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# Introduction to the Report of the Secretary General



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INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL



CM/1706

PREFACE

This introduction to the report is being issued in advance in order to give the Council of Ministers time to consider it before it is tabled for the discussion in the meetings to come. This practice, established since the last Session of the Council, has proved useful in enabling the delegations have an in-depth exchange of views on the issues raised in the report. This has in turn facilitated smooth and meaningful deliberations and saved valuable time.

This introduction is not exhaustive; and it is not its purpose. The activities of the General Secretariat are treated in detail in my report contained in Document No. CM/1706 (LVI) Parts II and III. This introduction is intended to highlight certain issues which, by their nature and implications to the work of the Organization, require to be singled out for attention.

It is therefore my hope that this introduction will facilitate the deliberations and expedite the work of the Council and Summit.



Salim Ahmed Salim

Dakar, 21 June, 1992.

The present Sessions of the Council of Ministers and Assembly of Heads of State and Government are being held at a time when our Organization is called upon to shoulder greater responsibilities and live up to the expectations of our peoples. After the Addis Ababa and Abuja Sessions, the meetings in Dakar have become of crucial importance in that they are expected to adopt further steps on the path towards the strengthening of the Organization and ensuring its greater relevance to the present needs of the Continent. This present Session of the Council and of the Summit will provide us with an opportunity to address the serious problems facing our Continent. In this regard, economic integration and cooperation, conflict situations, the current developments in South Africa, the on-going process of change in our Continent and the strengthening of the capacity of the OAU to meet the current challenges and priorities will no doubt be the focus of attention of both the Ministers and the Heads of State and Government. There are, of course, other issues of political, economic, social and cultural importance which equally deserve consideration by the Council and the Assembly. I shall allude to some of them in the course of this introduction to my Report.

### Economic Integration and Cooperation

2. A lot has already been said about the poor performance of African economies and the serious socio-economic situation of our Continent. The causes of this situation, both internal and external, have been clearly identified. I would like to stress here that tremendous efforts are being made by our countries to reverse this negative trend of their economies. Some signs of recovery are already apparent thus indicating clearly that the development of our Continent can be achieved if we persevere

in our efforts. These efforts are, however, being thwarted by a hostile international environment characterized by the continued deterioration of the terms of trade which operate to Africa's disadvantage, the collapse of commodity prices, external indebtedness, the negative resource flows and above all, the obvious lack of will to provide effective and sustained assistance to developing countries. These, in my view, are the major and central issues which the international community cannot avoid addressing at this tail-end of the century. In this increasingly inter-dependent world, moving towards a "global village", the issue of solidarity in development must be seriously tackled. In this connection, the meetings in Dakar, while focusing on Africa's own efforts and initiatives to overcome its difficulties, should be the opportunity to send a loud and clear message to the international community calling for genuine inter-dependence. I hope that they will also serve to boost Africa's position and role in the multilateral negotiations on trade and development, in view of the recent evolution on the international scene.

3. Africa has already committed itself to rely primarily on its own efforts, energies and resources to ensure its development. In this respect, the signing of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community heralded the era of economic integration and cooperation. But this clear and historic manifestation of Africa's commitment displayed at Abuja a year ago needs to be translated into concrete action by implementing the provisions of the Treaty. The first and important step is to realize the ratification of the Treaty. To-date, only nine Member States have ratified it. It is evident that this somewhat slow pace at Ratification is a far cry from the great expectations that electrified the atmosphere during the signing ceremony of the Treaty last year at the new Nigerian Federal Capital. I should like, therefore, to seize this opportunity to appeal once again to those Member States that have not yet done so, to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

4. Obviously, the Treaty will be given concrete form through the various protocols that have been identified. I should like to stress the importance of the Protocols which will constitute the life-blood of the Treaty. A series of priority Protocols have been identified by the Organization and so far, the Permanent Steering Committee has already concluded the first reading of the Protocols on the Relationship between the African Economic Community and the Regional Economic Communities. The Committee is expected to conclude consideration of this Protocol by the end of next year. Furthermore, the background studies on the Draft Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, the Rights of Residence and Establishment, and the Draft Protocol on Transport and Communications, have been finalized. These have been sent to all Member States and to the Regional Economic Communities for comments. Studies have also been initiated with regard to the Protocol on Trade and Customs Cooperation and on the Pan-African Parliament. I should also like to point out that work will soon start on the other Protocols such as those on Industry, Science and Technology, Agricultural Cooperation and Monetary Cooperation in keeping with the agreed Programme of Work of the Permanent Steering Committee for 1992/93.

5. At this juncture, I would like to highlight some factors which are, in my opinion, essential to the pursuit of this important and collective undertaking by Africa. Firstly, it is important to continue to have financial and technical resources to sustain our efforts. In this regard, I should like, once again, to express my appreciation to the UNDP for the assistance it has been providing. I have been and shall remain in contact with the UNDP Administrator and his colleagues to ensure that this assistance is released expeditiously and used effectively. Furthermore, I will be failing in my duty if I did not mention

the efficient and commendable support and cooperation that we have received from the ECA and ADB within the Joint OAU/ECA/ADB Secretariat. I am confident that with the excellent relations that we have established with the ADB President, Mr. Babacar N'diaye and more recently with the Acting Executive Secretary of the ECA, Mr. Issa Diallo, we will be able to successfully discharge this responsibility. Indeed I am happy to report that our three institutions attach the greatest importance to the implementation of the Abuja Treaty and are working in concert towards that objective.

