

ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

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ALGIERS DECLARATION

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Organisation of African Unity, meeting in Algiers, Algeria, from 12 to 14 July 1999, solemnly declare as follows:

The end of the Second Millennium represents for Africa, the demise of an era characterised by colonisation and its tragic trail of domination, plunder and negation of the African personality. We welcome this development and affirm our resolve to strive towards ensuring that Africa and Mankind as a whole are never again subjected to such an experience so demeaning to the human dignity.

Through huge sacrifices and heroic struggles, Africa has broken the colonial yoke, regained its freedom and embarked upon the task of nation building. This achievement constitutes for us a source of profound and legitimate pride, as these struggles have not only crystallised the determination of our peoples, who made the greatest sacrifices to assert their existence and their legitimate rights, but also have contributed significantly in inculcating in the peoples and nations of the continent the universal principles of the right of peoples to be the architect of their own destiny, the right to self-determination and independence, as well as the principle of the sovereign equality of states and their right to development.

It is therefore with the most profound respect that we bow to the memory of all the martyrs of Africa whose supreme sacrifice has paved the way for the continent to regain its freedom and dignity. We pay tribute to the sons and daughters of our continent who laid down their lives for its political and economic emancipation, and for the restoration of its identity and civilisation, under conditions of extreme adversity.

This is evidenced by the legacy of conflict situations which like many time bombs, exist here and there on the Continent, coupled with problems arising from an economic infrastructure geared exclusively to satisfying the needs of the colonial metropolis, problems emanating from a political/administrative organisation rooted in authoritarianism and ethnic divisions, widespread illiteracy and extreme marginalization of the African peoples - so many problems whose magnitude has been exacerbated by the climate of the cold war and the negative impact of a basically unfair international economic system.

All these problems constitute an unwieldy heritage whose cumulative effects have been, and continue to be, for the most part, the root cause of the numerous conflicts, crises, poverty and under-development weighing heavily on the overwhelming majority of the peoples of Africa.

We do not intend, by the aforesaid, to shirk our own responsibility for the problems and difficulties still bedevilling our countries and the continent in general; rather, we wish to underscore the immensity of the efforts exerted by our respective countries, individually and collectively, to overcome the problems inherited from colonisation, ensure peace and stability on the continent, consolidate the hard-won national sovereignty, establish stable state institutions and promote an equitable and fair economic and social development in our countries.

Inspired by its intrinsic ancestral values, Africa was able to muster the strength and determination to assert its existence and take up all these challenges. Equally inspired by this same spirit and these same values, we commit ourselves to face up to the new and formidable challenges which today confront our continent.

We are deeply convinced that the Organisation of African Unity has played an irreplaceable role in the, affirmation of political identity and the realisation of the unity of our continent. We hail the pioneering work of our Founding Fathers, and commit ourselves to further this accomplishment, and to continue to make the OAU the vital instrument of our collective action both within Africa and in our relations with the rest of the world.

Convinced that respect for the principle of inviolability of the borders inherited at independence contributed decisively to the preservation of peace and stability on our continent, we reaffirm its validity and permanence as a fundamental norm applicable in the settlement of border disputes.

We hail Africa's concerted action in ensuring that the process of decolonization of the continent is brought to a successful conclusion. In this regard, we reiterate our support for the speedy implementation of the UN-led Peace Plan in the Western Sahara in cooperation with the OAU.

We also reaffirm our determination to promote the use of peaceful means in the resolution of conflicts, in conformity with the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference, non-recourse to threats or the use of force, and of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

In this respect, we believe that the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is a valuable asset for our continent which must be nurtured and consolidated. This Mechanism which symbolises the concrete resolve of our continent to fully assume its responsibilities, does not exonerate the United Nations Organisation from its obligations under the UN Charter as far as the maintenance of international peace and security is concerned.

We believe that youth and women's commitment and participation can contribute towards creating an enabling environment which conduces towards a culture of peace and tolerance.

To that end, we reiterate our commitment to the Global Plan of Action on Youth and the African Platform for Action, which is an integral part of the Global Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women as an appropriate framework for creating a more egalitarian society.

We also reaffirm our determination to work relentlessly towards the promotion of the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and our commitment to combat all forms of child exploitation, and, in particular, put an end to the phenomenon of child soldier.

We believe that human rights have undergone major positive changes since the independence of African countries. The liberation movements of our peoples, the efforts of our countries and of the OAU to codify and implement these rights, as well as the current dynamic process of establishing new democratic spaces in Africa have contributed to a very large extent to these changes. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Protocol on African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights as well as the Declaration and the Plan of Action, recently adopted in Mauritius, eloquently testify to Africa's contribution to the promotion and protection of the noble cause of Human Rights. We, however, recognise that much remains to be done to bring these developments to the level of our own expectations and the legitimate aspirations of our peoples. We are aware of these limitations and are determined not to relent in our efforts to transcend them.

In this Spirit, we reiterate our commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We emphasise the indivisibility, universality and inter-dependence of all human rights, be they political and civil or economic, social and cultural, or even individual or collective. We call upon the international community to ensure that they are not used for political purposes.

We are convinced that the increase in, and expansion of the spaces of freedom and the establishment of democratic institutions that are representative of our peoples and receiving their active participation, would further contribute to the consolidation of modern African States underpinned by the rule of respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens and the democratic management of public affairs.

