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**FOURTH EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT  
OF THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE  
AND GOVERNMENT**

**8 – 9 September, 1999**

**Sirte, Libya**

**EAHG/Draft/DECL. (IV)Rev.1**

**DRAFT**  
**SIRTE DECLARATION**

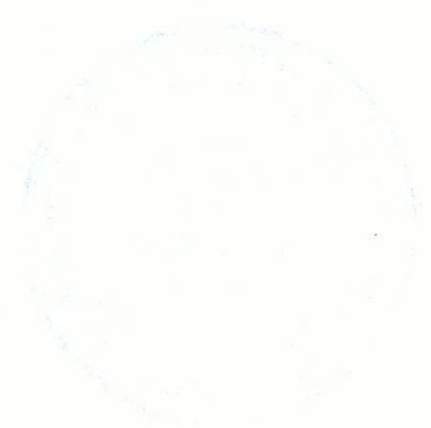




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We, the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), meeting at the Fourth Extraordinary Session of our Assembly in Sirte, in the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, from 8 – 9 September 1999, to discuss ways and means of strengthening our continental Organization to make it more effective so as to keep pace with the social, political and economic developments taking place within the context of globalization,

**DECLARE AS FOLLOWS:**

1. In May 1963, when the Organization of African Unity was established, the Founding Fathers were guided by a common desire to:

- promote the unity and solidarity of the African States;
- coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;
- defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence;
- eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and
- promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. The Founding Fathers of our Organization were convinced that African peoples on the Continent and people of African descent in the diaspora, would best succeed in their struggles against colonialism, neo-colonialism, racial minority rule and other forms of subjugation and domination, within the context of a shared spirit of Pan-Africanism, based on unity, solidarity and cohesion as well as co-operation between African peoples and among African States.



3. We note with satisfaction that our continental Organization has endeavoured since its inception, to live up to those expectations and ideals. We are encouraged by the heroic struggles waged by our peoples and our governments during the last century of this millennium for political independence, human dignity and economic emancipation. We salute the heroism and the sacrifices of our peoples, particularly during the liberation struggles and the efforts they made to promote and consolidate African unity.

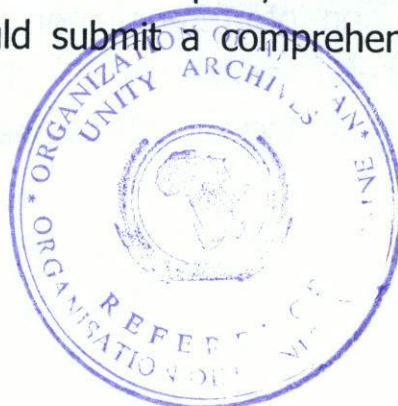
4. As we come to the end of the second millennium, we are increasingly conscious of the imperative need to strengthen our Continental Organization and to rekindle the aspirations of our peoples for further unity, solidarity and cohesion in a larger community of peoples transcending linguistic, ideological, ethnic and national differences. We are convinced that our collective thinking and actions will continue to be inspired by our past experiences and that they will serve to prepare Africa to face the challenges of the next millennium, especially, those posed within the context of globalization.

5. It is our conviction that in order to cope with those challenges and to effectively address the new social, political and economic realities in Africa, our continental Organization needs to be revitalized in order to be able to play a more active role and continue to be relevant to the needs of our peoples and responsive to the demands of the prevailing situation. To this end, we recommit ourselves to vigorously pursue the process of reform and renewal of the General Secretariat of our Organization to enable it play a more catalytic role. We pledge to support and strengthen the General Secretariat and provide it with the necessary resources to function more effectively. In particular, we pledge to honour our financial obligations to the Organisation.



6. Important measures have been adopted to streamline and adjust the structures of the General Secretariat. In adopting those measures, we signalled our determination to ensure that the working methods, systems and structures of the General Secretariat are reviewed especially as we transit to a phase characterised by new challenges including conflict resolution, democratisation, observance of human rights, economic integration and social emancipation .

