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**STATEMENT OF H.E. DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION
OF AFRICAN UNITY ON THE OCCASION OF THE
FIRST MEETING OF THE PATRONS' GROUP OF THE
ALLIANCE FOR AFRICA'S INDUSTRIALIZATION**

ALGIERS, ALGERIA

13 JULY 1999

Your Excellency, Henri Konan Bedie,
President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire and
Chairman of the Patrons' Group of the Alliance
for Industrialization,
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government –
Members of the Patrons' Group,
Your Excellency Carlos Magarinos,
Director-General of UNIDO,
Your Excellency Omar Kabbaj, President of ADB,
Your Excellency K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of ECA
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my singular honour and privilege to join in welcoming you all, to the First Meeting of the Patrons' Group of the Alliance for Africa's Industrialization which is being organized during the Thirty-fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU.

I wish to pay special tribute to H.E. Mr. Henri Konan Bedie, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, for his personal commitment and interest in Africa's economic cooperation and development as evidenced by his leadership and drive for the operationalisation of the Alliance for Africa's Industrialization.

Mr. President,

The significance of the Patrons' Group is that it serves to call the attention of African leaders, decision-makers and the international community at large, to the opportunities that exist in Africa for accelerated industrial development, as well as to the urgent necessity to exploit them for the benefit of the Continent. This effort at sensitization has become necessary because of the present situation and indeed, future prospects of Africa's industrialization in a globalizing world. The present situation with respect to the status of industry in Africa is characterized largely by weak industrial infrastructures, declining industrial production and Africa's continued dependence on the outside world for needed manufactured products.

The Alliance therefore is an opportunity for our governments as well as the public and private sectors in our respective countries, to conceptualize, define and elaborate their industrial policies and strategies, in response to the challenges, risks and opportunities of the globalizing world.

I need to underscore that, in the first place, for Africa to be able to compete and participate effectively in the globalizing world economy, there has to be a policy re-orientation with

greater emphasis accorded to an industrial development strategy targeting the critical sectors of our development and based on our comparative advantage. The second element in this new policy orientation is the indispensable strategy of regional integration and cooperation, with the objective of opening internal markets for the promotion of intra-African competition, as a learning ground and stepping stone for entry into the global arena. This is indeed the fundamental objective of the African Economic Community which we are pursuing along with all the regional economic communities.

The importance of the Alliance is thus, to refocus our attention not only to these new global challenges and opportunities but more importantly to the necessity as well as the requirements of Africa's economic transformation and sustained development. In this regard, we need to intensify our efforts to promote Africa's industrial development and attract international investment and partnerships. On our part, we in the OAU pledge to continue to strengthen this cooperation along with our partners, UNIDO, ECA and ADB in the service of the Continent.

Mr. President,

For our continent to succeed in launching an appropriate programme of industrialisation and indeed development in general, we have to intensify efforts to remove the impediments to our development. Among these, priority attention should be given to the debt burden and the development and rehabilitation of physical infrastructure.

African States individually and collectively have made tremendous efforts to create the conducive environment for relaunching their economic and social development. These commendable efforts need to be supported by our partners in order to ensure their sustainability. Such support should be mobilized from both public and private sectors and through the promotion of Africa as a destination of choice for direct foreign investment.

It is with this background that I urge all our Member States, particularly at the national and regional levels, in cooperation with and involvement of all the relevant sectors and institutions including the private sector to continue to accord priority to issues of industrialization. I wish in particular to urge that the objectives of the Alliance become an integral part of

national and regional strategies, and that concrete programmes are formulated for their realisation.

I thank you very much for your attention.