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ADDRESS BY THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL, H.E. MR SALIM AHMED SALIM

ON THE CELEBRATION OF AFRICA DAY

AT UNESCO HEADQUARTERS

Paris, 1st June, 1990.

MR CHAIRMAN,
DEAN OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,
YOUR EXCELLENCIES, MEMBERS OF
THE AFRICAN GROUP TO UNESCO,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I AM PARTICULARLY HONOURED AND PLEASED TO ADDRESS YOUR EXCELLENCIES ON THE OCCASION WHEN WE CELEBRATE AFRICA DAY. MAY I, THEREFORE, ON BEHALF OF MY COLLEAGUES, THE ENTIRE SECRETARIAT AND THE WHOLE MEMBERSHIP OF THE OAU, CONGRATULATE AND THANK THE AFRICAN GROUP TO UNESCO FOR HAVING INVITED ME TO ADDRESS YOU ON THIS HISTORIC OCCASION ON WHICH AFRICA, ITS FRIENDS AND WELL-WISHERS CELEBRATE, WITH PRIDE AND REDEDICATION, THE FOUNDING OF THE OAU 27 YEARS AGO.

MR CHAIRMAN,
YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SPEAK ON CULTURE AND ITS DIMENSION TO DEVELOPMENT IN GENERAL BUT WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE AFRICAN CONTINENT IN THE 1990s AND EVEN BEYOND. THE CHOICE OF THIS SUBJECT IS NOT ONLY APPROPRIATE AND APT BECAUSE THIS IS PARIS, THE HEADQUARTERS OF UNESCO, BUT BECAUSE UNESCO IS ONE OF THE OLDEST AGENCIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS WHICH IS THE CHAMPION OF THE ROLE AND CENTRALITY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND CULTURE IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. I WISH, THEREFORE, SIMPLY TO HIGHLIGHT THE ESSENTIAL ROLE THAT CAN AND SHOULD BE PLAYED BY THE INTERACTION OF CULTURE, EDUCATION AND SCIENCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF OUR WELL-ENDOWED AND YET UNDER-DEVELOPED CONTINENT.

BEFORE I PROCEED, HOWEVER, I WILL ATTEMPT TO DEFINE CULTURE, IN THE BROADEST SENSE, AS CONSISTING OF ALL THE WAYS OF LIFE OF A PEOPLE INCLUDING THEIR MATERIAL THINGS, THEIR POLITICAL, SOCIAL, LEGAL AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS, THEIR HABITS AND CUSTOMS, THE WAYS OF ACTING, THINKING, FEELING AND REACTING THAT INDIVIDUALS LEARN AND SHARE WITH OTHERS - SUCH AS SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, LANGUAGES, RELIGIONS, IDEAS, VALUES AND WAYS OF DOING AND MAKING THINGS.

REDEFINED OTHERWISE, IN THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SENSE AND FOR OUR PURPOSE HERE, CULTURE MEANS AND INCLUDES AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF LEARNED BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS THAT ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE MEMBERS OF ANY GIVEN SOCIETY. CULTURE REFERS TO THE TOTAL WAY OF LIFE OF PARTICULAR GROUPS OF PEOPLE. IT INCLUDES EVERYTHING THAT A GROUP OF PEOPLE THINKS, SAYS, DOES AND MAKES - ITS CUSTOMS, LANGUAGE, MATERIAL ARTIFACTS AND SHARES SYSTEMS OF ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS. CULTURE IS LEARNED AND TRANSMITTED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

BY THIS DEFINITION, IT CAN BE SEEN THAT ANY CULTURE SHOULD CONSIST OF THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, BELIEFS, CEREMONIES, RITUALS, LAWS, ARTIFACTS, TOOLS, SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, MYTHS AND LEGENDS, KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, CONCEPT OF SELF, MORALS, IDEALS AND ACCEPTED WAYS OF BEHAVING. BY DEFINITION, THEREFORE, TO BE HUMAN MEANS TO BE PART OF A CULTURE. IT BECOMES, THUS, IMPOSSIBLE TO CONCEIVE OF HUMANS OUTSIDE THE CONTEXT OF CULTURE SINCE IT IS HUMANS WHO CREATE CULTURE AND CULTURE DEFINES HUMANS.

ANOTHER ASPECT I WISH TO HIGHLIGHT IS THAT OF COMMUNICATION IN THE WAKE OF WHICH ARE THE PHENOMENA OF CULTURAL FUSION, TRANSNATIONALISATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF CULTURE. CULTURE IS NOT STATIC FOR SOCIETAL GROUPS THEMSELVES ARE NOT ISLANDS INTO THEMSELVES. HENCE, CULTURE SPREADS BY INTERACTION, INFORMATION MEDIA, TRAVEL, INTER-MARRIAGE, TRADE TRANSPORT EVEN WARS, CONQUEST AND OTHER FORMS OF HUMAN CONTACT. IT IS THIS CULTURAL FUSION AND SPREAD WHICH LEADS TO DEVELOPMENT.

