

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE
AFRICAN UNITY, DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM, AT THE INAUGURAL
SESSION OF THE SIXTH SUMMIT CONFERENCE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF
THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (DAKAR, SENEGAL DECEMBER 9, 1991)

MR. CHAIRMAN,
YOUR MAJESTY,
YOUR HIGHNESSES, YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED HEADS OF
STATE AND GOVERNMENT,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I WOULD LIKE FROM THE OUTSET TO THANK THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF SENEGAL FOR THE KIND INVITATION EXTENDED TO US TO ATTEND THIS SIXTH SUMMIT CONFERENCE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION. THE PARTICIPATION OF THE OAU DELEGATION, WHICH I HAVE THE HONOUR TO HEAD IN THIS CONFERENCE IS INDICATIVE OF THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THE ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE O.I.C. THIS ROLE HAS GROWN IN IMPORTANCE AS THE YEARS HAVE GONE BY. AT THE SAME TIME WE TAKE PRIDE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE MEMBER STATES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION ARE AFRICAN STATES. IT IS EVIDENT THAT AFRICA DOES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE O.I.C. ACTIVITIES. IT IS THEREFORE ONLY LOGICAL THAT THE LINKS BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION AND THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY HAVE BEEN STEADILY STRENGTHENED. I WISH TO STRESS, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS NOT ONLY THE AFRICAN COMPOSITION OF THE O.I.C. WHICH UNDERLINES THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACHE TO YOUR ROLE AND ACTIVITIES. MORE IMPORTANTLY WE ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE SIMILARITY OF PROBLEMS DISCUSSED BY OUR TWO ORGANIZATIONS AS WELL AS THE CHALLENGES CONFRONTING OUR RESPECTIVE MEMBER STATES. THESE RANGE FROM ISSUES OF SECURITY TO THOSE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS WELL AS THE COMMON STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AND DIGNITY OF OUR RESPECTIVE PEOPLES_ BE IT IN SOUTH AFRICA OR IN PALESTINE. IN THIS RESPECT WE PARTICULARLY APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT THE O.I.C. HAS BEEN DEALING WITH MANY PRESSING AFRICAN PROBLEMS AND INVARIABLY COMING OUT WITH POSITIONS SUPPORTIVE OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLES IN THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND SECURITY FIELDS. WE ARE ALSO APPRECIATIVE OF THE IMPORTANT SUPPORT BOTH MORAL AND MATERIAL GIVEN BY INDIVIDUAL NON AFRICAN MEMBER STATES OF THIS ORGANIZATION TO MANY AFRICAN STATES AS THEY STRUGGLE AMIDST FORMIDABLE OBSTACLES FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES. #WE ARE PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT YOUR CONFERENCE IS TAKING PLACE HERE IN DAKAR, THE BEAUTIFUL CAPITAL CITY OF SENEGAL. THIS COUNTRY, ITS PEOPLE AND ITS LEADERS HAVE BEEN PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE NOT ONLY IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS BUT ALSO IN THE REALM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. SENEGAL, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF ITS ESTEEMED HEAD OF STATE, PRESIDENT ABDOU DIOUF, HAS SERVED AFRICA WELL BY ITS PRINCIPLED AND INVOLVED COMMITMENT IN THE QUEST FOR PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY. SENEGAL HAS ALSO BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF PROMOTING AFRICAN SOLIDARITY THROUGH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION AS WELL AS THIRD WORLD UNITY AND COOPERATION.

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THE CONVENING OF THIS CONFERENCE, HERE IN DAKAR, IS NOT ONLY A TESTIMONY TO THE POSITION THAT SENEGAL OCCUPIES IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD BUT ALSO A TRIBUTE TO OUR CONTINENT. I WISH TO THANK THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF SENEGAL FOR ACCEPTING THIS HONOUR AND EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO THEM FOR THE WARM RECEPTION AND GENEROUS HOSPITALITY ACCORDED TO US SINCE OUR ARRIVAL IN DAKAR. THE SIXTH SUMMIT CONFERENCE OF THE O.I.C. IS TAKING PLACE AMIDST A BACKDROP OF FAR-REACHING CHANGES ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO ALLUDE IN DETAIL TO THE CONTENT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ALL THESE CHANGES. THE ESTEEMED AND RESPECTED LEADERS HERE PRESENT ARE ONLY TOO CONSCIOUS OF THEM. SUFFICE IT TO SAY HOWEVER THAT IN THE LIGHT OF THESE CHANGES, IT IS ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE THAT MEMBERS OF THIS ORGANIZATION, LIKE THE MEMBERS OF THE O.A.U., HAVE TO ORGANIZE THEMSELVES IN ORDER TO RESPOND IN SUCH A MANNER SO THAT WE ARE NOT CONDEMNED TO A PERIPHERAL POSITION. WE HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT THAT IN THE NEW ORDER THAT IS UNFOLDING, OUR COUNTRIES ARE ENABLED TO PLAY THEIR RIGHTFUL ROLE AND TO BE BENEFICIARIES LIKE THE REST OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN A WORLD WHERE COLD WAR IS A MATTER OF HISTORY. I REMAIN CONVINCED, MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION WILL BEAR THIS IN MIND AND LIVE UP TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE HOUR.

