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**FOURTH EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT
OF THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE
AND GOVERNMENT
8 – 9 September, 1999
Sirte, Libya**

EAHG/2 (IV)

**INTRODUCTORY REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL**



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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The proposal for the convening of an Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government was made by the Libya Arab Jamahiriya to the Thirty-Fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Algiers, Algeria, from 12 – 14 July 1999. It was introduced by Col. Muammar Gaddafi, Leader of the Great First of September Revolution of the Great Socialist Peoples' Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, during the Summit deliberations on the Agenda item on "*Collective Security and Conflicts on the Continent.*"

2. In his intervention, the Libyan Leader invited the Assembly to meet in an Extra-Ordinary Session to be convened in the Jamahiriya, from 8 – 9 September, 1999. Subsequently, the Algiers Summit adopted Decision AHG Doc.140 (XXXV), in which it accepted the offer of Col. Muammar Gaddafi to host the Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly "*to discuss ways and means of making the OAU effective so as to keep pace with political and economic developments taking place in the world and the preparation required of Africa within the context of globalization so as to preserve its socio-economic and political potentials.*"



Agenda

3. Rule 13 of the Rules of Procedures of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government provides that the agenda of an Extra-Ordinary Session shall comprise only items submitted for consideration in the request for convening the Extra-Ordinary Session. Consequently, the Agenda of the Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government is as recalled in the above paragraph 2 and summarized as follows: "*Strengthening Africa's capacity to meet the challenges of the New Millennium*".

II. BACKGROUND

4. Over the last three decades, there were many who had doubted the prospects for the OAU surviving the turbulence that was associated with the liberation struggles and decolonization efforts, as well as with the initiatives to consolidate the gains of the post-independence era in many African countries. It was a period during which the unity of African countries was threatened, in spite of the strong vision of a United Continent that the Founding Fathers of the Organization of African Unity stood for and defended vigorously.

5. Thirty-six years after its inception and contrary to the predictions of pundits and cynics, the Organization of African Unity remains the premier Continental Organization in Africa. During the three and a half decades of its existence, the OAU adapted itself to the changing environment and evolved institutionally to meet the challenges that it has had to confront.

6. In dealing with these challenges, the OAU has endeavoured to adapt itself to deal with the many dynamic and complex developments on the continent. That is why the Organization has

remained, over the years, a unique framework for the unity, cooperation and solidarity between African countries, despite the difficulties and the obstacles it encountered.

7. Over the last decade, the OAU has been guided by the paramount objective of adjusting itself to meet the challenges of the day and of remaining relevant to its Member States. That was the rationale behind the program of Reform and Renewal the Organization has been pursuing over the last years. This program focused on the regional and continental cooperation and integration agenda; the peace and security agenda; the democratization and human rights agenda; the restructuring of the General Secretariat and the Charter review. This program was aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Organization to serve the Continent and its peoples and to be relevant in a context of an ever-changing environment.

8. This program of Reform and Renewal clearly needs to be pursued more vigorously as the Continent is preparing to confront the challenges of the new millennium as was clearly emphasized during the discussion of the Leaders at their recent Summit held in Algiers, Algeria, from 12 – 14 July 1999 and reflected in the Algiers Declaration (***See Declaration in Annex 1***). This objective was at the core of the Summit Decision endorsing the Libyan proposal to convene an Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government to deliberate on the best ways and means for strengthening Africa's capacity to meet the challenges of the new millennium.

9. In order to facilitate the discussions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on this crucial matter, the following background information is provided on the efforts deployed so far to

strengthen the capacity of the Continental Organization to better serve the interests of the Continent and its peoples.

III. STRENGTHENING OAU'S CAPACITY

I) The 1990 OAU Summit Declaration on the Political, and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World: Africa's Response

10. In July 1990, the Twenty-Sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government reviewed the situation of the Continent in the light of the achievements of the Continent in the area of decolonization and the struggle against Apartheid, as well as the changes which were then taking place in the world. The Summit adopted a landmark Declaration (*See Declaration in Annex 2*) in which African Leaders reaffirmed that Africa's development was the responsibility of African Governments and Peoples. They expressed their determination to lay a solid foundation for self reliant, human centered and sustainable development on the basis of social justice and collective self-reliance, so as to achieve accelerated structural transformation of African economies. They expressed their determination to work assiduously towards economic integration through regional cooperation.

