

*ADDRESS OF THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL, H.E. MR SALIM AHMED SALIM*

*TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE, FINANCIAL*

*AND BUDGETARY MATTERS*

*Addis Ababa, 8 January, 1990.*

MR CHAIRMAN,  
YOUR EXCELLENCIES THE AMBASSADORS  
AND HEADS OF DELEGATION,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT I AM ADDRESSING YOUR DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE - THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE, BUDGETARY AND FINANCIAL MATTERS - AND SINCE THIS SESSION FORTUNATELY COINCIDES WITH THE NEW YEAR, I WISH AT THE OUTSET TO CONVEY MY BEST WISHES OF GOOD HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY TO ALL OF YOU.

MR CHAIRMAN,

YOUR COMMITTEE HAS A UNIQUE MANDATE. IT PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE WITHIN OUR ORGANIZATION. IT IS THE VITAL LINK BETWEEN THE MEMBER STATES AND THE SECRETARIAT. IT, THEREFORE, ASSUMES A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY IN THE VERY EXISTENCE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANIZATION. IN MY VIEW, THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANIZATION LARGELY DEPENDS ON THIS LINK WHICH SHOULD BE FURTHER ENHANCED BY US ALL. IT IS OUR COLLECTIVE INTEREST TO SEE THAT THIS LINK IS USED AS A FORUM FOR JOINT-ACTION, FOR COORDINATION AND HARMONIZATION OF THE WISHES OF THE MEMBER STATES AND THE OBLIGATIONS AS WELL AS REQUIREMENTS OF THE SECRETARIAT. WE MUST, THEREFORE, ALWAYS ENDEAVOUR TO ENSURE THAT THIS IS A MUTUALLY REWARDING COOPERATION, A MUTUALLY REINFORCING RELATIONSHIP.

ON MY PART, I WISH TO SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY OF THE INAUGURAL SESSION TO ASSURE YOU OF READINESS ON MY PART AND ON THAT OF THE ENTIRE SECRETARIAT TO COOPERATE WITH YOU. I HAVE TAKEN THE SOLEMN COMMITMENT TO ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION ENTRUSTED TO ME AND UPHOLD THE CONFIDENCE PLACED IN ME BY OUR HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT. IT IS MY INTENTION TO EXPEND ALL EFFORT TO ACCOMPLISH THIS MISSION WITH YOUR COOPERATION AND SUPPORT AS PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEMBER STATES.

MR CHAIRMAN,

A DRAFT AGENDA HAS BEEN TABLED BEFORE YOUR COMMITTEE. THE ITEMS OF THE AGENDA DEAL WITH THE 1988/1989 BUDGETARY YEAR WHICH IS COVERED IN THREE REPORTS : A STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE PRESENT FINANCIAL YEAR AS AT 31 OCTOBER 1989; A STATEMENT ON CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE REGULAR BUDGET OF THE ORGANIZATION AND, FINALLY, A DRAFT BUDGET AND PROGRAMME FOR THE 1990/1991 FINANCIAL YEAR. ALL THESE ITEMS WILL BE INTRODUCED BY THE SECRETARIAT AS AND WHEN THEY ARE TABLED FOR CONSIDERATION BY YOUR COMMITTEE.

ON MY PART, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A FEW GENERAL REMARKS ON THE FUNCTIONING OF OUR ORGANIZATION AND TO HIGHLIGHT THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE BUDGET/PROGRAMME FOR THE 1990/1991 FINANCIAL YEAR.

1) THE DRAFT BUDGET AND PROGRAMME FOR 1990/1991 AMOUNTS TO US\$ 29,867,670.00. THIS REPRESENTS, IN ABSOLUTE TERMS, A 3.23 % INCREASE ON THE PRESENT BUDGET OR US\$ 934,729.00. HOWEVER, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT FACTORS OF INFLATION AND CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS, THIS IS A ZERO-GROWTH BUDGET. THIS FIGURE DOES NOT INCLUDE THE BUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS FOR OUR PROPOSED OFFICE IN WINDHOEK AND THE COMMISSION ON PEOPLES AND HUMAN RIGHTS BASED IN BANJUL. IT EQUALLY DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS OF THE REPORT OF THE STRUCTURAL COMMITTEE WHICH WILL BE PRESENTED TO YOU IN DUE COURSE. THESE WILL BE TABLED BEFORE THIS COMMITTEE SEPARATELY.

2) THIS DRAFT BUDGET AIMS AT THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES SO AS TO ENSURE CONTINUITY AND SMOOTH EXECUTION OF PROGRAMMES ALREADY IN PLACE. TO THAT EXTENT, IT IS A FACILITATING BUDGET. BUT ABOVE ALL, IT IS A BUDGET AIMED AT MEETING THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS OF THE SECRETARIAT. FOR WE INTEND TO KEEP ALIVE OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE VARIOUS ISSUES BEFORE AFRICA. AS AND WHEN NEED ARISE, WE SHALL EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES OF SEEKING MANDATE FROM THE MEMBER STATES TO BRANCH INTO THE NON-TRADITIONAL AREAS OF INVOLVEMENT.

