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Laying the Foundation for the
Socio-economic Transformation
of Africa in the 1990s:
The Development Policy Agenda

Adebayo Adedeji

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LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICA IN THE 1990s: THE DEVELOPMENT POLICY AGENDA

Statement by
Professor Adebayo Adedeji,
*United Nations Under-Secretary General
and Executive Secretary
of the Economic Commission for Africa*

*at the formal opening
of the twenty-sixth session of the Commission/
seventeenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers
held at the Commission's headquarters*

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I. INTRODUCTION

It is, as usual, a great honour and privilege for me to participate at this solemn opening of the twenty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Africa and the seventeenth meeting of its Conference of Ministers. Since the eighteenth of April, a series of meetings have successfully been held in preparation for this Conference of Ministers which was formally declared open a few minutes ago.

Among these are (a) the Inter-governmental Expert Group Meeting on the Final Review and Appraisal of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD); (b) the Resource Mobilization Committee for the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (UNTACDA II); (c) the Regional Technical Committee of the Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS); (d) the twelfth meeting of the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in the Development Process; (e) the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Chief Executives of ECA-sponsored Regional and Subregional Institutions; (f) the meeting of Inter-agency Co-ordinating Committee on UNTACDA II; (g) from 29 April to 7 May, the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW) held its twelfth meeting; and (h) the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning held an extraordinary meeting to adopt the first package of projects for implementation under UNTACDA II. This meeting, which was held on 7 and 8 May and was preceded by an expert preparatory meeting, was a follow-up to their Abuja Conference held in February this year.

And I must not forget to mention that the meetings of the organs of all the five MULPOCs have taken place both at official and ministerial levels, in the different subregions, between March and April 1991.

Not only is each of these meetings unique in its concerns for specific aspects of the development of our continent, but also collectively, and together with the sectoral ministerial meetings and the MULPOC meetings, they constitute the basis of submitting, in an integrated and coordinated manner, all major issues in the field of economic and social

development to the annual session of the Commission. They also form the basis for preparing the 1992-1993 biennial programme of work and priorities.

All our meetings have been successfully held during the past three weeks because of the congenial atmosphere which has been provided by our host government - the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. For all these and for the continued support of our host Government to the ECA secretariat, I wish to express through you, distinguished representative of Ethiopia, the most sincere appreciation of my colleagues and of myself to His Excellency Comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and President of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

In all we do in life - whether in our private life or in our public responsibility - time and timing are of essence. They are the factors that play a crucial role in the final outcome and appraisal of our achievements and in our sense of judgement. There is a time to work and a time to play. There is a time to stay and a time to leave. For me, insofar as my current responsibilities in the United Nations in general and in ECA in particular are concerned, the time to go has finally arrived. Hence I resigned my appointment in January and the distinguished Secretary-General of the United Nations has been kind enough to accept my resignation. This, therefore, is the last time I will have the privilege of addressing your august council as the Chief Executive of your Commission and as your humble servant.

II. THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF THE 1980s

The decade of the 1980s - Africa's lost decade - is remarkable for its many paradoxes. It was the decade during which Africa evolved its own continental strategies and programmes of development, and yet most of its governments followed and implemented only those strategies and policy frameworks carved out for Africa from outside in order to have access to the "almighty" foreign exchange resources. Throughout the decade, Africa consistently and assiduously tried to put its economic

problem, in the forefront of the global agenda and yet, at the end of the decade, became more marginalized and more peripheral than it has ever been. It was a decade when more resources went to waging conflicts, civil wars and internal stifes than to education and health. Finally, it was a decade during which one and all in the international community agreed that Africa needed massive transfers of resources from abroad to enable it cope with its crisis and lay the foundation for an economic turnaround and yet, throughout the period, Africa became increasingly a net transfer of resources and the persistent victim of the reverse flows of resources.