6. Another important factor is related to the need for greater cooperation, coordination and harmonization between the OAU and the existing Regional Economic Groupings, through close working relations. The success of our undertaking clearly depends, to a large extent, on the capacity of the OAU to coordinate and harmonise the efforts geared towards economic integration at the regional level. While expressing my satisfaction with the existing cooperation between the OAU and the Regional Economic Groupings, it is my view that we should together strengthen this cooperation in the interest of our common undertaking.

7. The establishment of the African Economic Community will also depend on the involvement of people of all walks of life in Africa who must be sensitized about this enterprise. The OAU, with its limited resources, is making efforts to this end. However, it will obviously require additional efforts, at national level within the Member States to popularize the Treaty and the concept of the African Economic Community among the people, including government officials, the business community, workers, students, researchers and academics and the ordinary people in our Continent. Indeed it need hardly be over emphasized that this Community is, in the final analysis, a Community of the African people. They are the intended beneficiaries. It

is therefore essential that their stake in its success must not be in doubt. And this can be best realized by involving them in all practical and possible ways.

8. Finally, as the Community is a long-term project, it must be built on solid ground if we want it to take off and develop. It will ultimately depend on the degree of commitment of the Member States. I believe that the political will shown with the signing of the Treaty should be followed up by concrete action by each Member State at every stage in the process of implementation of the Treaty. The preparation of the Draft Protocols is a case in point where Member States must seriously negotiate the terms and come up with agreements to whose implementation, they will be genuinely committed. In other words, the Community of intentions put together in the Abuja Treaty, must develop into a Community of interests to be reflected in the various Protocols and other instruments of the Treaty and, more importantly, in the day to day relations among Member States.

#### CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN AFRICA

9. Our Continent is still grappling with conflict situations which seriously undermine peace and security that are sorely needed for Africa's economic recovery and development. While the trend is towards decline in inter-State conflicts and hopefully this trend will continue, it is most disturbing to observe that this has not been the case with regard to internal conflicts.

10. Apart from their adverse effects on peace and stability in the Continent and the fact that the meagre resources of the countries concerned are diverted from development, these conflicts

engender considerable suffering in terms of loss of life and destruction of property as well as the huge number of refugees and displaced persons that they generate. The gravity of the conflict situations in Africa and their attendant consequences have been the subject of intense reflection within the Organization. The focus of this reflection has been on how to equip it with the tools and resources to tackle these situations effectively.

### Western Sahara

11. It is a matter for regret that the Peace Plan, agreed upon by both Morocco and the Polisario Front and further endorsed by the UN Security Council in Resolutions 658/90 and 690/91 and the international community at large is still encountering obstacles with respect to its implementation. During my recent trip to New York, I had occasion to raise this issue with the UN Secretary-General Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali, to whom I conveyed our concern as well as our desire for a speedy implementation of the Peace Plan and OAU's readiness to make the contribution expected of it under the Peace Plan. We were encouraged by the recent designation of the UN Special Representative for Western Sahara and the steps taken to reactivate the process of implementation of the Peace Plan. With these recent developments, it is our fervent hope that, with the cooperation of the parties to the conflict, the peace process will be expedited so that a just and lasting solution could be found through the organization of a free and fair referendum for the people of Western Sahara.

### Senegal/Mauritania Dispute

12. The decision of the Governments of Mauritania and Senegal to re-establish diplomatic, air and postal links and re-open their common borders in April this year was received by us all with great gratification. I seized the opportunity to congratulate both Presidents Abdou DIOUF and Maaouya Ould TAYA for this major achievement which constitutes the culminating point of their own efforts and of various other initiatives including those of the OAU.

### Relations between Rwanda and Burundi

13. I have followed with great concern, recent developments in the relations between Rwanda and Burundi. I voiced this concern and OAU's willingness to assist in improving the relations between the two countries to the Burundi Special Envoy whom I received in Addis Ababa in April this year and to the Representative of Rwanda to the OAU. Through them, I appealed to the leaders of Rwanda and Burundi, to exercise restraint so as to avoid further deterioration in the relations between their two countries. Furthermore, in May I undertook a trip to both countries to convey my concern and to offer OAU's good offices in the efforts to deescalate tension and restore normal and friendly relations. I was encouraged by the disposition shown by the leaders of Rwanda and Burundi to normalize their relations. I was further encouraged by some of the concrete steps taken by both sides which have gone a long way towards achieving this objective.

### The Horn of Africa

14. I continue to be concerned over the situation in the Horn and the complexity as well as the nature of inter-relatedness of the conflicts raging in the region. I do

believe that the sooner peace and stability can be restored in this region which, for so long has been exposed, one way or another, to internal or inter-state conflict, the greater the impact will be on the entire Continent. Needless to say, the example of the Horn of Africa clearly demonstrates that peace and stability are indivisible within any context. That is why we were encouraged by the Summit of the countries of the Region which took place in April this year in Addis Ababa. This was immediately followed by the Regional Conference which brought together the various parties involved in conflicts in the Horn, non-governmental organizations, inter-governmental organizations, aid agencies and government representatives.

15. The Conference was a unique opportunity to address the humanitarian issues affecting the Region in the light of the "Declaration, Framework of Co-operation and Action Programme", adopted by the Horn of Africa Summit. The OAU, through the General Secretariat, participated and supported this Conference which it saw as a serious and genuine attempt to address the conflict situation in the Horn within a regional framework even if through the humanitarian perspective.

