



**Organization of African Unity**

**STATEMENT BY  
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THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON SECURITY,  
STABILITY, DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION  
IN AFRICA (CSSDCA)  
ABUJA, NIGERIA, 8<sup>th</sup> MAY 2000**

**Mr Chairman,**

**Your Excellency, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo  
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,**

**Honourable Ministers,  
Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, Madam Lalla Aisha Ben Barka**

**Excellencies Ambassadors and Plenipotentiaries,**

**Distinguished Delegates and Invited Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to take this opportunity to join the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, Olusegun Obasanjo, in welcoming you all to Abuja, and to this African Ministerial Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in the Continent. The City of Abuja has hosted a number of important conferences over the last decade. As we meet here today, our memories are still fresh with the aura that accompanied the signing of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community in this very city, a Treaty that provided the foundation for the Continental efforts towards integration, and which is now popularly known as the Abuja Treaty.

It is also a well-known and appreciated fact that, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has hosted other important meetings, which deliberated and provided a blueprint for the socio-economic development of the Continent. In this respect, I have in mind the meetings that led to the adoption of the historic Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos. Indeed, the Lagos Plan of Action has provided our Continent with an important legal framework within which efforts aimed at promoting regional economic cooperation and integration are being galvanized.

Today, once again, we meet in Nigeria to develop a road map for addressing, in a comprehensive and integrated manner, the critical issues of security, stability, development and cooperation in Africa. I would like to commend the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for accepting to host this conference of major significance to the continent. I am sure I speak for all of us when I say we have always felt at home in Nigeria. Indeed, it is my hope and expectation that the spirit that guided the elaboration of both the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Treaty will be rekindled to also guide our present deliberations.

In this regard, I should like to pay deserving tribute to the Africa Leadership Forum for promoting the idea that Africa needs to link the issues of security and stability to those of cooperation and development. Indeed, we are all aware that security and stability are prerequisite conditions to the socio-economic development of our continent and peoples.

The need for our continent to adopt an integrated approach to security, stability, development and cooperation came at a time when Africa was contemplating on how best to respond to the changes that were taking place in the world, particularly at the end of the Cold War. The Africa Leadership Forum, under the able leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo, had in 1990, organized a meeting in Kampala, Uganda, the outcome of which was the need to convene a Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA). This initiative was timely indeed given the transformation occurring at that time on global political and economic relations, and their implication to our Continent.

At the time when we are preparing to enter the new millenium, and set our priorities and objectives for the continent, it is opportune to revive this important initiative. I wish to pay tribute to President Obasanjo, who during the last Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Algiers, Algeria called upon his peers to proclaim the year 2000 as the "Year of Peace, Security and Solidarity in Africa". In Algiers, the leaders of Africa also took the opportunity



to rededicate themselves to eliminate conflicts in Africa and underscored the link between security, development and cooperation in Africa. Later, during the Fourth Extraordinary Session of the Summit held in Sirte, Libya, the Heads of State and Government called for the convening of a conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in the continent.

This Conference therefore provides an opportunity for the continent to take the necessary measures and work towards an integrated approach to security, stability, development and cooperation in Africa. The CSSDCA process is yet another testimony that we have acknowledged that security and stability in our region are fundamental to its development and cooperation. Indeed, insecurity and instability impede national and regional efforts aimed at ensuring the socio-economic development of our societies, while undermining the propensity for cooperation. It is indeed an acknowledgement of the need for the continent to play a central role in bringing about peace and stability in the continent as a basis for promoting and consolidating development through collective and concerted efforts.

The reality of our Continent in the past two decades underscores the imperative necessity of launching the CSSDCA initiative at this particular juncture. In the first place, we need to overcome the serious shortcomings that exist in the four 'calabashes': security, stability, development and cooperation. These shortcomings have been critical and have impinged on the endeavour to improve our welfare. At the same time, we need to strengthen and consolidate the various positive measures taken in the Continent, which cumulatively build up into a powerful momentum in the development of our societies. The CSSDCA initiative should therefore assist in galvanizing and directing this collective momentum in order to attain our continental objectives.

We all realize that the issues that are focused upon in this initiative preoccupied the Founding Fathers since the very creation of our Continental Organization. Precisely, after our victory against colonialism and apartheid, African leaders and the people of this continent, through their Continental

Organization, sub-regional institutions, and national systems, have taken a number of steps aiming at establishing peace, promoting democratization, enhancing development, and fostering cooperation and integration. The significance of the CSSDCA initiative lies in seeking to integrate actions in the various undertakings so as to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development through our collective efforts.

The initiative is therefore not completely a new project. It builds upon the foundation of frameworks, mechanisms, and joint activities that are already in place. The main objective, I believe, is to create the necessary synergy so that the efforts deployed in the search for security and stability feeds into the promotion of development and cooperation, and vice versa. It is in this respect, that the decisions made within the framework of the Sirte Declaration; the consolidation of such instruments as the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Management; as well as the numerous steps taken by our countries in promoting democratic governance and the respect of human rights acquire a new impetus by the measures to be taken through the CSSDCA process.

Similarly, the holistic and integrated perspective of this initiative provides for the broadening of the space for the participation of the civil society and other actors in pursuing national, regional and continental endeavours. Thus, the prominence given by the Abuja Treaty as well as the Sirte Declaration to ensuring the closer involvement of the peoples of our Continent can be further reinforced by the CSSDCA initiative.

The challenges before this conference and indeed the CSSDCA process is to come up with innovative actions and initiatives on both the domestic and international fronts. On the domestic front there has to be new policy orientations and approaches that facilitate the maximization of the intellectual and other resources within the public and private sector and the creation of a propitious environment that allows for the full participation of all segments of the society in the process of political and economic transformation.



The promotion of regional cooperation and integration must continue to be the corner stone of this strategy. So must our determination to end conflicts in our countries and between our countries. The current poignant and dramatic developments in Sierra Leone must clearly strengthen our resolve to end such misery, death, destruction and humiliation in our Continent.

On the international front, African countries in cooperation with all the developing countries, should call for new rules that govern international economic relations. These rules, in the case of our continent, should target the effective solution to the mounting debt problem, increased financial and technology flows to our countries and improved market access and prices for exports.

Indeed, more than at any other time, Africa needs at this particular juncture to develop the integrated vision, that allows proactive action in areas of profound importance to its development. We have made significant advances in establishing the basic structures and institutions for political and socio-economic transformation. Similarly, we have managed to undertake important steps in solidifying and enhancing the unity of our Continent. However, there are still a number of challenges that need to be overcome. By recognizing the linkages among the critical areas of our development and by orienting our collective actions in a holistic and focused manner we can be able to overcome these challenges.

It is my view that this Ministerial Meeting, in finalizing the details of this initiative for ultimate submission to the Summit, will be able to develop a shared perspective and come up with a collective framework of action. Such an outcome should build on our achievements and add to the impetus of the positive changes that are evolving in the Continent while overcoming the serious obstacles that continue to undermine our efforts.

In conclusion, I remain confident that the CSSDCA process properly constituted will provide a viable framework for the continent within which

general principles would be established for purposes of avoiding situations where Africa is continuously portrayed as a continent in perpetual crisis. Moreover, this process should help us to avoid situations that allow others to depict us as a continent in unending chaos. Clearly, Africa must assume responsibility for its own security and stability just as we all have clearly recognized that the economic development of the Continent is first and foremost the responsibility of African people and their Governments.

I wish you all success in the deliberations.

I thank you.