In order to ensure that the 1990s is not riddled by such paradoxes, and that we do not run the risk of losing yet another decade, I am using this historic opportunity of my last statement to you as your Executive Secretary to come back once again to the question of Africa's development policy agenda during the 1990s. You will recall that during ECA's thirtieth anniversary, which was held in Niamey, the Republic of Niger, and which coincided with the twenty-third session of the Commission, the title of my speech was African Recovery in an Uncertain and Unstable International Economy. In 1989, at your twenty-fourth session here in Addis Ababa, I chose Preparing Africa for the 1990s as the theme of my address. And last year, at your twenty-fifth session in Tripoli, I spoke on Africa in the 1990s: Marching Forward with the Transformation of the African Economy. Indeed, the fact that the theme of your Conference both last year and during the current session is Africa in the 1990s: Meeting the Challenges shows a consensus among all of us that this is the decade of our destiny. As I said in Tripoli last year:

"It is the decade that challenges Africa, its leaders, governments and people more than any of the preceding ones. For it is the decade during which we must answer a few basic and fundamental questions: What will be the plight of our people during the decade? Will it be one of growing immiserization or one of the reversal of the decay that set in during the last decade, of movement from a state of hopelessness and despair to one of growing optimism and endogenous socio-economic renewal? Will we succeed during this decade in abandoning the programmes and policies that marginalized our people, and turned a growing proportion of our population into vulnerable groups? Will we,

instead, pursue vigorously a human-centred development strategy and programmes that put the people first, with the governments yielding space to their people, creating the enabling environment to promote initiative and enterprise and which puts the people at the driving wheel?

"What will be the position of Africa in the world economy during the next ten years? Will Africa begin to recapture the lost ground in the international economy relative to other regions and lay the foundation for becoming a true partner rather than a perpetual dependant in the world economy? What will be our response to the phenomenon of growing regionalism that will be the hall-mark of the 1990s with the North American Free Trade Area, Europe 1992, the Pacific Rim, and what have you? Will we, in response, revitalize and reinvigorate our regional economic groupings such as the PTA for Eastern and Southern Africa, ECOWAS for West Africa, ECCAS for Central Africa and UMA for the Maghreb countries? How advanced will we have gone in the implementation of the Final Act of Lagos which calls for the establishment of the African Economic Community by the year 2000?"

We are now almost through with first half of the second year of the decade. Sadly, all the socio-economic and political ills that were so overwhelming in the 1980s and which contributed to our losing that decade are still very much with us - the disintegration of productive and infrastructural facilities; repeated cycles of droughts and environmental degradation and the vulnerability to natural disasters; the persistent threat of hunger now currently looming over 15-25 million people in Africa; and, the persistence and the spread of civil wars and internal strife in many African countries - in the 1980s the countries most seriously affected were Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Mozambique and the Sudan. Since this decade began, rather than the number reducing, more countries have been added to the list - Liberia, Rwanda and Somalia.

We must not forget that the commodity problem still remains unresolved and the excruciating debt burden still weighs more and more heavily on our economies and decisively constrains our ability to embark on a process of sustainable development even in spite of recent initiatives taken by some creditor countries to cancel some ODA debts - acts of generosity for which we are most grateful but which have resulted in the

cancellation of only 5 per cent of Africa's stock of debt. Besides, whatever might have been the presumed advantages of such cancelled debt more often than not quickly evaporated in the face of a more than proportionate reduction in earnings from export commodities as a result of the collapse in the commodity market and the dramatic fall in prices. Thus, what the debtor nations gain in the wind of debt cancellation, they lose and lose much more in the whirlwind of persistent and sharp falls in the prices of export commodities.

Accordingly, the picture which is portrayed in the **Economic Reports on Africa** for 1990 and 1991 is that the African economies are still not out of the doldrums and, if anything, that they are yet to acquire the capacity for independent and durable growth. In such circumstances we must perforce return again and again to the issue of our development policy agenda in the 1990s to ensure that we do not repeat the mistakes of the 1980s.

III. EMERGING POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

On the positive side, there are emerging some bright stars out of the firmament. And given our strong bias in favour of a human-centred development paradigm - the very pillar around which the **African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP)** is built - these developments have tremendous potentials to impact positively on our development prospects in the 1990s if they are properly harnessed and unleashed.

The first and most significant of these positive developments is the pro-democracy and popular participation wind of change that is currently blowing throughout our continent. In some places it has developed into a gale force. There is no doubt that sooner or later the whole continent will be covered by it and, when this happens, we will be heralding the birth of a new Africa - where democracy, public accountability, the political and economic empowerment of the people and equity and justice prevail. As I have said again and again,

"Africa needs fundamental change and transformation, not just adjustment. The change and transformation required are not just narrow, economic and mechanical ones. They are the broader and fundamental changes that will bring about, over time, the new Africa of our vision where there is development and economic justice, not just growth; where there is democracy and accountability, not despotism, authoritarianism and kleptocracy; where the governed and their governments are moving hand-in-hand in the promotion of the common good; and, where it is the will of the people rather than the wishes of one person or a group of persons, however powerful, that prevails."