#### ETHIOPIA

16. I have closely followed developments in Ethiopia and have been in contact with the Government and other political movements as well. In all my discussions with them, I stressed the need for a spirit of restraint, flexibility and accommodation in the process of national reconciliation. I have been encouraged by the Government's determination to continue along this path. Moreover, I have constantly underscored the attachment of the OAU to peace and stability in Ethiopia and in the region. To this effect, I have reiterated the continued disposition of the Organization to assist in achieving this objective. In the context of

supporting the process of democratization in the country and pursuant to the invitation extended by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, the OAU agreed to take part in the observation of the Regional Elections in the country. The OAU Observer Team is working as part of the Joint International Observer Group.

17. I wish to report that I have received a letter from the Chairman of the Referendum Commission of Eritrea inviting the OAU to observe the forthcoming referendum scheduled for next year in Eritrea. Considering the evolution of the situation, it is my intention to undertake consultations, as appropriate, on how best our Organization can effectively respond to this invitation.

#### SUDAN

18. I have, on many occasions, expressed the importance that we, in the OAU, attach to the restoration of peace, stability and national concord in the Sudan. I was briefed regularly on the situation prevailing in that country by the Government of the Sudan which has all along reiterated its readiness to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. I was also in contact with the SPLM. I am encouraged by the fact that the efforts of the Current Chairman, H. E. President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria, finally culminated in talks between the government and the SPLM which recently took place in Abuja under the auspices of the Nigerian Government. I would urge both parties to continue on this path so that a peaceful and lasting solution can be found.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Nigerian Government and especially to President Babangida for the untiring efforts and commitment to the search of a negotiated resolution to the conflict in Sudan. It is my sincere hope that the Government of Nigeria will continue with its mission of good

offices in the larger interest of our Continent until the final triumph of peace and national reconciliation. The General Secretariat will continue to render whatever support that it is called upon to give in the achievement of this objective which is so important not only for the Sudan but for our Continent at large.

### SOMALIA

19. The situation in Somalia is still of particular concern to the OAU and to the international community at large despite the encouraging developments that have occurred in recent months. The consequences of the conflict on the civilian population are all the more tragic. Apart from the daily influx of refugees and displaced persons into the neighbouring countries, the Somali crisis has created a serious situation of famine which further compounds the disaster that has befallen the people of that country. In this regard, I despatched a team from the General Secretariat to Kenya two weeks ago, to assess the refugee situation and its impact on that country as well as to explore what the Organization can do to assist in alleviating the plight of refugees. No doubt, the observance of the cease-fire has allowed for the initial delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Somali capital. It must however be acknowledged that this is clearly inadequate to meet the huge requirements of humanitarian need in the country. While commending the efforts made by the international community to assist Somalia, and hailing the courage of the representatives of international non-governmental organizations operating in that country, I would like to renew my urgent appeal for massive assistance to Somalia. This is a major prerequisite for the re-establishment of security in the country especially as it is, as of now, in the throes of a rising wave of armed robbery caused, inter alia, by the famine which could ruin

the efforts of the international organizations if not arrested in time.

20. In the course of the last six months, the OAU, in co-operation with the UN, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, has pursued the efforts it had initiated in order to restore peace in Somalia. The Council will recall in this regard that the joint efforts of the four organizations culminated in the holding of consultations which brought the Mogadishu warring factions to New York on 12 and 13 February this year. The consultations ended up with the signing of a declaration in which the parties pledged to halt all hostilities and to observe a cease-fire. The General Secretariat was represented at the New York consultations by the Assistant Secretary-General in-charge of Political Affairs, who subsequently went to Mogadishu and Kismayu as part of a joint UN/OAU/LAS/OIC delegation. The mission to Mogadishu had a dual purpose: firstly, to determine the practical ways and means of implementing the cease-fire in Mogadishu and secondly, to embark on consultations in preparation for the national reconciliation conference. The mission concluded with the signing of an Agreement on the implementation of the cease-fire, on March 3, 1992, by General AIDID and Mr. Ali MAHDI. The technical details of the Agreement were discussed between the parties concerned and a UN Technical Team to which a representative of the General Secretariat was associated. The deployment of a team of observers to monitor the cease-fire in Mogadishu and the despatch of UN Security personnel to provide protection for humanitarian-relief related activities were accepted, in principle, by the parties.

21. In view of the recent developments in Somalia, I have decided to send a mission to assess the situation on the spot. It met with the two warring factions in Mogadishu and, it would appear, the cease-fire is holding in Mogadishu

and new ground is being broken with regard to convening a conference on national reconciliation. The factions in Mogadishu and in the rest of the country have clearly expressed their desire to participate in such a conference. However, practical arrangements for its convening still have to be worked out together. It is along these lines that the General Secretariat intends to proceed in future, in close cooperation with the UN and other regional organizations involved in the process of resolving the conflict in Somalia. Our efforts may still fail if they are not grounded on a cease-fire agreement that is effective throughout the country. This is all the more essential, given the precarious situation now prevailing in the Southern and Northern regions of Somalia.

22. As part of the efforts to find a solution to the conflict in Somalia, the Horn of Africa Summit set up a Standing Committee to seek a political solution to the conflict. This Committee met with eleven Somali factions in Bahr Dar (Ethiopia) from the 31st of May to the 5th of June 1992 and, at the end of their proceedings, a political declaration and an agreement were adopted. I was briefed by the members of the Committee on the conclusions of the Bahr Dar meeting. I encouraged them to pursue their efforts geared towards promoting a peaceful solution to the conflict and assured them of the support of the OAU in this regard.

