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*REMARKS BY H.E.DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF OAU ON THE OCCASION OF
LAUNCHING OF PAWA ENDOWMENT FUND
Accra, Ghana - 18 August 1993*

Your Excellency, the Vice President of
the Republic of Ghana,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is always a pleasure for me to be in Ghana where the torch of Africa's redemption was first lit and where the unity of the Continent has become an article of faith. Indeed, how can I, as a faithful disciple of Pan-Africanism, fail to pay tribute to the memory of that great son of Africa, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, whose vision about the unity of the Continent still remains evergreen. These two considerations always come to mind each time one is in Ghana. And Ghanaians should feel proud of the role they have played and continue to play in Africa's march towards emancipation and development.

Let me also pay tribute to His Excellency President J.J. Rawlings for his dedicated commitment in leading the people of Ghana in their struggle for economic independence and emancipation. I should also like to thank him, the people and Government of Ghana for the leading role they continue to play in the promotion of freedom and development in our Continent and for Ghana's unequivocal support for and commitment to our continental Organization - the OAU. My thanks and appreciation also go to PAWA and the organizers of this meeting for inviting the OAU to participate in this historic event.

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Guests,**

For so many reasons, the Organization of African Unity could not fail to honour this rendez-vous. On two occasions, under the auspices of the OAU, African Writers have demonstrated how committed they are to sharing the suffering, hopes and ideals of the African peoples.

As you would recall, the first instance was in Brazzaville from 25 to 31 May, 1987 during the International Literary Symposium Against Apartheid at which you, the Writers, chose to demonstrate your solidarity with our brothers in Southern Africa, get involved in the campaign against the odious system of Apartheid and strive for the advent of an egalitarian and multiracial society in South Africa. You were right and we now start seeing some rays of hope since the release of Nelson Mandela. However, the path that still needs to be covered is uncertain and confronted with obstacles. The unrepentant racists will not succumb easily: that we know. However, we also know that "things will not stay the way they are. Indeed, when those who reign have spoken, those on whom they exercise their reign will also have their turn." That is our hope.

More than ever before, as African Writers, you should continue to watch and to educate and alert public opinion so that they are not misled by the euphoria. The cowardly assassination of Chris Hani and the new wave of violence in Pretoria fully well demonstrate that the forces of evil can still obstruct the so much awaited transition. Now that the deadlines are known, it is your responsibility to mobilize our peoples and pursue a veritable crusade to enable the

Liberation Movements to obtain the required assistance in order to prepare and win the elections. It is also our collective responsibility to do our utmost to prevail on our African brothers and sisters there to work together in the larger interest of their country.

The Pan-African Writers Association (PAWA) represents one of those bridges that have been constructed to link up a section of the African people. It is through such multi-ferrous groupings that we hope African Unity can become a reality. Your role is indeed, not restricted to the recording of historic events as is the case with the literature on Africa's liberation struggle. I urge you to direct your attention to all aspects of the African society, but more particularly to the struggle for the unity of the African people.

Mr. Chairman,

The unity I am talking of is no longer the unity that was viewed as unattainable, a fantasy or a dream. Today, that dream, that vision, has not only become a necessity, but indeed the only way for the salvation of the Continent, which now tethers on the brink of more catastrophies. So serious is our situation today, that collective effort at continental level offers the only prospect of hope for our Continent.

I believe we shall not fail in this endeavour. First, because there is no other alternative than to succeed. Second, the levelling of the political playing field in Africa gives us hope for success, and third, our determination to make the venture a government/people-centred project, reinforces our hope for success. It is our firm conviction, that with a little more sacrifice, determination and

commitment, we will be able to alter the present image of the Continent and to place it on course to progress and prosperity.

Against this background, the OAU has already put in motion a project for the establishment of the African Economic Community. It is the topmost item on the agenda of the OAU in which all institutions, governmental and non-governmental and most importantly, the people of Africa in partnership with the governments, are expected to be the main actors.

Indeed the efforts of our governments need to be buttressed by the support of the African masses. It is in this connection that we seek to urge all Pan-African institutions and bodies like PAWA to spearhead Africa's new agenda. PAWA in particular has a unique and historic role in Africa's renaissance. We expect the pen to be used in furtherance of the aims and objectives of the Community, in the free supply of ideas on all items on the agenda of the OAU, and in the mobilization of the African peoples and in the sensitization of African governments for progress on the Pan-African ideals.

Just as the people are increasingly becoming partners in the governance and development of our countries, so do we expect them to become active participants in the work of the OAU. We believe this partnership will bridge a historic gap, and instill greater impetus to the Community. In a few months, hopefully the Treaty for the Community would come into force when we would have secured the required number of ratifications. Whilst on ratifications, I am happy to mention

that Ghana was the first country to deposit her instruments of ratification. That once again reaffirms Ghana's abiding commitment and attachment to co-operation and solidarity among African countries.

Africa is determined to ensure that its efforts and resources are geared towards the basic objective, namely to forestall further impoverishment, accelerate the process of growth and stimulate economic development. While engaged in individual efforts at the national level, our countries still remain convinced that their survival and development lie, in the final analysis, in their unity. It is true, our countries may differ in terms of size, population and wealth. But the fact is that all of them are poor and in the back-wagon in terms of development. No matter how relatively rich or powerful they may be, they are individually incapable of influencing the international system in any manner whatsoever. Together however, they can form a common front which the rest of the World cannot afford to ignore. Our collective and individual survival is at that price. Which son or daughter of Africa can shirk away from such a challenge? Definitely, not your Association and I am proud to say so.

