

STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAU
AT THE OPENING OF THE SIXTH ALL-AFRICA TRADE FAIR
BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE SEPTEMBER 9, 1992.

- Your Excellency Comrade Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe;
- Honourable Vice Presidents;
- Honourable Ministers ;
- The Executive Secretary of the ECA;
- Excellencies, Representatives of Member States;
- Representatives of African and International Organizations
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is for me a special honour and privilege to be present at this important event, which marks the culmination of a long period of intensive preparation, particularly by the government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair authorities and members of the Organising Committee. I would therefore, at the outset like to extend, on behalf of the OAU, my warmest congratulations to H.E. President Mugabe, the government and the people of Zimbabwe for their outstanding contribution in making this day a reality.

This achievement is particularly significant, considering the extreme hardships and difficulties that the country has been going through due to the devastating draught that has engulfed Zimbabwe and the other countries of Southern Africa. The OAU would like to salute the fortitude, determination and above all the

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sacrifices, of the people of Zimbabwe in the face of such a major challenge.

I am indeed particularly happy to join in welcoming all participants to the Sixth All-Africa Trade Fair which is taking place in this beautiful city of Bulawayo; a city rich in history and culture, and which symbolises in no small way, the political and economic achievement of the people of Zimbabwe.

The traditional warmth and hospitality of the people of Zimbabwe are as old as the country itself, and have been demonstrated in the brotherly manner in which we have been received and generously treated . For all this, I am exceedingly grateful and highly indebted to President Mugabe, the government and the entire people of Zimbabwe. I am confident that The excellent facilities available here at the ZITF, coupled with the organisational efficiency of the Fair authorities, will enable all the participants to conduct their business in the most congenial atmosphere.

Comrade President,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellences,

The holding of this FAIR, with the participation of Member States, as well as the large number of participants from both

African and international organisations, is not merely in keeping with the four-yearly tradition of the All-Africa Trade Fair. It is above all clear demonstration of Africa's recognition that the economic development of the continent is a priority responsibility of African governments, institutions and peoples. It is also a manifestation of Africa's determination and commitment to intensify intra-African Cooperation for the accelerated development of the continent.

This is why this day is being observed here , at the Fair, as the African Integration Day.

Comrade President,

As you are aware, Comrade Nelson Mandela, President of the ANC and Comrade Makwetu, the PAC leader would have been here with us today, as we inaugurate the African Integration Day. Unfortunately, this has not been possible, owing to the cold-blooded massacre of unarmed ANC supporters by the Ciskei ~~armed~~ ^{Security} forces. The OAU condemns this wanton murder by the forces which are the creation of the apartheid System. The ultimate responsibility for this hideous act must therefore rest with the regime that created, and continues to arm and finance the bantustans. This massacre and the Boibatong massacre have clearly posed yet another threat to the process of change in South Africa. The South African government has a clear responsibility to put an

end to such violence and carnage if its claims of working towards a new South Africa are to have credibility.

Excellencies,

I would like to accord special recognition to the United Nations organisations and agencies which are represented here, and to express sincere appreciation for the support which they have always given to the organisation of All-Africa Trade Fairs, and for their participation in these fairs. Apart from mounting individual stands, the international organisations have provided support in the form of seminars, workshops, demonstrations of special techniques and provision of general information. All this has been in support of Africa's effort at promoting economic cooperation and integration for development.

The theme which has been set~~ed~~ for the Sixth Fair is "trading for African Integration". This is indeed, most befitting, since the fair is taking place a little^{OVER} a year, since the signing of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, in Abuja Nigeria, on 3rd June 1991. The significance of the Abuja Treaty is that, it constitutes a solidifying force for African Unity, since it pinpoints economic cooperation and integration as the soul of African economic independence.

Comrade President,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to use the opportunity which is offered by the Sixth All-Africa Trade Fair, to emphasise that the African Economic Community should not be seen as an exclusive concern or responsibility of the governments. The Community is for all and every African, and we must all be fully involved in every stage of the implementation of the Abuja Treaty. In this connection, the role of the African business Community, such as is represented here at the Bulawayo Fair, is very crucial to the success of the effort that will be deployed.

There is no doubt that business operators and members of the private sector, ^{will feel} ~~won't~~ significantly the impact of policies and measures that will be agreed upon and enforced, among the member States of the African Economic Community. It is thus imperative that, the organised private sector makes substantial contribution to the formulation of such policies and measures, in order to ensure that they address the specific issues and achieve the desired results; such as an increase in the recorded volume of intra-African trade, which is, at the moment only about 5% of Africa's total trade.

There are indeed several factors that account for the low volume of recorded intra-African trade; they include poor transport links, problems associated with payments and established historical trade patterns. A most serious problem however, which, at the same time lends itself to ready solution, is the lack of awareness of the range of goods and services which are generated by economies of the neighbouring states. It is rather strange that several foreign products, including non-essential food items, are being commercialized in Africa by the media, whereas similar goods produced in Africa suffer from lack of promotion. It is my expectation that this Sixth Fair in particular, will contribute to the solution of this problem, by increasing the awareness of the actual and potential possibilities for expanding intra-African trade and intra-African economic contacts in all sectors.

Comrade President,
Honourable Ministers,

As the Sixth All-Africa Trade Fair is being organised within the context of promoting African cooperation and integration, its success will be assessed partly in terms of what takes place here at the Fair ground, and essentially what follows after we have all left Bulawayo. Africa has gone a long way, and acquired experience since the first All-Africa Trade Fair, in Nairobi, in 1972; the second, in Algiers in 1976; the third in Khartoum in 1980; the

fourth in Lome, in 1985 and; the fifth in Kinshasa in 1988. We have, through our collective experiences become more sophisticated in our participation in these fairs. These Fairs should therefore contribute to developing, improving and widening the African market for products and services generated by African economies, as well as to improving the quality and competitiveness of these products.

The current global trends towards the building of trading blocs are bound to continue; this is why Africa has to recognize the significance of developing its own internal market and of satisfying its internal demand, first and foremost. It is a well-known fact that Africa's agricultural exports face a very bleak future in world markets, particularly in terms of their prices and earnings, as a result of production glut, advances in technology with consequent reduction in the use and need of raw materials, and greater substitution of synthetic for natural materials. There is a need therefore to restructure Africa's production systems, with a view to according high priority to industrial development, as well as to transport and communications and energy.

The concept of restructuring Africa's productive systems has to emphasize Africa's cooperation with other developing countries for the purpose of maximising to the fullest, the benefits of South-South cooperation. In this connection it is my pleasure to announce that the first Afro-Arab Trade Fair will take place in Tunis, Tunisia, about one year from now, in October 1993. All

1Member States of the OAU and of the League of Arab-States, have been invited to participate in this Fair which is designed to strengthen further, Afro-Arab cooperation for the accelerated development of all the Member States.

Comrade President;
Excellencies; Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to stress that our presence today, in Bulawayo, is indeed a testimony to our belief and confidence in ourselves as a people. Above all, it is a testimony to our confidence and pride in the African continent, its future, its potentialities and the force that it can mobilize through cooperation and integration, to rid itself of poverty and disease. I am confident that this Sixth All-Africa Trade Fair will constitute a major building block for a more prosperous, secure and self-reliant Africa.

I thank you for your attention.

Ladies and gentlemen, I now have the pleasure of presenting to H.E. President Mugabe, the Emblem of the All-Africa Trade Fair.