

21

« THE 1990 HOFFMAN LECTURE »

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP IN THE 1990s :

THE AFRICAN DIMENSION

DELIVERED BY H.E. MR SALIM AHMED SALIM

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OAU

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Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank Mr. William Draper III, The Administrator of the UNDP for the honour they have conferred upon me by inviting me to deliver the 1990 PAUL HOFFMAN LECTURE.

This Lecture gives me an opportunity, not only to honour a great Statesman and Humanitarian; but also, to pay tribute to an institution he helped found and, which continues to carry on his mission of responding to the challenges of development and fighting poverty in the World. Over the last four decades, the United Nations Development Program has strived to join the developing countries in a partnership of development. It has provided resources. Through its vast network of field offices around the world it has come in direct contact with poverty and suffering and, in the process, has been able to appreciate the full magnitude of the development problems in the less privileged parts of this world. True, poverty is still rampant and so are many of the ills that confronted the greater part of mankind forty years ago. But, there are efforts in evidence to end these ills and perhaps no other institution has contributed more to these efforts than the UNDP has.

For this, I would like to thank the Staff of UNDP for their dedication and to urge them to continue with this noble mission.

Mr. Chairman,

The world is currently going through fundamental changes of both political and economic nature. In Europe, the perspective of these changes will culminate into a single European Market in 1992. There are some important changes in Apartheid South Africa. Indeed, changes in superpower relations, involving the United States and the Soviet Union, are already having a profound impact on global politics.

The recent dramatic transformations and developments, particularly in the political, economic scientific and technological fields, have brought about profound changes in the international system. The changes in the Soviet Union brought about by "perestroika" and "glasnost" have given impetus to fundamental changes in East-West relations. The rapprochement between the United States and the Soviet Union has changed the politics of the balance of power and confrontation between the two super powers. The two are gradually entering into an era of partnership and accommodation in key areas, especially security and the future of world politics.

Of course, there will be benefits and costs to the rest of the world resulting from this new International political climate. We in Africa who are linked to Europe by a myriad of agreements and legacies are concerned about the implications of the New Europe Environment. A United Germany, being a dividend of this New Environment, will certainly have impact on the European theatre as it will to Africa. We welcome it and the opportunities it potentially has to enter into a meaningful development partnership with our continent.

Though not directly arising from the Events in Eastern Europe but nonetheless linked to the evolving International System, is the current global trend towards the establishment of trading and economic blocs. In recent years there has been an increasing tendency towards the establishment of larger, stronger and more cohesive trading and economic blocs. The examples of this new direction include the 1992 Single European Act; the trade agreement between the United States and Canada, which is expected to be joined by Mexico, to establish a free trade area for the region, as well as the formation of trading blocs in South-East Asia and the Pacific region. The formation of these trading economic blocs will have far-reaching effects for Africa in the 1990s. Africa will have to adjust to

these changing trading patterns; and, being the weakest partner in these trading relationships, it will not be an easy task.

Africa enters the Twenty First Century with an awfully fragile scientific and technological base at a time when the rest of the world is making astronomical advances. These new advances are bringing about a new industrial revolution whose consequences for Africa are bound to be enormous. Advances in semiconductor technology; robotics and biotechnology and other so called new frontier technologies are transforming the world economic and trading systems.

Already, advances in biotechnology are affecting the demand in the industrial countries, of some African raw materials. These, for example, have affected the demand for sisal as a result of further development of synthetic fibres. Similarly, the development of synthetic diamond has affected those African countries which produce the mineral. These developments constitute in a very real sense, the kind of formidable challenges which Africa must face in the 1990s.

It is for this reason that African Statesmen, scholars, workers, politicians, students, the Clergy, and civil servants are now deeply involved in

contemplating the future of our continent. Newspapers, magazines and different aspects of the news media have joined the debate on the future of Africa. Indeed, at no time since independence some thirty years ago has the African continent been so gripped with the question of its future. And this concern is not limited to Africans alone; Non-Africans well-wishers and foes alike have also joined in the debate.

This debate is rooted in the social, political and economic crises that are presently obtaining in the continent. The severe socio-economic crisis that has ravaged the continent for the last two decades or so is forcing people to re-examine and, increasingly, to question the strategies which the continent has been pursuing.