11. In order to facilitate the process of socio-economic transformation and integration, the Leaders agreed on the need to promote popular participation of their peoples in the processes of Governance and development. They also agreed that a political environment which guarantees human rights and the observance of the rule of law was needed to ensure high standards of probity and

accountability, particularly on the part of those who hold public office. The Leaders committed themselves to the further democratization of African societies and to the consolidation of democratic institutions in their countries.

12. The Leaders recognized that the possibilities of achieving their socio-economic objectives would be constrained as long as an atmosphere of lasting peace and stability does not prevail in Africa. They therefore, renewed their determination to work together towards the peaceful and speedy resolution of conflicts on the Continent.

13. This Declaration constituted a real Plan of Action for our Organization in the efforts it has eventually deployed towards asserting itself as an institution, which is at the core of all endeavours at promoting peace and development on the Continent.

ii) **Peace, Security and Stability**

14. Building on the commitments made in the 1990 OAU Summit Declaration, African Leaders meeting at the Twenty-Ninth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Cairo from 28 – 30 June 1993, adopted a Declaration on the establishment, within the OAU, of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (*See Declaration in Annex 3*). In taking this decision, the Assembly was conscious of the fact that no single internal factor has contributed more to the socio-economic problems in the Continent than the scourge of conflicts, within and between African countries. They were also aware of the consequences of the conflicts, which are bringing about death and human suffering and engendering hate and division among and between communities and nations. Conflicts have forced

millions of Africans into a drifting life as refugees and displaced persons. Conflicts have gobbled up scarce resources and undermined the ability of African countries to address the many compelling needs of their people.

15. The Assembly decided to establish a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution as a way to bring to the process of dealing with conflicts on the Continent a new institutional dynamism, enabling speedy action to prevent or manage and ultimately resolve conflicts, when and where they occur. The Mechanism, is guided by the objectives and principles of the OAU Charter, in particular the sovereign equality of Member States; non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States; their inalienable right to independent existence; the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as the inviolability of borders inherited from colonialism. It functions on the basis of the consent and the cooperation of the Parties to a conflict.

16. Since the establishment of the Mechanism six years ago, the OAU has been involved directly or indirectly and within the limitations of its mandate, operational capacity and resources, in many constructive initiatives aimed at addressing the security challenges facing the Continent. More than at any other time in the history of the Organization of African Unity, there is currently, no conflict in any part of the Continent for which the OAU and its Member State are not involved in peace efforts. This was the case in conflicts such as those in Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, the Republic of Congo, Angola, the Sudan, the Comoros and the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

17. In addition, most of the Regional Economic Communities have already adopted peace and security arrangements along with their economic portfolios. Experience tends to point at the fact that sub-regional organizations may enjoy comparative advantage in undertaking peace initiatives. However, the OAU must position itself to ensure greater coordination in the conflict management activities in the regions of the Continent, and provide a continental approach and perspective to the efforts at conflict prevention, management and resolution.

18. As part of these efforts, the OAU has also endeavoured to address the legacy of armed conflicts, such as the problems of refugees and displaced persons, the proliferation of anti-personnel mines and small arms and light weapons.

19. Six years after the adoption of the Declaration establishing the Mechanism, the Central Organ still lacks adequate information to effectively predict, plan for, prevent and manage the complex and numerous conflicts that have plagued the Continent. This is largely because the operational arm of the Mechanism (the Secretariat) lacks the capacity for in-depth analysis on which to base strategic options for policy makers. In order to remedy this situation, an Early Warning System capable of collecting, analyzing and disseminating information for use by policy makers is being developed. It is expected that once the project is completed, the Organization and its Mechanism will be at the cutting edge of technology for information exchange between the Secretariat and OAU Member States on the one hand, and between the OAU and regional mechanisms for security on the other.

