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The nations of the Arab world view us as we view them, often through the skewed lens of public perception that tends to be either indifferent or inaccurate. A new bridge of understanding has been established between our worlds by three esteemed Black African leaders—Presidents Kwame N’krumah, Sekou Toure, and Modibo Keita. Their names symbolize our shared aspirations and stand as a testament to a rich heritage that, despite facing adversity, remains unbroken. I believe the interactions and spirit they embodied as representatives of the Casablanca Group have illuminated the common objectives that unite us, and the proof of this unity is evident in our assembly today. Therefore, it is not merely a hopeful delusion to state that the Addis Ababa meeting should not be dismissed as a superficial publicity stunt but rather seen as a gathering of clear-minded individuals with a shared purpose. I feel it is essential to express the concerns of those who may feel disheartened by pondering the ideal geographical setting for our unification. I am confident that if I assert our ultimate aim should be to unite all marginalized individuals globally under a common faith and ideal of human dignity, it will garner unanimous support.

Questions for consideration: What did Yamouogo mean by his mandate to reclaim not just an initiation but a signed Charter of African Unity from this conference? How does he define this Charter? When he emphasizes the need for flexibility in the permanent organs of our future Union to withstand challenges and avoid disintegration, what is he implying? What arguments does President Maurice Yameogo present to uphold the sovereignty of each independent African state? How do African nationalists view sovereignty in terms of independence? What differentiates the application of independence to a group of states versus individuals? If the masses united with nationalists for independence but were later sidelined in post-independence institution-building, what legacy would be founding fathers leave for future generations? If the struggle for independence leads to institutions controlled by elites, are these institutions legitimate? What does this mean for a group of nations achieving independence or sovereignty?

In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 1963

Your Imperial Majesty
Honourable Heads of State and Government

The name ADDIS ABABA will henceforth be associated with one of the outstanding events in the human history of our century. The fact is that today's rendezvous will have been not only that of logic and good sense; it also has been that of will and, we all hope, of good will. It is not for me to trace the course of that history, still so recent but so rich in happening, which will have made it possible to transcend skepticisms and sterile divisions; in short to transcend this accumulation of preconceived ideas, of false images and permanent outrages against human solidarity.

A big breath of pure air, a new definition of man, a new ethic, a new way of imbuing human relations with humanity has been born in Africa; this flame has sometimes flickered; for a long time, it remained spluttering, but today it sets aglow a whole heaven of hope. We Heads of State, have the very formidable privilege of hallowing a destiny, the destiny of Africa; but, at the same time and of necessity, the destiny of universal peace, the destiny of a humanity delivered from the course of self-destruction. I have the great pleasure of greet here each of the Heads of State whose lucid vision and far—seeking ideas of our common future have made it possible to convene this very high assembly of honorable representatives of independent States of the African continent. Thirty-one Heads of State and Government are meeting, mostly for the first time, each with preoccupations heretofore marked by the geographic area to which he belongs; but also, anxious to go beyond the artificial division of Africa into groups foreign to each other, and in any case lacking the osmosis necessary to enable the great breath of African liberty to circulate without obstruction. Better still, thirty—one Heads of State and Government are providing the whole world with the spectacle, comforting for some and astonishing for others of the sacrifice they are making to raise themselves to the highest level in the world,

The time has now come to confront, to weigh, to discuss, to understand each other and to take hands; the time has come to find out not who was right and who was wrong, but to seek out that which must unite and to abolish that which might divide us: the time has come for us to achieve complete fulfillment. On that point, indeed, agreement unanimous and profound and there is no point in further developing the spirit common to us since it has made it possible for us to meet at Addis Ababa; perhaps conditional trust and mental reservations will continue to rule until the discussions have been concluded: but we shall certainly have the surprise of noting the deep identity of the aims we are pursuing and of the methods we consider the best. The difficulties facing us are no less than the lofty designs we have

planned; the terms of the discussions may well be technical, but their substance is in the elements common to us all.