THE ROLE OF THE CULTURAL DIMENSION TO THE SUSTAINABLE AND RELEVANT SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CONTINENT CANNOT BE OVER-EMPHASIZED IN THAT THE AFRICAN LEADERS HAVE ALREADY PRONOUNCED THEMSELVES ON ITS CRITICAL, VITAL AND PERMEATING IMPORTANCE FOR ANY CONTEXT SPECIFIC AND VIABLE SURVIVAL OF THE AFRICAN ECONOMY, PEOPLES AND THEIR INSTITUTIONS BE THE TRADITIONAL OR MODERN.

INDEED, IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT, IN ADOPTING THE CHARTER OF THE OAU IN MAY 1963, THE FOUNDING FATHERS FORESAW THE IMPORTANCE OF AFRICAN CULTURE AS ONE OF THE PILLARS OF AFRICAN UNITY WHEN THEY ESTABLISHED, AS ONE OF THE SPECIALIZED COMMISSIONS OF THE OAU, THE EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, CULTURAL AND HEALTH COMMISSION.

THE OAU IS NOW 27 YEARS OLD. IN THE LIFE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MAN OR WOMAN, 27 YEARS OLD SHOULD BE A TIME FOR SERIOUS STOCK-TAKING, REFLECTION AND MAPPING OUT AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE. THAT IS THE TIME OF THINKING OF MARRIAGE, FOR KNOWING ONE'S ROOTS, FRIENDS, PERPETUATING ONE'S LINEAGE, SEARCHING FOR ONE'S IDENTITY, SELF-ASSERTION AND ASSERTIVENESS. THE OAU, AFTER 27 YEARS, IS ITSELF CONFRONTED WITH THE QUESTIONS ABOUT ITS FUTURE AND IS CURRENTLY PONDERING ON AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY THAT WOULD NOT ONLY GUARANTEE OUR CONTINENT'S CONTINUED RELEVANCE AND, INDEED, SURVIVAL BUT WOULD ALSO ENSURE HARMONIOUS SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY IN THE 1990s AND BEYOND INTO THE 21ST CENTURY. THIS PREOCCUPATION OF SELF-ASSERTION AND SEARCH FOR CULTURAL IDENTITY BY THE OAU IS THE MORE URGENT BY THE CURRENT GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SPHERE. WITH THIS WORTHY ENDEAVOUR, AFRICA SHOULD APPROPRIATELY FIT INTO THE NEW GEOPOLITICAL MAP AND BENEFIT FROM THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER, AS WELL AS CONTRIBUTE TO IT.

MR CHAIRMAN,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

AS WE CELEBRATE AFRICA DAY, THE CONTINENT IS IN ITS NINTH YEAR OF ECONOMIC RECESSION. BY THE END OF 1987, THE AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME IN THE AFRICAN REGION WAS 2 PER CENT LESS THAT ITS LEVEL IN 1980. REAL WAGES HAVE DROPPED IN MOST COUNTRIES. SOME COUNTRIES HAVE EXPERIENCED A DRAMATIC FALL OF 10 % PER YEAR

SINCE 1980. THE PRODUCTIVITY OF LABOUR HAS DECLINED ON THE AVERAGE BY 1.5 % PER YEAR IN AFRICA DURING THE 1980s COMPARED TO AN AVERAGE INCREASE OF 1.2 % AND 2.5 % IN THE WESTERN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND ASIA, RESPECTIVELY. THE COMBINATION OF SUCH UNFAVOURABLE TRENDS HAS LED TO A GROWING IMPOVERISHMENT IN THE CONTINENT TO THE POINT THAT IT IS CURRENTLY ESTIMATED THAT OVER HALF OF THE AFRICAN POPULATION LIVES UNDER THE POVERTY LINE. ALTHOUGH IN THE PERIOD UP TO 1980, THE CONTINENT RECORDED SOME SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN MEETING THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE POPULATION, THE SITUATION HAS DRASTICALLY WORSENERED IN THE AREAS OF EDUCATION, NUTRITION, HEALTH AND HOUSING IN THE EIGHTIES.