It was at the end of the ECA-sponsored Arusha International Conference on Popular Participation in February 1990 where the **African Charter** was adopted that we strongly advocated that the time has come for the African people to put themselves first, to get rid of their lethargy, to wean themselves of their dependency syndrome and take control of the driver's seat of the vehicle for engineering the social, political and economic transformation of their countries and continent. The response to that call for change has been most encouraging and augurs well for the future. We see this as a portentous sign of the beginning of the second liberation of Africa.

The second positive development is the growing and determined effort to address the problem of internal civil strife and war in Africa. In Angola and in Mozambique, in Rwanda and in Liberia, and in Ethiopia, the Sudan and Somalia, men and women of goodwill on both sides of the conflicts that have afflicted their countries are seeking peaceful solutions. These efforts must be encouraged and supported, for democracy, development and transformation cannot flourish in societies and countries that are strife-ridden or are constantly in a state of war.

The third positive sign is the ongoing dialogue in the Republic of South Africa to dismantle apartheid and install a truly democratic system of government. Although progress has been slow and is continually marred by the internecine struggles among the majority black population, possibly aided and abetted by extreme elements among the white population if not actually fuelled by them, it is our hope that the process which has begun last year is irreversible and that, sooner or later, a

genuinely democratic majority-ruled Republic of South Africa will emerge to resume its place in ECA and take its seat in OAU. I used the words "resume its place in ECA" advisedly for it is now forgotten that South Africa was one of the nine founding member States of ECA in 1958. Because of its *apartheid* policy, its membership was suspended in 1963 by ECOSOC on the recommendation of the Commission. The integration of the Republic of South Africa into the African regional economy will have tremendous positive impact and challenge not only in Southern Africa but also throughout the continent.

The fourth positive development since the beginning of the new decade is that the negotiations of the treaty establishing the African Economic Community have been successfully concluded and our Heads of State and Government, at their forthcoming summit meeting of the OAU in Abuja, Nigeria from 3 to 5 June 1991, will sign the treaty. While the signing of the treaty is, of course, not an end by itself and while the road to the complete realization of all the phases in the establishment of the community will be long and arduous, the progress so far made is historic and gives hope for optimism.

IV. AFRICA'S POLICY AGENDA FOR THE 1990s: A NINE-POINT PROGRAMME OF ACTION

What in the light of these recent events - some positive, others negative - should be our development policy agenda for the 1990s? This is a question which is easier posed than answered but from which we cannot afford to shy away. But let me start by answering it negatively. That is by identifying the one issue that should not be on the agenda.

(a) *Reaffirmation, operationalization and implementation of existing continental blue-prints*

As the whole world knows, Africa devoted the 1980s working out regional strategies and policy frameworks for meeting the challenges that confront it. These include the *Monrovia Strategy* (1979); the *Lagos Plan of Action* and the *Final Act of Lagos* (1980); *Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER)* (1985); the *United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Develop-*

ment (UN-PAAERD) (1986); the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) (1989); and, the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (1990). Moreover, the African strategies and policy frameworks are reinforced by such international instruments as the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Growth in Developing Countries, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and the Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries.

Therefore, Africa does not lack strategies and policy frameworks and does not need to devote its energy and resources to preparing new ones in the 1990s. What it needs to do now, what it must do earnestly and doggedly, is to stick to them, to be faithful to them and to translate them into operational programmes at the national, subregional and regional levels and proceed post haste with their implementation. We must reject the bait, no matter how tempting, to work out yet another regional strategy or programme. In this connection, I am glad that the Draft Memorandum by the ECA Conference of Ministers to the *Ad hoc* Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly on the Final Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of UN-PAAERD, 1986-1990 explicitly rejects such an option. As it frankly states,

"... given the global political and economic climate, it cannot be expected that a repetition of UN-PAAERD, no matter how modified, would yield results different from those of the previous Programme. If anything, it might exacerbate the marginalization of Africa by removing its main concerns from current global concerns and treating them as special problems. It will, thus, be a political mistake to relegate Africa to a "back burner" position by invoking yet another programme with an appellatory character, which, as everybody knows would lead to nothing".