IN THE POLITICAL FIELD, THE AIM WOULD BE TO PURSUE THE EFFORTS OF OUR ORGANIZATION TO ENSURE THE TOTAL LIBERATION OF THE CONTINENT. THE EFFORTS DIRECTED AT EXERTING MAXIMUM PRESSURE ON THE PRETORIA REGIME SO THAT IT WOULD BE COMPELLED TO ABANDON THE EVIL SYSTEM OF APARTHEID SHOULD BE INTENSIFIED.

IN THIS RESPECT AND IN VIEW OF THE MAJOR CHANGES THAT WE ARE WITNESSING TODAY, WE SHOULD BE EXTREMELY VIGILANT AND CHECK AGAINST ANY DENTS IN THE POSITION NOW ACHIEVED BY THE JUST STRUGGLE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PEOPLE AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.

OUR ORGANIZATION WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED , IN THE COMING YEAR, TO PROMOTE PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO THE CONFLICTS BETWEEN MEMBER STATES WHICH ARE SPREADING DEATH AND SORROW IN OUR CONTINENT. IT WILL, TO THE BEST OF ITS ABILITY, CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN AFRICA.

IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD AND IN MATTERS OF COOPERATION, THE ORGANIZATION WILL DIRECT ITS EFFORTS AT FORSTERING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION. WE INTEND TO BUILD UPON THE SPIRIT OF THE AFRICAN PRIORITY PROGRAMME FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND FOCUS ON THE AFRICAN COMMON POSITION ON THE DEBT. A SERIES OF PROGRAMMES, WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH AN AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, WILL BE IMPLEMENTED.

AS WE ENTER THE LAST DECADE OF THE 20TH CENTURY, AFRICA HAS TO PONDER ON HER WORSENING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN PARTICULAR IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE. INCREASINGLY, IT IS BECOMING CLEAR THAT WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO WAIT FOR CHARITY OR GOOD WILL FROM EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE.

THE CHANGES IN EASTERN EUROPE HAVE ESSENTIALLY ALTERED THE PRIORITIES OF EUROPE. A UNITED SINGLE MARKET EUROPE OF 1992 IS BOUND TO HAVE FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS TO AFRICA. ALL THESE CHANGES NEED TO BE UNDERSTOOD, TO BE ANALYSED IN ORDER TO PREPARE AN AFRICAN RESPONSE. I SEE THIS ROLE OF ANALYSIS, OF LOOKING AHEAD ESSENTIALLY TO BE THAT OF THE OAU. CONSEQUENTLY, IN THE DAYS AHEAD, WE SHALL TRY TO ELABORATE MECHANISMS WITHIN THE SECRETARIAT TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE. WE HOPE WE CAN BE ABLE TO DO SO WITHIN THE EXISTING RESOURCES AT LEAST FOR THIS YEAR ALONE.

IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE , CULTURE AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, THE ORGANIZATION INTENDS TO UNDERTAKE A NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES WITH THE END-PURPOSE OF ASSISTING IN THE SOCIO-CULTURAL ENHANCEMENT OF OUR PEOPLE. FOR INSTANCE, WE ARE NOW TRYING TO MAP OUT AN AFRICAN STRATEGY THAT MIGHT TAKE US TO THE TARGET OF «EDUCATION FOR ALL BY THE YEAR 2000». WE SHALL ALSO CONCENTRATE ON ISSUES AFFECTING WOMEN WHOSE CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY. WE HAVE NOW SET UP A WOMEN'S UNIT IN THE SECRETARIAT TO DEAL WITH THESE ISSUES. SPECIAL ATTENTION WILL BE DIRECTED AT YOUTHS WITH SPECIFIC EMPHASIS ON THEIR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT. NATURALLY, THE WELFARE OF OUR CHILDREN WILL CONTINUE TO BE ONE OF OUR PRIORITY PREOCCUPATION.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES LIKE DROUGHT, DESERTIFICATION, TOXIC WASTES, ETC, WILL ALSO BE ADDRESSED MORE SPECIFICALLY. A MAJOR MOBILIZATION CAMPAIGN SHOULD DEFINITELY BE ORGANIZED IN OUR CONTINENT SO THAT PUBLIC OPINION AND THE GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE EDUCATED ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

ON HEALTH MATTERS, PROVISION HAS BEEN MADE, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE WHO AMONG OTHERS, FOR SURVEYS TO BE CONDUCTED WITH A VIEW TO ARRIVING AT THE TARGET OF «HEALTH FOR ALL BY THE YEAR 2000».

