

REMARKS BY
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AT THE ELYSEE SUMMIT FOR PEACE AND SECURITY IN
AFRICA

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Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

The primary issue of this Summit, Peace and Security in Africa, is a critical one, first and foremost, for the peoples and nations of Africa, and then the entire world, which has a huge stake in our continent.

Half a century has elapsed since the era of decolonization and the emergence of the majority of African states. In historical terms, this is not a long period of time and we cannot but notice that it took centuries and protracted bloody conflicts for much of the developed where to arrive where it is today.

Given the deplorable conditions obtaining at independence, a number of African countries have made considerable progress in a number of areas. Yet, we are painfully aware that whatever successes we have registered fall far short of the expectations of our people. Africa remains the least developed continent and inter-state and intra-state conflicts continue to rage.

Excellencies,

This is not the first Summit for Peace and Security in Africa, but a continuation of previous Summits, most notably those convened by the African Union. To make tangible contribution for peace and stability, this and similar efforts need to focus on the root causes of conflict and insecurity and the critical ingredients for peace and stability. It is also imperative that past experience of external intervention in conflict situations is honestly assessed, lessons drawn and critical corrections made.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to present a very concise summary of the Eritrean perspective:-

1. No situation of conflict and insecurity can be properly and sustainably addressed without finding a solution for the political and socio-economic causes that underpin it. Consequently, national, regional, African and international efforts must give primacy and devote most resources to political and socio-economic initiatives.

2. The people, government and other actors in nations that face conflict and insecurity bear primary responsibility for resolving their problems. This responsibility needs to be readily acknowledged and space, time and encouragement need to be afforded to them as they seek what can be a difficult and complicated way forward.
3. External military intervention cannot be a quick and easy substitute for a national process of conflict resolution. Past experience clearly shows that if it is not predicated on, or preceded by a workable peace framework, hasty military intervention mounted without proper consideration and requisite accountability could result in worse and more complicated outcomes. Even when it is necessitated and warranted by an acute and deteriorating situation, it needs to be solidly based on, and implemented with due regard to, international law.
4. In regards to our continent, where most external intervention has been taking place, Africa must shoulder primary responsibility to address conflict situations and promote peace and security. Towards this end, it needs to develop its own institutional capacity, logistical capability as well as economic and financial resources. It simply cannot continue to interminably depend on outside forces, no matter how sincere they are.

I Thank You.