ADDRESS

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY JOAQUIM ALBERTO CHISSANO

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

AND

CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

III ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION

ADDIS ABABA, 6TH JUNE 2004
Your Majesty
King Mswati III

Your Excellencies
Heads of State and Government of the African Union

Your Excellencies
Members of the Executive Council

Mr Chairperson of the Commission

Distinguished Commissioners

Distinguished Members of the Permanent Representatives Committee

Distinguished Delegates

Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Excellencies,

We are gathered here today to reflect on the activities carried out by our Organisation. We do so, in this beautiful and welcoming city of Addis Ababa, cradle of the Organisation of African Unity, in warm hospitality that the people and Government of Ethiopia have always accorded us, whenever we come to their country.

Allow me, therefore, on behalf of the Heads of State and Government and their delegations, to express our sincere gratitude to our brother Meles Zenawi and, through him, to the people and Government of Ethiopia.
Our Assembly takes places just after important events to the life of our Organisation have occurred. As a matter of fact, the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and the 10th Summit of the Implementation Committee of NEPAD, which took place in Maputo, recently, have given us an opportunity to reflect on important issues, whose impact will be felt on our efforts for socio-economic development, with the involvement of our partners.

The 10th Summit of the Implementation Committee of NEPAD has provided us with an opportunity to align our positions, in view of the G8 Summit, one of the main partners in the framework of NEPAD. The exercise was worth doing if we take into account the results attained.

The ACP Summit held in Maputo from 21 to 24 June, apart from laying down common strategies for the cooperation of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group with Europe, has also afforded a moment of interaction and strengthening of the friendship relations between the parties. Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group did exploit other opportunities for cooperation among themselves.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Organisation has made tangible progress in the last 12 months.

The vision of African leaders of shaping the African Union with the bodies capable of fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of our peoples, continued to gain momentum. As a matter of fact, we launched in March 2004 the Pan-African Parliament, an organ that is responsible for assuring full participation of the African peoples in the process of sustainable economic and social development, as well as in dealing with countless challenges confronting Africa, in the process of integration of our continent.
In fulfilling the mandate given in Maputo, the Executive Council, in its IV Session has elected the Commissioners of the Union for the portfolios of Human Resources, Science and Technology and for Economic Matters, thus creating the necessary conditions for the functioning of the Commission.

Another important organ that we were able to inaugurate is the Peace and Security Council, launched on the 25 May 2004, the Day of the African Unity. As we all know, this important organ is responsible for implementing the African agenda on the prevention, management and conflict resolution.

The Peace and Security Council held its first session at the level of Heads of State and Government, taking important decisions, the most important of which, was the sending of a humanitarian mission to observe the cease-fire in Darfur, in the Sudan.

We expect to approve, in the course of this Assembly, the Statutes of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), an advisory organ of the African Union that will constitute an institutional and legal framework through which the civil society will make its contribution towards the development of Africa.

To overcome the situations of tensions and conflicts that still remain in some parts of our Continent constitute the major challenge in our efforts for development.

However, we should take note with satisfaction, of the trend of reducing the focus of tensions and conflicts in Africa, particularly with political agreements reached concerning the conflicts in Sudan, Burundi, Liberia, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Somalia.
Allow me to reiterate the principle we have defined, that the primary sources of resources necessary to implement the programs and projects of the African Union must come from Member States. Peace operations do not fall out of this principle, therefore, it is imperative that we maximise the use of our comparative advantages in making our contributions to the Peace Fund.

The role played by the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the search for peaceful solutions for prevailing conflicts in some regions of our continent was equally remarkable, especially with respect to the conflicts in Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sao Tome and Principe and Guine-Bissau.

Our first peace operation, the African Mission for Burundi (AMIB) it is a success story. The success would have been even enormous if all Member States have contributed. We congratulate ourselves with this success, while also extending to the United Nations our congratulations for finally assuming their responsibilities in Burundi with the approval of the deployment of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB).