Without in the least wishes to give an exhaustive enumeration of them, the beginnings and the end are I believe, to be found in the definition of our relations with the groups outside our sphere, in the definition of economic options common to us all and, finally, in the definition of that philosophy which must serve as the true instrument of our action: and, in the long run perhaps, the essential thing is to succeed in finding the formula which will ensure us respect, consideration and efficacy; I in no way underestimate the compelling power of some options, in no way underestimate the blinding dullness of certain pre-conceived ideas but our conference will mark the essential rediscovery of our common will to live in true liberty and in true dignity. These direct contacts between Black Africa and White Africa, and the more specifically oriental world, will certainly be a rediscovery for us all; it is rendezvous of truth whence we are entitled to expect that the light, the beneficent light of fraternity, will break forth. The difficulties in our relations with the outside world on our forthcoming regrouping will derive from the fact that words have ended by acquiring, in the situation of today, very subjective values with respect to those who utter them and it will not be the least of our triumph if we succeed in stabilizing the quicksand or vocabulary.

We are not responsible for the division of the world into ideological blocs, awaiting extinction by an atomic accident; the important thing is that we must be able to place this situation as alien to us from the day when we shall have built our regrouping and our unity into a moral force that will prevail: ours is the number and ours must be the strengths. Remembering the technical means displayed by this one and that one. This expression may raise a smile, but it certainly will not if our strength lies in the deeply human value of the principles we defend, in the objective and serene reprobation our action will bring to bear on all threats at acts of folly that will end in bloodshed; if we have the strength and the will, in short, to be what we ought to be. We are in the situation of enforced solidarity; let us try to be the group of effective, freely chosen solidarity.

Nothing is served by burying our heads in the sand and denying certain facts: We, Africans of Black Africa, who have been forged in the crucible of the same historic. geographic and political facts are already driven to recognize, while congratulating ourselves thereon, the profusion of divergent ideas which upsets all those who wish to project the future. Africa is not monolithic in thought; it obviously cannot be so in politics; and this affirmation becomes a fortiori even more obvious from the moment when we leave the geographical area of Black Africa and enter the realities of the modern Arab world. There again the profusion of ideas, the will to renovate and make progress, the richness of the philosophic vision has

nothing to envy in those of any people or any continent: but this at the same time shows us the importance of elements to take into account for the synthesis, the power of imagination, the will for tolerance which must preside at the birth of the community spirit of our future regrouping.

It is not even necessary to recall the factors of dispersion, the factors of misunderstanding accumulated over the centuries. The people of this same Arab world know us only as we know them, that is to say through the gravely distorting prism of public information, indifferent if not inaccurate. The new element, the bridge of new knowledge between our two worlds, has been thrown by three of our Black African brothers, Presidents KWAME N'KURUMA, SEKOU TOURE and MODIBO KEITA; for us their names are the best reference, they are the sublime children of a land of pride which adversity has been able to keep on the leash but has never been able to break. I am convinced that the contacts, the spirit in which they were the spokesmen for the Casablanca Group have already provided the members of that group with evidence concerning the deep identity of the objectives of our action; and the only proof I want is the fact that we are all met here today.

In consequence, it is not a sign of complacent optimism to consider that the ADDIS ABABA meeting should not be classified among, artificial and publicity seeking improvisation but rather constitutes the meeting of lucid men who know what they want. Perhaps I ought to make myself the interpreter of some downcast spirit by raising the question of the optimum geographic area for our regrouping. Well, I think I should find unanimous approbation if I were simply to say that the aim of our regrouping should be to gather all the outcasts of the earth round one and the same faith and one and the same ideal of human self-respect. But we have not reached that stage; we must be realistic and see at the given moment what is possible and desirable in the same way as we must build as solidly as possible what already exists. So, we must grant sufficient flexibility to the permanent organs of our future Union so as to enable it to withstand all shocks without the danger of falling to pieces.

Our new Union, although it must live and set an example, should, above all, maintain the spirit of tolerance and neighborly love for each woman and each man of the countries it embraces, our Union should mean, a constant forgetfulness of self for the future of the common good, in the absolute desire for joint success, in the total disdain of the spirit of domination under any form.

