

DECLARATION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

We, the Heads of State and Government, meeting in Tunis, Tunisia from 13 – 15 June, 1994 at the invitation of the Tunisian Government to participate in the Thirtieth Summit of the Organization of African Unity,

Aware of our historical responsibility in providing our peoples with comprehensive and sustained development so as to step into the twenty-first century, under propitious condition that enable our people to achieve their legitimate aspirations for progress and peace ad contribute with other peoples to the civilization of mankind,

Convinced that the focal role of man, as objective and supreme beneficiary of development, and that there is need to entrench the human dimension in all policies seeking the economic development of our countries;

Proceeding from our firm determination to stand up to the challenges dictated, on the one hand, by he changes affecting our African societies and their economies and, on the other, by the numerous imbalances in world economic transactions and the deteriorating volume and prizes of African exports that deprived Africa of the resources it needs to finance sustained development and on-going progress, in addition to the recurring problems, caused by balance of payments of external debt servicing.

Faced by increasing social problems and their aggravation, such as rising unemployment, higher poverty rates, a growing illiteracy, pervasive corruption and social marginalization and the inability of family relations and traditional frameworks of social solidarity to assume their role as protectors of the vulnerable groups, and of the values, social and civilization ethics of our societies,

Considering the need to withstand all forms of intolerance and extremism that, nurtured by poverty, deprivation and marginalization, rely on them to contain the very bases of social peace, political stability and national cohesion;

Convinced that human rights are an indivisible whole encompassing political, economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions;

Convinced that the ability of social, economic and investment conditions to develop human skills are basic and indispensable elements to support the democratic transition process in our African countries on the basis of sagacious options and widespread popular participation likely to root the foundations of the civilian society and strengthen its potentials for self-development;

Believing in the rationale of a balanced development that takes account of the needs of the present and the requirements of the future, striking a balance between the aspirations of the present and the rights of the future generations to live in a cohesive economic, social and environmental climate, as called for by the International Community in the Declaration of the United Nations World Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro;

Considering that both developing and industrialized countries share a great number of social problems due to the fundamental changes that occurred in the development patterns and the quality of international relations in the 90s;

Convinced of the importance of the African Common Position in human and social resources development in Africa as defined by the Conference of African Ministers of Human Resources Development, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 20 and 21 January 1994, and endorsed by the OAU Labour Commission;

Determined to contribute to the World Summit on Human Development scheduled to be held in Copenhagen in March 1995:

WE DECLARE in accordance with the Common African Position that:

- 1. there is need to reaffirm our commitment to human development as a basis for cooperation among states to underlie a human and social order founded on justice, dignity, tolerance and mutual respect;**
- 2. there is need to understand the real problems of the African continent so as to identify the means whereby to solve them with the needed seriousness and draw up the sectoral and comprehensive plans therefore;**
- 3. there is need to promote the conditions that lent themselves to comprehensive development in a climate of political stability, peace and security;**

- 4. there is need to consolidate a democracy founded on participation, encouraging initiatives and organizational patterns that would enable our societies to influence development and rely on their own capacities so as to shield themselves against all forms of violence, extremism and discrimination;**

- 5. there is need to take action national, regional and international levels with a view to mobilizing efforts in support of the educational, training, health and information sectors, and in order to eradicate the social ills, primarily poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and prevent the unravelling of the family fabric; in order also to work out programmes that make it possible to secure the economic and social merging of the vulnerable groups, primarily women, children, youth, the elderly and the handicapped;**

- 6. there is need to take action, in the scope of an exchange of interests among States, to consolidate all forms of joint development in favour of the progress of mankind and in order to safeguard international peace and security;**

- 7. there is need to encourage the merging and consolidation of natural developmental efforts in Africa so as to curb the on-going deterioration of the terms of trade that adversely affect the African countries and to work out new forms of international cooperation that take into account the value of social efforts and the difficult conditions in which they are made and, in this connection, alleviate the burden of the external indebtedness of Africa and**

enable the investment of due external debts in programmes relevant to the development of human resources and for environmental purposes;

8. **there is need to ensure, through bilateral cooperation programmes and those of the United Nations and other international institutions, a close relationship between economic and social development and always bear in mind that the progress of man and his optimum prosperity are the highest objective of mankind at the threshold of a new century.**

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