

**Consultations between the United Nations**  
**and the Organization of African Unity**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM, SECRETARY GENERAL**  
**OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY**

**Addis Ababa, 6 November 1995**

**Your Excellency Mr. Lansana Kouyate**  
**United Nations Under Secretary-General,**  
**Your Excellency Mr. K.Y. Amoako**  
**Executive Secretary of the United Nations**  
**Economic Commission for Africa,**  
**Distinguished Representatives of Specialized Agencies,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish to welcome you all to Addis Ababa for this important meeting on the cooperation between the United Nations System and the Organisation of African Unity General Secretariat. We at the OAU, attach great importance to this review meeting as we consider the United Nations institutions as our main partners in our endeavours in the service of our continent. I personally attach the utmost importance to the cooperation between our Organizations. I am also very cognisant of the commitment and disposition of my brother, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali to this cooperation.

Indeed, these consultations are in recognition of the common goals and objectives pursued by our two respective Organisations, especially in the promotion of peace, security, stability and development in Africa. These are also a manifestation of the special relationship between the two Organisations built over the years in support of Africa's quest for political and economic emancipation. In that respect, the relations between the OAU and the UN are unique in the sense that the very creation of the OAU was inspired by the ideals of the United Nations. Africa has always found in the UN the right forum to articulate its demands and aspirations and to bring its contribution to the advancement of the

cause of humanity. Africa has similarly found strength and support in the United Nations in its efforts to promote the dignity of the African peoples. This is to underline how deep-rooted are the relations between the UN and the OAU which we are today here to review.

This is our tenth consultative meeting. We have therefore accumulated a wide experience of cooperation between the two Organisations. I believe it is time to take stock of this valuable experience with a view to identifying the shortcomings and propose new modalities for strengthening and revitalizing our cooperation. We are going through new realities in the continent and in the world and we are facing new challenges. I suggest therefore that this present meeting devote some time on how best the cooperation between the OAU and the UN System could be enhanced and adjusted to the present needs and demands of the continent. Your meeting has therefore a significant role to play in proposing specific measures on how to make this unique forum of consultation more action-oriented and focussing more on concrete projects to be jointly implemented by our Organisations in the various fields of common interest.

As you are well aware, both the UN and the OAU have wide mandates and areas of responsibilities which justify the broad spectrum of our cooperation. They range from education, culture, health and social issues to economic cooperation and development to environment and other global issues, to peace, security and

stability of the continent. For Africa, these are all priority areas. We need therefore to increase our efforts to design and promote concrete projects that can make an impact on the day to day life of our people.

As we engage ourselves in this exercise, we should also have in mind some specific areas that have emerged as the priorities of the priorities and therefore constitute the continent's agenda for action. You are all familiar with these issues which relate to conflict prevention, management and resolution, to the democratic transition in Africa and to the economic cooperation and integration in the continent. Here again, we should be able to explore together, concrete actions to be undertaken jointly. For instance, we at the OAU are fully committed to work assiduously to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in the continent. Indeed, we do realize that our people deserve peace and stability. We also realize that there cannot be meaningful development without durable peace in our continent. The challenge of peace in our continent is enormous. The OAU and Africa have the will and determination to address this burning issue of conflicts in the continent and the attendant problems of refugees and displaced persons. We shall devote all our energies and resources towards this goal. However, we need the support and the backing of the United Nations as the overall Organisation responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. The cooperation and support we are expecting from the UN and its institutions should include capacity-building, technical, financial and logistical support. We also need to strengthen and



harmonize our actions both in the field and at the Headquarters. This meeting should provide the opportunity for an indepth exchange of views on how to enhance our cooperation in this new and challenging field. Such course of action will enable us define more clearly the role of each of our institutions so that we may avoid duplication of efforts and ensure more rational use of resources. This is all the more necessary given the experiences we have had in our joint action in the continent and currently in Burundi, Rwanda and Liberia.

Our two Organisations are also presently involved in supporting peaceful political transition in the continent. Our Organisations have been associated with the observation and monitoring of elections in Member States. On some occasions, like in South Africa, and Mozambique and other cases, we have been able to work together. We should be able to draw lessons from these experiences with a view to putting in place a more permanent and viable framework for future cooperation in this area.

The other area of priority for our continent is the whole issue of the establishment of the African Economic Community. So far, we have received tremendous support from the UN System, particularly in the preparation of the various protocols related to the Treaty. I would like to seize this opportunity to express our appreciation to all the UN institutions and agencies for their valuable support. We should like this support to be reinforced and re-invigorated as we have already entered in the active phase of the implementation of the Treaty

through the harmonization and coordination of the integration efforts by the Regional Economic Groupings. Both the OAU and the Regional Economic Communities need to enhance their respective capacities to carry out this responsibility. They both need the support and the backing of the United Nations and institutions. This is therefore another area where the meeting should make concrete proposals on how to support Africa's efforts in the field of economic cooperation and integration.

Finally, I wish to refer to the herculian efforts that are being deployed by the African people and the governments to meet the challenges of peace and development. The United Nations is active in Africa. It knows the efforts of the continent, and the sacrifices being made often without the requisite level of support from outside. The United Nations should therefore be the Ambassador for the continent both in appreciating these efforts and informing the world about them. This role of advocacy must be seen by Africa to be real. Equally, to complement these continental efforts the United Nations must also take its role in Africa, even more seriously by providing adequate resources. The UN has a role and responsibility in the continent, which it cannot abdicate or transfer to any other institution or group of countries.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our belief in the usefulness of this forum for consultations and coordination of views and efforts. However, for this forum to be meaningful and effective, it should enable our two institutions to go

beyond the formality of meeting, to more concrete action in terms of formulating and implementing joint programmes in the areas of mutual concern. I hope you shall take advantage of this meeting to meet this challenge.

I wish you successful deliberations.