20. It is evident that the limited but consistent efforts deployed by the Organization and its Mechanism in the period of the last six

years, have over-stretched the resources of the OAU to the maximum. There is need therefore, for continued and increased support to the Mechanism if those efforts are to be sustained. The current level of financial contribution to the OAU Peace Fund especially from within the Continent remains largely inadequate to sustain the operations of the Mechanism. There is need to examine more closely how best to address this problem so that the Mechanism can cope with the ever increasing and daunting challenges that it faces.

21. More importantly however, the efficiency of the Mechanism depends largely on the extent of the will of the Member States to make use of it. In this regard, while it is encouraging to note that Member States are increasingly seeking the involvement of the Mechanism, through its Central Organ and the Secretary General in efforts at conflict prevention, management and resolution, it is a matter of fact that its operations are still limited. As the Continent is still confronted with the serious challenge of conflicts, it is important that ways and means be devised to further enhance the efficacy of the Mechanism.

iii) Democratization and Human Rights

22. Over the last years, the Organization has been increasingly involved in observing elections in Member States and in supporting the democratization process on the Continent. Since 1990, the OAU has been requested to observe over 80 elections in 36 Member States. This is a clear demonstration of the irreversible trend towards democratization on the Continent and of the growing confidence reposed in the OAU by its Member States.

23. It is to be noted however, that the OAU has not always been able to send significant numbers of observers to monitor elections. Depending on situations and on the requests by Member States, the OAU has deployed groups of observers, of different sizes and compositions. This situation is also due to the limited financial resources of the Organization devoted to these operations.

24. It is also to be noted that the OAU Observer Teams have not always been as effective as would have been desired. It is a fact, nonetheless, that the OAU through its Observer Groups has played a constructive role in supporting the efforts towards democratization in Member States and contributing to the promotion of a democratic culture on the Continent. This is one area where the OAU clearly needs to strengthen its capacity, to effectively assist Member States in the years ahead.

25. In the area of Human Rights, Member States have long recognized this challenge, as evidenced by the adoption in June 1981 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the subsequent establishment, in 1987, of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Furthermore, by adopting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in June 1998, the Protocol on the Establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Assembly provided Africa with an important instrument for ensuring observance of human rights, as an integral aspect of the Organization's wider objective of promoting collective security, durable peace and sustainable development. More recently, in April 1999, the First OAU Ministerial Conference on Human Rights in Africa adopted the Grand Bay (Mauritius) Declaration and Plan of Action, which constitute an African collective vision for Human Rights at the dawn of the new millennium.

iv) Economic Cooperation and Integration

26. On the economic front, OAU Member States have taken landmark initiatives in the adoption of *inter alia* the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa (1980), the signing (1991) and Entry Into Force (1994) of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community and the adoption of the Cairo Agenda for Relaunching the Economic and Social Development of Africa (1995). Despite the difficulties encountered in their implementation, on account of internal and external factors, these programmes have demonstrated the commitment of African leaders to issues of continental cooperation and integration as Africa's indispensable strategy in its drive to achieve socio-economic development and economic well being for all its peoples.

27. The primary objective of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (*See Treaty in Annex 4*) is the creation of a larger and viable economic space, as well as integrated African markets as a means of fostering economic growth in the Continent.

