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**Organization of African Unity**

**STATEMENT BY  
DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM,  
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OAU,  
AT THE NINTH SESSION  
OF THE ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE**

**SHERATON DOHA HOTEL  
DOHA, STATE OF QATAR**

**12 NOVEMBER 2000**

**Bismillahi Rahmani Al-Rahim**

**Your Highness, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar,**

**Your Majesties, Highnesses and Royal Highnesses,**

**Excellencies Heads of State and Government,**

**Your Excellency, Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations**

**Your Excellency, Dr. Azzedine Laraki, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Conference**

**Honourable Ministers,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is an honour for me to participate at this opening of the Ninth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference. I wish to express my gratitude to His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, to His Highness' Government, and also to the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Conference for the kind invitation that has enabled us to be in Doha with you today.

The Organization of African Unity considers the collaboration and association that exists between our two Organizations to be a valuable aspect for the mutual benefit of our respective Member States.

The fact that a significant number of Member States of the OIC are African States in addition to the fact that the problems addressed by the two Organizations are significantly similar, leaves no doubt that our fates are bound and that the challenges we face are common.

Viewed in the context of the common aspirations of our people for a better life, the common challenges that we face make it incumbent to strengthen our collaboration in the different political, economic and socio-cultural fields, to consolidate our solidarity, and to coordinate our endeavors on fundamental issues of common concern. In this respect, the OAU particularly appreciates the fact that the OIC 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. I am hopeful that the signing and subsequent

implementation of the "Cooperation Agreement Between the Organization of African Unity and the Organization of Islamic Conference" will reinforce our relationship and expand the horizons of our joint activities.

This Summit is taking place against a background of critical events that call for a consolidation of the unity among members of the OIC, and also a reaffirmation of the solidarity and cooperation between the OAU and the OIC. The disturbing developments in the Middle East, particularly the violence meted on the people of Palestine, also the variable impact of globalization on our societies, as well as the gigantic internal challenges faced by our respective Member States call for determined and concerted efforts by the OAU and the OIC.

The OAU is gravely concerned at the plight of the Palestinian people. It has unequivocally deplored Israel's excessive and deadly force which has led to the death and injury of hundreds of Palestinians, including innocent children. I wish to reaffirm the OAU's unequivocal position and continuous support for the right of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, to exercise their inalienable national rights, including their right to return to their homeland, self-determination and the establishment of an independent State on their national soil in accordance with the principles of international law and relevant UN resolutions. I do believe that through working together, we can render maximum support to the Palestinian people in their just cause. Such support is particularly crucial today.

In fact, it is by summoning the same commitment and solidarity within our ranks that we can be able to surmount the challenges of globalization, including its opportunities and threats. The technological advances that the world is currently experiencing, coupled with the rapid and extensive movement of goods and capital offer new prospects for the development of our Member States. At the same time, the impending threat of marginalization – which can undermine our sovereignty, cultural and historical identities as well as our development prospects, compel us to harness collective efforts in order to overcome it. Indeed, we need to coordinate our positions as we engage in crucial negotiations pertaining to the global trading and financial arrangements that are currently going on.

Coordination is equally critical in the efforts to promote peace, security, stability and development for our people. It is important, in this regard, to ensure that the efforts of our two Organizations and their Member States continue to remain in tandem and complementary. Wherever possible, we should strive to avoid sending conflicting signals which may undermine common objectives.



Mr. Chairman,

Africa is changing, our people are determined to forge a better future – a future free of conflict, a future in which the vast resources and great potential of our Continent will be made full use for the social and economic development of our people, a future where our people will be enjoying greater freedom including freedom of political choice and freedom from want. Yet considerable obstacles lie ahead including man-made and natural disasters as well as many killer diseases such as HIV-AIDS and Malaria. To overcome some of these obstacles, our Continent needs international understanding, support and solidarity. In this connection, I would like to underscore the importance of the valuable support, both moral and material, given by individual Member States of the OIC and its institutions to many African States. The support and assistance being extended by the State of Qatar for example is a case in point.

For our part, we recognize that in order to realize our objectives, we must ensure even greater unity and cohesion within our African ranks as well as promoting a quicker pace of cooperation and economic integration. The decision of the African Heads of State taken in Sirte, Libya, in September 1999 to establish an African Union is precisely in response to this requirement. I am confident that OIC will continue to support Africa's efforts in this endeavour.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my thanks, appreciation and gratitude to His Highness the Emir, the Government and People of Qatar for the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in this beautiful city. I wish His Highness all success as he leads this Organization in the coming years. I wish also to pay tribute to the outgoing Chairman, His Excellency Seyed Mohammed Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for the quality of leadership he has provided during his tenure of office. I cannot conclude my statement without paying due tribute to Secretary-General Laraki for his outstanding and dedicated service to the Organization.

I wish the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the Islamic Summit Conference successful deliberations.

**Wa Ssalam Alaikum Wa Rahmat Allah Wa Barakatou.**