23. Finally, I would like to express my satisfaction with the cooperation existing between our Organization and the United Nations particularly in our joint and determined endeavour to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Somalia. In this regard, our two Organizations are in constant contact either directly in my communications with the United Nations Secretary-General or through his Special Representative to Somalia.

**LIBERIA**

24. Since the last Session of the Council, there have been encouraging developments in the Liberian conflict. The informal consultative group meeting of the ECOWAS Committee of Five which convened in Geneva in April this year, under the auspices of President Houphouet-BOIGNY of Cote d'Ivoire, agreed on the creation of a buffer zone along the Liberia/Sierra Leone border and on the deployment of ECOMOG forces throughout Liberia. I would like to urge all the parties concerned including the NPFL of Mr. Charles Taylor, to extend their support to and facilitate ECOMOG's mission within Liberia. It is also pertinent here to record our appreciation for the efforts and sacrifices made by the ECOMOG Members. It is my sincere hope that the international community would accord proper recognition to this valiant effort by African States to resolve an African problem. The international community should also rise to the challenge of providing the much required assistance to the ECOWAS countries so as to enable them to effectively pursue this important mission. At the same time, I wish once again to launch an appeal for the provision of humanitarian and other assistance to the people of Liberia. It is above all of vital importance that urgent assistance be forthcoming to ensure the return and resettlement of Liberian refugees, the logistical support for the peace process as well as for the eventual reconstruction of that country.

**RWANDA**

25. My trip to Rwanda last month had a dual objective. The first which has already been alluded to was part of the efforts aimed at helping in the normalization of relations between the two fraternal Central African States of Rwanda and Burundi. The second objective was to make an on the

spot assessment of the current status of the conflict between the Government and the Rwandese Patriotic Front and seeing how the OAU can continue to assist in finding a peaceful solution to it. To this end, I had lengthy and constructive discussions with the leaders of the Transitional Government of Rwanda including the President, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and other Ministers.

26. I was encouraged by the disposition of the Rwandese Government to seek a resolution of the conflict through dialogue and direct negotiations with the RPF. This commitment was repeatedly reiterated to me and I am convinced of the genuine disposition of the Transitional Government to pursue a peaceful settlement. Earlier in the month I had also met with the leaders of the Rwandese Patriotic Front who also expressed to me their desire and commitment to seek a resolution of the conflict through negotiations.

27. I left Rwanda encouraged by the prospects of peace in the making though there was no doubt that a lot of hurdles had yet to be overcome. Since then talks have taken place in Paris from 6 to 8 June 1992 between the Representatives of the Rwandese Government and the Rwandese Patriotic Front. A second round of talks is expected to take place in the region. In the meantime however, it is very distressing to note the recent escalation of the fighting which has brought more death, suffering and destruction to the Rwandese people. I regret very much this escalation of fighting and fervently appeal to the parties to the conflict to put a definite end to this fighting and pursue instead, the path of dialogue and negotiations which both parties have unequivocally committed themselves to. It is imperative that the ceasefire Agreement signed at Nsele in March 1991 the validity of which, both parties have in their most recent talks reaffirmed, should be scrupulously respected by both parties.

28. Finally I wish also to appeal to all the countries of the region and especially all the neighbouring countries to do their utmost to assist the parties in the quest for an end to the conflict, the achievement of peace and national reconciliation. In particular, I believe that the various measures and undertakings taken by the Transitional Government of Rwanda to address itself to some of the underlying causes of the conflict merit our encouragement and support.

#### MOZAMBIQUE

29. The situation in Mozambique continues to be of great concern in view of the fact that despite the efforts made by the government of that country in the search for a peaceful solution through dialogue and negotiations, no significant progress has been made so far. It is important that RENAMO be urged to show flexibility and a sense of compromise so that the process may be pursued on more serious grounds leading to a lasting solution. The serious drought affecting Mozambique makes the continuation of the war imposed on the people of Mozambique a sure prescription for greater disaster.

#### ANGOLA

30. Angola has made commendable efforts to achieve peace and national reconciliation. I wish to encourage the Government and the people of Angola to persevere in their on-going efforts to restore peace and harmony in the country. I also wish to appeal to the parties concerned, in particular UNITA, to comply fully with the letter and the spirit of Peace Accords and to desist from any action that may jeopardize the peace process. The OAU like the rest of the world community looks forward with great expectations to an orderly and peaceful conduct of general elections in that country in September this year.

REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN AFRICA

31. The scourge of refugees often as a result of the escalating wars and conflicts has interacted with natural disasters to bring tremendous suffering and sorrow to the people of Africa. I wish to note that in recent months, a number of Member States have taken encouraging measures to address the root causes of refugees and displaced persons in our continent. Determined efforts have been expended to ensure the voluntary repatriation of refugees from their countries of asylum as well as to enable them exercise the options of settlement or naturalization in the receiving States. Equally, the on-going political reforms in many countries, have created more conducive political environment which has contributed to some alleviation of this problem.

32. However, despite these commendable initiatives, fratricidal conflicts, compounded by natural disasters in some parts of the continent, have continued to result in population movements within and outside African countries. As the situation of Africa's refugees and displaced persons continues to worsen, the OAU has called on the international community, including the non-governmental organizations, to increase their assistance in support for the Continent's efforts to bring relief and humanitarian assistance to the effected persons.