Almost everywhere on the continent, there is also an attempt to take a critical look on how political business is conducted. Africa is going through a phase of political debate on the question of its political future and the kind of changes which are necessary today. The major questions are: What kind of Africa shall we have by the turn of the century and, Can Africa have a "willed" future in this increasingly

interdependent world? What kind of policies and strategies should be adopted to bring about the desired development? How will Africa figure in the emerging New World Order and how the continent can cope with the challenges of the 1990s and beyond.

Mr. Chairman,

Today, virtually all African Governments are almost entirely preoccupied with crisis management. During the early 1960s, when the majority of African States were gaining independence, there was great optimism that the continent could effectively mobilise its vast resources to meet the needs of its people and organize their political systems so as to be meaningful players on the world political scene. This hope was further bolstered by the fact that Africa constituted about one-third of the world's total number of States. However, by the mid-1980s, this optimism had given way to disillusionment as Africa became increasingly marginalized in global politics as a result of tumbling economic fortunes.

Africa was ravaged by a serious drought which engulfed the entire continent from East to West and from South to North, leaving in its wake scenes of famine, starvation and death. This compounded the declines in economic performance

resulting from a host of factors not least from the hostile international economic environment, collapse of prices of African commodities, worsening terms of trade, and the escalating and debilitating external debt burden.

African countries have attempted to respond to this crisis. In 1980, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity adopted the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Final Act of Lagos (FAL). In July 1985, following a review of the implementation of the Lagos Plan, the Assembly adopted the Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-90 (APPER). In 1987, the Assembly adopted African Common Position on Africa's External Debt Crisis.

Despite these efforts, Africa has remained the poorest and the Least developed continent in the World. Among the 41 Least Developed Countries in the World, Africa has the largest membership. The number has been growing: it was 14 in 1979, 18 in 1981, 21 in 1985 and 28 in 1990. Food importation has escalated and continues to do so. Industrial capacity goes underutilized. Unemployment has become rampant; and per capital incomes have steadily declined. These are the realities of the African situation today. The

questions to be asked are : What is wrong and what could be done and Why is it that despite Africa's efforts and past development assistance it has not been possible yet to deal decisively with Africa's problems of underdevelopment?

I am fully aware of the complexity of this subject. But perhaps time has come to ask ourselves such questions. And which better occasion than this one where we are honouring Paul Hoffman who sought to build "a world of decency, abundance and equal opportunity." Indeed, he feared that, "the contrast between riches and poverty on our planet is one of the tragedies of this century." It is in addressing these questions that Africa, together with her development partners, can meaningfully tackle the problems of the continent's future.

Mr. Chairman,

A critical re-examination of the fundamental root causes of Africa's underdevelopment and the continuing socio-economic crisis must be based on a keen understanding of the factors which militate against our efforts. Distortions in the economic structures which Africa inherited from its colonial past, the ever-

falling commodity prices, the declining terms of trade, an increasing heavy debt and debt servicing burden, high interest rates, volatile exchange rates, protectionism against the little that Africa manufactures for exports, are all factors which must be tackled if we are to comprehensively deal with Africa's problems. There must be, in tandem with this effort, an increased awareness of the interdependence of nations and the likely adverse consequences for the entire world community if Africa is left to continue to slide into even greater poverty.

Mr. Chairman,

Perhaps the most important challenge which Africa has set for itself, is the achievement of economic self-reliance and self-sustaining development. These are the main objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action. The achievement of these objectives entails a fundamental structural transformation of the African economies which are presently dependent on factor inputs from foreign countries. This state of dependency poses serious handicaps to African countries in areas such as cost structures, production efficiency, identification and exploitation of natural resources and the development of domestic technology. Most capital goods used in production in Africa are

acquired from abroad; but, these are not generally consistent with the factor endowments of African countries.

In the external trade sector, the dependence of the African economies are no less glaring. The African exports consist of a small number of primary agricultural and mineral commodities. Earnings from the export of these commodities have often fluctuated drastically because of price instability in international markets. In the last decade, the prices of African commodities have continued to drop sharply. In 1989, the prices were about half of what they generally were in 1980. The collapsed commodity prices portend dismal prospects for Africa's development. Because of the dependence of African countries on commodity exports, fluctuations in this sector have had serious repercussions on foreign exchange earnings, government revenues and in consequence, serious contractions in public expenditures. This has come about at a time when the needs of people have never been greater.