ONE OF THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CRISIS RAVAGING OUR CONTINENT IS THE EVER-MOUNTING EXTERNAL DEBT AND DEBT-SERVICING BURDEN TO THE TUNE OF US\$ 250 BILLION IN 1989 AND US\$ 30 BILLION PER ANNUM, RESPECTIVELY. THIS HEAVY EXTERNAL BORROWING CAME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF THE COLLAPSE OF COMMODITY PRICES. THAT IS WHY WE WERE CONVINCED AND MAINTAIN THAT THE AFRICAN DEBT CRISIS IS PRIMARLY A BY-PRODUCT OF THE COLLAPSE IN THE COMMODITY MARKET AND MANIPULATIONS OF INTEREST RATES. THUS, THE CUMULATIVE TOLL ON AFRICAN SOCIETY OF THIS UNREMITTING DECLINE FOR A WHOLE DECADE IS CLEAR AND UNMISTAKABLE. WHEREAS IN 1960, AFRICA HAD 124 MILLION ILLITERATES, IN 1985, THE ILLITERATE POPULATION HAD INCREASED TO 162 MILLION. TODAY, ALMOST ONE FIFTH OF ALL THE ILLITERATE FEMALES IN THE WORLD ARE IN AFRICA.

THE SHORTAGE OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE AVAILABLE TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA IS ALARMING OUT OF AN ESTIMATED TOTAL POPULATION OF 555 MILLION, ONLY ABOUT 2000,000 PEOPLE HOLD POST-GRADUATE DEGREES. MOREOVER, 94.8 MILLION ARE UNDER-EMPLOYED IN ADDITION TO 20.1 MILLION OTHERS WHO ARE OPENLY UNEMPLOYED. THIS RESULTS IN LOW PRODUCTIVITY, LOW INCOMES AND LOW CONTRIBUTIONS OF THESE PEOPLE TO DEVELOPMENT. THE LACK OF APPROPRIATE SKILLS DUE TO THE INADEQUACY OF EDUCATION POLICIES HAS RESULTED IN A GREATER RESORT TO RECRUITMENT FROM OUTSIDE THE CONTINENT FOR MANAGERIAL AND TECHNICAL POSITIONS AND THIS SITUATION HAS NOT SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED SINCE INDEPENDENCE. BESIDES THE MISALLOCATION OF AVAILABLE HUMAN RESOURCES, NOTABLY IN PUBLIC SERVICES, LIMITS INDIVIDUAL AND AGGREGATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO EFFICIENCY. THESE AND OTHER UNFAVOURABLE FACTORS SUCH AS THE LOW REMUNERATION LEVELS, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT, HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO INTENSIFYING THE BRAIN-DRAIN FROM THE CONTINENT.

MR CHAIRMAN,

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I NOW WISH TO REFER TO THE CENTRALITY AND IMPORTANCE OF AFRICAN CULTURE AND THE CULTURAL DIMENSION TO DEVELOPMENT. WHEREAS, THE COLONIALISM HAS ITS SHARE OF THE BLAME IN EXPLOITING AND UNDER-DEVELOPING THE AFRICAN CONTINENT WHICH HAS ALSO MADE SOME MISTAKES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE FOR THE MOST PART TENDED TO BE MAINLY BASED ON A NON DYNAMIC DEFINITION OF DEVELOPMENT AND HAVE BEEN IN THE MAIN MODELS ADOPTED IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA AND WITHOUT SUCH RELEVANCE TO THE CONDITIONS IN OUR CONTINENT. A GOOD NUMBER OF OUR COUNTRIES HAVE TRIED TO BUILD «CONSUMER SOCIETIES» WITH EMPAHSIS ON PERSONAL INCOMES AS OPPOSED TO COMMUNITY EXPENDITURE. THEY HAVE ALSO PURSUED INDUSTRIALIZATION WIHTOUT ENOUGH ATTENTION TO UPGRADING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND TECHNIQUES, IN PARTICULAR THE NEEDS OF THE PEASANT FARMERS, WHO CONSTITUTE THE VAST MAJORITY OF AFRICA'S PEOPLES, HAVE BEEN LARGELY IGNORED.

IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION ALSO, WE HAVE TRIED TO COPY WESTERN PRACTICES AS WE HAD KNOWN THEM. WE HAVE TAKEN PRIDE IN A FEW MODERN HOSPITALS STAFFED WITH INTERNATIONALLY QUALIFIED DOCTORS, RATHER THAN TAKING BASIC HEALTH SERVICES TO THE MASSES OF OUR PEOPLE. THESE HAVE BECOME WHITE ELEPHANTS AT THE EXPENSE OF THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE. WE HAVE EMPHASIZED ACADEMIC RATHER THAN TECHNICAL EDUCATION WITH OUR UNIVERSITIES HAVING PRIDE OF PLACE AS THEY CONCENTRATE ON ARTS SUBJECTS. CONSEQUENTLY, AND AS AFORESAID IN THE MOST «EDUCATIONALLY SUCCESSFUL COUNTRIES» OF AFRICA, THERE IS A GROWING PROBLEM OF EDUCATED UNEMPLOYED YOUTH WHILE NEEDED TASKS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE AND NATION GO UNDONE FOR WANT OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL. ANOTHER DISCOURAGING OBSERVATION IS THAT WE HAVE THOUGHT AND ACTED TOO NATIONALISTICALLY IN OUR