33. I would like at this juncture to commend Member States, the International Donor Community and the UNHCR in particular, for the assistance they have been providing to alleviate the suffering of up-rooted persons in Africa. But at the same time, while re-emphasizing our determined efforts to peacefully settle conflicts, enhance the participation of our people in the political and economic processes, and to put in place institutions to consolidate and sustain democracy, I wish to appeal to all our partners, both within

and outside Africa, especially the UNHCR, to give requisite attention to the refugee problem in Africa and to redouble their assistance to its up-rooted communities.

#### MECHANISMS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION, MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION

34. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government, in 1990 adopted the Declaration on the Political and Socio-economic Situation in Africa, and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World by which our leaders, among other things, committed themselves to exert greater refforts towards the creation of an enabling environment for conflict prevention, management and resolution. While commendable eforts have been made by the Organization in the past to resolve conflicts, it was not always able to carry them through with the required speed and efficiency. In this regard, in my report to the Twenty-seventh Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Abuja, I stressed the need to undertake a re-structuring exercise within the Secretariat, with a view to making its structures more responsive to the new responsibilities, including that of conflict management. In this connection, I was pleased that the Fifty-fifth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers, held in Addis Ababa, in February this year, approved, among others, my proposal on the establishment of a Division of Conflict Management, within the OAU General Secretariat. At the same Session, my proposal on the setting up of a permanent mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution within the OAU using the Bureau of the Summit as the principal organ responsible for this mechanism was also endorsed.

35. Subsequently, I embarked on consultations aimed at setting up a mechanism for consideration by this Council and Summit. The proposed mechanism is described in the final chapter of my report on conflict Situations in Africa, Document

CM/1710 (LVI). The main thrust of the proposed mechanism is to provide a framework within which our Organization can act swiftly and with maximum efficiency in cases of conflict through the Bureau of the Summit as the overall organ responsible for the mechanism, the Secretary-General and of course with the consent and co-operation of the Governments and/or parties concerned. I am of the firm view that the immediate past Chairman should be part of the Bureau for the current year in order to ensure continuity.

36. In view of the financial implications inherent in the establishment and operation of such a mechanism, I am proposing that a Special Fund be created to sustain the activities of the Organization in the field of conflict management, prevention and resolution. I am also proposing that a sum of US\$ 1 million from the regular budget be set aside for this purpose. It is also proposed that the Fund should receive voluntary contributions from within and outside Africa. Moreover, there is provision within the mechanism for cooperation between the OAU and the UN on the one hand and with African Regional Organizations on the other.

37. I wish to stress that my overriding consideration in submitting this proposal for a mechanism is to enable our continent and our Organization to address themselves to this burning issue of conflicts within our societies and at times among our countries which bleed our people and squander our resources. Africa must be in the forefront in attempting first to prevent conflicts and where they have erupted to doing everything possible to contain and ultimately resolve them. African countries and their continental Organization should be the first point of call rather than taking a back seat. This is particularly important if we are to confound the advocates of the misplaced notion of "Afro-pessimism". Above all it is crucial if we are to live up to our wishes and aspirations that African problems should

first and foremost be resolved by Africans. And I believe that considering our Continent's potential and experience, this is one area where the OAU with the support of Member States can and should make a major contribution.

38. The mechanism proposed comprises some ideas put together as a result of some consultations and in the light of the experiences thus accumulated in the area of peace-making, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. I believe that Council will enrich these proposals. Clearly for these efforts to succeed, the consent and cooperation of all States and in particular the Governments and/or parties concerned is a condition prerequisite. But whatever the mechanism that eventually emerges, what is important is that the Council and later the Summit should decide to do something concrete in overcoming this scourge of conflicts confronting our continent. In doing so the Dakar Summit will be a turning point in making our Organization more relevant to the needs of the hour and expectations of our people.

#### SOUTH AFRICA

39. The situation in southern Africa continues to be a matter of concern and still poses a serious challenge to our continental Organization. Since the February Session of the Council during which the Ministers engaged in a thorough analysis of the situation in the light of the whites-only referendum and the violence in the townships, the Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa convened in Arusha (Tanzania)

in April this year to assess the situation in the country and map out a clear strategy on how to support the process of change in South Africa.

40. The Ad Hoc Committee deplored the inability of the government to maintain peace and security and to arrest the wave of violence. It decided to dispatch a monitoring group to South Africa to assess inter alia, the situation of violence in that country. I would like to report in this respect that the OAU monitoring team comprising the Ambassadors of Nigeria, Algeria, Congo, Uganda and Zimbabwe accredited to the OAU together with two senior officials of the Organization went to South Africa in May this year. This team which was led by the Nigerian Permanent Representative to the OAU was able to meet with all the main political actors in the country including the Liberation Movements, government officials, political parties and other groups. The report presented to me by the Monitoring Team will be circulated to members of the Council during this Session for information.

41. On the current negotiations in progress within the CODESA framework, the Ad Hoc Committee appealed to the liberation movements and to all the democratic forces in South Africa to take advantage of the process to expedite the transition towards a democratic and non-racial society in South Africa. It also made an urgent appeal for unity among the liberation movements and other democratic forces within the framework of the Patriotic Front.

42. The Ad-hoc Committee further addressed the issue of relations with South Africa and noted that some countries had taken unilateral steps to lift sanctions against that country. This clearly went beyond the Common Position agreed upon by the international community which referred to a phased withdrawal of sanctions. The Committee resolved that only with the advent of an interim government responsible for supervising the transition to democratic rule, including the holding of free and fair elections under universal adult suffrage and a common voters roll, can Africa and the rest of the world enter into a meaningful relationship with South Africa.