7. In our resolve to strengthen our continental Organization we also initiated a process to review the Charter of the OAU. We recognise that this process must be pursued more vigorously in order to adapt the Charter to the new realities and enhance the effectiveness of the Organization in the light of socio-economic and political developments. In this regard, the process shall be guided by the various Decisions adopted by our Assembly, in particular by: the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos of April 1980, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Addis Ababa Declaration of July 1990, on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes taking place in the World, the Treaty Establishing The African Economic Community, the 1993 Cairo Declaration establishing, within the OAU, a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the African Nuclear Weapon – Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba) and the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The process shall also be guided by all the deliberations of our Assembly including those of our last session held in Algiers, Algeria, in July 1999, especially the decision to reject unconstitutional changes and the Algiers Declaration. In this respect, we direct that the Charter Review Committee should submit a comprehensive report to our next Summit.





8. We recommit ourselves to vigorously pursue the agenda for peace, security and stability in our Continent. In this regard, we reaffirm our resolve to address the scourge of conflicts in Africa. We are determined to strengthen the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, particularly its preventive aspects and to develop an Early Warning capacity for conflict prevention, management and resolution. In reiterating this commitment, we recognise the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.
9. We reaffirm our commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, representing a threat to international security and an impediment to development. Africa has contributed its share by adopting and implementing the Treaty of Pelindaba. We reiterate our support to the process of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle-East in view of the inter-dependence of security between the two regions.
10. We are deeply convinced that the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, constitutes a major and positive achievement towards promoting human rights values, stability and socio-economic development in Africa. We urge the international community to conclude a Global International Convention in the same vein, through the convening of an International Summit Conference under the auspices of the United Nations.
11. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles stipulated in the Charters of the OAU and the UN on the respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference, non-use of force in international relations and peaceful settlement of disputes and We recommit ourselves to resolve conflicts in Africa peacefully and to continue to



provide support to those countries emerging from conflicts. We call upon the international community to beef-up our efforts in conflict prevention, management and resolution as well as post-conflict reconciliation, reconstruction and development endeavours.

12. We are also concerned that the proliferation of conflicts has resulted in an ever-increasing number of refugees and displaced persons on our Continent. We are determined to address the root causes of the refugee problem in Africa as stated in the Khartoum Declaration on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons. We are also determined to find a solution to the phenomenon of "armed refugees" which has resulted in the destabilization of some of our countries and further complicated the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

13. We reaffirm our determination to continue to encourage and support the on-going democratization process on the Continent. We regard the process of democratization in Africa to be critical in sustaining our efforts towards the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights as well as respect for the rule of law. We also consider the need to build institutional capacities for good governance as being critical to our efforts to release the energies and creativity of our peoples to focus more on economic transformation and sustainable development with a human face. In this regard, we pledge to support institutions of civil society and the media which have an important role to play in informing and educating the people.

14. Whilst recognizing the efforts that we have made in addressing violations of human rights in Africa, as well as our contributions to the universalization of human rights, we note with regret that violations still continue to occur in some parts of our continent, thus constituting a serious impediment to the freedom and socio-economic



development of our peoples. In this regard, we recommit ourselves to take up the challenge of promoting and protecting human rights in our Continent as a matter of priority, as was solemnly expressed in the Grand Bay (Mauritius) Declaration and Plan of Action of April 1999. We also recommit ourselves to ensure the early establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights as stipulated in the Protocol we adopted in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in June 1998.

15. In our collective resolve to strengthen our continental Organization, we recommit ourselves to ensure the ratification of accession to all the Treaties and Protocols that we have collectively adopted. Furthermore, we undertake to ensure a speedy incorporation of these legal instruments into national legislation where appropriate, including the process of harmonization of relevant national laws. We further recommit ourselves to follow closely the implementation of the Decisions and Resolutions that we have adopted for the benefit of our peoples and governments.