Unity is strength; that is an eternal maxim. If therefore, we want to be strong we must achieve Unity. But how can we achieve Unity with the numberless obstacles impeding our path? It is sufficient to want the means - and that with determination of being quite simply African in the full sense of the word. Obviously, a drowning man cannot choose which branch he will hang onto; on this apocalyptic sea over which we are sailing, African Unity is the only haven. It is unity, rather than violent speeches, which will

hasten the departure of the impenitent colonialists who still wish to preserve possessions in Africa. It will at the same time eliminate all ambitions and resulting subversions. The colonial powers will never take us seriously if we leave ADDIS ABABA Without adopting the outline of our Pan African Charter.

There has long been speculation on our ability to unite because of the aged being within each of us. By unanimously approving the ADDIS ABABA Charter we shall display unquestionable political maturity. We shall cut short all causes of division between us. the advantage of Africa and not of those who keep those differences alive. In Africa there are not, as the devotionists would wish revolutionaries on one side and reformists or moderates on the other; there is simply one Africa, revolutionary in the highest degree throughout its length and breadth. We shall therefore silence all those evil prophets of misfortune who expect our conference to result in timid decision liable to serve as easy nourishment for their propaganda against African Unity. I must now raise the more delicate problem of the common economic future; guiding ideas whether premature or technically interesting, in short opinion at least meriting study have been submitted and advanced; I cannot but leave the specialists the task of discussing these matters,

What I should like to say, however, is that just as in the beginning the idea of African Unity appeared as a dream and has yet made its way; so, it is possible to conceive that our economic confrontation will open up new ways and perhaps that way left to unaligned countries of dinging on their own the real direction of their economic progress, of establishing. in the perspective of their special interests that which will not only be the AFRICAN COMMON MARKET, but sooner or later the Market of the unaligned countries; perhaps all that placed us more than ever before the obligation of African Unity enlarged to its widest dimensions. That, honourahle Heads of State and dear colleagues, is the message I wish to bring you on behalf of my country, Upper Volta.

May I be permitted to convey my fraternal greetings to you all; you have all succeeded in affixing your signatures to a stirring page of African history: I cannot cite you all by name, but I must address a special message of brotherly friendship to Prime Minister BEN BELLA; the people of Algeria has at last emerged from the period of terrible trials and started to blaze the trial along which all African may now proceed. We extend special greeting to Prime Minister BEN BELLA because we know he cannot disappoint the exceptional destiny which must be Algeria's. It now remains for me — and I do so with very special joy — to address my very sincere thanks to the Ethiopian Government for the magnificent welcome it has given my delegation; we beg HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I to accept the expression of our highest consideration and deepest sympathy.

YOUR MAJESTY, please allow me, in conclusion to evoke the memory of the beautiful and noble Queen of Sheba, wife of the great King Solomon. This prestigious and charming image of the Union of two great people brought about by the love of their sovereigns pleasingly illustrates the work of builders which we want to be. On the other hand, in an even more distant past there floats another image from childhood also from Holy Scriptures; that somber disquieting erection, the Tower of Babel. May this evocation discourage us from over ambitious designs, convince us of the necessity of building slowly but surely with union of hearts and minds. May it also allow us to evoke what His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia represented for the world in the sad and tragic years which in Africa marked the end of an era and the beginning its renaissance. It may be said that His Majesty HAILE SELASSIE I was and is the most prestigious personality of old Africa.

The impressive serenity of His Imperial Majesty, the tranquil assurance which emanate from the whole of his great personality, simplicity and sweetness of his expression all this joined to a sublime faith in God cannot but augur the success of the Summit Conference. It for this reason that I am confident that at the end of our work the first African bomb will burst in Addis Ababa; a super—atomic bomb if will be, both beneficial and deadly; beneficial for our people, and deadly for colonialists. even the most stubborn of them; it will be the bomb of AFRICAN UNITY. In any cases the mandate I bear from the people of Upper Volta obliges me under pain of deceiving them, to take back from this illustrious conference, not merely initiated, but well and dully signed, the Charter of AFRICAN UNITY. Then the name of ADD'S ABABA will remain, for the greater glory of us all connected with the achievement of a fundamental and masterly work permitting that hither to under—estimated human category to see each day rise with a little more confidence; to witness each day more certainly, the building of the effective and objective conditions of dignity and liberty!

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