

MEETING BETWEEN
THE OAU AND UN SYSTEM
2 - 5 APRIL 1990
ADDIS ABABA
ETHIOPIA

ADDRESS BY THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL, H.E. MR. SALIM AHMED SALIM
AT THE MEETING BETWEEN THE OAU

AND

THE UN SYSTEM

Mr. Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, Ambassador Aby Farah,
Distinguished Heads of Specialized Agencies and Representatives,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to Addis Ababa, the Headquarters not only of our Panafrikan Organization the OAU, but also the UN Economic Commission for Africa. I would like to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of all my colleagues in the OAU, my sincere thanks for your kind and positive response to my invitation. I am aware of your heavy engagements in your respective Organizations especially during this particular period of the year. Your presence at this meeting is, therefore, most appreciated. It is a testimony not only of the good relations between OAU and the entire UN System, but also of the dedication and commitment of each Agency represented here to the future well-being of Africa.

I would like to commend H.E. Mr. Javier Perez De Cuellar for his personal efforts to promote and strengthen cooperation between the OAU and the UN System. His personal dedication to the cause of Africa and all its people is a matter of record and source of strong encouragement to us.

Dear Friends,

As you are all aware, the present consultative meeting is one of the series of such meetings, which have been organized since 1980, between the OAU and UN Systems. I would like to underline the special importance to the OAU of these now institutionalized consultations.

First, this meeting between OAU and its Development partners for the UN System is taking place at a crucial moment not only for Africa but also for the entire world, that is to say at the very beginning of the new decade of the 1990s opening up the 21st century. At this point in time, the world is going through rapid, dramatic and fundamental transformations which are bringing about important changes of the political and economic map of all the regions of the world. These changes which are taking place particularly in the countries of the

North, traditional partners of Africa, will have serious impact on the course of development of the Africa be it politically, economically, strategically or diplomatically. The OAU and UN System will have to learn how to respond with necessary readjustments of their actions and approaches to these global changes. Moreover, it is now imperative for Africa and its Development partners to assess, in a critical and comprehensive manner, the impact and implications of these changes and adjust her policies accordingly.

Secondly, African leaders adopted, ten years ago and the International Community endorsed, a long-germ Development strategy which is known since then as the Lagos Plan of Action and its Final Act. A new substantial programme of Action for LDCs was adopted for Africa during the 1980s. It will be important, therefore, to assess and review our joint efforts in promoting Socio-Economic progress and development in the Africa Region in the light of the various development strategies adopted both at Regional and International levels and draw lessons from these experiences so as to force a common position for our joint action during this decade of the 1990s.

Thirdly, five years ago, Africa conducted a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action. The outcome of this preliminary review was the adoption of short-term and medium-term measures for the accelerated implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action. Africa's Priority Programme (APPER) was adopted by the OAU Heads of State in 1985 and endorsed by the International Community at the time of adopting the UN Programme of Action for Africa's Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) in 1986. This had provided our institutions of the OAU and UN System an ideal platform of partnership. It is true that, in spite of all the efforts and energies deployed by the UN System to mobilize the required financial resources to assist African Member States to implement their development programmes, UNPAAERD fell short of its expectations. The response of the International Community was hardly encouraging. In working out our new programme for cooperation over the next two years, it will be, therefore, necessary to take stock of the earlier development decades and other relevant development programmes for Africa during the 1980s, assess critically the achievements, failures and bottlenecks

in fulfilling our respective commitments vis-a-vis African Member States. Such a consultative forum will be productive and achieve its objectives only when some operational arrangements are made to ensure proper coordination of our efforts and resources and bearing in mind that what ever we do is designed to complement the efforts of African Member States themselves, individually or collectively.

Fourthly, our meeting is taking place only a few weeks before the next Special Session of the UNGA on International Economic Cooperation and Revitalization of Economic Growth for Developing Countries. It is expected that the OAU and UN Specialized Agencies will take advantage of this forum to exchange views on how best to ensure the success of the Special Session and see how, in the adoption of a new International Development Strategy for developing countries, which we hope to adopt, we can take cognisance of the current changes. These changes will be far reaching and involving the inevitable redefinition of International Economic Relations. In this regard, the UN will have a vital role to play so as to avoid the looming phenomenon of marginalizing the weaker partners, particularly the African region.

Finally, this meeting should note the positive political developments in the southern part of our continent. With Namibia's independence, which Africa and the International Community celebrated on 21 March 1990, the OAU has fulfilled one of its major objectives which had, over the last three decades, galvanized the entire International Community around a common struggle for the political decolonization of the continent. I wish, on behalf of the OAU, to pay deserved tribute to the International Community in general and the United Nations, in particular, for their unremitting support to Africa and the Liberation Movements which was instrumental in bringing about this development. With the end of political decolonization today and the inevitable dismantling of apartheid tomorrow, Africa will have to face the most formidable challenge throughout the present decade and during the next century, namely economic development with the ultimate objective of ensuring a sound productive base for the economies to enable the African population to meet their basic needs and to gradually improve their standard of living within an economic and political environment more conducive to greater challenge is a test of credibility of

partnership between Africa and the International Community and between OAU and the UN System in their search for a new and equitable international economic order.