28. Africa will begin the new millennium with five Regional Economic Communities which should constitute strong pillars of the African Economic Community. While in some regions the progress and achievements in regional integration are manifested in enhanced programme coordination and policy harmonization, particularly in the monetary and financial fields, in other regions programmes and trade liberalization and freedom of movement of persons are providing the fruits and benefits of regional integration to the generality of the people. Progress in regional integration in the Continent therefore is not only significant but its trend and direction are encouraging indications of what Africa should expect in the new millennium. It is to be noted however that despite this progress, the implementation

process of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community is behind schedule. Furthermore, the various Regional Economic Centres are not at the same level of integration. The establishment of the African Economic Community is one of the priority agenda of the OAU. The process of implementation of the Treaty needs to be reinforced and given renewed impetus so that the integration agenda be pursued to its final objective.

v) Socio-Economic Challenge

29. The socio-economic situation in Africa has remained precarious despite the many efforts made by Member States individually and/or collectively to lay a solid ground for Africa's development. In the **social sector**, despite efforts deployed by the Organization through both Member States and the General Secretariat to meet the basic needs of the populations of Africa, many challenges continue to face the Continent in the areas of Health, Education, Labour and Social Affairs, Human Resources Development, Science and Technology, the Rights and Welfare of Children, Youth and women, as well as in the protection and sound management of the Environment for Sustainable Development.

30. Indeed, In the area of **Health**, the challenges include the spreading of pandemic diseases such as Malaria and HIV/AIDS and other diseases like poliomyelitis and more seriously the re-emergence of diseases, which had been virtually eradicated from the Continent in the very recent past. The combined effects of HIV/AIDS, Malaria and malnutrition, within the context of the increasing rate of poverty makes it difficult to achieve meaningful socio-economic development.



31. Facing those challenges, the Organization has put in place a number of strategies, which the General Secretariat is now assisting Member States to implement. These Strategies include:

- the Dakar (1992) and Tunis (1994) Declarations on HIV/AIDS.
- The OAU/UNAIDS new partnership through the establishment of a Cooperation Agreement in order for the two institutions to work more efficiently and effectively towards the strengthening of the fight against HIV/AIDS at national level.
- The Harare Declaration on Malaria Prevention and Control in the context of African Economic Recovery and Development through which Member States commit themselves to give full political support to actions aimed at preventing and controlling Malaria on a sustainable manner by implementing the Plan of Action of the Declaration.
- The African Regional Nutrition Strategy (1993-2003) which was aimed at addressing the food and nutrition deficiency in Africa.

32. A key to human resources development is the **Educational and Training Systems** in Member States. In order to address effectively the issue of education, the period 1997-2006 has been declared "EDUCATION DECADE IN AFRICA." During this period education is supposed to be a top priority. The Harare Programme of Action for the Decade was adopted by Ministers of Education and endorsed by the 35th Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Its implementation will require special attention on

Equity, Quality, Access to Education for all and complementary learning modalities to ensure that people have the knowledge and skills to cope with rapid socio-political, economical and technological changes.

33. In the field of **Science and Technology** the General Secretariat has continued to promote the development of endogenous scientific and technological capacity for better health, protecting the environment and improving general efficiency. In the promotional aspect, efforts are being made by the Secretariat towards popularizing and encouraging a wider penetration, investment and utilization of cost-effective and appropriate technologies for poverty alleviation; such as, renewable energy resources, health technologies, food technologies, drugs production from African Medicinal Plants.

34. Member States and the General Secretariat are increasingly recognizing the role of **Women and Youth in Development**. In this regard, policies and programs have been put in place with a view to ensuring the effective participation of women and youth, in peace and development endeavours on the continent. The importance of ensuring the total emancipation of African women from discrimination and other prejudices and ensuring that they play their full and rightful role in the process of governance and socio-economic development need not be over-emphasized. Strategies have also been adopted by the OAU in order to ensure the protection and the welfare of the Children particularly through the adoption in July 1990 the "*African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*."

35. In the field of **Culture**, the Organization has elaborated measures for the protection of Africa's Cultural Heritage through the

adoption of the "African Cultural Charter" (1976) and the "Plan of Action for the Promotion of Cultural Industries" (1992).

36. As Africa prepares to enter the new millennium, the Continent is beset with a multitude of **environmental problems**, both natural and man-made, which threaten to disrupt the process of economic integration and sustainable development set forth in the Abuja Treaty. Drought, desertification and land degradation are today among the major environmental challenges that Africa faces. They undermine the potential for food self-sufficiency and security, and consequently aggravate poverty. Other natural disasters that the continent has to grapple with are floods and insect (pest) epidemics both of which impact negatively on agricultural production and cause loss of life.