RELATIONS WITH OTHER AFRICAN STATES. WHEREAS THE NEED TO CREATE AND CONSOLIDATE A SENSE OF NATIONHOOD AND NATIONAL PRIDE HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED, THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN AND BUILD ON THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE STRUCTURES AND SENSE OF AFRICANNESS HAS BEEN GIVEN ALL TOO LITTLE ATTENTION. THIS HAS COMPLICATED AND INHIBITED INTRAAFRICAN COOPERATION OF ALL KINDS.

THUS, THE RESULT OF COMBINING AN UNJUST AND ADVERSE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER AND OUR OWN FALSE STARTS TO DEVELOPMENT, IS REFLECTED IN THE PRESENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN AFRICA. WE HAVE NO NEED TO BE APOLOGETIC OR EVEN DESPONDENT ABOUT THEM BUT WE MUST RECOGNIZE HOW BAD THESE CONDITIONS ARE.

WE MUST RE-EXAMINE OUR PAST DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES. ALTHOUGH AFRICA'S CRITICS AND DETRACTORS ADVANCE DIFFERENT EXPLANATIONS FOR THE DIFFICULTIES OF EACH NATION, YET THE MALAISE IS COMMON, IT VARIES ONLY IN DEGREE. IT, THEREFORE, CANNOT BE ACCOUNTED FOR BY REFERENCE TO IDEOLOGY OR FORMS OF GOVERNMENT. AMONG THE FREE AFRICAN NATIONS ARE STATES GUIDED BY CAPITALISM, MARXISM, SOCIALISM OF VARYING DEFINITIONS AND SO-CALLED «MIXED ECONOMIES». THEY ARE GOVERNED BY MILITARY ADMINISTRATIONS, MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACIES, ONE PARTY STATES - DEMOCRATIC AND OTHERWISE - KINGDOMS AND REPUBLICS OF DIFFERENT KINDS. WHATEVER THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT OR ADMINISTRATION, THE FACT IS THAT TO THE NATIONS OF AFRICA, IDEOLOGY OR FORMS OF GOVERNMENT HAVE PROVED TO BE MUCH LESS RELEVANT ECONOMICALLY

THAN THE EVENTS IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD. IT IS EXTERNAL FACTORS WHICH ARE CENTRAL TO THEIR RATE OF DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE. HENCE, INDIVIDUALLY AFRICAN STATES HAVE NO POWER TO INFLUENCE THAT EXTERNAL WORLD.

IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS, AFRICA CONTINUES TO BE TOLD : THIS IS THE PRICE OF YOUR EXPORTS; THAT IS THE PRICE OF YOUR IMPORTS; THIS IS THE CONDITION FOR AND THE PRICE OF YOUR LOAN, YOUR CREDIT. AFRICA'S CHOICE IS TO AGREE OR NOT TO EXPORT, NOT TO IMPORT AND NOT TO BORROW, WHICH IS USUALLY NO CHOICE AT ALL IF THE PEOPLE ARE TO BE FED AND OUR ECONOMIES CONTINUE TO EXIST. THIS «TAKE IT-OVER-LEAVE-IT» AUTHORITARIANISM IS EXERCISED AGAINST AFRICAN COUNTRIES EVEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS OF WHICH WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE MEMBERS. WE ARE TOLD : YOU WILL ADOPT SUCH AND SUCH AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY IF YOU WANT DEVELOPMENT CAPITAL OR FINANCIAL. THE LATEST THINKING IN THIS DIRECTION IS THE INTRODUCTION OF MULTIPARTISM AS A CONDITONALITY FOR AID OR CREDIT.

WHERE DOES AFRICA GO FROM HERE ? AFRICA CANNOT ESCAPE FROM THE WORLD AND DOES NOT WANT TOO. WE CANNOT ESCPAE FROM THE POWER OF THE ECONOMIC NORTH EITHER. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRATEGIES WE HAVE ADOPTED UNTIL NOW HAVE LED US INTO AN ECONOMIC MORASS FROM WHICH THERE IS NO EARLY PROSPECT OF ESCAPE AND FROM WHICH IT SOMETIMES SEEMS THAT THERE IS NO ESCAPE AT ALL. BE THAT AS IT MAY, I SUGGEST THAT ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO EASY OR QUICK WAY OUT OF OUR CURRENT PROBLEMS, WE CAN STILL GET OUT OF THEM.

