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Opening speech by Comrade Chairman Mengistu Haile-
Mariam of the PMAC and Commander-in-Chief of the
Revolutionary Army of Socialist Ethiopia.



ገዢ ሊቀመንበር መንግሥት ኃይለማርያም
Comrade Chairman Mengistu Haile-Mariam

- Comrade Romesh Chandra, President of the World Peace Council,
- Delegates who struggle for justice and peace,
- Guests and Comrades,

At the outset, I would like to welcome you, internationalist combatants who have dedicated your lives to the lofty ideal — peace, to Revolutionary Ethiopia.

On behalf of the Ethiopian broad masses, the Provisional Military Government and on my own behalf I am very glad to convey our best wishes for the success of this Bureau Session of the World Peace Council, the Human Rights Commission and the Seminar on Education for Peace and Disarmament which will be held in the consequent days.

The Ethiopian broad masses regard this conference which is being inaugurated today in the capital of Revolutionary Ethiopia with special esteem. This is because it is convened at a time when our people are celebrating the 84th Anniversary of the Victory of Adowa, which has an exemplary character and was a decisive battle in which Ethiopians crushed European colonialist forces.

The heroes of Adowa meted out humiliating defeat to the colonial aggressor in defence of the very principles that this session untiringly struggles for, namely, national liberation, justice and peace. Hence the fact that the meeting of the staunchest champion of peace, the World Peace Council, is held at this juncture in this country does not only bear very historic significance for the Ethiopian broad masses but further deepens the current internationalist character of our struggle.

- Dear delegates,
- Comrades,

It is with a sense of pride and joy that I receive the Joliot Curie gold peace medal from the internationally reputed and respected Comrade Romesh Chandra at the very beginning of this

historic conference. However, as I have stated in other instances, when comparing the revolutionary contributions that I as a revolutionary Ethiopian have made with the untold sufferings and sacrifices the Ethiopian broad masses have been made to bear for ages, I think it is quite modest. Particularly, eventhough the Ethiopian broad masses have within the preceding years of our revolution scored several victories the difficult and trying moments they endured in the tribulations of the struggle have put their resolve to test. And in the ensuing heat of struggle, the masses proved their mettle by unflinchingly defusing imperialist and reactionary conspiracy and single-mindedly pursuing their cause by weathering all hardships. The main source from which the struggling sons of Ethiopia draw inspiration is the broad masses. Thus, tonight I have further cause for being very glad because I am receiving the Joliot Curie Medal on behalf of the Ethiopian broad masses who have revived their long anti-colonial struggle in the radical revolutionary onslaught.

I believe that this award bears testimony to the unremitting struggle for justice and peace waged by our people and stands as a symbol of their determination to challenge all anti-peace forces. It is also my firm conviction that this banner of peace will be regarded by the present Ethiopian revolutionary generation with pride and honour as it is a confirmation of its profound allegiance to peace; while for the future generation it will serve as a historical reminder of its proud history and also act as an inspiring beacon that would motivate it to strive for the supreme objective — the well-being of mankind. I have no doubt that it will especially instill additional strength to the struggle of the Ethiopian revolutionaries for peace, justice, freedom, for the common struggle for the social and economic progress of mankind and also stimulate them to prove that they are worthy of the trust bestowed upon them by the struggle they will further wage and the new victories they will score.

When we reflect on this award, there is an issue that poses before us all. This is the revolutionary spirit that fired the imagination of Joliot Curie and his colleagues, and the noble and high ideal they struggled for. Although, the responsibility for the reali-

zation of this genuine freedom, the welfare of mankind and the shining sacred goal of an assured and lasting peace rests on the entire peace-loving forces of the world, the World Peace Council shoulders heavy responsibility in raising high its voice in fulfilment of this noble task. It is because of this that expectations are high that this conference will carefully weigh and analyse the present predicament our world is in and chart ways through which the supreme goal can be implemented.