The diminishing commodity export earnings have also led to a serious decline in imports. In addition to falling export earnings, a growing number of African

countries have adopted stringent structural adjustment programmes which include at times massive devaluation. The net effect being significant contractions in imports, as well.

The poor performance in the export and import sectors has, in turn, adversely affected the manufacturing sector which has been deprived of imported raw materials, machinery, spare parts and high-level technical personnel. Today, essential commodities which depend on foreign inputs are scarcely supplied in Africa, and many manufacturing plants are either closed or function at minimal capacity. Unless external support is forthcoming, the rehabilitation and revitalization of existing manufacturing enterprises will continue to face serious difficulties in the years ahead.

Mr. Chairman

Africa is a continent endowed with vast natural resources, but the collapse of commodity prices both agricultural and mineral commodities has exacerbated the crisis of financial and economic management. The present debt crisis is linked to the substantial reduction of, in some cases, up to 50% in Africa's foreign exchange earnings.

The present dependence of the continent on commodity exports prompted the UN Secretary General to establish an Export Group on Africa's Commodity problems. This important question will be placed before the current 45th Session of the General Assembly. The Frazer Report is being widely distributed by the UNCTAD Secretariat.

At the end of August this year, the OAU Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Matters completed work on formulating comprehensive proposals in a African Common Position on the Frazer Report.

This common position, which we regard as an important contribution to the joint debate, the joint development effort between us and our development partners, will be distributed to all states members of the UN.

Let me, however, emphasize that it is imperative for Africa to diversify its commodity production and trade. But the process of vertical and horizontal diversification requires substantial financial resources which are beyond the capacity of Africa to generate alone.

The international community, in particular the donor countries, the international financial

institutions and funding agencies ought to help in providing increased financial resources on concessional terms to support diversification in Africa.

Investment through joint ventures in support of national and multinational diversification projects should be promoted, as well as domestic and foreign direct investment through, inter alia the effective positive participation of Transnational Corporations.

The OAU has also proposed that a Commodities Diversification Fund for Africa be established in the African Development Bank to finance diversification programmes and projects in Africa. The Secretary General of the United Nations is being requested to promote the establishment of this fund and to mobilise sufficient resources from the international community, including multi-lateral institutions, for its efficient operation.

Africa's commodity exports still face a plethora of tariff and non-tariff barriers, internal taxes, variable levies, import licensing quotas and administrative and health restrictions. We cannot be expected to increase our agricultural and non-agricultural exports or make any significant progress in our diversification efforts if the access of our products to the markets of our major development

partners in Europe, in America and in Asia are closed to us through a maze of protectionist measures. The outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral Trade Negotiations and its impact on Africa's Agricultural, natural-resourced-based and tropical products cannot be predicted.

Africa's development partners can assist our development efforts through the implementation of the Standstill Agreement in respect of African Commodities and processed products, through the lifting of all existing tariff and non-tariff restrictions that affect the commodity exports of Africa's Least Developed Countries and through maintaining the preferential arrangements which have been negotiated with many African countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Apart from the many debilitating effects of the collapse of commodity markets, Africa has now to cope with a rapidly increasing population. At above 3.0 percent annually, Africa has the fastest population growth rate in the world. According to the United Nations, the population grew from 224 million in 1950 to 555 million in 1985. By mid-1989, the African population was estimated at 628 million. If the trend continues, the population will reach an estimated 888

million by the year 2000. This will represent an annual growth rate of 3.6 percent during the next 10 years. This rapid population growth poses serious socio-economic problems especially on the need to produce enough food for an estimated additional 15 to 20 million people annually, at a time when Africa is struggling to feed itself.

In addition to the provision of food to a rapidly growing population, Africa also faces the challenge of how to create 200 million additional jobs about 10 million annually, between 1990 and the year 2000; when presently, millions of able people are unemployed and millions more underemployed. Education and other demands including the provision of primary and secondary education to about 137 million and 70 million young people, respectively, by the year 2000, have to be met.

Similarly, urban services such as clean water, sewerage, transportation, housing and health, to the ever-swelling urban population have to be provided. These problems leave Africa with no option but to pursue population policies which ensure a balance

between population growth and socio-economic development. Indeed, the need to integrate the population variable in the formulation of national development policies and programmes has never been greater.

Mr. Chairman,

Solution to all these will, of course, depend in large measure on the ability of Africa to achieve recovery and accelerate the pace of development in the next decade. I believe that the attainment of recovery and accelerated development will depend on both the domestic policies and a supportive external environment.