43. I would like to state at this juncture that the OAU, through the Ad-hoc Committee on Southern Africa, has adopted a clear stand on current developments in South Africa by specifically determining the stage of irreversibility in the process of change before the rest of the international community can completely open up to South Africa. We do realize that significant progress has been made in the process of negotiations. However, the path is still strewn with enormous obstacles. The serious difficulties facing CODESA II clearly demonstrate that the situation is still precarious and that vigilance has to be exercised so as to ensure that the process is neither reversed nor aborted. That is why our support and assistance to the liberation movements and all the other democratic forces in South Africa are all the more vital at this crucial phase in our protracted struggle. It is equally important that any and every pressure continue to be exerted on South Africa to ensure that CODESA II bears fruit and that an interim Government is set up as soon as possible.

The Process of Change in Africa

44. The on-going process of change in Africa continues to raise debates both within and outside our Continent. Much has been said on this issue since the Heads of State and Government adopted the Declaration On Fundamental Changes in Addis Ababa in 1990 and collectively committed themselves to the further democratization of our societies. Since then we have been arguing that the present developments have their genesis in the very struggle for the political emancipation and for the dignity and freedom of our peoples. It is therefore, a matter of pride that we are witnessing the rebirth of a new Africa imbued with the traditions of democratic rule and human rights which have always been part of its culture and values.

45. Our Continent is now fully engaged in the process of change. We cannot over-emphasize the need for such change to take place in a peaceful and orderly manner. It is therefore important in this respect to develop a culture of tolerance and to build solid institutions to sustain the democratic systems in our countries taking into account our own culture, traditions and value systems.

46. I am happy to note that our Organization is being associated in the management of this process. This is a new and very challenging responsibility. We consider this a sign of confidence placed in it by its Member States. The great expectations and hopes of African countries and peoples in the OAU's ability to help in this process are obviously beyond the current capacity of the Organization. Indeed,

the OAU is not appropriately equipped and has not acquired enough experience so far to deal with this new area of responsibility.

47 To date, the OAU has participated at the request of the Member States concerned, in the observation of elections in the Comoros, Benin, Cape Verde, Zambia and Mali. We expect to do the same in other countries in the near future.

48. I wish to report that I have managed to respond positively to all the requests made so far by sending observer teams. At this juncture, I should like to express my appreciation to the Member States, whom I have approached in some cases, for the cooperation they have extended to me by making available senior officials to be part of the observer teams. I believe this is yet another area where Member States and the Secretariat can work hand in hand and develop a credible African expertise in election observation. It is indeed, a matter of pride and satisfaction to note that African countries are increasingly resorting to Africans to observe elections. It is also encouraging to see that Member States are willing to extend to the OAU an enhanced role whenever other international observers are involved in this exercise.

49. A case in point is that of Togo where the three main political institutions count tremendously on OAU's help and assistance in the process of transition and attach great importance to its involvement in all stages of the process. In view of the recent upsurge of tension in that country, I undertook a short trip to Togo where I met all the parties involved and urged them to exercise restraint and moderation in the interest of a peaceful and orderly transition. I



also despatched an OAU team, at the request of the Togolese authorities, to observe the registration of voters. Finally, I would like to report that the Togolese authorities have made it known to me that they are expecting a significant contribution from the OAU during the forthcoming series of elections. They count on OAU playing a major monitoring and coordinating role in this exercise.

50. In view of the above expectations, the issue is how to equip our Organization with the necessary resources to enable it carry out the tasks required in this area of responsibility. To this end, I convened a meeting which brought together African Ambassadors in Addis Ababa and OAU officials who had participated in the election observation and engaged in a thorough debate on this issue, in the light of our modest experience in the field. It is my intention to follow up this initial exchange of views on the matter in order to formulate concrete guidelines for the OAU in election observation and monitoring. I am convinced that much can be done in this respect by largely making use of the human resources available within the Continent.

51. I am of the view that, for an observer mission to be serious and credible, it should supervise the entire process of election. It should do so with a high degree of professionalism and integrity. All this inter-alia involves heavy financial commitments. If our Organization, therefore, has to carry out this task adequately, we should be ready to provide it with the necessary financial resources. To supplement the efforts within the Continent, I have already approached some international institutions and organizations as well as some countries outside Africa willing to support our own efforts. They have expressed their readiness to

provide the OAU with the necessary assistance particularly in the area of capacity building. This Council may wish to provide guidelines on how best the OAU can cope with this new and in my opinion relevant and important area of responsibility.

**STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE OAU**  
**AND ITS CAPACITY TO DELIVER**

52. Our Continent is presently engaged in a process of Economic Integration and Cooperation, Conflict Resolution and Management of Political Change. This will require that our Organization adapt and equip itself to face all these new areas of responsibility.

53. The last Session of the Council approved an interim reorganization of the General Secretariat with greater focus on new priority areas. The present Session is expected to examine a proposed mechanism for conflict management and consider the ways and means of enhancing the ability of the Organization to assist in the process of change. This is a herculean task which has to be taken up by the OAU if it is to be relevant to the peoples and countries of Africa. This of course requires that we, in the General Secretariat, redouble our efforts to live up to this responsibility. It also calls for renewed and greater commitment on the part of Member States to the objectives and new responsibilities assigned to the Organization. In this regard, the central issue is that of the financial commitment of Member States to the OAU. While I do acknowledge the serious efforts made by Member States to honour their financial obligations, I wish to state that the situation is still a matter for serious concern. Member States have accumulated huge amounts in terms of arrears of contributions while the rate of payments to the budget which has just ended in May this year did not mark any improvement from previous years. On the contrary, there has been a decline in the rate and amount of contributions.

