



H.E. MOKTAR OULD DADDAH
President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

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The eyes of the world are upon us, particularly those of the African peoples, and the greatest disservice we can do is to falter in our mission. This conference must not only succeed but also meet the aspirations placed upon it. It is imperative that we identify key areas where we can achieve immediate consensus and solidify that agreement without hesitation. Chief among these is the urgent establishment of an African Charter outlining the fundamental principles for unity, as well as the objectives and methods needed to achieve it. The Mauritanian delegation firmly believes that our efforts will fulfill the aspirations of the African and Malagasy peoples, leading to the emergence of a constructive and enduring unity. It is evident that our gathering here, in a spirit of camaraderie, despite the myriad challenges before us, serves as a testament to our unwavering resolve to succeed. May our endeavors be blessed and guided towards the path of greater happiness for our peoples.

Questions for consideration: What steps must be taken to overcome obstacles to achieving unity, according to President Daddah? What does Addis Ababa Conference need to accomplish to fulfill the hope of African peoples, according to President Daddah? According to President Daddah, failing to achieve unity will be the greatest crime committed against Africans by their own leaders, why? Why does President Daddah believe that "The Mauritanian people are convinced that their independence will not be complete until the day when all the peoples of the continent are free and united"? Why do Mauritanian people regard themselves as an integral part of the great African homeland, according to President Daddah? Why does President Daddah believe that in the absence of unity "Africa will perish" why? If the masses of African peoples fought alongside African nationalists to attain independence, but they were eventually denied the opportunity to participate fully and actively, in post-independence era's institution building process by African leaders, what will African leaders have proven to Sub-Saharan Africans and to their posterity? What does it mean for a group of citizens to be independent and united?

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Your Majesty

Your Excellencies

I take pleasure in beginning this brief statement, for the inadequacies of which I ask you to forgive me, by thanking our illustrious host, the Emperor Halle Selassie I and the Ethiopian Government and people, for the warm welcome they have given us and for their unsparing efforts to make possible this Meeting in which we are all proud to take part in Addis Ababa, capital of the oldest independent African country. The fact that our meeting is being held in this distinguished capital is a happy augury and the surest guarantee of the success of our work. I am happy to be able to proclaim today, before all Africa assembled, what have been saying at every opportunity for many years on behalf of the Mauritanian people: namely our belief in the need to build African unity, and our constant determination to accept all the necessary sacrifices in order to achieve that unity. The Mauritanian people convinced that its independence will not be complete until the day when all the peoples of the continent are free and united. It regards itself as an integral part of the great African homeland, which we must build at all cost if we do not wish to perish, the victims of isolation and senseless disputes.

Ever since Mauritania acquired the right to express its point of view, that is, since acquired internal self-government and more especially since it became independent, it has been unceasingly asserting its attachment to African unity: the best proof of this is that the Mauritanian People's Party lays down in article 2 of its statutes that the achievement of African unity is one of the fundamental aims of its activities. Hence the Mauritanian delegation feels great joy today on the occasion of the meeting of this historic Conference which brings to fruition a long-cherished hope. African unity is our essential concern: for, as I have often explained, our geographical position makes us a natural geographical position a "hyphen" between Black Africa and White Africa. Mauritania relates to the Arab countries by ethnic ties and by a precious cultural heritage. It also attached to Black Africa not only by solid ethnic links but also by geography and, from time immemorial by its economy. For this dual reason, the Mauritanian people cannot repudiate either of its two origins or cut itself off totally from them. It takes pride in symbolizing, by the harmony of the elements that compose it, an Africa united in its diversity and in thus being an example of that unity which is our common goal.