Such a rejection would lead us to the very first issue which should be on our development policy agenda for the 1990s. This is a reaffirmation of the continuing relevance and validity of our continental blueprints backed by a determination to operationalize them and pursue their basic strategies, objectives and priorities in our search for socio-eco-

conomic recovery and transformation. Though they, particularly the most basic among them, such as **LPA and FAL**, **AAF-SAP** and the **Popular Participation Charter**, may from time to time require some fine tuning, we are all agreed that they provide the key to the solution of our long-term development problem. The corollary of all this is the acceptance of the cardinal principle that the attainment of self-sustained development, which is human-centred and which aims at the integration of the African economies, requires the adoption of long-term and medium-term plans as well as articulate technical and logical stages in the long-term plan. Such a plan must be based on a firm and legitimate political will, a rational and methodological process, and appropriate and development-oriented economic policy instruments at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.

(b) *Getting policy instruments right*

The second issue which must feature prominently on our development policy agenda is the imperative necessity of getting our policy instruments right. I argued this at some length last year. All policy instruments, including adjustment measures must be subordinated to the pursuit of the goal of long-term development and transformation. In this connection, our two-year long study of three selected policy instruments whose preliminary drafts were placed before you last year has now been completed and will soon be published. The three policy instruments are **multiple exchange rate systems**, **differential interest rates policy** and **selected credit control** and price support policies for food self-sufficiency in Africa. The final version of this study has benefitted consistently from extensive consultations with experts and various institutions at the regional and international levels. As I stated in the foreword to the study, these three policy instruments,

"... have a direct influence on all spheres of economic activity including, in particular, the level and structure of production, export performance, magnitude and pattern of imports, consumption levels and patterns, external debt, balance of payments and resource flows. Hence the application of these policy instruments does determine, to a large extent, the path and content of both adjustment and transformation."

(c) *Developing internal capacity to respond to external shocks*

The third issue on our agenda is the development of the internal capacity and capability to be able to respond to change and to external shocks. In the ever-changing world environment in which we live, negative and positive changes abound, both internally and externally, and only those countries whose internal structures and external relations are adaptable to changing situations and novel ideas can hope to take full advantage of new opportunities, be it in national, subregional or international trade or finance. For instance, the menace of drought to Africa's agriculture has remained a recurrent theme since early 1980s. The collapse in commodity prices has meant serious losses in government revenues, investment and consumption. Severe foreign exchange constraints have adversely affected both the productive capacity of African countries and their ability to generate additional incomes. The combined effects of declining export earnings, reduced external capital inflows and increasing debt-service obligations have severely limited the ability of many African countries to promote economic recovery, not to speak of the pursuit of a long-term development strategy. The world of ever-shifting technological frontiers and fast technological obsolescence is such that reliance on primary production has been rendered into an unviable development strategy, and countries that rely almost entirely on the possession of abundant raw materials and its associated pattern of production and trade are going to find themselves more and more in a disadvantageous position, left behind in the development race. Added to this are the untoward effects and impact of the recent Persian Gulf crisis on Africa.

As a people, ours is to be able to insulate ourselves from the negative aspects of the global economy and to increase our capacity to respond appropriately and effectively to such positive exogenous shocks. It is more than ever clear that the speed of economic recovery and transformation in the African countries will depend on how successful African Governments are in removing the rigidities of the African economies, and how well they master the strategy of managing their domestic economies as well as their economic relations - monetary, trade and financial - with the rest of the world.

(d) *Achieving congruence between priorities and resource allocation*

The fourth topic on our agenda is how to achieve total and complete congruence between our stated goals and priorities and the allocation and utilization of our own resources. Indeed, the greatest challenge that we face in the years ahead is how to ensure the most efficient use of available resources - a factor which is at the heart of the effective management of our economies. It is common knowledge that, in many African countries, resources - be they financial, physical or human - are far from being productively utilized; that considerable leakages exist and are being perpetuated; and, resource allocations do not always match or reflect stated goals and priorities.