We followed with interest and satisfaction the holding of orderly elections in Malawi, Guine-Bissau, South Africa and Comores, a vital pre-requisite for the consolidation of stability and democracy. We must also celebrate the progress made in the consolidation of peace in Angola and Sierra Leon.

Despite these positive developments, we are concerned with the difficulties, which the peace process in Cote d’Ivoire is going through. We therefore appeal to the conflicting parties to develop efforts aimed at overcoming their differences, with the support of the African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations.
to 10 thousand and the assistance in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

The preparations for the II phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, which will take place in Tunis, are underway. Our attendance to the I phase of the preparations of this event, in Geneva, expressed the importance Africa attaches to the e-governance and access to Information Technologies. We should in a dynamic and active manner attend the II phase of preparations that will take place in our Continent, as we believe that Africa’s development requires access to information technologies.

Still in the context of expanding and strengthening partnerships, we attended the 8th Assembly of All Africa Church’s Conference. It was a healthy moment of interaction with this component of the civil society, which has expressed its commitment towards supporting the African Union in the implementation of development projects and programs. They have also expressed desire to find best ways and mechanisms for their integration in the African Union, thus becoming part and parcel of the Union and an instrument for the implementation of NEPAD.

On a second occasion, I attended on 2 December 2003, the 3rd Summit of Africities, a forum where leaders of local governments from our Continent met in search for ways and means for an active role they could play in the African Union and its NEPAD Program.

I am confident that the Commission of the Union is studying with the Africities the best modalities to better materialise this desire for partnership.

The launching of the Peer Review Mechanism expresses our commitment to good economic, political and corporate governance, within the framework of NEPAD. This mechanism reflects our political will to make progress in different areas of
development, certain that the firm ground and the way we have decided to take will lead us to success. I would like to congratulate those countries that have adhered to the Mechanism and hope that others will follow the example, so that we can all stride at the same pace.

It does not suffice to claim this century as the century of Africa. It is imperative that we relentlessly commit ourselves in the implementation of development projects and programs of our Continent. The agenda for this Session provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm our determination and dedication in pursuing the objectives that we have set for ourselves.

Distinguished Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I allow me a moment so that I can share with you, some personal ideas, in the light of the unique significance and character this event represents in my life.

This is my very last attendance in an ordinary session of our Organisation, in my capacity as Head of State and Government. Time has come for me to hand over the testimony to whom the people of Mozambique will entrust the difficult, but important mission to fulfil. This will be the One who, when you meet in Khartoum, will renew the confidence and faith the people of Mozambique have on this Organisation.

The next presidential elections in Mozambique will take place on the 2nd and 3rd of December 2004. Certainly when Your Excellencies will be deliberating in the course of the IV Assembly, I will have taken my seat amidst civil society, a victory we can be proud of having been able to conquer. I will be watching your performance, so that, from my point of advantage, I may contribute to the strengthening of a strong and
dynamic partnership between the African Union Member States and the Civil Society, which is desirable.

Distinguished Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Destiny has given me this rare privilege to witness, now and here, the intertwining of two folds of my life: One of a server of my people and other of a server of Mother Africa. I feel, therefore, involved in an emotion that is difficult to describe. I beg your indulgence. I hope you will understand there is no human being that can remain indifferent before such present history.

I beg, therefore, your indulgence because I cannot resist the temptation of thinking and looking to the past, the past that is well alive on my own memory! I will not and must not take much of your precious time telling facts of my personal life. However, I feel it is my duty to offer my testimony of a glorious tale of liberation, as I lived it, as I understood it!

Distinguished Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The history of our Organisation resembles that of our own. It was here at the OAU and in the camps of Mozambique where we grew up. It was here where we consolidated ourselves as freedom fighters of our peoples.

It was in this school, the OAU and its Coordinating Committee for the Liberation Struggle of Africa that, under the leadership of Mondlane, we learnt the first letters of the alphabet of liberation of our Continent.

Here in Addis Ababa, first in the corridors, and later in the conference rooms, we learnt about the techniques of diplomacy