy towards the countries or the groupings of countries in other continents. Representation in the specialized agencies of United Nations might be conceived along the same lines. The Permanent Conciliation Commission might be the fifth basic institution, even if it is established by a separate treaty; since it guarantees African peace, it is of the utmost importance. It would be advisable, taking into account the importance we all set on harmony in our relations, for provisions regarding arbitration to be made in the same treaty: appeal to the International Court of Justice will be made only when all the means of African Conciliation have been used. Those would be the instruments of our political action. The sixth might concern our second front, the economic front; I am alluding to the Organization for Economic and Social Co-operation.

We are all convinced that the strength of our entente depends on our economic strength; we know that cultural and social development is possible only if it is founded on economic progress. The different forms of co-operation, and their efficacy should not be weakened by excessive fractioning; far from distributing them amongst several autonomous organs, we should group them into specialized sections of the same organ. We all desire the establishment of an African Common Market, and because we desire it eagerly, we must prepare it with the utmost care. I do not think that it can, like the European Common Market, result from measures taken at the highest level, and then impose on its members far-reaching reforms which we know are difficult to put into effect. It seems to me that this must be tackled in the same way as our down-to-earth programmes of action. More and more numerous are the countries of Africa and Madagascar where the individual, the family and the village are called upon to participate in the equipment of their territory in accordance with plans conceived by themselves and forming integral part of the state's programmes.

We should use the same approach to achieve our economic integration, which should start the lowest level. Circumstances favour this formula; our countries' economies are not specialized to such a point that the orderly distribution of production activities will impose on some of them reconversions which their economic systems cannot afford. The first step towards widening the African economies should be to harmonize production plans and abolish customs barriers. It would be dangerous for its



future that the Continent's industrialization be continued amidst the confusion reigning at present. Our effective or potential natural resources are numerous and diverse. Each of our countries must base its efforts on those which stands the best chance of exploiting and leave to the more favored the exploitation of resources which for them are of secondary importance. It is by refraining from competition that we can establish a strong and competitive industry in relation to world trade. Since there is still to do so, we should promote the development of our industries on the basis of specialization.

In this intelligent and broad regionalism will help us. We have already noted the existence in Africa of joint economic policies, which are applied to areas of relatively little importance in relation to the geographical scale of the Continent, which are not politically and demographically negligible: it is an ascertained fact that those ententes have already obtained excellent results. Therefore, regional re-grouping will initially be indispensable: they will be a means to an end but not an end in themselves and we will have to aim at a later stage towards a fusion of the economic or other complexes they will have formed. It is difficult for me to believe that regionalism can develop particularities: On the contrary, I think that it will favour co-operation and contribute to the flowering of African universalism. Each member State of a regional grouping can become an efficient intermediary for the new relations between that Grouping and other member States of the Convention. The movement is reversible: it is conceivable that a state which is party to the Convention may become a member of a regional grouping to which it does not belong, for one definite operation; another eventuality can even be contemplated: that a regional programme, strengthened by new adhesions may become the programme of the Convention for several groupings and perhaps even for all its members.

To sum up, I sincerely hope that in all the fields of our co-operation, the same procedure will be adopted, and that the rapprochement of regional groupings will ensure our unity. I even believe that it will be necessary to create new regional groupings to cover the continent with machinery for harmonious co-operation. In order that the necessary rapprochements may be prepared on that basis, we should show realism and practical sense. It seems to me that a system of permanent connections and information, a network of interpenetration should be our first concern. For, I ask you, how can we establish a Union if we have no means of meeting? It is not enough that we, Heads of States and Governments, a few Ministers, and a few experts and Ambassadors of goodwill mutually know, understand and appreciate each other: it is also necessary that the technician and the businessman, the student and the sportsman, should be able to move freely and feel at home in all the countries of the Convention.

I wish therefore that we could very rapidly work out a body of appropriate provisions so as to facilitate communications, and above all that our nationals might travel without hindrance through all of

our countries; that merely by presenting a national identity card they can freely cross all our frontiers. Secondly, it is necessary that we should agree on the languages to be used for official purposes, which for the convenience of our relations are very few. It is of little importance that they should have come from sources outside our hereditary culture; I even think that one of our vernacular languages would stand no chance of being accepted as a common language by the other Nations which are parties to our Convention. Lastly, we must with the least possible delay solve the problem of an inter-African network of communications and transport.

The central station for our telephone and telegraphic communications should be in Africa, and as far as possible at the geographical center of the Continent. The same would apply to the airport which would serve as a centrifugal point. Our roads, our railways, our sea-routes should be organized in networks to meet our particular purposes. These purposes should not be limited to Africa and Madagascar shrinking within themselves so as to live in autarky. Unity should not create an impassable barrier around our countries as a whole, cutting them off from the other continents. The modern world is one of mutual help and international solidarity and if we disregard this fact, our countries will be faced with serious dangers. It is with the help of the whole world that we shall build up our economies and make them prosperous; and let us not forget that a prosperous economy will consolidate the independence of each of our States and the Unity of Africa.

*Your Excellencies, Heads of States and Governments,*  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

'The general outlines of our respective doctrines are in general no longer a secret to anybody. Most of them have been revealed during the last few weeks to the International Press in declarations, articles, or communiques, My Government did not think it necessary to push itself any further forward. It made its general position known through the voice of its Foreign Minister. Since, on the other hand, I did not want to take up too much of your time, I limited my remarks, with very few exceptions, to the institutional aspects of our exchange of views. I have already been compelled to retain your attention for longer than I would have wished and I apologize most profusely.

May I sum up rapidly my remarks. In Africa, such as it is divided up in 1963, there exist independent States which we would wish to see strong, and dependent countries which we would wish to be strong and independent: the strength of each of these Nations depends on the strength of the whole. The independence of Africa depends on her economic strength. She must present to the world a united front if she is to gain its respect; but for the time being she is made up of scattered fragments

which have at least the merit of existing. We must consolidate the fragments and join them together: this programme will be achieved only if we have faith in its feasibility, confidence in our final success and a steadfast determination to be patient and pursue our efforts. Africa and Madagascar must become one vast building-yard open to all good workmen.

The task is an exalting but also an overwhelming one; we must make haste to ascertain where we stand. By the end of this memorable conference general trends will already be established which we shall have to classify and compare. Important diplomatic action should immediately follow; my wish is that it should be discreet so as to avoid the dangers of demagogy. Thus, we will be born our African and Malagasy Convention, whose aspirations are the greatness of Africa and the welfare of its people. Our common aspirations have brought us together in the splendid capital of Ethiopia, following the acceptance of an invitation on which everyone had ample time to reflect. We are ready to discuss our differences with the view to wiping them out. Being responsible to God, to our peoples and in our own conscience, we are duty bound to mark the way for an Africa free from hatred and all forms of religious, racial, tribal, ideological fanaticism and from internal disputes, an Africa which is from now onward to be an Africa of brotherhood and equality and an Africa of co-operation which may tomorrow be the United Africa for which the Malagasy Republic earnestly prays.