16. On the economic front, we recognize that during the last three decades, our Continent has undertaken economic reforms that paved the way for modest development and economic growth. Nevertheless, we remain concerned that widespread poverty and underdevelopment continue to stunt the potential in many of our countries. We reaffirm our strong commitment to pursue our agenda of action aimed at ensuring poverty eradication through accelerated economic growth and social justice on the one hand and the integration of our economies and the attainment of sustainable development in Africa, on the other. In this our endeavour, we call upon the international community to continue to support us with increased resources.



17. In that regard, we have provided our Continent with an adequate framework for the orderly and sustained development of our countries in the social and economic fields by having adopted and ratified the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. We, hereby, rededicate ourselves to the key provisions and objectives of the Treaty, including in particular, the establishment of an African Parliament which will make it a Community of Peoples.

18. We acknowledge and commend the progress made so far in various sectors by our Regional Economic Communities which are the building blocks of our continental economic institution. We firmly renew our individual and collective resolve to strengthen these Communities through increased political, material and financial support.

19. We recognize that in order to enhance our collective resolve for an accelerated implementation of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, we would need to put in place a viable system of transport and communications network and energy infrastructure and to preserve and protect the environment on our Continent. We are, therefore, determined to mobilize the necessary expertise and resources to achieve these particular objectives. In this regard, we direct the General Secretariat to take the necessary steps to ensure speedy completion of relevant Protocols related to the implementation of the Treaty for our consideration and adoption.

20. We recognize the need for increased food production through improved agriculture, livestock, fishery and research. We, therefore, firmly resolve to take all necessary and urgent measures to attain, on a permanent and sustainable basis, food self-sufficiency and security.



We commit ourselves to give priority to the development and management of water resources in the continent.

21. Over the years, we have come to recognize that when we speak with one voice, we are able to defend and safeguard our collective interests, especially in multilateral fora . In this regard, we resolve to strengthen our capacities in multilateral negotiations, especially within the framework of the globalization and rapid liberalization of the world economy through the World Trade Organization (WTO). To this end, we undertake to make our economies more competitive and to strengthen our commercial relations for the benefit of all our peoples.

22. In order to cope with the challenges of the process of globalization, we need to strengthen our production and export capacities. In this regard, we recognize the role and contribution of the private sector. We are, therefore, determined to put in place an enabling environment to allow for the development and effective participation of the private sector in our economic endeavours.

23. We recognize that the development efforts deployed and the sacrifices endured by our peoples had been and continue to be significantly undermined by the capital flight and external debt burden of our countries. While appreciating the initiatives taken by our partners to address the debt problem of African countries, including such initiatives as the one in favour of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), we appeal for more practical measures by the international community aimed at the total cancellation of Africa's external debt.

24. We are conscious of the need to put in place the necessary strategies for the improvement of the social conditions of our



peoples. In this regard, we are determined to work towards the improvement of the health conditions in our Continent. We are concerned over the health crisis facing our Continent, especially, the spread of diseases such as Malaria, Polio, HIV/AIDS, and the re-emergence of diseases, which had been virtually eradicated from the Continent. We are conscious of the need to pay more attention to the devastating effects caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic which is spreading in most African countries. We recommit ourselves to effectively address this unhealthy and untenable situation as stipulated in our Dakar Declaration of 1992 on the AIDS pandemic in Africa and reiterated in the Tunis Declaration of 1994 on AIDS and the Child in Africa.

25. We are determined to work assiduously to reverse the trend of brain-drain faced by our continent which has negatively impacted on our human resource capacities. In this regard, we pledge to ensure that our governments create a more conducive environment for our professionals and experts to engage in meaningful research and other creative endeavours in the continent. We also pledge to promote inter-action between our professionals and experts with those of the outside world.