WE HAVE TO START BY ACCEPTING CERTAIN FACTS. THE RICH, INDUSTRIALIZED AND POWERFUL NATIONS OF THE ECONOMIC NORTH WILL NOT WILLINGLY AGREE TO CHANGE AN INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF TRADE, FINANCE, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY WHICH WORKS IN THEIR FAVOUR. NOR SHALL WE GET FROM THEM THE MASSIVE INFLOW OF INVESTMENT CAPITAL WHICH IS UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED AS NECESSARY TO OVERCOME AFRICA'S PRESENT PROBLEMS AND ALLOW RAPID ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON THE TRADITIONAL PATTERN. IN OTHER WORDS, AFRICA SHOULD NOT EXPECT ANY MARSHALL PLAN. ON THE CONTRARY, THE CURRENT NET TRANSFER OF CAPITAL TO THE NORTH WILL BECOME WORSE UNLESS WE SUCCEED IN TAKING APPROPRIATE MEASURES WHICH IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR ANY COUNTRY IN ISOLATION.

AFRICA IS NOT LACKING IN RESOURCES. WE SIMPLY DO NOT RECOGNIZE THEM FOR WHAT THEY ARE BECAUSE WE ARE THINKING IN «NORTHERN» TERMS.

AFRICA'S GREATEST RESOURCE IS ITS PEOPLE. ALTHOUGH THEY USUALLY HAVE NO UNDERSTANDING OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND THE DISCIPLINES IT REQUIRES OR DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS OF MACROECONOMICS, FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND THE SUBTLETIES OF DIPLOMACY AND SO ON, YET THEY HAVE AN INNATE AND GOD-GIVEN SKILL WHICH IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THEM AND TO OUR DEVELOPMENT. THEY ARE SKILLED IN SURVIVAL. IN SPITE OF ALL THEIR PROBLEMS, THESE UNDERRATED AND SO-CALLED UNEDUCATED PEOPLE STILL DEMONSTRATE AGAIN AND AGAIN THEIR RESILIENCE AND ABILITY TO LEARN NEW TECHNIQUES OF PRODUCTION OR LIVING. THEY HAVE SHOWN THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO ADOPT OR ADAPT THEM ONCE THEY ARE CONVINCED

OF THEIR VALIDITY IN THEIR OWN SOCIO-CULTURAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE USEFULNESS OF THESE NEW TECHNIQUES TO THEIR LIVES.

IF AFRICA'S FIRST RESOURCE IS ITS PEOPLE, THE SECOND FOLLOWS : IT IS OUR TRADITIONS AND CULTURES. THESE TOO WE WESTERN EDUCATED HAVE LEARNED TO SCORN AND DENIGRATE. BUT THROUGHOUT THE LENGTH AND BREATH OF AFRICA, PEOPLE HAVE A FEELING OF RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXTENDED FAMILY, THE CLAN AND EVEN THE TRIBE. EVEN, WE SO-CALLED «MODERN» PEOPLE STILL HAVE AND PRACTISE IT. THE DETAILS DIFFER BUT THE CONCEPT OF SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY IS COMMON; IT IS AN INTRINSIC PART OF THE SURVIVAL TECHNIQUE OF AFRICAN PEOPLE. ^{IT} WERE ~~IT~~ NOT SO, OUR DISASTROUS MACRO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS WOULD ALREADY HAVE LED TO MUCH MORE SUFFERING AND DEATH THAN NOW, WHEN FAMILY AND OTHER SOLIDARITY HELPS OUT THE MEMBER WHO IS JOBLESS OR LANDLESS OR OLD OR OTHERWISE UNABLE TO EARN A LIVING WORSE STILL, THE SUFFERING OF AFRICA'S 5 MILLION REFUGEES AND 12 MILLION DISPLACED PERSONS WOULD HAVE BEEN GREATER THAN IT IS IF IT WERE NOT FOR OUR TRADITION OF TRIBAL AND, INDEED, INTER-TRIBAL SOLIDARITY AND COHESION.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH ORTHODOX DEVELOPMENT THEORY, AND BY THE POLICY APPROACH BEING URGED ON US BY THE INTERNATIONAL «AID DONORS», WE, IN AFRICA, HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY TRYING TO UNDERMINE THAT CONCEPT OF SOLIDARITY IN FAVOUR OF RABID INDIVIDUALISM AND THE IDEA OF THE FREE MARKET AS THE PANACEA OF ALL OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC ILLS. WE NEED INSTEAD TO BEGIN CONSIDERING HOW WE CAN WORK WITHIN OUR OWN TRADITION AS WELL AS OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE AND EXPAND AND ADAPT IT TO MEET THE

DEMANDS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND ITS POSSIBILITIES OF A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING FOR ALL. IN PARTICULAR, WE SHOULD BE WORKING OUT HOW TO EXTEND AND HELP THE PEOPLE TO ORGANIZE, ON A WIDER BASIS, THE TRADITION OF COOPERATION FOR COMMON PURPOSE. AFRICA'S ECONOMIC LIBERATION IS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT A CULTURAL LIBERATION.