54. The Council may recall that, at its last Session, it decided to use 10% of the arrears of contribution to finance the regular budget of the current year. I then drew the attention of Council to the fact that this arrangement is workable only if Member States commit themselves to pay their arrears and contributions regularly. Unless this is the case, this arrangement can only undermine the exercise and diminish the resource base of the Organization. It is therefore my view that the Council was well-advised in its decision at the last Session in Addis ababa, to table as a permanent item on the agenda of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the issue of the arrears of contributions of Member States to the regular budget of the OAU. It is my confident hope that this issue will be given appropriate consideration by the Assembly.

55. Our Organization is now called upon to play a greater role in the Continent. This is occurring at a time when fundamental changes are taking place at the international level requiring that the Organization reconsider its role and position in the international context. It is more than ever before necessary for Africa to close its ranks so that it can more efficiently defend its interests at the international level. This brings to the fore the need for our Continent to be present at the main international centres where decisions of major importance affecting Africa are made. We should perhaps make greater use of our African Groups in the main international capitals by opening channels of communication between them and the OAU. This also raises the issue of OAU's presence in the capital of the United States of America.

56. During my visit to the United States in April this year, the importance of the issue was repeatedly emphasized in my discussions with the African Diplomatic Corps, Congressmen, members of the Senate and other influential

personalities including those who have been in the forefront in support of African causes. They all underscored the vital importance of OAU's presence in Washington, D.C so as to help build an African constituency in that country. Indeed a couple of years back, the opening of an office in Washington was approved in principle by the Council of Ministers. This has so far not materialized. However, in the meantime, a decision was taken to assign an officer in our New York Office to cover Washington. This arrangement proved, in practice, to be inadequate. I do believe that, with minimum financial commitment, it would be possible to open an OAU Office which will be the focal point and the nucleus of the liaison network to be developed.

57. While in the United States and in the course of my discussions among others with Government Officials, the President of the World Bank and his close associates, I briefed them on the agenda and priorities of the OAU. I specifically emphasized that in order for Africa's on-going efforts, both in the political and economic fields to bear fruit and endure, they must be complemented with the support and economic assistance of the international community.

#### OTHER ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

##### Drought Situation in Africa

58. This situation, which was already a serious cause for concern when it mainly affected the regions of the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, has now been further aggravated with the unexpected drought of unprecedented proportions in the Southern Africa region. I had the opportunity, during a visit to Zimbabwe, to personally witness the gravity of this scourge now affecting an area, which was traditionally a net exporter of food and food products. Apart from the immediate adverse effect on the populations concerned, coupled

with the suffering and other humanitarian relief-related needs that this drought engenders, it threatens to become a major obstacle to economic development and recovery. This situation, in my view, is a lot more tragic than it looks and Africa should address it seriously. We should perhaps review our agricultural strategies emphasizing more on food security and think in terms of setting up strategic food reserves at the regional and, possibly, continental levels. I would like to seize this opportunity to make an urgent appeal to Member States in particular and to the international community in general, to provide the required assistance to the affected countries. I would, more specifically, appeal for assistance, particularly in the field of logistics and transportation, which is complex and intricate. We were most encouraged by the outcome of the Pledging Conference which took place in Geneva recently at the initiative of the UN Secretary-General. Our sincere hope is that the pledges made will indeed be translated into concrete action so as to alleviate the immense needs of the affected population.

59. Finally, I would like to draw attention to the fact that Africa had established some years back a framework for solidarity with its affected populations when it decided to create a Special Emergency Fund for Drought and Famine. This Fund has, so far, made a significant contribution towards alleviating the suffering occasioned in many parts of our Continent by drought and famine. I would appeal to Member States, as well as to the international community to contribute towards the replenishment of the Fund.

### Environment

60. The drought situation in Africa coupled with other natural disasters such as floods and cyclones clearly points to the vulnerability of our continent to environmental hazards and the vital importance of the environment in the sustainable development of Africa.

61. Africa's interest in environmental issues is longstanding. As far back as 1968 it adopted a Convention on the Conservation and Protection of Nature and Natural Resources. It is this same concern that led on to the adoption of the Bamako Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes. I wish to seize this opportunity to appeal to those Member States which have not yet signed or ratified these Conventions to consider doing so.

62. Earlier this month, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development convened in Rio De Janeiro (Brazil) to chart out a course for the future in the field of the environment and development. It was an opportunity for mankind to elaborate programmes for joint global action to safeguard our environment. Africa participated effectively and was able to put across its concerns, as contained in its Common Position on the agenda of the Conference. In addition, the high level participation of many leaders and experts from our countries, testifies to the seriousness with which the Continent views the imperative of combatting the degradation of our environment. The Earth Summit made some important accomplishments. In particular, I note that it was possible to reach agreement on Conventions on Biodiversity and Climatic Change, the Forest Principles as well as to enter into a commitment to elaborate a Convention on Desertification. This notwithstanding, it was regrettable that the overriding issue of global poverty which is the primary cause of environmental degradation was not seriously addressed. Similarly regrettable was the reluctance of our partners in the Developed North to commit the resources required to promote a partnership in the global management of the environment for sustainable development within the context of Agenda 21.

