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APPEAL BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAU
DURING HIS MEETING WITH THE HEADS OF NON-AFRICAN
DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN ADDIS ABABA
ON TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 1991

Before I conclude, I would like to seize this opportunity to draw the attention of Your Excellencies and, through you, that of your respective countries to the tragic situation now prevailing in Africa as a result of the combined effects of drought, famine and armed conflict. A major human tragedy which is not fully appreciated - maybe - is unfolding in Africa today.

Considerable efforts are being made by individual African countries to achieve food self-sufficiency. Sincere and sustained efforts are being deployed to eradicate poverty and human misery. A sizeable share - if not the major proportion of the refugee burden is borne by African countries. Efforts are also being made at continental level. The OAU has, over the years, earmarked 2 percent of its budget for assistance to refugees in Africa. Moreover, the OAU Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa has, as of today, sponsored projects in African countries affected by drought and famine to the tune of US Dollars 20 million. This Fund, which is mainly financed from the contributions of OAU Member States, is also open to contributions from other members of the international community.

Unfortunately, all these efforts fall far short of Africa's needs in terms of humanitarian assistance. It is, in this regard, that we highly appreciate the assistance extended to Africa by our partners from outside this Continent and by international organisations. Such generous assistance is a clear manifestation of the solidarity that should prevail among the members of the international community.

I would therefore like to seize this opportunity to make an urgent appeal through you to your respective Governments in particular and to the international community as a whole so that they respond to Africa's urgent need for humanitarian assistance. At a time when Africa's confidence and determination to tackle the root causes of the political and socio-economic problems is clearly in evidence, the international community is duty bound to support this continent at this crucial stage in its history. You are aware of the present plight of many African countries such as Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, Mozambique and Angola. You have all followed the tragic developments that have occurred recently in the Horn of Africa. I would like to draw your attention to the situation in the region, and for example to the case of the Sudan which has recently had to receive a huge influx of refugees and which requires urgent and commensurate assistance from the international community. Djibouti and Kenya have also been burdened with additional refugees arising from both the Somalia and Ethiopia situation.

Above all, I wish to echo the pertinent remarks made recently by Mr. James Ingram of the WFP on the magnitude of the crisis presently facing our continent where millions of our people face the imminent danger of starvation and death. A swift and generous response by the international community is most crucial if the impending catastrophe is to be averted. I request you to transmit my concerns and appeal to your respective Government and Institutions.

Tuesday, June 18, 1991