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Organization of African Unity

**Introductory Statement by  
H.E. Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary  
General of the Organization of African  
Unity on the occasion of the Address given by  
Madam Madeleine Albright  
United States Secretary of State**

Africa Hall  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

December 9, 1997

- **Madam Madeleine Albright,  
US Secretary of State,**
- **Your Excellencies, the Heads of  
Diplomatic Missions,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish, on behalf of the General Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity and on behalf of all those gathered here, to welcome most sincerely, Madam Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State and her delegation. Your visit, Madame, following the visit of your distinguished predecessor last year, makes us feel honoured. But, we are also privileged to receive the first female Secretary of State in the history of the United States and the highest ranking woman in the US Government.

Prior to her nomination by President Clinton to her present position and the subsequent confirmation by the Senate, Madame Albright was the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations and a member of President Clinton's Cabinet and National Security Council. Madam Madeleine Albright also served as the President of the Centre for National Policy and as a Research Professor of International Affairs and Director of Women in Foreign Service Programme at Georgetown

University School of Foreign Service. She also served as a Senior Fellow in Soviet and Eastern European Affairs at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Previously, she was on the staff of the National Security Council as well as a White House Staff Member.

Besides her impressive credentials in academic and public service fields, Madam Albright brought to her position a special knowledge in international affairs and above all, a unique perspective and sensitivity. Her first visit to Africa in less than a year since her swearing-in as Secretary of State is a demonstration of her commitment to the strengthening of relations between the United States and Africa and of the US renewed interest in Africa. The visit coincides with the working visit to Ethiopia and other African countries of a Presidential delegation led by Congressman Charles Rangel. It should also be situated in the context of the overall initiative launched by President Clinton which seeks to build a new partnership between the United States and Africa based on the promotion of trade and investments. We welcome the President's initiative. We consider it as being aimed at accelerating growth and economic development in Africa. It is our understanding that the overarching goal of the initiative is to contribute to the economic integration of African economies into the World's economy. We also welcome the on-going consultations in Congress aimed at enacting legislation which would encourage and enhance commercial and trade relations as well as investments between Africa and

the United States. It is our fervent hope that the Bill on "African Growth and Opportunity: End of Dependency Act" will be passed by Congress next year.

All these efforts both by the Administration and by Congress will certainly be given further impetus by the visit which President Clinton is planning to undertake to some African countries in the course of 1998.

Madam, you are therefore undertaking by your visit to Africa at a time of great expectations for the enhancement of the relations between Africa and the United States. Your visit also takes place at a very challenging time in our Continent.

In the economic field serious efforts are being deployed by African countries in order to adjust and adapt their economies through painful but necessary reforms. At the same time, our countries have committed themselves to the establishment of the African Economic Community as the most viable framework for collective sustained development and cooperation. On the political front, there is firm determination to promote the course of peace and stability. The scourge of conflicts is addressed with greater vigour within the framework of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and within regional arrangements. Efforts at democratization are also deployed with

focus on good governance, respect for human rights and for the rule of law. In sum, African countries have set for themselves the path towards peace, development and democracy and they are determined to play a central role in this endeavour. What they need is the support of their partners within the international community to complement their own efforts. It is in that context that we appreciate and value the support provided and cooperation extended by important partners such as the United States. I wish, here, to put on record our gratitude to the United States Government for its contribution in support of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. However, beyond the much desired support, our Continent also needs the understanding of the international community in recognizing its particular situation and its realities.

Africa wants to build a new and genuine partnership with the international community based on mutual respect and benefit. It is determined to play its rightful role and occupy its rightful place within the comity of nations. In this respect, we look forward with great expectations to the enhancement of the relations between Africa and the United States as an example of that partnership we seek to forge as we are preparing to enter into the new millennium. We believe your current visit to Africa will make a contribution in this partnership.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It now gives me great pleasure to invite the United States Secretary of State to address the audience.