The improvement in the external environment conducive to the acceleration of development would involve, in particular, the increased net inflow of resources, the improved level of prices fetched by commodities exported by Africa in the world markets, the favourable terms of trade, and the increased access, which African countries should have, to markets in the industrialized countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Africa faces an even greater crisis arising from her external indebtedness. Recently, both the World Bank and UNCTAD published reports indicating that, the developing world together have been forced to export billions of dollars to the Industrialized Market Economies of the North and to the Bretton Wood Institutions as well.

Today, Africa's external debt stock is estimated in excess of \$260 billion dollars and rising. This represents the staggering 328.4 percent of the continent's total Gross Domestic Product.

The ever-increasing interest rates have added even more grievously to that burden.

I note that there has been efforts and various initiatives aimed at alleviating the ODA debt burden on the Developing countries. The initiatives of the Group of 77, the Toronto Plan, both the Baker and Brady Plans all aim at containing, in the short run, the most adverse effects of the debt. They do not, however, incorporate long term measures. The more forthcoming initiatives have included

the decision of various countries, notably, the Scandinavians, the United States, Canada, France and others to write-off ODA debts owed by the Least Developed Countries most of them African. We were encouraged by the position taken by President Mitterand at the LDCs Conference in Paris last month. We have also noted the most recent British initiative to alleviate the debt burden of the poorest most indebted countries. It is a positive development and if adopted by the Paris Club Countries, and as estimated, as much as \$18 billion would be written-off the debt stock of the poorest - again most of them African.

We have also noted, with appreciation, the statement made by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait on the cancellation of the interest on loans extended by Kuwait to poor countries and Kuwait's disposition to review the principal loans.

Mr. Chairman,

These are holding measures which by themselves cannot bring about growth to African economies. These have to be part of a larger plan to ensure that African and other poor countries do not relapse into severe indebtedness. This plan should aim at addressing the imbalances and inequities in the International Economic System which forced them into the condition of indebtedness.

It is a plan which must be based on the elements embodied in the African common position on Africa's external Debt Crisis adopted by the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in 1987.

Of course, I am keenly aware that the role of domestic policies in promoting development cannot be over-emphasized. They are crucial, if not critical. Indeed, African countries have the responsibility of developing their countries by taking measures to mobilize their resources, to allocate and utilize them efficiently. It would not be fair indeed if these countries were to ask the outside world to support them in their development efforts, if these efforts were not in evidence in their own countries. In this context, it is worth noting that African Leaders have sought to set their own economies on secure footing by adopting structural adjustment measures. So far, over 30 African countries have adopted structural adjustment programmes in one form or another. These measures have been taken at enormous social and economic costs and great political risks.

According to the World Bank Debt Tables (1989-1990), a total of 64 countries signed agreements for debt rescheduling with the London and Paris Clubs between 1980 and 1989. Of these, 31 were from Africa. Many African countries have signed rescheduling agreements between 7 and 14 times during the period between the same period.

Mr. Chairman,

Of equal concern to the continent is the issue of human resource development. It is the consensus view that human resource development is fundamental to the future of Africa. It is an issue involving more than the conventional regard to education, health, mobilisation of women and youth for development. It is directly linked to need of harnessing national resources and applying them to development. The most important area of human resource development at the present time is the acquisition of modern scientific and technological knowledge directed to bringing about development.

Indeed, the key to the future is the technological know-how. The future progress and prosperity of nations will increasingly depend less on their national resources endowments and more on their reservoirs of skilled manpower. The future development will depend on the degree to which those nations acquire command over modern scientific and technological knowledge. Africa must find ways and means of meeting this challenge in the 1990s and beyond. We are naturally gravely concerned that this objective is now severely constrained by the general collapse in the higher education system which is imminent on the continent.

The continent is threatened with collapse as a result of underfunding arising from the economic crisis gripping the continent. The Universities, Libraries, Laboratories have become delapidated or fallen into disrepair due to drastic contraction in public funding.

Similarly, lack of foreign exchange earnings has curtailed scholarships to high institutions of learning in the countries of the North. Massive devaluation has brought down salaries of professors who have had in turn to emigrate mostly to Europe and North America in search of better pay. This multifaceted nature of the crisis has wrought havoc in the sphere of education and human resource development.

