

# DECLARATION ON THE POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN AFRICA AND THE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN THE WORLD

*AHG/Decl.1 (XXVI) 1990*

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, meeting at our Twenty-sixth Ordinary Session of our Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 9 - 11 July 1990, have undertaken a critical review of the political, social and economic situation of our continent in the light of the rapid changes taking place in the world and their impact on Africa, as presented in the *Report of the Secretary-General on the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World and the Implications for Africa: Proposals for an African Response*.
2. In particular, we have noted the changing East-West relations from confrontation to co-operation, the socio-economic and political changes in Eastern Europe, the steady ... global tendency towards regional integration and the establishment of trading and economic blocs as well as the advances in science and technology. These we found, constitute major factors which should guide Africa's collective thinking about the challenges and options before her in the 1990s and beyond in view of the real threat of marginalisation of our continent.
3. We noted with satisfaction, the achievements of Africa in the struggle for the decolonisation of the continent and in the fight against racism and apartheid, as well as the positive role played by the OAU in this respect. The independence of Namibia has pushed further Africa's frontiers of freedom.
4. We took note of the measures taken by Mr De Klerk which provide ground for optimism. We caution however, that these changes fall far short of our common objective of totally dismantling apartheid. Unless and until the racist minority government is irreversibly committed to the eradication of this anachronistic system, the international community must continue to exert all forms of pressure including, in particular, economic sanctions against South Africa. This, in our collective view, is also the demand of the National Liberation Movements of that country. We wish at the same time to reaffirm our solidarity with the oppressed people of South Africa and to assure them our undivided support at this crucial phase in their struggle. At the same time, we urge them to close their ranks and unite their forces.
5. The socio-economic situation on our continent remains precarious today despite the many efforts made by our countries, individually and collectively. At our Second Extra-Ordinary Assembly in Lagos, Nigeria in April 1980, we adopted the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa up to the Year 2000 and the Final Act of Lagos. At the Twenty-first Ordinary Session our Assembly held here in Addis Ababa in July 1985, we also adopted the Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990. Equally, in the face of an often excruciating external debt burden, we convened the Third Extra-Ordinary Session of our Assembly and adopted the African Common Position on Africa's External Debt Crisis. In all these endeavours, we were guided by the principle of collective self-reliance and self-sustaining development.
6. These represented our collective attempt to institute measures to arrest and reverse the steady decline in Africa's economic performance. Despite these attempts and strong political commitment to them, it has not so far been possible to achieve our objective of laying a firm foundation for self-sustained development of our countries. On the contrary, throughout the decade of the 1980s, most of our productive and infrastructural facilities continued to deteriorate. The per-capita incomes of our peoples fell drastically and so did the volumes of our exports as well as imports. There has been a sharp decline in the quality of life in our countries as spending on public health, housing and education and other social services had to be severely curtailed. Food production has also fallen in proportion to the expanding population. All this contrasted sharply with the alarming rise in Africa's external debt stock which shot up from about US\$ 60 billion in 1980 to about US\$ 257 billion by the end of 1989. As a result of this combination of acute economic problems and external indebtedness, the number of African member states classified as least developed rose from 21 to 28 during the same period.

