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**GOODWILL MESSAGE FROM H.E. DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM,  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN  
UNITY TO THE THIRD PAN-AFRICAN HISTORICAL  
THEATRE FESTIVAL (PANAFEST '97)**

The 3rd Pan-African Historical Theatres Festival (PANAFEST '97) is being convened at a time when our Continent is going through and grappling with finding solutions to multiple crises of peace, security, and stability, of economic cooperation and integration, of promoting and protecting human rights and the observance of the rule of law and of promoting African unity and solidarity. Our continental Organization has deployed measures aimed at supporting the efforts of our governments and people towards addressing these challenges by simultaneously working towards promoting a culture of peace and tolerance among and between our people and in promoting national cohesion, unity and reconciliation.

In this regard, the theme of the 3rd Pan-African Historical Theatres Festival: the *Re-Emergence of African Civilization and Uniting the African Family for Development* is indeed, topical. It provides us with an opportunity to reflect more seriously on the place and role of our culture in our development efforts.

In 1976 the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted, *The Cultural Charter for Africa*. The Charter drew inspiration from the Pan-African Culture Manifesto adopted in Algiers in 1969, and the conclusions of the Monrovia Declaration on the Future Development Prospects of Africa towards the Year 2000 and the Inter-Governmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa, Accra (1975) also provides additional empitus in our collective endeavours to preserve our culture. Indeed, these various declarations and blue prints were meant to provide a framework for situating the place and role of African culture in Africa's development efforts towards socio-economic transformation and development.

It was also in this context that a decision was taken to encourage schools, occupational and political circles and the public at large to reappropriate the traditional African spirit of solidarity and respect. In this regard, the 3rd PANAFEST '97 is a manifestation of the desire of the African peoples to promote African cultural values and heritage that was to ensure the development of a new pedagogy geared to African unity so that culture did not remain the preserve of political circles alone. I am happy to note that since its inception, the Organization of African Unity recognized the crucial importance of African culture in promoting integration among the African countries and closer understanding amongst their people.

In this regard, we are happy and proud that, once again, our Pan-African Organization is honoured to be one of the sponsors of this impressive festival which brings together, in one setting, a variety of cultural exhibitions from over forty Member States. It is, indeed, a great achievement for Ghana to have a Pan-African Festival of such magnitude on its land and especially in the historical and cultural towns of Cape Coast and Elmina.

Once again, I salute the President, the Government and the people of Ghana for hosting this splendid festival. I also wish to thank those African countries which are participating in PANAFEST '97. I also greatly appreciate the solidarity shown by many countries and their relevant organizations which have contributed to this important event. To all of you, please accept the best wishes from the Organization of African Unity. We, at the OAU, are of the view that our culture provides a good common ground upon which a collective approach to our common problems can be addressed.