The Community and development in general can only take place in an atmosphere of peace and stability. In order to reacquire the initiative, Africa would need to implement efficient measures to heal the wounds and put an end to the suffering and bloodletting on the Continent. I am pleased to observe that over the last few years, Africa, through our Organization, has made firm moves aimed at overcoming the political inhibitions which restrict its action and to follow a path that will enable it to tackle the scourges represented by these conflicts.

This initiative started off in Addis Ababa in 1990 when the Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted the "Declaration on the Fundamental Changes taking place in the World and their Impact on Africa". It was further enhanced following the recent decision of the OAU Summit in Cairo to establish a mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution within the OAU. The Mechanism is, indeed, a viable framework for collective security, particularly in the context of the changes taking place in the world.

We have, in that regard, quite rightly stressed and will continue to insist on the fact that Africans, more than anyone else, do understand that change will occur and must happen in the Continent. However, we must ensure that it is not just change for the sake of change but one that is good and necessary for the well-being of our peoples. For such change to have any real impact, it must emanate from our peoples and be properly managed so that the euphoria that accompanies it does not wipe out the very foundations of our societies. We all aspire to such change but it has to be effected through a process of transition that preserves peace and stability and safeguards national unity and concord. Changes that do not take into account these parameters can only lead to political polarization, division and chaos. Whether it be in matters of democracy or human rights or over other issues, our countries also have the right to emphasize the fact that the policy-makers derive their legitimacy from the culture, traditions, customs, history and systems of values that sustain our societies. At the same time we must underscore the universal character and application of the fundamental principles that underpin a democratic society. The challenge before our countries therefore is how to ensure the effective application

of the principles of democracy while at the same time taking into account our social, cultural and traditional values. The two are not contradictory. Rather they are complimentary and mutually reinforcing.

**Your Excellency, Mr. Vice President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Guests,**

In its efforts to organize itself better, Africa does not intend to turn its back on international cooperation. It remains prepared to work with all those who respect our own choice and support and encourage us. Today, I am pleased on behalf of the OAU to welcome them to this PAWA meeting and further wish to assure them of our gratitude. Clearly, their contribution would go a long way in providing PAWA with the funds required for the financing of the major programmes that it intends to realize.

I have already underscored the leading role we expect PAWA to play in the new Africa we seek to build, in addition to its normal vocation. It is necessary in this regard for PAWA's capacities to be strengthened and financially sustained so as to enable it to respond effectively to the responsibilities entrusted to it. As Secretary General of the OAU, I know the nature and the extent of the financial difficulties that face Pan-African Organizations and institutions which almost exclusively derive their financial support from one and the same Member States. We recognize the tremendous pressures on the Member States, but we also do recognize the primordial importance of those functions that these organizations are supposed to perform.

This is the dilemma facing all continental organizations and institutions and unless immediate solutions are found, most of these organizations would be compelled to close shop. There is only one way to salvation. Pan-African Organizations have to diversify their sources of income generation in order to break out of financial strangulation. The people of Africa would have to be directly involved through motivation. For the people to be motivated, organizations would have to provide satisfaction in terms of whatever they offer. And that is a challenge for survival. This is why I heartily commend PAWA for its initiative in the endowment project. We hope the people of Africa, governmental and non-governmental organizations, would be sufficiently mobilized to make a contribution to the Fund. I wish to seize this opportunity to reaffirm OAU's support in this endeavour.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to quote an African wiseman who said that "the word discouragement is foreign to the African". Indeed, after the hesitations and uncertainties of the eighties, Africa now knows where it is coming from, where it is and above all, where it wants to go. It has some idea of the direction in which it would like to move and the task that is expected of it in order to achieve its objective of freedom, unity, peace and economic prosperity. It has mapped out a programme based on its own perception of its needs and priorities. It is increasingly realizing that responsibility for economic recovery and development lies primarily with itself even if we have to continue appealing for international solidarity and cooperation.

Africa has now equipped itself with an instrument for peace through the creation of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution which places Africa and its continental Organization at the very core of efforts aimed at achieving peace, security and stability in the Continent. It is now resolutely engaged in the process of political transition which will enable it to occupy its rightful position in the concert of nations and be an active partner on the international scene. This is our new agenda. It needs the support and commitment of African governments, institutions and peoples. PAWA, which brings together enlightened Africans, has a major role to play in this venture. This is my appeal. It is indeed my conviction that you can live up to the challenge.

I thank you.

Mr. Chairman,

I am filled with deep emotion and pride at this honour that has been bestowed upon me as the Nobel Patron of the Arts Award, by PAWA. I am grateful for the honour, and as a Patron, I pledge on my honour to always seek to advance the cause of the Association and to work for the cultural renaissance of the Continent.

This honour goes to the Organization of African Unity that I have the privilege to serve as Secretary General. I see in it the symbol of the confidence that African Writers and their Association have repositied in our continental Organization as well as in its ability to uphold and promote African diginity and pursue the cause of peace, co-operation, development and solidarity within our Continent.

I thank you most sincerely for the honour.