— Dear delegates,

— Comrades,

This Session of the World Peace Council is timely since it is being held at a moment when the peace of the world is, due to imperialist machinations, in a precarious situation. It has been amply proved in the last two world wars that the typical nature of imperialism is an urge for destruction and not a desire to strive for peace. In particular the immense destruction and ravage wrought by these wars is not only recorded in history, but the holocaust that ravished mankind during the Second World War has still got living examples. Although imperialism whose very essence is based on the oppression and anguish of peoples cannot escape the verdict of history, its arrogance is inflated to such a degree that it is poised to push the world to the brink of another war. To help it achieve these sinister designs it resorts to the encirclement of areas of revolutionary ferment, subverts the national liberation movements, gets hectic ally involved in the destabilization of the progressive regimes and their sovereignty, and in general hatches out counter-revolutionary conspiracies. Although, it actively espouses and promotes anti-peace policy in all continents, it is laying special emphasis in bolstering the military capability of the South African racist regime, which by assuming the post of a permanent sentinel for imperialism is given the task of hushing out the struggle of the peoples liberation movement. It is abundantly clear that the Apartheid Pretoria regime is faithfully carrying out its assigned mission of destruction. The fact that imperialism and its messen-

gers of spoilation, clinging to and true to their racist policy are not only limited to turning the lives of the Africans who are groaning under the oppressive yoke to a painful drudgery, but are also disdainfully trampling underfoot the freedom of the peoples who are on the eve of independence. This is a very ghastly act and arouses the wrath of the peace forces. Especially, the very fact that the people of Zimbabwe, who through the gallant and bitter armed struggle were almost about to accede to independence, were by means of the vile conspiracy made to forego and implore their freedom from Britain at Lancaster House is very sad and leaves a shameful chapter in the history of liberation struggles.

The conspiracy and the vicious acts of the British government in trying to wrest the victories that the people of Zimbabwe have scored through the undaunted struggle of the Patriotic Front is very clear indeed.

In pursuance of its racist policy, British imperialism has resorted to various stratagems to hand over the broad masses and patriots of Zimbabwe to its puppets. Since it is the very same colonial masters that at this moment are the overseers of this fake election it is predictable what sort of result they are anticipating. Hence, the British rulers and their lackeys cannot through political chicanery prune on the political form, freedom's sapling planted by the struggling sons of Zimbabwe through sacrifices paid in blood over long years. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the peace combatants, democrats and in general the entire peace-loving peoples of the world to raise their political, moral and material support in order to save Zimbabwe and her likes from the claws of imperialism. As I stated some days ago in this same hall during the OAU 34th Session of the Foreign Ministers of Africa there should be no limit to the sacrifices we should pay for Zimbabwe's independence. We should be ready and determined even to shed our blood. A deeper look at the issue reveals that the intricate conspiracy of imperialism and reaction in Zimbabwe cannot be seen in isolation from its overall strategy and vile schemes of involving southern

Africa in an imbroglio and its general plan of putting the continent under its control.

Revolutionary Ethiopia's stand regarding Zimbabwe and similar cases has been and shall always be firm. Since we Ethiopians believe that our independence is incomplete as long as the whole of Africa and the human family in other continents has not secured its genuine freedom, we are willing to accept any sacrifice for Zimbabwe's independence. So far, we have tried to render assistance within the limits of our country's resources. I believe that this conference will realize the pressing nature of the issue and give particular attention to it.

Although imperialism continuously changes its focus of attention, the areas it dissipates in are quite numerous. One of these areas that has become a hot bed of tension is the Eastern Africa region. In outright violation and disrespect for the resolutions of the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the OAU and the World Peace Council that the Indian Ocean be a zone of peace, American imperialism has not only continued to amass its arsenal on Diego Garcia but is engaged in widening and constructing new bases. Not confining its activities to this, it is also feverishly busy in trying to set up new military bases in the Indian Ocean littoral states and in particular in certain countries within the East African region. On the pretext that it is out to safeguard the oil routes, it is deploying and increasing the number of its modern warships in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. This is indicative that it is on the alert and ready to aggress the territories and destabilize the governments in the area. Besides taking dangerous moves in the Middle East that are intended to weaken the struggle of the people of Palestine, it is still conniving new plots.

In Afghanistan, imperialism and reaction are involved in frantic moves to reverse the revolution unleashed by the masses. Their actions range from disseminating false propaganda to hoodwink world public opinion to the fielding of mercenaries to attack the revolution. However, the correct and popular political line that has been advanced by the broad masses of Afghanistan and the People's

Democratic Party of Afghanistan for 14 years cannot be swayed from its course by feudal remnants or by groups who have succumbed to imperialist bidding. Although this is incontrovertible, American imperialism's huge shipment of armaments to the surrounding countries with the aim of inciting them against Afghanistan, and its desire to become directly involved and thereby spread its sphere of influence by securing a springboard for reactionary insurgency has created a dangerous and tense environment. Imperialism's action in trying to disturb peace in Europe is another cause for World tension. By means of its NATO machinery, American imperialism has deployed the "Pershing and Cruise" missiles, thus seriously affecting the spirit of detente and leading to the hovering of a mist of war over the world.