(e) *Putting in place a holistic human resources development policy and strategy*

Fifthly, we must deal squarely in the 1990s with the question of human resources development in a holistic manner. For at the centre of the African socio-economic drama lies the human factor which is the ultimate dialectics whereby peoples are necessarily and immutably the mentors of the processes of change and transformation and the beneficiaries of the results of such processes. Our failure to pursue long-term development goals has probably had the most devastating negative impact on the human factor - whether in the fields of education and health or in the fields of employment, the empowerment of the people and income distribution. With the illiterate population growing more rapidly in Africa than its overall population growth rate (while it is decreasing in other regions), with persistent inadequate scientific and technical know-how and with severe underutilization of human resources, how can we hope to cope with the challenges that lie ahead? Africa must therefore deal squarely with the all-too-important question of human resources development in a holistic manner - that is, the creation of human resources, their rational and optimal utilization and the development of an enabling environment that will bring about a high degree of involvement and commitment by the entire population. What we need is a new approach that will put at the forefront of our development effort the human factor; an approach that will redress the lack of

viable political entities and encourage a democratic culture to take root on the continent.

(f) Making regional and subregional integration as an integral part of domestic national policy

Sixthly, economic co-operation and integration between and among African countries must become an integral part of domestic national policy. Any assessment of the prospects there are for Africa must, per force, take cognizance of regional economic integration. For in no area of endeavour - whether it is in the internalization of the development process or international trade negotiations, debt policy, or adjustment with transformation - can much progress be made without cooperation among African countries. In a continent which emerged from colonial dependence in such a fragmented state, nothing will guarantee full mobilization of the continent's immense potential more than a concerted effort at economic integration and cooperation. What we have done so far is to set up the needed intergovernmental organizations and instruments of cooperation and integration, but we are still to make them function effectively to serve the ends they are intended to serve.

If, as is increasingly evident, the world of the future will be a world of trading blocs and economic groupings - what with the planned consolidation of Europe into a Common Market in 1992, the US-Canada Free Trade Area, the Australian-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement, and an OECD for Asia - the real losers in the 1990s and beyond are those areas, especially Africa, where the process of economic integration is yet to be fully consolidated. At a time when the other continents are strengthening economic and commercial ties among themselves, Africa cannot afford to remain disunited. This is why the proposed signing of the treaty establishing the African Economic Community in Abuja in June 1991 is both timely and indeed welcome. Time is not on Africa's side. The rest of the world is, quite understandably, not waiting for us. Having formed itself into solid economic blocs, the rest of the world is likely to find it easier to cooperate even better with and among itself than with Africa. Africa is the only continent that, for now, has no second window to fall back upon and is completely devoid of the leverage and the necessary wherewithal for operating as an equal economic partner

within the international community. Therefore it is necessary for Africa to find ways and means of accelerating the process of full integration than is currently envisaged if they are to strengthen ties among themselves, and enhance their ability to participate more fruitfully and as worthwhile partners in the international economy.

(g) *Rediscovering Africa's culture, tradition and value*

The seventh issue for our agenda is the imperative necessity for the African people to redefine their identity, their values and their aspirations. Even after more than three decades of independence, the traditional African cultural norms, beliefs and attitudes have hardly been given the due chance to situate and shape the development of the continent. Preoccupation has been so much with "imitative modernism" through which Northern values, institutions and technology are transplanted rather than with those positive aspects of traditional values and cultures that could be positively harnessed for development.

As I said in 1975, in the Tom Mboya Memorial Lecture, "for over the last hundred years, the traditional cultures of Africa - the arts and customs and beliefs of the scores of diverse ethnic groups in Africa - have seldom appeared worthy of honour and respect". The African traditions of solidarity, cooperative spirit, self-help development and humanism, and of perceptions of human beings as the fulcrum of development as well as of sanctions on leadership to ensure accountability have fallen into disuse and forgotten. How to sort this out, and, having done so, how to positively capitalize on those functional aspects of our cultures, values and customs and harness them for development purposes is one of the major challenges facing development economics today inasmuch as Africa is concerned.

If the African people continue to undermine and distort their identity, if the African people continue to throw away their own values and mimic alien ones, if the African people refuse to define a future of their own or, having defined it, refuse to stick assiduously to it, and if the African people refuse to base their aspirations on their own potential, it will be very difficult for the region to start on the path of real progress. If we do not rediscover the apparently lost courage to develop on our own lot and by our own bootstraps, how do we expect anyone else to

expend energies and resources in assisting us to develop? As a people, we must abandon our contagious lethargy, our monumental opportunism, our unjustified fatalism, and, above all, our dependency syndrome.

