



Organization of African Unity

**Statement by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim
Secretary General of the OAU/African
Economic Community (AEC) at the 1997
Summit of the Southern African
Development Community (SADC)**

Blantyre, Malawi

September 8, 1997

- **Mr. Chairman,**
- **Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC),**
- **Your Excellency, K. Mbuende, Secretary General of SADC,**
- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,**
- **Dear Colleagues (ECA and ADB),**
- **Distinguished Delegates,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I should like, at the outset, to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to President Muluzi, the Government and the entire people of Malawi, for the warm welcome and brotherly hospitality that I and my delegation have enjoyed since our arrival in this beautiful city.

I wish also to express my gratitude to Mr. Mbuende the Executive Secretary of SADC, for the kind invitation extended to me to address this particular Summit of SADC. As we participate in this SADC summit we are, once again reminded that SADC is one of the five pillars upon which our African Economic Community stands. We are, therefore, gathered under one of the great pillars for region cooperation and integration in Africa.

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,**

Exactly two months ago, the African Economic Community held its inaugural Summit meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe. The inaugural Summit of the African Economic Community was indeed a timely beginning of our march towards the realization of the objectives of the founding fathers of our continental Organization. We must, here and indeed always, be guided by that dream, in order to build upon and improve on the achievement of those who brought us our hard-won freedom the entire people of Southern Africa and indeed, the rest of the

Continent, that have great expectations from your deliberations, here in Blantyre. I am confident that those expectations are not misplaced. Indeed, during the inaugural Summit, our leaders once again, demonstrated their determination to work together, with the support of the Regional Economic Communities to promote the spirit of individual and collective self-reliance in the Continent.

We, at the OAU, firmly believe that it is, indeed, through building capacities for individual and collective self-reliance that our Continent and people will be able to reverse the current trend towards its marginalization, and thus move to the centre stage of the global economic environment.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Heads of State and
Government of SADC,

Indeed, apart from the priority we have attached to strengthening of the Regional Economic Communities, the Abuja Treaty provides as well, that the African Economic Community

shall be established mainly through coordination, harmonization and the progressive integration of the programmes of the Regional Economic Communities.

The Protocol on the Relations between the AEC and the Regional Groupings, provides for a Committee on Coordination with responsibility for providing policy orientation, coordination and harmonization the priority activities of the Regional Groupings as well as monitoring and reviewing the progress of regional integration in relation to the establishment of the AEC.

**Your Excellencies,
Heads of State and Government,**

We are currently discussing with all the Regional Groupings, programmes on resource mobilization and popularization of the AEC Treaty, as well as support for the implementation of the programmes of the RECs in the different sectors. The findings from discussions between the mission and the Regional Economic Communities are being analyzed for a

meeting to be organized with the participation of the concerned institutions, including in particular, the Regional Economic Communities. I would like to assure this august assembly that we in the OAU/AEC are attaching the highest priority to the implementation of the African Economic Community Treaty and, that the on-going structural reorganization of the OAU is to enable the OAU/AEC deal more effectively with the requirements of regional and continental integration.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Executive Secretary, Dr. Mbuende for the warm reception he accorded the mission and, in particular, for the ideas and suggestions so generously provided on the way forward.

**Your Excellencies,
Heads of State and Government of SADC,**

You will recall that at the inaugural session of the African Economic Community, you, together with your other colleagues endorsed the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, authorizing me to sign on behalf of all Member States, the Protocol on Relations between the African Economic Community and the Regional Economic Communities. This Protocol which, I understand is coming before you at this session, constitutes an effective instrument for promoting and facilitating coordination, as well as general cooperation between the African Economic Community and the Regional Groupings and among the Groupings themselves. I wish to appeal to you to give your Executive Secretary, the required authority to sign this important instrument, so that all of us can join hands to provide support and assistance to our countries to face the serious challenges of the 21st Century.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that our efforts aimed at individual and collective self-reliance through economic cooperation and integration continue to be seriously undermined by the prevalence of conflicts in the Continent. Conflicts, particularly the ethnic-related conflicts are threatening to destroy the social fabric of our society with significant impact on the socio-economic development of our countries and our region. It is for these reasons, that I commend the efforts you have and continue to deploy to put in place an effective mechanism to address issues of peace, security and stability in your sub-region. Let me, at the same time, underline the importance of effective coordination between such sub-regional initiatives and mechanisms and our continental framework for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

To us in the OAU, such coordination is important in ensuring and promoting synergy between and among regional and the continental mechanisms with a view to providing a conducive

environment for the promotion of regional economic cooperation and integration in Africa. Let us, therefore, resolve to continue to coordinate our efforts and resources in addressing issues of peace, security and stability in the Continent as sine quo non for socio-economic transformation and development.

Thank you.