Dear Brothers,

The work of our Ministers of Foreign Affairs has paved the way, leaving us the responsibility of determining in the last instance the means that will bring about the consolidation of African and Malagasy

unity. The Mauritanian delegation would be overjoyed if it proved possible to achieve complete unity immediately, and we would be willing to subscribe to it at once. But we have to recognize that there are great difficulties owing to differences in economic and political conditions, differences in civilization, etc. For all these reasons, we feel that the best method is to proceed by stages. Provided that the first stage is reached here and now, and that the foundation for unity are laid at once, and such a way that the process may henceforth be irreversible. The eyes of the world are upon us, particularly those of the African peoples. The greatest crime we can commit against those peoples is to fail. This conference must succeed and must fulfil the hopes placed in it. In my view, it will suffice if we make a list of the points on which immediate agreement is possible, and if that agreement is consolidated without delay.

Here are some of these points:

The immediate preparation of an African Charter, defining the principle on which unity should be established, and the aims and the means. The establishment of permanent secretariat, responsible for coordinating the work of the pan—African bodies that exist or are to be created, which should be given the necessary powers. The immediate setting up of the most important of these bodies, an organization of economic and technical co-operation, the need for which is obvious. and whose role will be to constitute an African front to defend the interests of our continent, particularly in matters as the stabilization of commodity price, the processing of the largest possible quantity of these raw materials on the spot, and joint action to force the developed countries to respect our continent and its interests: this calls for firstly, the setting up of an African common market, the design and achievement of which will be one of the main tasks of this organization, and secondly the establishment of an African development bank;

The Creation of a cultural body responsible for promoting and disseminating the African cultures. There is a particularly urgent need to find an African university. It is also important to encourage meetings under the auspices of popular organizations, political parties, trade unions, women's associations, youth movements. students' organizations, so as to eliminate the causes or that isolation of which we have for so long been harvesting bitter fruit. In the struggle against colonialism and racial discrimination, we must coordinate our efforts and the aid to be given to liberation movements: this coordination must be ensured by a bureau which will centralize and allocate all the contributions, I take the opportunity to ask the Conference of African and Malagasy Heads of State and Government to address a solemn appeal to the nationalists of each country, asking them to form united front so that the struggle does not suffer from the quarrels dividing them and so that the assistance supplied to them may attain its object.

In the international field, a consistent African group should function both in the United Nations and in all the other international organizations. This does not mean that the Afro-Asian group ought to be abolished: there are in fact very many links between us and the Asian countries: community of interests, past and present struggles against colonialism, the active part they are taking in the liberation of Africa, etc. Hence there is no question of Africa, even if united, isolating itself beyond the necessary solidarity with the countries of the "Third World," it must seek to lay the foundations of a fraternal cooperation with all states - in the interests, of course of the development of our continent, but also so as to help to bring peace and harmony into the world. I am aware that most of the points I have made have already been mentioned by other speakers, but I do not think that it is a bad thing. Everyone must express in this forum his ideas on African unity and the means of achieving it; so much the better if the same ideas are frequently repeated; that is a good sign. I have further endeavored to make a personal contribution by formulating simple proposals that are easy to apply.

My dear friends,

I wish to express, before concluding that the African and Malagasy unity, for which we are all laying, the foundations demand sacrifices from us not the least of which is that we should forget our former quarrels and dissensions. History reminds us that small conflicts of this kind involve dangers of balkanization that are too serious for us to take lightly. As far as the Mauritanian people is concerned, it feels no resentment or bitterness against anyone, not even against those, who at one time did it harm or tried to do it. On the contrary, it extends to them a friendly hand, as to long—lost brothers, repeating in the words of Joseph: "God will forgive you." Not only that, but to demonstrate our good faith and help to bring together all the members of the great African family. I declare to this historic meeting that we are willing to establish friendly relations with Morocco such as we have with our other sister countries, as soon as Morocco has recognized our independence and national sovereignty.

My dear friends.

The Mauritanian delegation is certain that the result of our work will not disappoint the hopes of the African and Malagasy peoples, and that this Conference will give the birth of a constructive and lasting African and Malagasy unity. How could it be otherwise, when the simple fact that we are assembled here in a friendly atmosphere, despite innumerable tasks and responsibilities, despite all the obstacles and all the factors making for division, is already proof of our unshakeable determination to succeed? May God bless our efforts and guide us towards the better path, for the sake of our peoples' happiness.