It becomes necessary therefore that Human resource development must be one of the targetted areas of concentration in the recovery efforts of Africa and of the support of her partners. There must be concious efforts to ensure resource commitment to this sector including the revival of training programs within Africa. Equally, funding must be targetted to the rehabilitation of the education infrastructure generally - from the primary stage upwards.

Central to all these concerns is the question of alleviating poverty. One of the most enduring problems in the continent is the abject poverty of a large number of African people. Despite the fact that Africa is one of the most richly endowed continent, the majority of its people are poor. The whole continent, excepting South Africa, has a GDP lower than that of Italy alone. There will therefore be need to involve people into the productive process so that poverty alleviation is not just a matter of transfer but also a contribution to the production of wealth.

Mr. Chairman,

Africa is equally preoccupied with the degradation of the environment. Our concern however, in no way detracts from our view that the developed countries are most responsible for the current degradation of our environment and therefore bear primary responsibility in its restoration. I am, of course, concerned that as the numerous developing countries proceed along the same path of development as that of the presently industrial countries, the burdens on the ecosphere, in the world ecological system, will become intolerable and endanger the life and future of the planet earth.

Aside from this development - induced damages to the environment, poverty itself is a major cause of environmental degradation in Africa. Unable to afford the cost of various kinds of energy from fossil fuels and other sources most people have resorted to cutting trees and forests to meet their energy needs. Ignorance and lack of knowledge on better land use and conservation methods has led to over-grazing of marginal lands, and to desertification and salination.

But the poor have to survive. In order to reduce the impact of the poor on the environment, it will be necessary to integrate the factor of environment in the planning of National Development including the institution of better methods of land husbandry. This course of action requires massive increases of resources to Africa so that the poor can, among fulfilling other needs, have access to alternative sources of energy.

Mr. Chairman,

In the final analysis, the manifestations of Africa's economic malaise such as low levels of gross national product (GNP), poverty, environmental degradation, technological backwardness, diseases or financial imbalances we are experiencing today; all

derive from the fact that Africa remains hostage to the severe external environment that has not been responsive to the root causes of the Continent's socio-economic deterioration. It is these root causes and not the symptoms of the underlying problems that must be addressed in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

Likewise, the underlying cause of Africa's economic crisis cannot be viewed within the context of macro economic policies alone. The problems are embedded in the economic distortions of Africa's production and consumption patterns which the Continent inherited from the colonial past. Africa continues to produce raw materials which it does not consume and imports industrial, chemical and technology-related products and services which it does not produce.

The design and deepening of such patterns were perpetrated during the colonial period. Instead of putting in place policies which are meant for, or allocating resources to encourage the horizontal integration among the economic sectors at national level and among the economies of neighbouring countries, the colonial powers encouraged the setting-up of vertically integrated economies that became appendage to, and heavily dependant on the rich

metropolitan North. These are fundamental distortions which cannot be solved by demand-focussed macro economic policies alone. Solution to these structural problems will require more and more investments in those areas that are most amenable to the horizontal integration of sectors at national, sub-regional and regional levels.

The question of investments in Africa must be addressed more seriously. Foreign direct investments are non-debt creating. The majority of African countries have put in place a climate which is conducive to domestic and foreign direct investment. We want to work out together with our partners in the North, as well as the private sector, in a new development partnership that is mutually beneficial.

The vulnerability of African economies in the 1990s will continue to be compounded by the persistent fall of commodity prices and the deterioration of the terms of trade. It does not suffice to urge African farmers to work harder and produce more. Indeed, those less charitable about Africa have continually said, "oh, if only Africans worked harder and if they produced more, their economic problems would have ended." This is a simplistic view. Today, Africans work harder than they did ten years ago and indeed produce more, but earn less and less. This is the reality of the market place today. Therefore, no

matter how much more cotton, cocoa or coffee is produced during the 1990s, unless Africa can get remunerative prices for the raw materials, the kind of new development partnership I am talking about cannot be realised.

Mr. Chairman,

Africa sees part of the solution to her problems as laying in economic integration. The FINAL ACT OF LAGOS adopted by the Third Extraordinary Session of the OAU Summit in Lagos in April 1980 specifically called for the establishment of an African Economic Community through a Treaty to be drafted by a Ministerial level committee. The Act was to be implemented in stages, and the specific activities were laid down for the 1980s and 1990s up to the year 2000.