63. The "Earth Summit" in Rio De Janeiro was apart from these considerations a sensitization Conference. Now more than ever before, Africa must address itself more resolutely to the imperative of safeguarding our environment. This will require that we make environment a central issue in our planning and ensure that it is integrally incorporated in our development programmes. At the same time our countries should work in concert and in a coordinated manner in making the appropriate follow up to the "Earth Summit" especially on the implementation of Agenda 21.

#### Health Situation in Africa: The AIDS Pandemic

64. The health situation in Africa, as a reflection of the economic situation in our Continent, is a matter of concern. In addition to the poor health care delivery and facilities and the major endemic diseases which undermine the health situation of our populations, Africa is now faced with a new and terrible scourge that affects the very survival of our peoples. I am referring in this respect to this AIDS pandemic. The Council and Summit will be seized with this matter in their consideration of the declaration proposed by the Extraordinary Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Health which convened in Geneva during the World Health Assembly meeting.

65. Concerted and determined efforts definitely need to be made to combat this scourge. In this regard, the importance of adequately sensitizing our populations on the dangers of this disease and on the precautionary measures that have to be taken need not be over-emphasized. It is also vital that we mobilize resources for this purpose both within and outside Africa.

### The Situation of Children in Africa

66. In Africa, children constitute the most vulnerable category of the population and the most highly exposed to disease, natural calamities and conflicts. In order to sensitize the leaders of Africa and the International Community at large, to the needs of Africa's children, the Abuja Session of the Council of Ministers requested the General Secretariat, in collaboration with UNICEF, to organize an International Conference on Assistance to the African Child. I am grateful to President DIOUF and the Government of Senegal for having offered to host this Conference which is now scheduled for Dakar from 25 to 27 Novemebr, 1992. I would further wish to stress the importance of careful preparation of the Conference if it is to achieve its objectives. Member States are urged to communicate their national projects to the Secretariat. In view of this Conference, I would like to call on those Member States that have not signed or ratified the Convention on the African Child to consider doing so soon.

### Cultural Dimension of Development

67. Our Continent is now engaged in a process of economic integration and cooperation requiring the re-structuring of the economic space. The economic space that is envisaged cannot be based solely on economic and material considerations. It has to be built by men and women bound by the common desire to live together and build the Community together. In other words, we need a cultural undertaking to cement and consolidate the Community's edifice from within. Culture is an important factor of development which can neither be neglected nor ignored in view of the fact that it can either slow it down or boost it tremendously. Since the Council is seized with a series of issues of a cultural nature, I

am in no doubt that this issue will be adequately addressed. Moreover, which other venue would be more propitious than Dakar for us to activate the cultural dimension of our economic integration project within the framework of the African Economic Community!

### Conclusion

68. Africa stands at the threshold of a new era. As we look back at the almost three decades of existence of the OAU, Africa can rightly take pride in its achievement in the field of decolonization. Africa is now basically free. Even in South Africa, the process of negotiations, notwithstanding the many difficulties it is facing and is bound to face, holds promise that at last South Africans as a society can break loose the shackles of racism. The continent is going through a period of transition. As we grapple with this transition and further democratization, we are faced with the daunting challenge of ensuring that it is managed well and change is effected without prejudice to social order and to the gains of the three decades of independence. The OAU is strongly encouraged by the increasing dispositions of Member States to associate it with the management of that change. This is a new area of responsibility; and as we gather experience, we will continually put it at the service of Member States.

69. The process of ratification of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community has begun; I hope that it will be expedited so that, with the entry of the Treaty into force, we can embark on the arduous task of forging the Community our Continent wants and needs. The challenge of building the Community lies beyond its ratification - important as it is. It lies in our ability to forge links based on the common interests and aspirations of the people of Africa, which we want to articulate within

the setting of that Community. For that Community will not be one of goods and services, but of people. As we begin on the road of elaborating the institutional aspects of that Community, so must we redouble our efforts at its popularization. The people of Africa, who are the ultimate beneficiary of that Community must be fully involved in its building and be made to feel part of it and with a stake in its consolidation and preservation.

70. These are some of the objectives we have challenged ourselves to meet. But to be able to handle them, as well as other equally important and demanding issues of preserving the environment, of the drought ravaging the Southern parts of Africa, famine as well as of ending the scourge of refugees, Africa will a priori, have to have peace and stability. Conflicts in the continent, within and among States, have not only consumed our much needed resources, they have divided nations, undermined the foundations of unity of our Continent and seriously compromised our ability to pursue development. Africa is now determined to pursue with resolute vigour the imperative of ending conflicts, of bringing about peace and stability in the Continent. I have been gratified that this renewed determination on the part of Member States is being pursued in tandem with challenging the OAU to play an increasingly enhanced role in assisting in the promotion of peaceful resolution of conflicts.

71. The lack of an institutional mechanism within the OAU, which is accepted by Member States, has, to a great degree, been a handicap to attempts to handle conflicts. In the days ahead, the Council will have opportunity to deliberate on the whole question of conflicts and consider

the proposal, which I am making for a mechanism for conflict resolution. What is important is that Africa must re seize the initiative and take the lead in resolving its own conflicts instead of being reactive to those of others often from outside the Continent. Only if we reassert our role as those primarily responsible for resolving these conflicts can we be able to determine our future. It is our responsibility; we owe it to ourselves and our future generations.

72. Dakar should provide the opportunity to make the important and far-reaching decisions which we need.



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# Introduction to the Report of Secretary General

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