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STATEMENT BY THE OAU SECRETARY GENERAL,  
H.E. SALIM A. SALIM, ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE LAUNCHING OF THE OAU PEACE FUND,  
18 NOVEMBER 1993, CONGO HALL,  
AFRICA UNITY HOUSE, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Mr. Chairman,

Africa needs peace; and it needs the means to secure that peace. It is for that reason that it gives me great pleasure to witness the auspicious launching of the OAU Peace Fund of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

It is a fact to be underscored that though the task of bringing peace to Africa costs money, the devastation wrought by conflict and war costs enormously more. Thus, the establishment of a Special Fund for conflicts by African leaders during the Twenty-Ninth Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Cairo last June, to secure the crucial funding needed to enable the smooth operation of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution which it also established at that Session, and of which the Fund is, indeed, an integral part, was a practical manifestation of Africa's commitment to work for Peace and cut the huge socio-economic costs flowing from the onset and spread of conflict and war.

The creation of the Fund is a way of ensuring a ready and steady flow of resources required to meet the challenges that the Mechanism will face in the fields of conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building.

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, our Mechanism, barely five months old, already faces the daunting challenge of assisting our brothers and sisters in the restoration of legality, peace and reconciliation in Burundi.

As stipulated by the Declaration that set up the OAU Mechanism, the Fund will consist, on the one part, of contributions of OAU Member States, obtained through the regular budget. The Ministers, meeting in their first Ordinary Session of the Central Organ, have decided that these contributions should amount to 5% of the regular budget or not lower than US\$1 million in any single year.

On the other part, the Fund's resources will derive in part from voluntary contributions from governmental, public and private sources from within Africa. The people of Africa are thus presented with a fine opportunity to demonstrate that they can act to help themselves.

We thus, call on all the people of Africa - the businessmen who have a stake in conducting business unhampered in a climate of peace and stability; the women and children who are invariably the most vulnerable and the most affected victims of conflict; the youth and students who have a keen interest in ensuring that the future which they look forward to is not aborted by the wars of the present; the trade unions, civic associations, professional bodies, and non-governmental organizations who have a vital stake in the guarantee of a strong society unaffected by war and calamity; the farmers whose cycles of harvest are destroyed by war - we call on them to make a contribution to peace in Africa.

Contributions by ordinary Africans to the Fund will be a practical way of demonstrating the concern, the sympathy and love they feel for their less unfortunate brethren in other parts of the Continent. This could indeed be a fine hour for Pan-Africanism.

Voluntary contributions from outside Africa, given by the friends of Africa who have often stood by the Continent in its times of need, are also warmly welcome.

All manner of contribution, in cash or in kind, whether material, logistical or other are keenly solicited.

In that connection, we also appeal to the gifted and creative amongst ourselves: the writers, the artists and the musicians, to make use of the indigenous cultural idioms of Africa in order that the imagination and the human spirit of the public will be activated in the noble pursuit of peace.

We also turn to our respected brothers and sisters of the press, and the broadcasting and television world in each of our countries, to assist us in disseminating the news about the establishment of the Fund so that it reaches even the most far-flung corners of our Continent, and beyond.

We trust that the sympathy and concern which we know abound in Africa and in the world at large for the plight of those millions of innocent Africans caught in the cross-fire and flames of war, will be given practical expression through your many and varied contributions to the OAU Peace Fund.

Peace, like a frightened child fleeing from the horrors of conflict, knocks on Africa's floor begging to be let in.

Let us allow it to enter. Let us give it succour; let us give it sustenance; and let us, with gratification, watch it grow.

I thank you.

