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Organization of African Unity

STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAU AT
THE WORLD SOLAR SUMMIT

Harare, Zimbabwe

16 September 1996

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GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN
UNITY AT THE WORLD SOLAR SUMMIT
HARARE, ZIMBABWE, 16 - 17 SEPTEMBER 1996**

- **Your Excellency Robert Mugabe,
President of the Republic of Zimbabwe,
Chairman of the World Solar Commission,**
- **Your Excellencies, Distinguished Heads of State
and Government,**
- **Your Excellencies the First Ladies,**
- **Your Excellencies Vice Presidents Nkomo and Muzenda,**
- **Distinguished Prime Ministers,**
- **Your Excellency Prof. Federico Mayor,
Director General of UNESCO,**
- **Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament,
Distinguished Heads and Representatives of
International and Regional Organizations,**
- **Excellencies,**
- **Distinguished Delegates,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish to thank President Robert Mugabe for the kind invitation he extended to me to participate at this first World Solar Summit. I also wish to express my profound appreciation to the Government and people of Zimbabwe for the excellent arrangements and facilities provided for all the delegations. This will no doubt contribute to a successful meeting. May I

also express special appreciation to the members of the World Solar Commission for their careful preparation for this Summit.

It is particularly important that this Summit is holding in Zimbabwe with President Robert Mugabe as Convenor and Chairman given the fact that soon after the R10 Earth Summit in 1991, no other African Country had taken as much interest and invested as much as Zimbabwe in the development and promotion of solar energy. I wish to applaud the high level commitment and personal effort of President Mugabe in his initiative for the benefit of Africa and the world.

The Twentieth Century has been remarkable in the history, experience, growth and development of the human race. During the early part of this Century, eminent Scientists and Technologists laid the foundation for the study of matter and energy. As humanity progresses through this Century into the next, our dependence on science and technology for survival will increase. This is because "ENERGY" described simply as the ability to do work is the prime mover of all human activity. For without energy, all human enterprises will cease to function. In modern economic consideration, the "most accurate index of a country's industrial progress is its per capita energy consumption." In general, nations with low per capita energy consumption are mostly agrarian with their indigenous conventional energy resources either "inadequate or non-existent." Africa belongs to this

group of countries. It has therefore been postulated that if Africa has to beat the path of accelerated economic growth and development, it must increase its per capita energy consumption appreciably.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this regard, it is propitious for the Summit to be holding in Africa, a Continent with an unlimited, yet hardly tapped solar resource power. The successful harnessing, development and utilization of this energy source will clearly have far reaching positive impact on the development of our countries. Moreover, Africa will tremendously benefit from the successful utilization of solar energy as it will constitute an appropriate alternative to the use of fire wood which is causing serious deforestation and considerable environmental degradation in our Continent.

Africa, therefore, welcomes the high level of attention and discussion being given to the development of solar energy through this World Solar Summit. The personal participation of Heads of State and Government and the contribution of other personalities and experts in the energy sector is indeed a welcome development which augurs well for the future. For one thing, it is a clear demonstration of the level of concern and seriousness the international community is henceforth disposed to accord to

this particular issue. Beyond this disposition, it is my confident hope that this Summit will constitute a turning point in the efforts aimed at addressing the issue of development and utilization of solar energy which, so far, has remained on the periphery of the international agenda.

**Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In this regard, I wish to stress that the World Solar Programme of Action from Africa's perspective must emphasize the building and enhancement of Africa's capacity for sustainable production and utilization of solar energy for development. As has been the case with some new technologies, Africa must not continue as a passive consumer of solar energy soft and hardware which it does not and cannot produce. Therefore this Summit should enable the International Community to address these critical issues that impinge on Africa's development.

**Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This historic Summit is expected to adopt a World Solar Programme. It is our expectation that in doing so, particular consideration will be given to the need to ensure that the Declarations and Decisions taken

in Harare will be followed up with vigour and determination. As we look forward to the implementation of the Harare Programme, we wish to stress the importance of involving all segments of the community in our respective societies. For example, the close involvement and participation of the economic operators including that of the private sector should be encouraged in promoting the development and utilization of solar energy in a sustained manner. The forging of genuine partnerships through joint ventures should also be promoted. Clearly, the decisions of this august Summit also ought to look beyond the end of the conference in terms of the nature of the follow-up activities that will be required to address the critical problems in the solar energy sector.

We, in the OAU and Africa will be waiting with eagerness for the outcome of this important Summit. We are looking forward to the emergence of a strong political commitment for the promotion of solar energy programmes which can have an impact on our countries for the well-being and progress of all our peoples.

I thank you.