The OAU has been working hard on the establishment of the African Economic Community. The OAU Permanent Steering Committee, embracing the entire OAU membership, has prepared a preliminary draft of a Treaty establishing an African Economic Community. This draft will be presented to the next meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the OAU in June next year in Abuja - Nigeria for their signature.

The importance of African integration for Africa's economic development cannot be over-emphasized. It is a means of promoting inter-African trade, investment, research and development. Indeed, recent developments in the world, particularly those in Europe and North America, make it imperative for us to take measures for economic integration. Efforts towards integrating the African economy must be seen in the context of building credible defence against further economic degeneration. I believe that economic integration in Africa has the potential of opening the way for establishing new and mutually beneficial political and economic relationships within Africa itself. Here, I would like to thank the International Community and the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, in particular the UNDP, for the support they have extended in this area. I hope that more such support will be forthcoming especially, financial and technical assistance to national and continental projects in such key sectors as human resource development and utilization and intra-African trade.

Mr. Chairman,

Of course, the prospects of the continent to emerge from the current difficulties will depend largely on its ability in the 1990s to create an enabling political environment which promotes the

participation of the people in the processes of government and development planning. There is need in Africa to create a political environment which guarantees human rights and the observance of the rule of law. Such an environment would ensure high standards of accountability particularly on the part of those in public service. There is now general realisation that political freedom is a catalyst to economic development. A permitting political environment liberates people's creative energies and spirit of enterprise. Apart from the pursuit of political freedom as an ideal and an inalienable right inherent in constitutional rule, such freedom underpins any long term development strategy. It is for this reason that the issues of democratisation and of popular participation in the political and economic processes were subject of serious discussion during the last Session of the OAU Summit in July 1990. The African Heads of State and Government then adopted the THE DECLARATION ON THE POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN AFRICA AND THE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN THE WORLD. In that Declaration, they recommitted themselves to the further democratisation of the African societies and to consolidate democratic institutions in their countries, in tandem with deploying increased efforts in Economic Development.

Mr. Chairman,

Africa can take measures aimed at facilitating growth and economic recovery. We can also take other collateral measures in the political field, aimed at consolidating that process of recovery. But, Africa needs international solidarity. Indeed, while the African strategy for the 1990s and beyond must be largely inward-looking in order to build Africa's inner strength its ability to succeed and make impact on world scene will also depend on the kind of relationship she maintains with the rest of the World, in particular the developing world.

There is now, more than ever before, the need to re-examine the content of South-South relations with a view to giving this particular form of cooperation a new vigour and orientation in the light of the changes taking place in the world. Within the context of the South-South cooperation, Africa must take Third World issues seriously. The call made in the South-South Commission report issued by its Chairman, Former President Nyere for South-South solidarity and unity of action could not have come at amore appropriate time.

Mr. Chairman,

I believe that the United Nations system remains,

by and large, the most important institution with which Africa can work to advocate and promote its interests at the international level. For this reason, Africa's strategy for the 1990s is also to increase its support for the ideals of the United Nations, particularly with regard to issues of concern to the Developing world.

Africa must continue to use the United Nations System as a framework for intensifying coordination and harmonization of Africa's common positions. The focus of Africa's multilateral diplomacy and international negotiations must remain within the UN System. We intend to use the United Nations in promoting South-South cooperation and North-South dialogue in support of the African strategy for the 1990s. And it is within the Nations System that Africa can monitor activities, projects and programmes, with the assistance of the international community and ensure better coordination for the achievement of Africa's common objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no doubt that Africa has encountered and continues to face harsh and formidable political,

social and economic difficulties. These are development problems. But development in Africa cannot be measured by statistical indicators alone. For, behind these statistics are people whose initiatives, resourcefulness, dignity and hope cannot be quantified. The overwhelming majority of African people are hardworking people who have a desire to take care of their lives and to improve their lot. They want and hope to make better their state of living. With this spirit, the African development problems are not insurmountable. They can be overcome. With the creation of an enabling political environment, proper planning and foresight, African people can bring about economic development in the 1990s and face the challenges of the next century with confidence.

To do this successfully, the African people need the support and encouragement of the international community. But for this support and encouragement to be more effective, it has not only to take into account the legitimate aspirations of the African people, but also the great potential and talent that exist in our Continent. Africa expects the United Nations and its family of organizations including the UNDP to play a leadership role in this regard.