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REMARKS BY THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL, H.E. MR SALIM AHMED SALIM

AT THE MEETING WITH THE EXECUTIVE HEADS

OF THE OAU SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

Addis Ababa, 31 March, 1990.

DEAR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS

REPRESENTING THE OAU SPECIALIZED AGENCIES,

IT IS A PLEASURE FOR ME TO WELCOME YOU ALL. THIS OCCASION PROVIDES ME WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET YOU MOSTLY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY CAPACITY AS SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION. IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE THAT SUCH MEETINGS WILL BE ORGANIZED ON REGULAR BASIS IN THE FUTURE.

THIS MEETING, WHICH BRINGS TOGETHER TODAY ALL THE OAU'S FAMILY, HAS BEEN ORGANIZED FOR SEVERAL REASONS. AS YOU ARE WELL AWARE, THE OAU IS MEETING ITS PARTNERS OF THE UN SYSTEM JUST IN A FEW DAYS FROM NOW (2-5 APRIL, 1990). THIS MEETING BETWEEN OAU AND UN SYSTEM IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE AN IDEAL CONSULTATIVE FRAMEWORK WHERE OUR ORGANIZATION AND ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES WILL SUBMIT CONCRETE PROJECT/PROGRAMME PROPOSALS REQUIRING UN SUPPORT. IT IS , THEREFORE, OUR DUTY AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY COLLECTIVELY, AS AN INTERESTED PARTY TO THIS COOPERATION, TO HARMONIZE AND COORDINATE OUR STRATEGY AND AGREE ON THE PROCEDURES IN SUBMITTING OUR CASE. THAT IS WHY THE FIRST TASK OF THIS MEETING MUST BE THE CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE OAU'S PRIORITY PROGRAMMES, IN THE SHORT AND LONG TERMS PERSPECTIVES, SO AS TO IDENTIFY OUR REAL PROBLEMS AND CONSTRAINTS REQUIRING EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE.

I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS ONE IMPORTANT POINT HERE, THE COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OAU SYSTEM FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA. AFRICA HAS ALREADY A LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AS EMBODIED IN THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION AND ITS FINAL ACT. OUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY AS A SYSTEM IS TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ADVISORY SERVICES TO MEMBER STATES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN. OUR PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE ALWAYS LINKED TO THIS OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF PROVIDING TO OUR MEMBER STATES WITH THE NECESSARY TECHNICAL AND ADVISORY SERVICES IN THIS DAILY ENDEAVOUR TO ACHIEVE A COLLECTIVE SELF-RELIANT AND SELF-SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT. WHEN WE HAVE UNDERSTOOD OUR ROLE AND MANDATE AS OPERATIONAL ARMS AND INSTRUMENTS OF MEMBER STATES, IT WILL BE EASY TO CLARIFY OUR POSITION VIS-A-VIS OUR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FROM WITHIN OR WITHOUT THE UN SYSTEM. THE ASSISTANCE WE ARE SEEKING SHOULD ALWAYS BE SEEN NEVER AS A SUBSTITUTE BUT RATHER AS COMPLEMENTARY TO OUR OWN EFFORTS AND RESOURCES, WITH THE PRIMARY AIM OF ENHANCING THE INTERNAL TECHNICAL CAPACITIES OF OUR ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONS. THIS IS A REAL CHALLENGE TO ALL OF US AS HEADS OF THESE AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS. IT IS A CHALLENGE TO THE DEDICATION, COMMITMENTS AND CREDIBILITY OF OUR INSTITUTIONS. THE NATURE, SCOPE AND RELEVANCE OF YOUR PROJECT PROPOSALS TO THE OAU'S OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WILL DETERMINE THE KIND OF SUPPORT WE ARE BOUND TO RECEIVE FROM OUR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS IN THE UNITED NATIONS.

ANOTHER REASON OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE TO THIS MEETING IS THAT THE OAU SYSTEM SHOULD TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF OUR CONTINENT, ASSESS THE IMPACT OF THE RAPID AND FUNDAMENTAL TRANSFORMATIONS TAKING PLACE ALL OVER THE WORLD IN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FIELDS. BUT IN ORDER TO GIVE A COLLECTIVE RESPONSE TO THIS CHALLENGE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO DEFINE IN CLEAR TERMS THE FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AGENCIES AND OAU SO AS TO ENSURE AND STRENGTHEN COORDINATION OF OUR EFFORTS AND RESOURCES TO MEET THESE CHALLENGES. AS LONG AS OUR PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES ARE NOT COORDINATED AND GEARED TOWARDS A COMMON GOAL AND OBJECTIVE, WE WILL FAIL TO MEET THE EXPECTATIONS FROM OUR MEMBER STATES, AND OUR PARTNERS WILL NOT TAKE US SERIOUSLY. AND IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR OUR EXISTENCE, AS A SYSTEM, TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AS WELL.

FINALLY, I HOPE THAT THIS MEETING WILL PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY TO OAU AND ITS AGENCIES OF THE OAU FAMILY TO EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES AND INFORMATION, HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE BASIC ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED DURING OAU/UN MEETING AND SEEK CLARIFICATION ON WORKING RELATIONSHIP TO BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE OAU AND UN SYSTEM, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO MODALITIES OF IMPLEMENTING THOSE PROJECTS OF DIRECT INTEREST TO OAU SPECIALIZED AGENCIES BY UN AGENCIES IN AFRICA.

BUT BEFORE I CONCLUDE THESE INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE I PERSONALLY ATTACH TO THE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WHICH MUST BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE OAU SECRETARIAT AND ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. IT IS TRUE THAT OUR SPECIALIZED AGENCIES NEED A GREAT DEAL OF AUTONOMY OF ACTION TO BE EFFECTIVE AND TO BE READILY AND QUICKLY RESPOND TO THE DEMANDS FROM MEMBER STATES. BUT IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THE SAME AGENCIES BELONG TO THE OAU FAMILY. IN THIS REGARD, THEY ARE EXPECTED TO SPEARHEAD THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ADOPTED BY THE OAU, EACH ONE IN ITS SPHERE OF COMPETENCE. THAT IS WHY THERE IS NEED FOR CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN OAU AND ITS AGENCIES, NEED FOR COORDINATION OF OUR PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS. BUT THIS COOPERATION AND COORDINATION IS ONLY POSSIBLE IF THERE IS PROJECTS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS AS WELL AS RELATED CONSTRAINTS. IT IS, THEREFORE, NECESSARY TO AGREE HERE ON A REGULAR CONSULTATIVE MEETING WHICH WOULD BE HELD AT A TIME MUTUALLY CONVIENT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE WORK PROGRAMS OF THE AGENCIES.

IF THE PROPOSAL IS AGREABLE TO THE AGENCIES, RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS SHOULD WORK OUT MODALITIES OF THIS CONSULTATIVE FORUM. IF THE OAU SYSTEM IS TO BE CREDIBLE, WE HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER, IN A COMPLEMENTARY MANNER, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THAT LONGTERM OBJECTIVE : SELF-RELIANT AND SUSTAINING EFFORTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CONTINENT.

I THANK YOU.