

**ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE
AND GOVERNMENT**
**Thirty-sixth Ordinary Session/
Fourth Ordinary Session of the AEC**
10 - 12 July, 2000
Lome, Togo

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**Declarations and Statements adopted by the
Thirty-sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly
of Heads of State and Government and Fourth
Ordinary Session of the AEC**

**Declaration on the 3rd United Nations Conference
on the Least Developed Countries**

WE, the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, meeting at the Thirty-sixth Ordinary Session of our Assembly and the 4th Ordinary Session of the African Economic Community in Lome, Togo from 10 to 12 July 2000, **have** undertaken a critical review of the socio-economic situation of the 33 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in Africa.

2. **WE NOTE** with concern that the socio-economic situation in these countries has continued to deteriorate, and that this situation has been exacerbated by external debt, inadequate infrastructure facilities, as well as by conflicts in some regions and natural disasters like cyclones, floods, and drought in others, leading to a rising level of poverty. Despite the drastic structural adjustment and policy reforms carried out by our countries, the number of countries in our continent classified in the category of Least Developed Countries has not decreased.

3. The international community, including the institutions within the United Nations System, has demonstrated its support to the LDCs through special initiatives targeted at this category of countries. In this regard, **WE WELCOME** the opportunity provided by the 3rd United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries as a Forum for the International Community to go beyond general declarations of intent and commitment, and embark on concrete implementable actions directed at ameliorating the socio-economic situation in the LDCs, with a view to attaining the internationally agreed target of reducing the level of poverty by half by the year 2015.

4. **WE REAFFIRM** at the same time, that the development of African LDCs is primarily the responsibility of their governments and peoples. In this regard, **WE COMMIT** ourselves individually and collectively to support the effort of the LDCs in our continent through programmes for promoting regional economic cooperation. This, **WE BELIEVE** is the only way forward for Africa as a whole to integrate into the global economy equitably.

5. In order to assist the LDCs deal with the serious challenges they continue to face, **WE CALL ON** the international community to redouble its effort in the critical areas of debt cancellation, resource flows, capacity building and infrastructural development with concrete programmes to be

worked out in close consultation and cooperation with our continental and regional organizations.

6. For the LDCs to be a credible participant in the global economy and conscious of the unavoidable phenomenon of globalisation, **WE CALL** on the 3rd UN Conference on the LDCs to launch a programme for the accelerated transformation of the economies of these countries, with emphasis on expanding and diversifying the production and export base. While **WE COMMEND** the decision to improve market access for products from the LDCs, **WE FIRMLY BELIEVE** that these opportunities can be exploited advantageously only when the required production and export capacities have been established and strengthened in the LDCs.

7. With regard to the debt problem of the LDCs, **WE WELCOME** the announcement concerning the enhancing of HIPC Initiative and call on the international community to provide adequate resources for its effective operationalization. While underscoring the fact that external debt and the debt service payments represent an excruciating burden on our continent and stifle our effort at development, **WE CALL ON** the creditor countries and multilateral financial institutions to provide real debt relief, including debt cancellation in favour of all LDCs, complemented by increased capital flows, particularly Official Development Assistance to meet the international agreed target, and Foreign Direct Investment. **WE**, on our part, **UNDERTAKE TO COMMIT** the funds released from such actions to the development of our societies with a view to eradicating poverty.

8. **WE PLEDGE** to lend our full support to the African LDCs in preparing for the 3rd UN Conference and to ensure the effective participation of all our countries. **WE CALL ON** the Secretary-General of the OAU, in consultation and cooperation with all the Regional Economic Communities, UNCTAD and other related UN bodies to assist the LDCs in the preparation for the 3rd UN Conference and to organise in that respect an African ministerial conference for the purpose of adopting an African common position.

2000

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