Despite the hopes generated by the end of the cold war and the attendant prospects of peace, development and integration in the world economy, we note that the Post-cold war era is fraught with new and grave uncertainties, serious risks of marginalization and new challenges that pose, numerous threats to our continent.

On the occasion of the Algiers summit, the last Summit of this Millennium, we would like to highlight the most important of these new challenges.

First, globalisation is undoubtedly the most widespread of these challenges. Ushered in with promises of progress and prosperity for all, it has today aroused fears, in that it poses serious threats to our sovereignty, cultural and historical identities as well as gravely undermining our development prospects. We believe that globalisation should be placed within the framework of a democratically conceived dynamics, and implemented

collectively to make it an institution capable of fulfilling the hope for a concerted development of mankind and prosperity shared by all peoples.

Secondly, we note with grave concern, the growing marginalisation of the United Nations and its role under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of international cooperation for development. We declare that the unilateral use of force in international relations, outside the duly conferred mandate of the United Nations Security Council, opens the way to practices inimical to world peace and security.

We reaffirm our commitment to respect for the major role and responsibilities of the United Nations and its Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. In this connection, we, once again, call for a genuine democratisation of international relations based on the active participation and a balanced consideration of the legitimate concerns of all nations. We call, in particular, for the democratisation of the United Nations and its Security Council, and the recognition of Africa's legitimate place within this organ.

The need for democratisation equally applies to other international institutions including, particularly, the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Thirdly, we believe that the nuclear disarmament issue and the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction remain a challenge and a crucial urgent problem facing the international community, and to which a definitive and lasting solution can be found only through general and comprehensive disarmament under strict and effective international control. Africa has always demonstrated its readiness to bring its contribution to bear on this process, as evidenced by the conclusion and implementation of the Pelindaba Treaty. This important step taken by Africa should be complemented by the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East taking into account the inter-dependence between the security in both regions.

We believe that illegal movement, proliferation and trafficking of light weapons constitute another threat to the peace and security of the continent, and we commit ourselves to combat this scourge and lend our support to the regional and international mechanisms charged with preventing and combating this phenomenon.

Fourthly, we underscore the fact that new forms of threat to the stability of societies and the life of individuals such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and organised crime also dangerously affect Africa and we call for a collective effort to address them. To this end, we call for the creation of appropriate mechanisms for the eradication of the phenomena of corruption, as well as arms and drug trafficking.

Indeed, terrorism, which is a transnational phenomenon, represents today a serious challenge to the values of civilisation and a flagrant violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also poses serious threats to the stability and security of states and their national institutions as well as to international peace and security. While reiterating our profound attachment to the struggle waged by peoples for freedom and self-determination, in conformity with the principles of international law, we call for an effective and efficient international cooperation which should be given concrete expression, under the auspices of OAU, through a speedy conclusion of a Global International Convention for the Prevention and Control of Terrorism in all its forms and the convening of an International Summit Conference under the auspices of the UN to consider this phenomenon and the means to combat it. Africa wants to make its full contribution by adopting its own Convention on this matter.

Fifthly, we note that the current trends in the World Economy do not augur well for Africa or for the great majority of developing countries.

Thus, despite the tremendous efforts invested by our countries to reorganise and restructure their economics at a very high social cost, our economies are increasingly facing a serious deterioration of the terms of trade, a decline in international development co-operation, a continuous fall in official development aid, an exacerbation of the external debt problem and the resurgence of protectionism on the part of the developed countries.

We, for our part, strongly believe that the promotion of economic co-operation and integration for the establishment of the African Economic Community as provided for under the Abuja Treaty will help consolidate the efforts being deployed by our countries to revive and develop their economies and to address the major problems facing Africa, notably problems of refugees and poverty, illiteracy and pandemics including the

scourge of AIDS, as well as environmental problems, namely water and desertification related issues and threats to bio-diversity.

At the dawn of the Third Millennium, we the Heads of State and Government of Member States of the Organisation of African Unity solemnly affirm our determination to fully assume our responsibilities to take up all these challenges. We recognise, however, that the solutions to these challenges depend, to a large extent, on the collective will and the pooling of efforts and resources of the entire International community.

In this connection, we call for a mutually beneficial and genuine international partnership; a partnership based on a balance of interests and mutual respect; a partnership, the most crucial and immediate ingredients of which are the genuine democratisation of international relations, the renewal of multilateralism and consolidation of its instruments, the reorganisation of international cooperation based on sustained inter-dependence and the decline in national egoism, and lastly the establishment of a security system designed and functioning with the participation and involvement of all nations.

While expressing satisfaction at the various co-operation initiatives and approaches in favour of Africa, we reaffirm our readiness and willingness to promote, with all our partners, a genuine partnership devoid of any selfish calculations for influence; a partnership that respects the unity of the continent and aims at the development of Africa, rather than using it as a mere reservoir of raw materials and market for manufactured goods; a partnership that enables Africa to achieve its integration, ensure its development for the benefit of its peoples and occupy its rightful place on the international scene for the mutual and inclusive benefit of the International Community as a whole.

Together, let us enter the Third Millennium with a genuine spirit of co-operation, with restored human dignity and a common hope in an interdependent future for mankind. In this process, Africa, which is prepared to be the master of its destiny, will shoulder its share of responsibility.