

ADDRESS As CHAIRPERSON OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AT THE OPENING OF THE SOUTH SUMMIT

Havana, April 12, 2000

Chairperson of the South Summit, President Olusegun Obasanjo,
Our esteemed host, President Fidel Castro,
Your Excellency, Mr Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations Organisation,
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government and Leaders of delegation,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen:

I am privileged to convey to the South Summit the greetings and best wishes of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I would also like to express our sincere thanks to the G77 and China for the honour you granted our Movement by affording us the possibility to address this solemn Opening Session of the Summit. We join those who have spoken before us in expressing our thanks to the Cuban Government and people for their warm and comradely welcome and the work they have done to ensure the successful outcome of this important South Summit. At its XII Summit Conference in Durban, South Africa in 1998, the Non-Aligned Movement made the following statement:

"The Heads of State or Government noted the important and positive role played by the Joint Co-ordinating Committee (JCC) of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 over the past few years in advancing common positions of the developing countries on different global issues. They were of the view that such contacts should be further strengthened and increased in order to harmonise the efforts and activities with a view to avoiding duplication and bringing greater coherence and consolidation to the unity and promotion of common interests on various global issues as well as in furthering greater interaction among the developing countries."

We would like to take advantage of this opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the Non-Aligned Movement to these goals and to re-emphasise the importance of our working together to achieve these critical objectives.

These matters were, in part, addressed by an expert group that reported to the last NAM Summit in Durban, South Africa. If we consider an expert group as an outcome of this Summit we believe that it would be necessary that we coordinate our work.

All of us present in this hall represent countries that can pride themselves on the continued existence of a strong spirit of communal, human solidarity among many of our people.

The atomisation of the family and the individual, driven by the development and entrenchment of the capitalist system, has not reached the structural permanence it has attained in the developed countries of the North.

As these countries achieved unprecedented levels of prosperity while experiencing serious social problems such as drug abuse, youth alienation and the weakening of the family, questions are being raised about the wider and human implications of today's dominant forms of economic development.

None of us present here can have any difficulty in defining what the purposes of economic development in our own countries should be.

What we aim to achieve is:

- the permanent elimination of poverty in our societies;
- the attainment of a sustained improvement in the standard of living of our people; and
- the enhancement of the dignity of our peoples, which must include the protection of the environment in which we live, respect for and defence of our languages and cultures and the nurturing of the social cohesion of our communities.

It goes without saying that we cannot realise the objectives we pursue outside of the context of the global society and economy. In particular, speedy movement forward towards their accomplishment requires a constructive and purposeful relationship between ourselves and the countries of the North. Among other things, this relationship must focus upon and address:

- the alleviation of the debt burden carried by many of our countries, including its cancellation;
- an effective mechanism to ensure a substantial increase in capital flows into the developing economies as this is a prerequisite for development;
- the reversal of the trend resulting in a sharp drop in official development assistance;
- the opening of the markets of the developed countries to our products, including agricultural products; and
- the transfer of technology. If the technology divide between North and South grows in the wake of rapid advances in communication and bio-technology then all will suffer and not just the developing world.

Similarly, we are faced with the challenge to reinforce the interaction and exchanges among ourselves as the countries of the South, to strengthen South-South cooperation.

Quite clearly, we have to work harder to strengthen the structures of regional cooperation to which many of our countries belong, at the same time as we encourage as extensive a system of bilateral relations as possible.

The regional groups must also work to enhance relations among themselves for the mutual benefit.

These exchanges must also focus on mutual assistance and support in the critical areas of human resource development and scientific and technological development, drawing on the experience and capacity of countries such as India.'

This increased reliance on our own resource should also strengthen our collective capacity to represent ourselves relative to the countries of the North.

This should not simply be a matter of increasing our bargaining strength. It should also address the central issue of the elaboration of a world agenda for human-centred development.

In this regard, it would not be our aim merely to produce a wish list of demands. Rather, we would have to seek to ensure that we have a world agenda for human-centred development that would actually be implemented.

What we need to do to achieve this result is one of the great challenges and conundra of our day. It stands at the heart of the challenges that face this important Summit.

Towards the end of his term as Managing Director of the IMF, Michel Camdessus spoke at Georgetown University in Washington on February 2 this year.

Among other things he made the important observation that "a new sense of world citizenship has not yet emerged among the commonly held values in our world."

He went on:

"A new kind of citizenship must be created, not simply a vague cosmopolitanism, but a genuine citizenship at all levels: local, regional, national and global. How can it be achieved? By making global solidarity more than just an adjunct of national policies.

The global solidarity required does not simply mean offering something superfluous; it means dealing with vested interests, certain lifestyles and models of consumption, and the entrenched power structures in countries."

I am certain that none of us present at this Summit would gainsay the importance of the observation Mr Camdessus made, that there needs to evolve a global solidarity that is more than just an adjunct of national policies.

The relevance of this has just been demonstrated in our region of Southern Africa. Various countries of the North came to Mozambique to help the government and people of that sister country to cope with a very serious flood disaster.

A week after they had arrived to demonstrate this global solidarity, they refused to do the most obvious thing to express solidarity with the suffering Mozambican people, namely, to cancel Mozambique's debt.

Presumably such a humane decision would have been inconsistent with their national policies, to use Mr Camdessus' expression. The question all humanity must answer is - what can and should be done to develop a global solidarity that is more than just an adjunct of national policies!

What shall we do successfully to deal with vested interests, certain lifestyles and models of consumption and the entrenched power structures in countries!

The challenge we face is to achieve the cohabitation in the global conduct of human affairs on the concept of human solidarity and the principle which governs the modern societies of the North, that the search for personal gain and advantage is the only viable and proven engine of progress and human fulfilment!

A number of tasks lie ahead of us.

We have to fight to ensure the democratisation of the international institutions of governance, including the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

We must work for the mobilisation of the masses of the countries of the North to sensitise them to the imperative to eliminate global poverty and inequality, in the interests of all humanity.

We have to add our weight to the ongoing campaign to address the debt question.

We have to ensure that we work together to ensure that the current round of WTO negotiations addresses the development issues which confront our countries and the world economy. We must act for the inclusion of the concerns and aspirations of the masses of our people within a real global agenda for people-centred development.

We must work together to give practical meaning to the important objective of South-South cooperation.

The long road we have to travel, in a world characterised by a process of globalisation, must offer hope to the millions of the peoples we represent that they are advancing towards a world free of poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease.

This South Summit is historic as the first Summit for the G77. However, we should harbour no illusions as to whether it will be judged historic in future. This will only happen if we make a lasting contribution towards the accomplishment of the urgent tasks on which we are agreed.

Once more, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, I wish the South Summit success

Thank you