IT IS CLEAR HOWEVER, THAT ANY MEANINGFUL INPUT TO THE AGENDA OF THE WORLD TODAY REQUIRES THE UNITY, SOLIDARITY AND COHESION OF OUR RESPECTIVE STATES AND ORGANIZATIONS. THIS COMMON POSITION MUST BE BASED ON THE LONG CHERISHED PRINCIPLES OF OPPOSITION TO AGGRESSION IN ANY FORM OR MANIFESTATION AND FROM WHATEVER QUARTER. IT MUST BE GROUNDED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF STRUGGLING FOR JUSTICE, EQUITY, AND FAIR PLAY. IT MUST ALSO BE UNDERPINNED BY OUR OWN COLLECTIVE WILL AND DESIRE TO TRANSLATE OUR DECLARATIONS OF COOPERATION AMONG OUR COUNTRIES, PEOPLES AND ORGANIZATIONS INTO CONCRETE ACTIONS.

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BEFORE CONCLUDING, I WISH TO CRAVE YOUR INDULGENCE HOWEVER TO REFER VERY BRIEFLY TO FOUR PRESSING ISSUES WHICH ARE OF CONCERN BOTH TO OAU AND O.I.C. I WILL BEGIN WITH THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT WHICH AS YOU KNOW FEATURES PERMANENTLY ON THE AGENDA OF THE HIGHEST ORGANS OF THE O.A.U. THE POSITION OF THE CONTINENTAL ORGANIZATION, WHICH IS KNOWN TO EVERYONE, REMAINS FIRM AND UNEQUIVOCAL: WE ARE FOR A JUST AND LASTING SOLUTION WHICH TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE INALIENABLE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO SELF DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RELEVANT

UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS AS WELL AS THE RESPECT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF INADMISSIBILITY OF ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY FORCE. THE O.A.U. HAS ACCORDINGLY WELCOMED AND FOLLOWED WITH ATTENTION THE PEACE PROCESS THAT HAS BEEN INITIATED IN MADRID AND CONSEQUENTLY APPEALS TO THE PARTIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS SO THAT PEACE AND JUSTICE CAN FINALLY PREVAIL IN THAT REGION. IN THIS RESPECT, WE REAFFIRM OUR SUPPORT FOR AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION.

IN AFRICA, THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF A NUMBER OF AREAS OF TENSION IS A SOURCE OF MAJOR CONCERN TO THE O.A.U. OUR ORGANIZATION IS STRIVING TO ENGAGE ACTIVELY IN THE DIFFICULT TASK OF MANAGING INTERNAL AND INTER-STATE CONFLICTS WHICH WE MUST ADMIT, HAVE TAKEN ON TRAGIC PROPORTIONS IN SOME CASES. I WOULD BE FAILING IN MY DUTY IF I DID NOT REFER IN THIS RESPECT TO THE SITUATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND MORE SPECIFICALLY TO THE TRAGEDY THAT HAS BEFALLEN OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF SOMALIA. IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT SOMALIA IS BOTH A MEMBER OF THE O.A.U. AND OF THE O.I.C. IT IS INCUMBENT ON US TO TAKE URGENT STEPS TO PULL THIS COUNTRY BACK FROM THE BRINK OF FURTHER DISASTER.

WITH REGARD TO SOUTH AFRICA, I WILL THIS TIME AROUND BE SPEAKING IN OPTIMISTIC TERMS IN VIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. INDEED, AN HISTORIC CONFERENCE WHICH BROUGHT TOGETHER MOST OF THE ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE AT THE END OF OCTOBER THIS YEAR, ESTABLISHED A UNITED PATRIOTIC FRONT WITH A PLAN OF ACTION AIMED AT HASTENING THE DEMISE OF APARTHEID. THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FRONT HAVE ALREADY TAKEN A DECISIVE STEP BY AGREEING ON A CALENDAR AND DATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WILL START SOMETIME THIS MONTH. THESE NEGOTIATIONS WILL DEFINITELY NOT BE EASY IN VIEW OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED. IT IS OUR VIEW, THAT EVEN THOUGH ALL PARTIES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO MOVE AHEAD AND MAKE PROGRESS IT IS ALL THE SAME NECESSARY TO CONTINUE TO EXERT PRESSURE ON PRETORIA IN ORDER TO HASTEN THE PACE OF TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTH AFRICA INTO A DEMOCRATIC AND NON-RACIAL SOCIETY.

IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD, WE HAVE COME TO TERMS WITH THE FACTS THAT DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE POLICIES OF INTEGRATION. IT IS NO LONGER ALLOWED IN THIS DAY AND AGE TO ENTERTAIN ANY ILLUSIONS AS TO THE LIMITATIONS OF ANY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE SOUTH WHICH IGNORE THIS FACT. THIS, IN

ANY CASE, IS THE BASIS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PANAFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY WHOSE TREATY WAS SIGNED LAST JUNE IN ABUJA (NIGERIA) BY AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE MEMBER STATES OF THE O.I.C. WILL BOOST THEIR ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH THE MEMBER STATES OF THE O.A.U. WITH THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES WE HAVE SET FOR OURSELVES IN THIS RESPECT.

I WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS IN YOUR PROCEEDINGS AND I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.