37. Individually, and collectively through the Organization of African Unity, Member States, despite limited financial and trained human resources endowments, have made significant strides in devising solutions to the Continent's environmental problems.

38. At the Continental level, Africa has put in place some legal instruments for the protection of the Environment such as:

- the "*African Convention on the Conservation and Protection of Nature and Natural Resources*" (Algiers, 1968);
- the "*Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa*" (Bamako, 1991).

39. In addition, the Organization has played, at the Global level, a crucial role in initiating and finalizing the United Nations Convention to combat Desertification (Paris, 1994).

40. Steps are now being taken to revise the Algiers Convention and align it with the subsequent Rio de Janeiro family of Conventions on Climate Change and Biological Diversity. Those instruments, together with " *Agenda 21*" constitute today the appropriate framework for Economic and Social Sustainable Development Strategies for poverty alleviation.

41. Since the 1980s, the implementation of conventional Structural Adjustment Plans by Member States have, invariably, brought about severe socio-economic hardship on the Continent. As a result, rampant unemployment, underemployment, low productivity coupled with the effects of grinding poverty within various layers of societies, particularly among the youth, school leavers, women, the aged and ageing have become common in Africa. To remedy such a situation, serious efforts are being deployed at national and continental levels for the implementation of the provisions of the 1991 "Abuja Declaration on the Employment Crisis in Africa" and the commitments made in the "African Common Position on Human and social Development" which was Africa's contribution to the Declaration and Programme of Action at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development in 1995.

42. In the **Economic Sector** the Continent is also faced with daunting challenges in the infrastructural development, financial resources and debt.

43. In a vast Continent with many small and landlocked States without appropriate linkages, the provision of an efficient **transport**

and communications infrastructure is indispensable in striving for economic advancement through regional integration. The poor state of transport and communications infrastructure in the Continent is, therefore, a matter of serious concern not only in terms of its inadequacy but also because of the poor level of maintenance, and destruction. With the help of the UN System, two Decades of Transport and Communications Development in Africa have been declared in 1975 and in 1985 with the basic objective of addressing the inadequacies in this Sector, as well as of improving the quality and level of services provided. The establishment in 1992 of the Regional Satellite Communication (RASCOCOM) was motivated by the desire to ensure a coordinated and effective service delivery in this sector. Having initiated the creation of RASCOCOM, the OAU was expected to be a major share-holder but this has not been possible on account of financial constraints.

44. The advances and constant changes in communications and information technologies have constituted additional pressure on the need for African countries to develop and enhance their capacities in these areas.

45. At the end of the second millennium, Africa remains the least industrialized Region in the Third World and a Continent highly dependent on imported industrial products. At the same time, it is recognized that a strong **industrial base** is required if Africa is to be competitive in the global arena and be able to restructure and transform its economies in the face of the increasing wave of globalization. In recognition of this situation, several initiatives have been taken by the OAU, including its contribution to the adoption of the Programmes of Industrial Development Decade for Africa and the Alliance for Africa's Industrialization. These programmes have been designed, inter alia, to refocus the Continent's efforts at, and

increase its awareness of the critical role of industrialization in Africa's development strategy. A higher level of commitment will be required on the part of all the Member States, particularly in terms of creating a conducive environment that will encourage and induce the private sector, both foreign and national to invest in the Continent's industrial future.

46. Agricultural development and food production in the Continent still depend, to a large extent, on the availability of rain and on the use of technologies which have not been adapted to the requirements of **modern agriculture**. The prevalence of drought in certain regions of the Continent, as well as natural disasters that impact negatively on food production is still a perennial concern. There is need for a determined effort on the part of all African countries to ensure that African agriculture and food production become less dependent on rain and that adequate food storage and conservation facilities are provided, in order not only to reduce post-harvest losses but also guarantee food availability for all at all times. These are, indeed, the basic objectives of the African common position on food security and agricultural development, which was adopted by the Thirty-Second OAU Summit in 1996.