LOOK AT CHINA WHICH IS SAID TO BE A MODERNIZING ECONOMY NOW. IT SHOULD BE RECALLED THAT THE FIRST AND BASIC STEPS IN CHINA DEPENDED UPON THE FULL INVOLVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE, THEIR USE OF TRADITIONAL TOOLS AND, INDEED, TRADITIONAL ALBEIT ADPATED MODES OF COOPERATION. JAPAN IS A «MODERN» COUNTRY, NOW A PART OF THE HIGHLY DEVELOPED ECONOMIC NORTH. BUT JAPAN'S ECONOMIC STRENGTH WAS ATTAINED THROUGH DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN ITS OWN CULTURE, WHICH IS STILL TO THIS DAY, VERY IMPORTANT TO IT. MORE THAN ANY OTHER INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRY, JAPAN DEVELOPED BY ORGANIZING AND USING ITS OWN RESOURCES OR MEN, MONEY AND TRADITION, AUGMENTED BY LEARNING, COPYING AND DEVELOPING SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE FROM THE THEN MORE ADVANCED COUNTRIES.

THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF ACCEPTING PEOPLE AS AFRICA'S BASIS ECONOMIC RESOURCE IS THAT WE MUST DEVOTE ALL OTHER RESOURCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE. THIS CAN BE DONE. FOR AFRICA ALREADY HAS A CONSIDERABLE CORE OF PEOPLE WITH THE MODERN TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE AND WITH THE TRAINING IN ECONOMICS AND OTHER PROFESSIONS, WHICH WOULD BE NEEDED FOR DRAWING UP

AND IMPLEMENTING SUCH A STRATEGY. BUT ALSO, ONCE AGAIN, WE TEND TO SCORN AFRICA'S PROFESSIONALS AS INEXPERIENCED WHILE, AT THE SAME TIME, WE DENY THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN EXPERIENCE. WE ACT AS IF WE RESPECT ONLY «EXPERTS» FROM THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WITH THOSE FROM THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES OUTSIDE AFRICA AS A SECOND BEST AND OUR OWN PEOPLE AS A LAST RESORT. THIS IS A COLONIAL LEGACY AND COMPLEX. WE NEED TO REVERSE THAT ORDER OF CHOICE.

THERE IS ANOTHER CHANGE WE NEED TO MAKE. AT PRESENT, WHATEVER EXPERTS WE USE, WE ALMOST ALWAYS ORGANIZE OUR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FROM THE TOP DOWNWARDS BECAUSE WE DO NOT INVOLVE THE PEOPLE. A CENTRALIZED PLAN MAY BE NECESSARY FOR BUILDING A MODERN STEEL MILL. WE TEND TO ADOPT THE SAME APPROACH WHEN THE PROJECT INVOLVES PROVISION OF VILLAGE WATER SUPPLY OR IMPROVING VILLAGE ROADS. INSTEAD OF PROVIDING SOME EXPERTISE AND NOT NECESSARILY THAT OF PEOPLE WITH A STRING OF DEGREES AND PERHAPS SOME PIPES OR TOOLS WITH WHICH THE VILLAGERS CAN BUILD THEIR OWN CLEAN WATER SYSTEMS, WE DECIDE TO «PROVIDE WATER» FOR THEM. THEY REMAIN ONLOOKERS AND THUS HAVE NO FEELING OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTAINING THIS DONATED PROJECT. IF THE PUMPS GO WRONG, THEY SHRUG THEIR SHOULDERS, COMPLAIN ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT AND GO BACK TO THE OLD SEARCH FOR STREAMS AND THOSE TRADITIONAL WELLS WHICH HAVE BEEN ABANDONED. THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA CANNOT DEVELOP IF THEY ARE MERELY ONLOOKERS IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT. AND IF THEY DO NOT DEVELOP AFRICA, WHO WILL ? ALL SEGMENTS OF AFRICAN SOCIETY SHOULD BE MOBILIZED AND BE MORE CLOSELY INVOLVED AND CONSULTED AT ALL STAGES OF THE POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR COUNTRY.