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is within this very perspective of defining as of now the position of Africa in this unfolding economic map of the world during the decade of the 1990s that our two Secretariats have proposed to focus the attention of this consultative meeting on Economic Cooperation and Integration in Africa. African countries and their leaders are convinced that a more coordinated and harmonized approach through the reorganization of the existing politico-economic space constitutes the only alternative for the accelerated, self-reliant and self-sustaining socio-economic development of our countries.

Our present meeting is, therefore, called upon to exchange views on how the OAU and UN System will pool together their efforts and resources, in a coordinated and harmonized manner, avoiding duplication and competition among various partners, so as to provide the required technical and financial assistance as well as timely advisory services to the African Member States through their established operational machinery such as the OAU Permanent Steering Committee.

While focusing its attention to the ultimate goal of establishing the African Economic Community, our meeting will have to address specific issues requiring joint action, such as Food and Agriculture, Refugees, Displaced persons, Emergencies, Environment and Development, Human Resources Development and Science and Technology. It is our view at this stage of discussion on the Draft Treaty establishing the African Economic Community that any sectoral project proposals should be linked with and geared towards the comprehensive implementation of this project, in a coordinated and harmonized approach at sub-regional, regional and continental levels. In preparing the summary conclusions and recommendations, it is hoped that projects with regional impact and possessing a high degree of integrative capacity will be identified so as to constitute a cooperation programme package between OAU and UN System over the next two years (1990/1991). It is my hope that the relevant Agencies will

come forward to provide the required assistance in the process of preparing and finalizing those protocols to be annexed to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, given these sectoral cooperation programmes which constitute the very foundation of integration of the African Economies.

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Over the last decade and since the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action and its Final Act, the OAU and UN System have established good and strong working relations based on mutual understanding and complementary action. These excellent relations have been characterized by bilateral assistance as well as regular consultations on major issues of common concern. That is why I wish to record the OAU's particular appreciation for the support and encouragement our Organization has always received from the UN General-Secretariat but also the Financial and Technical Assistance the UNDP has provided to the OAU in order to enable our Organization to cope with its challenging and increasing responsibilities. In the same view, it is my pleasure also to pay our due tribute to all those Specialized Agencies of the UN System which have established special cooperation arrangements with the OAU so as to ensure a better coordination and harmonization of our respective projects and programmes.

Over the last four years, the UN General Assembly has provided a General Cooperation Framework for the OAU and UN Joint Action in its annual resolution on cooperation between the OAU and UN. It will be necessary, in our future meeting, to review to what extent all these resolutions have been implemented by all concerned and, on the basis of the past experiences, to consider a new more productive methodology.

But above all, we should, in the course of our deliberations, be able to look critically at the established procedures by which the many resolutions we adopt are handled in the implementation stage. For ultimately, any resolution we adopt, however, comprehensive or well meaning, will not be of any use if it is not implemented. If these resolutions have remained unimplemented, I believe it is partly due to the fact that they never actually

went beyond the congress halls and archives. In other worlds, they never found their way to the implementers and they remain relegated to the curiosity of the history researcher.

It is the gap between our intentions as expressed in the many resolutions and the deeds which we must address. It is not enough for our respective institutions, to adopt resolutions and simply leave it at that. We should be able to help in the follow-up of these decisions through the labyrinths of government and ensure that they percolate down to the ultimate beneficiaries namely the people themselves. This would most certainly keep in check the proliferation of resolutions, most of which overlap and it would help streamline the work of our Organizations.

I would like to underline, before I conclude, that cooperation between OAU and UN System should be positive and comprehensive based on the understanding of mutual interest and taking into account the role and the responsibility of all the partners working for the promotion of the primary interests of Africa. I wish to refer in this context, to the role of the African Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) in sensitizing public opinion and promoting self-reliant and self-sustained Development of people. As operational instruments of the very Member States, they deserve our collective financial, technical and material support. I wish to take this opportunity to appeal to all UN Specialized Agencies represented here to review their cooperation arrangements with these OAU Specialized Agencies. In this regard, their role, as executing Agencies or as Associated Executing Agencies of Projects funded by your Agencies, should be taken into account so as to enable them to fulfil their functions.

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting between OAU and UN System is a further testimony of our common interest and determination to act together and to contribute to the tremendous efforts deployed by the African people themselves for their economic survival and for their human dignity. It is a challenge to all the International Community.

I hope, therefore, that this meeting, while charting out a new dimension of cooperation between OAU and UN System, will enable all the participants to come forward with concrete proposals for cooperation programmes and projects with regional dimension in all areas under discussion and also formulate the institutional framework for regular monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of those projects and programmes which will be identified.

I wish you successful deliberations. And to all our friends who have come from different areas of our globe to be with us here today and in the next few days we wish you a pleasant, enjoyable and productive stay in Addis Ababa.