

STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM
SECRETARY GENERAL OF OAU AT THE OPENING OF
THE CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS OF PLANNING WITH
THE UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES;
OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO 30 JAN. 1996.

Your Excellency President

Blaise Compaore, President of the Republic of Burkina Faso;

AL Haj Omar Bongo, President of the Republic of Gabon; Your Ex.
Your Excellencies, ~~Distinguished Heads of State and Government;~~
Ministres de la Republique Masur; Your Excellency President Abdou Diouf
Your Excellency Mr. James Gustave Speth,

Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme;

Honourable Ministers

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin my brief ~~opening~~ remarks by thanking Mr. James Gustave Speth, the Administrator of the UNDP for inviting me to this important meeting which is taking place in the beautiful city of Ouagadougou, among the friendly and gentle Burkinabe people.

President Blaise Compaore deserves our tribute not only for hosting this meeting, but also for the excellent facilities provided and above all, for the cordial reception and warm hospitality which is typical of the Burkinabe people.

In recognising the presence of important African leaders, in the persons of H.E. President Abdou Diouf of Senegal, H.E. President *SIR KETUMILE* Masire of Botswana, and H.E. President Omar Bongo of Gabon, I wish to stress at the same time the importance that Africa attaches to the UNDP and the demonstrated appreciation of the contribution of Burkina Faso to intra-African cooperation and the effort it has made in laying the foundation for the full economic emancipation of its

people.

President Compaore, the determination of your government in carrying out economic reforms, the pride, steadfastness and dignity of the Burkinabe people in pursuing their effort at socio-economic transformation, are worthy of emulation, as we look forward to the 21st Century.

Mr. President,

This conference which is to prepare for the 6th UNDP programme cycle, is being organised when Africa is going through profound changes. Our countries are grappling with economic reforms, despite the attendant problems and difficulties and constraints. They are also engaged in the long march towards better governance and democratization. Indeed, this is the commitment that African countries have entered into individually and collectively in various fora where Africa's socio-economic development issues have been discussed.

The major outcome, and indeed advantage in discussing the socio-economic development problems of our continent in various fora is the emergence of a clear consensus, by way of an articulated agenda. I am happy and indeed very much encouraged to note that the Cairo Agenda for Relaunching Africa's Socio-Economic Development, adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers in March last year, has been taken fully into account in all the documentation for this conference. Given this state of affairs therefore, Africa and all its people, expect that we are now at a point of departure in the sense that things will be better and that a solid foundation will be laid for the continent's take-off in all sectors of human endeavour. The basic challenge is to pool our effort and resources for the implementation of all the

existing programmes to the benefit of all African people.

The presence of the UNDP Administrator in our midst today, is an indication of the Programme's sensitivity to African issues, given the recognized fact that Africa lags behind all other continents, in terms of ~~the~~ *most* socio-economic and human development indicators. There is now a consensus on what is to be done and how. Africa expects that all the institutions and agencies in and outside the United Nations system, will work with all African Governments and people in this endeavour.

One of the significant dimensions of this conference, and indeed of the emerging consensus is the recognition of the inextricable link between conflict resolution and socio-economic development. Without peace and stability, there can be no development; and without development, peace and stability can not be durable. I hope to develop these issues further, later in the day when I will be introducing the subject relating to conflicts in Africa and prospects for the future.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that this is indeed a good beginning; We must pool our resources and work together in support of Africa's effort, and thus give force to the consensus which we now have on Africa's agenda for socio-economic development from now to the 21st Century.

Thank you.