47. The **external debt problem** of many African countries continues unabated. The debt overhang impedes African countries from directing more investment into physical infrastructure, human resources development and social services, particularly education and health. The negative effects of external debt on credit rating deters foreign investors from investing in many of these countries in the world trading and financial system. Consequently, Africa's persistent debt problem and the resulting decline in economic performance have continued to deepen the marginalization of the Continent in the global economy. It is noted that in recent years, there have been

efforts at providing debt relief, such as the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. However, we note these initiatives have had no effective impact on the African debt problem.

48. There is, therefore, an imperative necessity for a definitive solution to Africa's external debt problem as called for by the 1987 Africa's Common Position, which was adopted by the third Extraordinary Summit of the OAU. The proposed International Conference on Africa's External Debt Crisis, therefore should have, as its central objective, the need to reduce the total outstanding debt stock of all African countries.

vi) Charter Review

49. As part of the efforts to adapt the Organization to meet the challenges of the day, a Charter Review process was initiated in 1979, through the establishment of a Charter Review Committee by the Sixteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Monrovia, Liberia from 17 – 20 July 1979. The Committee was set up, "*for the purpose of making proposals for the Charter in the light of experience gained in order to make its institutions and mechanisms more effective and generally to strengthen the Organization in all respects.*"

50. Since then, the Committee held six sessions and considered a series of proposals for the amendment of the Charter (***See background Document on Charter Review – Annex 5***). It is to be noted that the Charter Review process was conducted in a rather slow manner. There is a need therefore, to revive the process and expedite it more vigorously with a view to adapting the Charter to the new realities and challenges.

51. It is clear that the current realities and the important developments, which have taken place since it was adopted in 1963, must inform the process of reviewing the Charter. Indeed, in the last few years, important structures have been created by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, which must be taken into account in the Charter. There is an obvious need to make reference, in the Charter, to the 1990 Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World and the 1993 Declaration on the establishment of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, and to harmonize the provisions of the Charter and the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community.

vii) Restructuring of the OAU General Secretariat

52. The restructuring of the General Secretariat has been on the Agenda of the OAU since 1984, when the Ad-Hoc Committee on Structural Reform was established. Considerable work has since been done by the Committee in terms of improving the conditions of service and methods of work of the General Secretariat.

53. The restructuring exercise was pursued in a more comprehensive and vigorous manner since the Harare Summit of 1997, which supported the Program of Reform and Renewal proposed by the Secretary General and which included the Restructuring of the General Secretariat. These efforts culminated in the submission to the Sixty-Ninth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of a set of proposals related to:

- the proposed Organizational Structure of the General Secretariat;
- the coordination activities of the African Economic Communities and the Regional Economic Communities;
- coordination between Headquarters and Representational offices;
- critical review of the career development plan for the professional staff;
- means of improving the methods of work and procedures;
- financial evaluation of the proposed structure; and
- implementation strategy.

The above proposals were adopted by the Council and subsequently endorsed by the Algiers Summit.

54. The objective of the restructuring exercise is to enhance the capacity of the General Secretariat to enable it better serve the Organization and its Member States. It is expected that the proposals which were adopted and aimed at streamlining the General Secretariat and introducing modern methods of work will allow the Secretariat to more efficiently discharge its responsibilities in an action-oriented manner that would benefit the Organization and its Member States.

55. Since the Algiers Summit, the implementation process of the restructuring of the General Secretariat has started. With the support of Member States, the Secretariat intends to pursue the implementation process with diligence.

IV. THE WAY FORWARD

56. As we prepare to usher Africa into the next millenium we need to accord priority to making our Continental Organization more effective so as to respond more efficiently to the exigencies and challenges of the next millenium. In doing this we need to take into account the new realities facing the world and Africa in particular. We therefore need to explore ways and means of addressing the challenge of globalization, the challenges of regional cooperation and integration as well as the challenge of maintaining peace, security and stability in Africa. We also have to explore ways and means of sustaining the process of democratization, strengthening the protection of human rights, and enhancing the respect of the rule of law.