SALT II (the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty) which was thought to be a means of arresting the arms race and a gateway to peace has not been ratified due to the intransigence of some members of the ruling class of America. In fact, American propensity for inciting a war daily diminishes the practicability of SALT II. Furthermore, it has been proved beyond doubt through its new action of setting up an Action Force that is intended to move very fast and intervene anywhere to suppress popular movements instantly that American imperialism is anti-peace. In addition the fact that it is increasing by many folds its military budget goes to show that it stands not for peace but destruction. Furthermore, similar to its audacious attempt aimed at subduing the Vietnamese and characterized by incessant bombardments and infliction of misery, today also it is engaged in recruiting and preparing the young for spoilation under the cover of National Service. This unmistakably indicates the degree of its invectiveness.

The fact that the disposition of the forces of American imperialism are widespread in the Pacific, Atlantic and the Indian Ocean and in general are intensifying military exercises is an indicator that it is either looking for a pretext or itching to provoke one in order to embroil the world in war. All these clearly portray in what a dangerous and frightening situation our world is in.

At this juncture, we would like to record our reservation and worries at the staggering amount of money and skill that is being expended on weapons of mass destruction in a world where hunger, disease and illiteracy run rampant. In 1900 the world spent on armaments 10 billion dollars. This figure showed a meteoric rise and the amount jumped in 1930 to 25 billion, in 1960 to 130 billion, in 1978 it reached 400 billion dollars and it is anticipated that after 20 years, that is in the year 2000 it will catapult to 820 billion. On the basis of the estimates made by the imperialists themselves the money expended on one F-14 fighter plane would build 9 large schools, while the cost of one leopard tank can build 36, three storied residential quarters. Likewise, the amount of money wasted in the manufacture of one submarine vessel can meet the expenses of educating 16 million children for one year, while fund that could have been used to erect five large hospitals is spent on one intercontinental missile.

It is again very clear why imperialist forces are squandering such an enormous sum on weapons and why they are impetuously aiming at threatening world peace. The main reason for this act is the strengthening of the Socialist forces and the cropping-up of the liberation movements in every continent.

Imperialists, the forces of reaction and all anti-people forces are impelled to incite war with the aim of arresting such a just stride of history.

They should nevertheless realizing that their attempt, apart from pushing entire humanity to destruction, will not impede the march of history should retrace their dangerous steps.

— Comrades,

The World Peace Council, that has planted and preserved the tree of peace on the very ruins of the Second World War should more than ever intensify its struggle. The tree of peace should never wither, nor eyes brimming with happiness be ever covered by the mist of war.

The struggle that we conduct in defence of peace cannot be isolated from our struggle to lay on a firm footing national liberation and the social and economic progress of mankind. To ensure the success of this sacred goal we must strengthen our solidarity. And this solidarity is the source of strength of the heroes who are lined up for the decisive victory, the emancipation of peoples and equality. The guarantee of peace is this united fist of peoples.

The present epoch we are in is a trying moment characterized on the one hand by sabre-rattling imperialism fully poised to initiate war, and on the other by the indefatigable struggle of the peace forces who are striving to put a halt to this destructive bent and work for the permeation of justice in the world. Since imperialism is unabashedly trying to make the best use of the prevailing situation, it is necessary for the peace forces to rise up united to withstand and defuse this attempt.

Obviously, the Ethiopian Revolution which is part of this internationalist struggle will through forging its alliance with the world peace forces increase its contribution to the security of the world. So far, although the sacrifices made by the Ethiopian broad masses in traversing along the course of victory and advancing to the current stage of progress is decisive, the assistance and support rendered to us by international peace-forces, all democrats and socialists have played a big role. I would like to take this opportunity to express my hearty thanks particularly to the World Peace Council and the National Peace Committees for all the political, moral and material assistance they have extended to us at different times.

— Comrades,

As peace and solidarity are inseparable twins it is known that the struggle for genuine peace is also a struggle for Socialism. Particularly at a moment when anti-peace forces are extremely raving to drive the world to the edge of disaster, it is increasingly being proved that peace cannot be attained without struggle. In this light, we should strive with all sincerity to bolster the struggle of

the stalwart champion of peace, the World Peace Council, in particular to reinforce its mobilizing capacity. Finally, I would like to express once again my heart-felt wishes for the success of this conference, re-assure you that the Ethiopian broad masses will not spare any effort at contributing its share for the ultimate victory of our common struggle against imperialists, exploitation and for peace.

I have no doubt that we shall triumph as our struggle is just.

THANK YOU