WE MUST NOT BE AFRAID OR ASHAMED OF OUR AFRICANNESS, TRADITIONS AND CULTURES. THEY ARE THE ROOTS WHICH GIVE US INNER LIFE AND STRENGTH. THEY ARE THE BASIS ON WHICH WE CAN BEGIN THE MODERNIZATION OF AN AFRICA WHICH IS INDEPENDENT AND THAT IS THE ONLY KIND OF MODERNIZATION WORTH FIGHTING FOR SHADOWS HAVE NO INDEPENDENT EXISTENCE. A LITTLE FERTILIZER IN THE FORM OF FOREIGN RESOURCES CAN BE APPLIED TO OUR OWN PROJECTS WHEN THEY ARE AVAILABLE ! BUT FOREIGN RESOURCES MUST NOT BE LOOKED UPON AS IF THEY WERE THE SEED FROM WHICH AFRICA CAN GROW. THIS IS THE MEANING OF ENDEGENOUS SELF-RELIANT AND SELF-SUSTAINING DEVELOPMENT.

ON THE BASIS OF ATTITUDES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND COOPERATION, BOTH TRADITIONAL TO AFRICA, WE CAN FIND A WAY OUT OF OUR PRESENT TROUBLES AND TOWARDS A REAL REDUCTION IN DEBILITATING POVERTY. THIS MEANS REVERSING APPROACHES WE HAVE MADE UNTIL NOW AND GIVING OUR PEOPLE TIME TO RECOVER FROM THE SCORN TO WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED. IT MEANS CAPITALIZING ON THE PRIDE IN OUR AFRICANNESS, NOT AS A REJECTION OF THE REST OF THE WORLD, BUT AS OUR PART OF AND OWN PAST AND FUTURE GROWING OUT OF THAT PAST BUT STRENGTHENED BY USING THE ADVANCE IN MANKIND'S KNOWLEDGE.

MR CHAIRMAN,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

ALTHOUGH THE COLONIAL EMPLOYER WAS QUICK TO DEPICT AND ACCUSE THE AFRICAN OF INEFFICIENCY, INNATE LACK OF

THOUROUGHNESS AND FOLLOW-UP AS WELL AS INTRINSIC INEPTITUDE, INCLUDING LOW PRODUCTIVITY, IT IS HIGH TIME THAT THE AFRICAN REFUTES THESE DEROGATORY REMARKS THAT ARE NOT INTRINSICALLY AND EMPIRICALLY CORRECT. INDEED, WE ARE CONSTANTLY TO WORK HARDER - AND WE DO. TODAY, AFRICANS WORK HARDER, PRODUCE MORE BUT EARN LESS! BUT WE NEED TO WORK EVEN HARDER.

PRODUCTIVITY AND ATTITUDES TO WORK ARE INFLUENCED BY SOCIETAL CULTURAL NORMS AND ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE WORK IS PERFORMED. IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT NEW WORK BEHAVIOUR IS AN ASPECT OF HUMAN EXISTENCE FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL WHICH HAS ATTRACTED AND CONTINUES TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF ALL PHILOSOPHERS, SOCIAL SCIENTISTS, THEOLOGIANs, WORKERS, EMPLOYERS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES. THIS WIDESPREAD INTEREST SHOULD NOT BE ALL THAT SURPRISING IF IT IS REALIZED THAT THE CONTINUED SURVIVAL OF THE HUMAN SPECIES DEPENDS ON MAN'S ABILITY TO PRODUCE MATERIAL GOODS. IN OTHER WORDS, WORK IS A PHENOMENON FUNDAMENTAL TO HUMAN EXISTENCE AND SURVIVAL.

THUS, IT CAN BE SEEN THAT, THROUGHOUT HISTORY, MAN HAS HAD TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE PROBLEM OF WORK AND ALL HUMAN SOCIETIES HAVE ACCORDED STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE, IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, TO WORK AND TO WORKERS. THIS CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF WORK TO ALL SOCIETIES OF ALL TIMES IS AGAIN UNDERSCORED BY ALL CULTURES, RELIGIOUS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE WORLD. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS THEN, WORK, BEYOND ENSURING THE CONTINUED SURVIVAL OF MAN, ALSO PRODUCES THE WEALTH OF NATIONS. THUS, FOR

ANY MEANINGFUL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RECOVERY TO TAKE PLACE, HARD WORK IS THE PRECONDITION.

AS IT IS WELL-KNOWN, THE MAJORITY OF THE AFRICAN POPULATION LIVE, WORK AND DRIVE THEIR LIVELIHOOD FROM THE RURAL SECTOR.