26. The development, planning and utilization of human resources remains fundamental to the sustainable development of our Continent. We recognize that, as we face the new millennium, our education and training systems, which are crucial to the cultural, social, economic and political development, should be adapted to the needs of our societies. We have declared the period 1997-2006, the Decade of Education in Africa. We, therefore, undertake to implement the Harare Programme of Action of the Decade, with a special emphasis on equity, quality, relevance and access to education for all.





27. We equally acknowledge the role and contribution of the women of Africa, not only to the social, cultural, economic and political development of their families, communities and countries, but also to the political stability and sustainable development of the Continent as a whole. We reiterate our commitment to the Khartoum Declaration Towards a Human-Focused Approach to Socio-Economic Recovery and Development in Africa, the Kampala Declaration and Framework for Action adopted by the African Conference on the Empowerment of Women Through Functional Literacy and the Education of the Girl Child, the African and Global Platforms for Action, and to the Consensus of Dakar. We also undertake to put in place the necessary policies and legislation at the national, regional and Continental levels, to facilitate and promote the protection, survival, development and mainstreaming of women in our development efforts. We pledge to extend to them equal opportunities in all spheres of life.

28. We are also cognizant of the fact that Africa's future must necessarily depend on Africa's Youth. We undertake to sign, ratify and implement the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. We also direct our respective governments to implement the African Common Position on Youth adopted by the First Pan-African Conference on Youth and Development.

29. We are painfully aware of the rampant unemployment, underemployment, low productivity and the effects of grinding poverty within our societies generally, but particularly among the youths, school leavers, women, the aged and ageing. In this connection, we recommit ourselves to implement the provisions of our Declaration on the Employment Crisis in Africa which we adopted in Abuja in 1991 and to the commitments we made in the African



Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa which was Africa's contribution to the Declaration and Programme of Action at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development in 1995.

30. We are aware that economic development activities for encouraging and popularizing a wider penetration, investment and utilization of cost-effective and appropriate technologies for poverty alleviation and improving the welfare of our population should have a Scientific and Technological base. We, therefore, resolve to make science and technology the cornerstone of our socio-economic development strategies in the Continent and look forward to the development of cooperation and coordination between African institutes of Research on Science and Technology, with a view to centralizing their operations.

31. We recognize that our continental Organization will be stronger and our collective voice more effective, if we involve all Africans in the establishment of a Community of Peoples. In this regard, we reiterate our determination to work towards the establishment of the Pan-African Parliament which is provided for in the Abuja Treaty. It is our conviction that it will provide a common platform for our peoples and their grassroot organizations to be more involved in discussions and decision-making on the problems and challenges facing our Continent, including issues of common interest, such as food security, the scourge of conflicts, the debt burden, the AIDS pandemic, desertification, the free movement of peoples, goods, services and capital, as well as the integration of our economies in line with current trends in other regions of the world. We therefore, call for the speedy establishment of the Pan-African Parliament.

32. Our vision is that of a United Africa. This was the vision of the great Pan-Africanists of this century both within the Continent and in



the diaspora. This was also the vision of the Founding Fathers of our Organization. We firmly believe that a United Continent is not only an attainable objective but a necessity in our quest for a better tomorrow for all our peoples so that they take their destiny in their own hands and be in a position to make better use of the human and natural resources in our continent. In order to realize this collective aspiration, we need to close our ranks and work together in greater cohesion to promote peace, security and stability in the Continent. We need also to pursue more vigorously the objective of regional cooperation and integration. Only in so doing will we be able to address effectively the major development challenges facing the Continent. We also recognize that this approach will facilitate the realization of our ultimate goal of a strong unified Continent at peace with itself and adequately equipped to interact effectively with the rest of the world.

33. Finally, we request the Secretary-General of our Organization, as a matter of priority, to take all appropriate measures for attaining the afore-mentioned objectives.

Done at Sirte, the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya,  
September 9, 1999 (9.9.99)





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# Draft Sirte Declaration

African Union Commission

Peace and Security

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