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STATEMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE OAU SECRETARY GENERAL
DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM ON THE OCCASION OF
AFRICA REFUGEE DAY, 20 JUNE 1992

Today 20th June 1992 marks the Africa Refugee Day. The day commemorates the coming into force in 1974 of the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The theme for observing this year's Refugee Day is Voluntary Repatriation. By this I mean voluntary repatriation is the most durable solution to solving the problem of refugees and displaced persons in Africa.

The refugee problem in our continent continues to pose many challenges to Africa and the international community as a whole. Africa continues to hold about 6 million refugees and more than 12 million displaced persons. The main root causes of the refugee problems on the continent are basically conflicts, human right abuses, drought and famine, natural disasters and calamities as well as adverse social and economic conditions affecting a number of our Member States. Our attempts to tackle the root causes of this human tragedy over the years have, at times been frustrated by other negative factors.

Meanwhile, the exiled population of Africans continues to cry for peace in their lives, sanctuary and, above everything else security so that they can return to their countries of Origin and to their loved ones. This is the challenge posed to Africa and its leaders. As we commemorate Africa Refugee Day, let us remember the millions of our brothers and sisters who, largely through no fault of theirs have been compelled to live outside their homes and away from their loved ones, who, despite the goodwill and support of Africa and the rest of the international community have been subjected to a life of deprivation and degradation and of conditions of squalor, diseases and malnutrition. In this regard an appeal is made to all Member States concerned to create conditions conducive to the return home of their nationals in exile and to declare general amnesty and enact amnesty laws and allow the voluntary repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin.

While Africa strives to attain this goal I wish to take this opportunity to once again, call on the international community to translate the principle of burden sharing and international solidarity into reality by their deeds in providing adequate resources to support the efforts of Member States in assisting refugees and displaced persons.

Peace in Africa is a sine-quo-non to development. Development can only come about with full and proper utilization of Africa's human and other resources. Our human resources can only be utilized if right conditions are created within our Member States. One such condition is the climate to peace and security to enable our brothers and sisters to return home VOLUNTARILY.

I hope and believe I can count on Africans humanity and the world's generosity in this noble crusade.



HONOURABLE MINISTERS,
THE DISTINGUISHED ACTING EXECUTIVE-SECRETARY OF THE ECA,
YOUR EXCELLENCIES MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT IS A GREAT HONOUR AND PLEASURE FOR ME TO WELCOME
AMONGST US THE DISTINGUISHED CURRENT CHAIRMAN OF THE OAU, THE
HEAD OF STATE AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES OF
THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, H.E. PRESIDENT IBRAHIM BADAMASI
BABANGIDA.

WE ARE MOST GRATEFUL THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO
RESPOND TO OUR INVITATION TO VISIT THE OAU HEADQUARTERS, IN ADDIS
ABABA, DESPITE A BUSY SCHEDULE BACK HOME IN NIGERIA. THIS VISIT HAS
BEEN MOST TIMELY AND VERY INSPIRING FOR ALL OF US WHO ARE
COMMITTED TO THE PROMOTION OF THE WELL-BEING OF OUR CONTINENT
AND ITS PEOPLES.

THE AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ADDIS ABABA
ARE GATHERED, HERE, TODAY, TO WELCOME YOUR EXCELLENCY AND TO
LISTEN TO YOUR MESSAGE.

MAY I REQUEST YOU, MR PRESIDENT, TO TAKE THE FLOOR.

MR PRESIDENT,

ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US, HERE, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU MOST SINCERELY FOR THIS VERY INSPIRING MESSAGE THAT YOU HAVE DELIVERED.

THE IDEAS THAT YOU HAVE PROPOUNDED AND THE VERY INFORMED VIEWS THAT YOU HAVE EXPRESSED WILL DEFINITELY SERVE AS USEFUL GUIDELINES FOR ALL OF US WITHIN THE AFRICAN COMMUNITY.

THE WARM APPLAUSE ACCORDED YOU BY THIS GATHERING IS THE MOST ELOQUENT TESTIMONY OF OUR THANKS AND GRATITUDE FOR YOUR ENRICHING STATEMENT AND MANIFESTATION OF OUR SENTIMENTS OF ADMIRATION FOR YOUR EXCELLENCY.

I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE YOU THAT THIS VISIT, WITH WHICH YOU HAVE HONOURED US, WILL REMAIN IN OUR MINDS AND WILL SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE OUR DETERMINATION TO SERVE THE INTEREST OF OUR CONTINENT AND ITS PEOPLES.

AS YOU LEAVE US, WE WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE YOU OF OUR VERY BEST WISHES FOR YOU PERSONALLY AND FOR YOUR FAMILY AS WELL AS FOR THE WELL-BEING AND PROSPERITY OF THE FRATERNAL PEOPLE OF YOUR GREAT COUNTRY, NIGERIA.