THAT THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR WILL, THEREFORE, INITIALLY AND EVEN IN THE FORESEABLE FUTURE CONTINUE TO BE THE MAJOR EMPLOYER AND HABITAT OF THE MAJORITY OF THE AFRICAN POPULATION CANNOT BE GAINSAID. THUS, WHEREAS THE AFRICAN RECOVERY PROGRAMME UNDERSCORES THE CENTRALITY OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE, IT ALSO IDENTIFIED OTHER PRIORITY SECTORS IN SUPPORT OF AGRICULTURE SUCH AS HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND UTILIZATION, ENHANCEMENT OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES, AMONG OTHERS.

MR CHAIRMAN,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

AS WE ENTER THE 1990s, WE SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT THE 1980s HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATELY DESCRIBED AS THE «LOST DECADE IN DEVELOPMENT» FOR AFRICA. IT, THEREFORE, BEHOVES ALL OF US TO REALIZE THAT WE OWE IT TO OUR CHILDREN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS TO WORK ASSIDUOUSLY AND DILIGENTLY FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF AN

AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY BY FIRST STRENGTHENING, COORDINATING AND HARMONIZING THE ACTIVITIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES OF THE FIVE REGIONAL GROUPINGS FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION, NAMELY THE ARAB MAGHREB UNION (AMU), THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL AFRICAN STATES (ECCAS), THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS), THE PREFERENTIAL TRADE AREA (PTA) FOR EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN STATES AS WELL AS THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION CONFERENCE (SADCC). GIVEN THE FRAGILE AND DEPENDENT NATURE OF AFRICAN ECONOMIES, NO SINGLE AFRICAN COUNTRY CAN DEVELOP IN ISOLATION. THUS, ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IS NOT A MATTER OF POLITICAL CONVENIENCE BUT OF SURVIVAL OF THE CONTINENT AND ITS PEOPLE.

IN CONCLUDING THIS STATEMENT, I WISH TO POINT OUT THAT I AM STRONG BELIEVER IN THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE, ROLE AND VALUE OF AFRICAN CULTURE AND TRADITIONAL VALUES. THESE AND THE CONTINENT'S HUMAN RESOURCES, ARE THE MOST PRECIOUS ASSET AND THE KEY TO THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT OF AFRICA. MANY RESOLUTIONS, LPA, APPER AND UNAPPARED HAVE PROGRESSIVELY UNDERSCORED THE ROLE OF THE STRATEGY OF AFRICAN TRADITIONS, CULTURE AND VALUES AS WELL AS HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN THE OVERALL SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTINENT. WE REALIZE THAT ONLY THROUGH DEVELOPING THE KNOWLEDGE BASE, THE INTELLECT, THE SKILLS AND ATTITUDES OF THE MAJORITY OF AFRICAN PEOPLES, THROUGH A SYSTEM OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN OUR CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT AND THAT ARE RELEVANT

TO OUR DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE, RESPONSIVE TO OUR BASIC NEEDS AND COGNIZANT OF THE REGION'S NATURAL RESOURCE ENDOWMENT, CAN AFRICAN STATES, ONE AND ALL, EQUIP THEMSELVES WITH THE CAPITALITIES AND INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT ? AFRICA'S VERY SURVIVAL DEPENDS A GREAT DEAL ON BASING ITS DEVELOPMENT ON ITS CULTURAL HERITAGE TO EXPLOIT, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLES, THE ABUNDANTLY AVAILABLE NATURAL RESOURCES AND DOING ALL THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE THROUGH COOPERATION AND COLLECTIVE SELF-RELIANCE.

ALTHOUGH, THE CURRENT AND FORESEEABLE FUTURE PERFORMANCE OF THE AFRICAN ECONOMY MAY LOOK BLEAK AND GLOOMY, WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW OURSELVES TO SUCCUMB. AFRICAN TRADITIONAL VALUES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF COHESION AND SOLIDARITY SHOULD BE OUR GUIDE AND PILLAR OF STRENGTH IN OUR DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. THUS, WHILE THE PAST SHOULD BE A LESSON AND THE FUTURE A CHALLENGE, WE SHOULD HENCEFORTH DRAW INSPIRATION FROM OUR FAITH IN THE AFRICAN SURVIVAL TECHNIQUES, POTENTIALITIES AND DESTINY OF AFRICA THE NECESSARY STRENGTH, DETERMINATION AND RESILIENCE TO REVERSE THE TREND AS WELL AS SET OUR CONTINENT ON THE RIGHT PATH TO RECOVERY, PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT. WE SHALL PREVAIL.

I THANK YOU.