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STATEMENT BY DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM, SECRETARY GENERAL  
OF THE OAU, WELCOMING H.E. JIANG ZEMIN, PRESIDENT OF  
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, ON THE OCCASION  
OF HIS ADDRESS ON "CHINA-AFRICA RELATIONS"

AFRICA HALL, ADDIS ABABA

MONDAY, MAY 13, 1996

Your Excellency President Jiang Zemin of  
the People's Republic of China,  
Distinguished Ministers of the People's  
Republic of China,  
Distinguished Ministers of the Federal  
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,  
Your Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me particular pleasure and satisfaction to welcome Your Excellency, President Jiang Zemin to this historic Africa Hall and to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Headquarters of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. We note that your visit to Ethiopia is part of an African visit which has already taken you to Kenya and will then take you to Egypt, Mali, Namibia and Zimbabwe. You will therefore have a continental perspective of the African situation.

**Mr. President,**

Your visit follows in the footsteps of many leaders of the People's Republic of China, at various levels, who have come to Africa in the aftermath of the pioneering visit of the late Premier Chou En Lai in the early sixties. That visit, laid the foundation for friendship between the

peoples of Africa and China, which friendship has withstood the test of time and of the tribulations of global politics and has endured for more than three decades today. Your visit today is testimony to the continuing friendship which your people and those of Africa cherish and are determined to strengthen.

The seeds of friendship which were sowed by the independent Leaders of Africa and of China, have borne fruit as evidenced by the broad range of cooperation which has been possible over the years. That cooperation was initiated during the tender years of our independence and when the People's Republic of China was undergoing fundamental change in its society and struggling to emerge from excruciating poverty which the centuries of external control and the attendant internal political strife had imposed upon its people.

The mission of the New China - the People's Republic of China, was self-determination and to cast away the burdens of under-development. Africa shared and still shares in that mission. That is why right from the beginning, Africa and China saw their common history and the common aspirations of their people as the foundations upon which new structures of relations could be erected. The solidarity that was generated by these common imperatives has endured and over the years, has been the source of sustenance for our cooperation.

Those of us who have the privilege of being associated with the People's Republic of China from the very early years, know how seriously the Chinese people have taken cooperation with Africa. As a young Ambassador, I had the unique and historic opportunity to represent my country in China in the sixties. The brief period I spent in China, inspired me immensely. I was inspired by the determination of the Chinese people to emerge from oppression and poverty and ascend, on to the world stage as a key player which the People's Republic of China now is. Above all however, I was inspired by the commitment of the country to its cooperation with Africa. The people of China did not allow the very difficult economic circumstances, they were living through at the time, stand in the way of cooperation. The Chinese people demonstrated selflessness in their assistance to Africa.

Over the years we have seen how that commitment to the cause of genuine cooperation has been reinforced. We have also witnessed the spirit of sacrifice endure as China has shared its wealth and knowledge with the people of Africa.

That spirit of solidarity was also most manifest in the principled support that the People's Republic of China gave to the struggle against Colonialism and Apartheid in Africa. China supported that struggle materially and later, at the United Nations, reinforced the ranks of the forces that championed the cause of freedom and justice in our continent. We all

remember with much appreciation how China supported the struggle, politically, diplomatically and through financial and material assistance.

**Mr. President,**

Your visit to Africa coincides with great transformations in the Continent. Africa as a whole is undergoing a period of fundamental change. We are facing the triple challenges of political transition, socio-economic transformation and of bringing about peace and stability in the Continent. This transition has not been easy indeed. Yet Africa persists on the path of reform in the clear conviction that ultimately, the Continent needs to put its house in order even if that takes decisions which are at times very painful, especially to those less advantaged in society.

As Africa restructures, great and varied opportunities for investment present themselves. The process of economic liberalization of exchange controls, of instilling greater fiscal responsibility, of instituting better macro-economic policies and of diversification are creating opportunities which the People's Republic can take advantage of. Africa's immense natural resources and the potential for manufacturing for a large market can be brought into partnership with China's technological know how to spur Africa's economic development.

The People's Republic of China is also in the process of economic transformation even though at a much larger scale given its immense economy and population. Yet the fundamentals of the reform processes in Africa and in China are the same. They are to bring about greater efficiency and productivity in the economic processes and better the lives of the people. To this extent, we can learn from each other and explore ways in which we can pursue enhanced cooperation.

Africa can learn from the pragmatic and realistic policies which China has embarked on to modernize and transform its economy. Africa can and should draw the lessons on how like China, it can bring about modernization and rapid economic transformation of its economies on the basis of its home grown policies which safeguard the fundamentals of equity and social justice.

The People's Republic of China has achieved tremendous socio-economic development in the last decade. It is a country built on sacrifice and total commitment to a cause. Over the years, we in Africa have admired and drawn inspiration from the tenacity and steadfastness of the Chinese people. China has been the example of true self-reliance. By the sheer will of its people, it has literally moved mountains and emerged now as a dynamic and vigorous economy with unparalleled growth rates and still with a potential of monumental proportions.

The opportunities for cooperation between Africa and the Peoples Republic of China are limitless. Whether in trade and investment, or technological transfers, our countries stand to benefit from increased cooperation.

China has championed the cause of South-South Cooperation and demonstrated in deeds that such cooperation is not an empty slogan but a viable proposition and one which can sustain development. For example, in Tanzania and Zambia, China has provided the example of true South-South Cooperation. In the Seventies when the rest of the World was skeptical about the viability of a railway corridor to the South linking the port of Dar es Salaam and the city of Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia, China came up with the financing, technology and manpower to build the railway. Decades later, the railway line did not only sustain the process of liberation, it has also strengthened the commercial and human contacts in the sub-region.

Across the African Continent, the People's Republic of China, has developed multifaceted relations with our countries. These relations, based on the principles of equity, mutual respect and mutual benefit have spanned all walks of life - from cultural and sports, industrial development, commerce, technology transfers to human solidarity and political cooperation.

The Chinese people have worked side by side with their African compatriots on various development projects and undertakings. China has over the last three decades, offered numerous scholarships and training opportunities to thousands of young Africans. The People's Republic of China has provided concessionary credit and development assistance to most African countries and corporations. In this process, China has been able to cultivate strong bonds of enduring solidarity and friendship. It is this friendship and that solidarity which has brought us together here this morning.

Africa also grappling with the challenge of peace. Conflicts continue to decimate our societies and undermine the prospects for development of the Continent. The conflicts in Liberia, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Burundi pain us all. They stand as an indictment to our common humanity and as a challenge to us all. Africa through the OAU is exerting monumental effort at promoting peaceful resolution of these conflicts and laying ground for long term peace and stability. Africa is grateful for the support of China in these efforts. Still however, we need to do more in terms of greater political support and resource commitment to the efforts at peace. This is why I am confident that in China also as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, we have a supporter and friend.



Mr. President,

We thank you, the Government and the people of the People's Republic of China, for your friendship and support. We see in your current visit to Africa as an added opportunity to consolidate and build on the ties of friendship and cooperation which have existed between China and Africa. We strongly believe that this enhanced cooperation is all the more needed now considering the new challenges that we face in common.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now my privilege and honour to invite the President of the People's Republic of China, H.E. Mr. Jiang Zemin, our distinguished guest and a great friend of Africa, to address this gathering on the subject "CHINA - AFRICA RELATIONS".