7. Our countries have made serious efforts to cope with most adverse consequences of this difficult economic situation. Most of our countries have entered into structural adjustment programmes with the international financial and monetary institutions, mostly at heavy political and social costs. But we realise that these are short-term measures and are by themselves insufficient to completely restore our economies to sound footing and lay firm foundation for future growth. We are very much concerned that, in addition to these problems, there is an increasing tendency to impose conditionalities of a political nature for assistance to Africa.
8. We reaffirm that Africa's development is the responsibility of our governments and peoples. We are now more than before determined to lay a solid foundation for self-reliant, human-centred and sustainable development on the basis of social justice and collective self-reliance so as to achieve accelerated structural transformation of our economies. Within this context we are determined to work assiduously towards economic integration through regional co-operation. We are also determined to take urgent measures to rationalise the existing economic groupings in our continent in order to increase their effectiveness in promoting economic integration and establishing an African Economic Community.
9. These are objectives we set for ourselves in Lagos in 1980. We reaffirm their continued validity as well as the fundamental principles of the Lagos Plan of Action and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, including the sectoral priorities contained in them, in particular, the urgent need to attain self-sufficiency in food production, to promote science and technology for development and to establish a viable industrial base on the continent. In this context, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of sound population and environmental policies conducive to economic growth and development of our continent.
10. We are fully aware that in order to facilitate this process of socio-economic transformation and integration, it is necessary to promote popular participation of our peoples in the processes of government and development. A political environment which guarantees human rights and the observance of the rule of law, would assure high standards of probity and accountability particularly on the part of those who hold public office. In addition, popular-based political processes would ensure the involvement of all including in particular women and youth in the development efforts. We accordingly recommit ourselves to the further democratisation of our societies and to the consolidation of democratic institutions in our countries. We reaffirm the right of our countries to determine, in all sovereignty, their system of democracy on the basis of their socio-cultural values, taking into account the realities of each of our countries and the necessity to ensure development and satisfy the basic needs of our peoples. We therefore assert that democracy and development should go together and should be mutually reinforcing.
11. We realise at the same time that the possibilities of achieving the objectives we have set will be constrained as long as an atmosphere of lasting peace and stability does not prevail in Africa. We therefore renew our determination to work together towards the peaceful and speedy resolution of all the conflicts on our continent. The resolution of conflicts will be conducive to the creation of peace and stability on the continent and will also have the effect of reducing expenditures on defence and security, thus releasing additional resources for socio-economic development. We are equally determined to make renewed efforts to eradicate the root causes of the refugee problem. It is only through the creation of stable conditions that Africa can fully harness its human and material resources and direct them to development.
12. At this crucial juncture when our continent is emerging with difficulty from a phase in its history that focused mainly on political liberation and nation building, and is about to embark on a new era laying greater emphasis on economic development, we need to strengthen the Organization of African Unity so that it may also become a viable instrument in the service of Africa's economic development and integration. Consistent with this goal, we rededicate ourselves to the principles and objectives enshrined in its Charter, to our faith in ourselves and to our continent, with greater determination to be masters of our destiny. In this spirit, we reaffirm our commitment to revive the ideals of Pan-Africanism and commit ourselves, individually and collectively, on behalf of our governments and peoples to maintain and strengthen our unity and solidarity and to pool our resources and wisdom in order to face the challenges of the decade of the 1990s and beyond, change the bleak socio-economic prospects of our continent and

guarantee a better life for all peoples and future generations yet unborn. These objectives are well within our capabilities. We, therefore, pledge to apply ourselves fully to the achievement of these objectives.

13. The achievement of these objectives will also require international co-operation and solidarity as well as fundamental changes in the international economic system. The continuing plummeting of the prices of Africa's commodities, skyrocketing of prices of manufactured goods and the growing burden of external debt and the attendant reverse flow of resources constitute external factors which severely constrain our efforts for economic recovery. The developed countries bear a major responsibility for the transformation of the present inequitable international system. On our part, we will continue to strive for the establishment of a just and equitable international economic system. In this connection, a revitalised Non-Aligned Movement can play a decisive role.
14. We recommit ourselves to strengthen South-South co-operation and to play a lead role in this regard. We also wish to express our readiness to work in concert with other countries and regions of the developing world to reactivate North-South dialogue and co-operation. We do believe that an increasingly interdependent world calls for greater international solidarity and that peace and prosperity should be shared for the common good of humanity.
15. We request the Secretary-General to monitor the implementation of this Declaration and to take all necessary actions in this respect in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, African Development Bank and other African and international institutions. We also request him to ensure the widest possible dissemination of this Declaration and to sensitise African public opinion and the international community on its content.

1990

# Declaration on the political and socio-economic situation in Africa and the fundamental changes taking place in the world

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