

(ii) STATEMENT BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF NIGERIA, MR. KANU G. AGABI, S.A.N.

I welcome you to Nigeria. I thank God by whose grace you arrived here safely. I wish you a happy stay in Nigeria and a wise and successful conference. I thank you for agreeing to hold this conference in Nigeria and for all the sacrifices you made to enable you attend. Your commitment to the objectives of this organization has been demonstrated by your attendance at this conference shortly after the assassination of the Vice-President of this Organization, Chief Bola Ige who was also the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice of Nigeria. May his soul rest in peace. By his death he proved to the agents of nihilism that there is no price that we will not pay for the peace and progress of the world. On your part, by holding this Conference in Nigeria shortly after his assassination, you have demonstrated that you, too, are willing to lay down your lives, if and when, necessary, so that Africa and Asia, indeed the whole world may attain peace and progress, not just of its parts, but of the whole. The world cannot know peace in parts nor can it progress in parts Asia and Africa, Europe and the United States, Australia and New Zealand must move forward together as one in peace and harmony as equal partners.

I remember with gratitude and honour those leaders of Asia and Africa who came together in 1956 at the Bandung Conference to unite against colonialism and other forms of exploitation. They were united at that time by their common experience of injustice, of hunger and poverty. As a result of their efforts and sacrifices virtually all of Africa and Asia are today free from colonial rule. But our exploitation has taken an altogether different form. Many of our people are still unemployed, many are the victims of corruption, many in Asia and Africa have no hope. These experiences must unite us as they united our ancestors. The present leaders of Africa and Asia are urged never to forget slavery and never to forget colonialism so that they can build nations that can no longer be enslaved or exploited. And I urge the nations of Europe and the United States not to forget slavery and not to forget colonialism so that they, too, may not be tempted to go that way again. But we cannot leave the matter entirely to their discretion. That is why, on our part, we must make every sacrifice to ensure good government in Asia and Africa. In a globalizing world Africa and Asia must be strong mentally, physically, economically and politically. In the new globalized world, as we buy so we must also be able to sell. Unless Africa and Asia are self-reliant the effects of globalization will be worse than the effects of slavery and colonization.

I thank His Excellency the President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and our Vice-President, His Excellency Alhaji Atiku Abubakar for their great sacrifices towards the peace and stability of our country. I thank them for their concern for Africa and Asia. The foundation which they are laying for Nigeria will ensure our dignity and prestige as a worthy member of the International Community.

I am greatly encouraged by the agenda of this conference. I pray for courage and wisdom as we discuss the refugee problem, the problems of Palestine and Israel, the legal protection of migrant workers, trafficking in women and children and many of the very important issues scheduled for discussion.

Finally, I thank the Secretary-General Dr. Kamil and his team for their excellent work. Without patience and understanding on their part this Conference could not have held here at this time.

Once more I thank you all. May God guide you and bless you throughout your stay in Nigeria.