



H.E. HABEMEUSHI

**Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rwanda Representing
H.E Gregoire Kayibanda President of Rwanda**

Address 20

I wish to express, Mr. President, that the Republic of Rwanda, which I have the distinct honor of representing, has consistently advocated for African Unity. This commitment is clearly articulated in the letter dated May 9, from His Excellency President Kayibanda addressed to all Heads of State. The current movement aligns perfectly with our aspirations for African Unity. The various political unions, inter-African organizations dedicated to technical, economic, and cultural collaboration, along with the periodic regional conferences uniting our leaders, represent significant strides toward the unity we seek. Historically, we have championed these gatherings and alliances, a clear reflection of Rwanda's intention in joining the African and Malagasy Union. My country, rich in poets and thinkers, values impactful discourse while prioritizing concrete actions. Therefore, I echo the call to ensure that before we part ways, we achieve tangible results and advance towards African Unity, a unity poised to benefit Africa and its people.

Questions for consideration: Why is it critically important for Africans to unite? If African Unity is key solution to African problems, but leaders of Africa fail to achieve it, what will they have proven to Africans, to their posterity, and to the rest of the world? If Unity is the peoples of Africa's deep aspirations but their leaders fail to achieve it , what will they have proven to Africans and to posterity? If the legacy of Berlin Conference must be derided to restore African dignity, but leaders of Africa fail to deride it to restore the dignity of their citizens and their countries, what will they have proven to their citizens and to their posterity? What does it mean for citizens of a group of independent nations to be independent?

In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 1963

Your Imperial Majesty, please allow me in the first place to convey the most sincere thanks of the delegation of Rwanda for the warm welcome and charming hospitality we have enjoyed ever since our arrival in the capital of the oldest of Empires of independent African States.

Mr. President

Honorable Heads of State and Government

Excellencies, Gentlemen,

It is with intense personal joy, but also with great apprehension that I take the floor before this august assembly to explain, in broad outline only, Rwanda Republic position with respect to African Unity. An intense joy, what a noble task it is to make a modest contribution at the historical moment when the whole African continent, freed from the colonial yoke, becomes aware of itself, at the moment when the leaders of this great continent, after having freed, one by one, nearly all parts of the Land of Africa meet for the first time at a summit conference in order to deride the famous Berlin colonial pact of 1885. But it also calls for great temerity to dare, mere Minister for Foreign Affairs that I am, to take the floor in the midst of Heads of State whose names and authority inspire respect in Africa. One must be courageous if one is not to become dizzy. That being so, I should like to state here and now, Mr. President, that the Rwanda Republic, which I have the signal honour of representing here, has always come out in favor of African Unity. And you will find this position in the letter, dated 9 May, which His Excellency President Kaibayenda addressed to all Heads of State.

There is no doubt that the present movement responds to our aspiration to African Unity. The different political unions, the various inter-African organizations for technical, economic, and cultural co-operation, and periodic regional conferences at which, as here, all the leaders of African and Malagasy States meet, constitute a first step towards the desired unity. We have in the past encouraged these meetings, these unions, these organizations, these conferences; that was Rwanda's intention in joining the African and Malagasy Union. Today, all the independent States of Africa and Madagascar seem to have decided to go beyond that stage. The Government and the people of Rwanda cannot but congratulate themselves on this great step unanimously taken by the leaders of free Africa. What, then, remains to be done? Why so many speeches to say that we are agreed, to recognize the necessity for Charter? This Charter - let us draw it up: that is why we have come.

Mr. President, I shall not lose myself in enumerating the basic structures which must be set up in the beginning, but I see the Heads of State and Government meeting periodically, Ministers more often,

and a permanent Secretariat appointed by the Conference Heads of State in accordance with criteria to be specified. Men being what they are, in the words of a great man, we must provide for an institution for the peaceful settlement of differences, using all means of negotiation, conciliation, mediation and arbitration. Mr. President, I cannot pass over in silence the problem of our African brothers who are still stagnating in the darkness of colonialism on this point, I am precise and clear. Africa for the Africans! Anyone who has read the history of my country knows how revolutionary Rwanda is, how much it condemns the domination and exploitation of one man by another. Thus, Rwanda is agreed that we should condemn once and for all these impenitent and incorrigible colonialists and grant facilities to our brethren who are fighting for their independence.

Mr. President, my country, people with poets and writers, knows how to appreciate speeches on their just merit; but it willingly grants priority to something concrete, tangible, realistic. Thus, I would add myself to the list of those who ask that before we separate, we should accomplish something and continue our progress towards African Unity, a Unity which will be useful to Africa and Africans. Mr. President, I have no more to say. Thank You!