



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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MESSAGE

FROM

**HIS EXCELLENCY CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
NIGERIA**

ON THE OCCASION

OF THE

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH
THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

NEW YORK, 29 NOVEMBER 2005

Mr. Chairman,

On the occasion of the Commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I have the honour to convey the following message by His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, and current Chairman of the African Union.

QUOTE

As we observe, today, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I express, on behalf of the African Union, our warmest greetings to His Excellency, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and President of the Palestinian National Authority as well as our solidarity with the Palestinian People. It is equally fitting, on this auspicious occasion, that we recall the first anniversary of the demise of the Great Leader of the Palestinian People, late Chairman Yasser Arafat, who devoted his entire life to the pursuit of freedom and dignity for the Palestinian people, a goal which has remained the focus of the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, since its establishment under General Assembly Resolution 3376 (1975).

Since the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was instituted, in 1977, Africa has joined other sections of International Community, to reaffirm, year after year, the right of the Palestinian People to dignity and respect, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Africa has exhibited an unwavering support for the Palestinian cause because of our conviction that, like all peoples, the Palestinian People

deserve to be accorded internationally recognized right to freedom in dignity.

Africa has, therefore, followed, with keen interest, developments in the Middle East process. We consider the present plight of the Palestinian People not only as a reminder of failed opportunities, but also a challenge to member states of this organisation to translate that vision into reality. The significant milestone that we have attained, on this matter, over the years, whilst a cause for satisfaction, should not make us complacent. The international community should not let slip the propitious opportunity to advance the cause of peace, development, and security in the region, which now presents itself. The fact is that the situation in the Middle East continues to merit the best of the concerted efforts of the international community, and particularly the countries in the region. Peace can only be achieved through accommodation, and mutual recognition. We all have the responsibility to encourage the parties to the conflicts to cultivate good neighbourliness so that through a spirit of give and take, the best interests of the peoples of the region can be served.

Africa reiterates its long-held conviction that the Palestinian issue cannot be resolved by any military or violent means. Violence begets violence, leaving in its trail, death and destruction, sorrow and bitterness, recrimination and vengeance. The result, as has been too painfully evident, is an environment that is further removed from peace.

The African Union, therefore, welcomes the recent efforts to broker peace and agreement between Israel and Palestinian Authority and commends the restoration of trust and confidence between the two leaderships. Indeed, Africa considers the understanding, elaborated in the Sham al-Sheik document, which, inter alia, calls for the cessation of violence as a major milestone in the efforts to address the plight of the Palestinian People, as well as the faithful implementation of the Road Map. In the same vein, African considers the recent removal of Israel settlements from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank, including the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip, and the opening of the Rafah border crossing by President of the Palestinian Authority as helpful signs for peace. These specific steps should serve to galvanize action of the parties in particular and the international community in general towards a definitive solution that will bring peace to the region as a whole.

Aware of the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security conferred on the Security Council by the Charter of the United Nations, the African Union reiterates its support for the implementation of the Council's extant resolutions, and the Quartet's Road Map. Africa equally reaffirms its support for self-determination for the Palestinian People. The acceptance and actualisation of the principle of two states, living side by side, within secure and defined borders, should strengthen peace and security in the region, and permit the Palestinian People to finally enjoy those rights which many of us taken for granted. Our commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People next year should be the celebration of the achievement of the Palestinian nationhood.

UNQUOTE