57. Regarding peace, security and stability on the continent, there is an imperative need to strengthen the capacity of the mechanisms, especially in the area of preventive diplomacy. It is important, therefore, to work more expeditiously towards the establishment of an Early Warning System to enhance the preventive capacity of the Mechanism. We also need to strengthen its analytical capacity so that the Central Organ can take more informed decisions in the implementation of its mandate.

58. In the social sector we need to focus more attention on the HIV/AIDS pandemic which continue to impact heavily on the human resource capacity of this Continent. We, therefore, need to move vigorously to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic through public awareness campaign at national, sub-regional and regional levels. Health education is key to our struggle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Moreover, there is merit in allocating more resources to programmes that aim at uplifting the living conditions of our people,

especially through poverty alleviation. Education in terms of both its quality and universality is an indispensable element in this regard.

59. In order to meet the objectives of regional cooperation and reintegration we need to initiate specific measures and recommit ourselves to accelerated implementation of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. We also need to give a new momentum to the establishment of specific commissions provided for under the Treaty. In particular, we need to ensure a speedy establishment of a Pan-African Parliament and such other institutions that will support the accelerated implementation of the Treaty.

60. We should therefore recommit ourselves to ensure that our countries assume greater responsibility at the national level by building and strengthening national capacities particularly regarding the mastery of science and technology for development, through inter alia quality education for all. There is need to consider the possibility of creating conditions to enable the full and effective participation of all segments of African societies including women in the process of economic development. We need to empower our people to ensure that they take part in planning for development. The democratization process must be allowed to gain root throughout the Continent. Moreover, we should also endeavour to promote economic activities that target the production of increased quantities and improved quality of goods and services to meet both domestic and export demands particularly manufactured goods. We should work towards constructing and reinforcing our physical and institutional infrastructures to meet the requirements of accelerated economic transformation. Finally, we should also endeavour to place economic development and improved economic welfare for all people among the top of the national agenda.

61. In the regional and continental context we should resolve to speedily implement the existing programmes for the promotion of regional and continental integration. As there is no complete integration without free movement of people, we need to formulate plans and programmes for the free movement of our people, including movement of factors of production so as to facilitate the creation of strong dynamic internal markets in Africa, for both the essential inputs and finished products. An accelerated implementation of the Abuja Treaty also requires the building of trans-boundary transport and communications networks and other critical infrastructure and services in support of Africa's integration efforts. We also need to strengthen and rationalize the institutions, which have been set up for the promotion of continental and regional integration.

62. Since the establishment of the Organization, many important treaties and declarations have been adopted in order to address specific issues of concern to Member States. The challenge now is to ensure the ratification and/or accession of these treaties and their effective implementation by incorporating them, where appropriate, into national legislation as well as to pursue a process of continuous harmonization of relevant national laws.

63. In this regard, particular efforts should be directed at those treaties and instruments relating to the promotion and protection of human rights, the environment, socio-economic development, and the peace and stability of our nations. Indeed, the challenges of peace, security and stability confronting the continent at the dawn of the new millennium, such as conflicts, terrorism and the proliferation of small arms can only be adequately addressed if concerted efforts are made to implement fully the relevant OAU treaties, including the

OAU Charter, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba).

64. At the international level we need to recommit ourselves in the promotion of south-south cooperation. We also need to build our capacities for multilateral economic negotiations. In this regard, African countries should continue to coordinate their positions with the assistance and support of the OAU in order to strengthen their negotiating capacity and derive benefits from international negotiations, as equal partners in the international community.

65. As the Continent is preparing to enter into the new millenium it is vital that African countries and Peoples recommit themselves to the ideals of unity, solidarity and Pan-Africanism which have served Africa well. These principles have strengthened Africa's capacity and resolve in dealing with the many crises and challenges. They have, at the same time sustained the Continental Organization throughout the years despite the difficulties encountered.



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