(h) *Removing infrastructural constraints to long-term development*

An essential precondition for Africa's turnaround and for laying the foundation for socio-economic transformation lies in squarely addressing the many long-term constraints on the economic development of the region. Problems such as inadequate transport infrastructure, low levels of human resource development, lack of effective environmental management and maintenance in the face of creeping deforestation and desertification and the poor levels of agricultural research and lack of technological break-throughs for such African staple crops as maize, millet, sorghum, cassava and yam, need to be urgently tackled. For what is at stake in Africa is whether it will enter the twenty-first century and the beginning of the next millennium with its present fragile structures, increasingly marginalized and unable to confront the real task of development and development engineering. Or, whether it is going to march strongly towards the twenty-first century and the next millennium with a new resolve to build the economic structures that will turn its tremendous potential of natural and human resources, together with the advantages and opportunities that these resources confer upon it into concrete results and achievements. Hence the strategic importance of this agenda item.

(i) *Taking individual and collective effort to ensure that the doomsday scenario is proved wrong*

Africa must take individual and collective effort to ensure that the doomsday scenario never comes to pass, and that it is never realized. The generally portrayed picture is that Africa will remain at the periphery of the world's socio-economic order. Already detached from the mainstream of the world economic system as a result of an "involuntary de-linking", Africa is most likely to continue to suffer from greatly reduced commodity prices in the 1990s; it will, at best, be allowed only to acquire polluting industries. Environmental degradation would accelerate, making many parts of the region totally uninhabitable; and, its

large and rapidly increasing population would almost ensure that squalor, disease, malnutrition and increased ignorance would be the lot of the average African! Undoubtedly, this type of prognosis for Africa in our "brave new world" goes beyond mere "Afro-pessimism" when one recalls the very brutal and frightening prediction by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD some time ago that "Africa in the year 2000 will not be in the ditch it is now. It will be in the bottom of a deep black hole." But the important thing for us is that it must not be allowed to come true not merely by words but by deeds and our concerted actions.

I have no doubt that this nine-point programme together with the four positive developments that I referred to at the beginning of this statement can, if pursued vigorously, make a major difference to Africa, propel it on the path of socio-economic recovery and enable it to lay the foundation for socio-economic transformation. We can even boldly predict that they will, together, make the second liberation of Africa a reality sooner rather than later.

V. THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SECOND LIBERATION OF AFRICA MUST BE WON DURING THIS DECADE

I did say a while ago that this will be my last statement before your august assembly as the Chief executive officer of your Commission. Throughout the period of my service, I have been treated by you and your respective governments with the utmost respect. All the governments you represent have been most courteous and supportive. We have worked together during these past 16 years to put ECA in the forefront of the battle for Africa's socio-economic emancipation and transformation. We have been consistent in our earnest search for the second liberation of Africa - the socio-economic liberation of the continent, the liberation of its teeming millions from the scorches of hunger, famine, disease, illiteracy and underdevelopment. The task has proved more herculean, and more daunting than we had thought, but we have remained steadfast and undaunted. I wish we were in a position to sing finita jam sunt praelia - the strife is over, the battle done; but we are not. Perhaps one day we may but not yet now. But as the poet, William Blake

once said, "Great things are done when men and mountains meet. This is not done by jostling in the street."

Therefore, as I bid ECA and the United Nations adieu, I can only truthfully say Veni, Vidi, Servi. I leave, fully conscious of the fact that the struggle must perforce continue, that the war for the economic redemption of Africa must continue to be waged until we are able to give hope to the hopeless, help to the helpless and turn this marginalized and excessively ridiculed continent into one of prosperity and abundance. I hand over to you an ECA that, working hand in hand with the OAU, is capable of playing an increasingly major role in the achievement of our long-term development objectives. And I charge you, one and all, to ensure, with all the resources at your command, that Africa overcomes - that it overcomes famine and hunger; that it overcomes illiteracy and backwardness and that it overcomes economic injustice and inequity.

Let me assure you that though I leave ECA and the United Nations, my commitment to continue with the struggle remains as firm as ever. Therefore, for as long as I live, I shall remain a combatant in the struggle for the second liberation of Africa - the socio-economic emancipation of our continent - for therein lies the path of honour and dignity and of hope and a future for our peoples, for our children and grandchildren.