WHETHER ON ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH OR OTHER ISSUES, OUR SUCCESS WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON OUR ABILITY TO HARNESS OUR RESOURCES AND APPLY THEM TO DEVELOPMENT. THAT ABILITY, IN MY VIEW, HINGES ON OUR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITY. FOR THE FUTURE, THESE TWO ARE THE KEY TO DEVELOPMENT. FOR THIS REASON, WE INTEND TO GIVE THIS ISSUE, AS WELL AS THE INSTITUTIONS DEALING WITH IT, THE NECESSARY PRIORITY.

FINALLY, THE ORGANIZATION WILL STRIVE TO PROMOTE AFRICAN LANGUAGES. IN THIS RESPECT, THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE WOULD RECALL THAT THERE IS ALREADY PROVISION IN THE 1989/1990 FINANCIAL YEAR FOR HOLDING A CONSTITUENT CONGRESS OF AFRICAN LINGUISTS. CONSULTATIONS ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY TO REALIZE THIS OBJECTIVE.

THE PROGRAMME OF THE ESCAS DEPARTMENT, WHICH I HAVE OUTLINED BRIEFLY, IS QUITE CONSIDERABLE AND REQUIRES SPECIAL COORDINATION. IT CALLS FOR CLOSE COOPERATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE REGIONAL OFFICES OF THE OAU (IBAR IN NAIROBI, IPC IN YAOUNDE, SAFGRAD IN OUAGADOUGOU, CELHTO IN NIAMEY AND THE FOUTA DJALLON HIGHLANDS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN CONAKRY) AND ITS HEADQUARTERS. THE SECRETARIAT INTENDS TO TAKE EVERY STEP REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT CLOSER WORKING RELATIONS ARE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE REGIONAL OFFICES AND HEADQUARTERS.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO REFER TO THE ACTIVITIES THAT THE SECRETARIAT INTENDS TO UNDERTAKE AS PART OF AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION. AFRICA AND THE ARAB WORLD SHARE A COMMON DESTINY. COOPERATION BETWEEN THEM IS A FACT OF HISTORY, THE LONG-TERM UNDERTAKING OF WHICH REMAIN IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH PEOPLES. AT A TIME WHEN MAJOR CHANGES ARE OCCURING IN THE NOTHERN HEMISPHERE, SOUTH/SOUTH COOPERATION, AND PARTICULARLY AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION, SHOULD BE REACTIVATED AND CONSOLIDATED. IT HAS BEEN DECIDED, IN THIS RESPECT, THAT JOINT AFRO-ARAB PROJECTS BE INITIATED SUCH AS AN AFRO-ARAB FAIR AND AN AFRO-ARAB CULTURAL INSTITUTE, BOTH OF WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE INSTITUTIONS IN CHARGE OF AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION AND ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF OUR ORGANIZATION.



ON THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST DROUGHT AND FAMINE IN AFRICA, THE FUND THAT WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT WAS ABLE TO CHANNEL ASSISTANCE TOTTALLING US\$ 16,745,430.00 FOR 40 PROJECTS IN 20 COUNTRIES. IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE OAU TO SUPPORT SUCH A MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT IN THE EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN PANAFRICAN SOLIDARITY BY GUARANTEERING THE SURVIVAL OF THE FUND AND ENHANCING ITS CREDIBILITY THROUGH A MORE DYNAMIC REPLENISHMENT OF ITS RESOURCES.

MR CHAIRMAN,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THE DRAFT BUDGET AND PROGRAMME, WHICH WILL BE TABLED BEFORE YOU, DOES NOT MEASURE TO THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEMS BEFORE AFRICA.

THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT WILL, ON ITS PART, ENSURE THAT THE PROGRAMMES IN THE DRAFT ARE IMPLEMENTED JUDICIOUSLY. THE REQUIRED DISCIPLINE WILL BE APPLIED TO ENSURE THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMMES TIES IN WITH THE OBJECTIVES THAT HAVE BEEN SET.

I AM AWARE, AFTER HAVING VISITED ALL THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT, THAT THE STAFF MEMBERS WORK UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITIONS. I SAW, FOR MYSELF , THE POOR CONDITION OF

THE BUILDINGS OF THE SECRETARIAT - CRAMPED OFFICES AND INADEQUATE FURNITURE. I WAS TOTALLY SHOCKED AT THE COMPLETELY OBSOLETE EQUIPMENT IN THE CONFERENCE DIVISION WHICH IS STILL USING COMPLETELY OUTDATED CYCLOSTYLING MACHINES. I WAS ALSO INFORMED OF CASES OF FRUSTRATION CAUSED BY LACK OF INTERNAL PROMOTIONS AND RECRUITMENTS WHICH DEMOTIVATED STAFF MEMBERS. I ALSO OBSERVED THAT THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SECRETARIAT WAS INHIBITED TO SOME EXTENT BY INADEQUATE COORDINATION.

MR CHAIRMAN,

I DO BELIEVE THAT, WITH YOUR COOPERATION AND THE SUPPORT OF ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, WE CAN IMPROVE ON THE PHYSICAL WORKING CONDITIONS OF THE STAFF AND IN THE PROCESS ENHANCE THE OUTPUT AND PERFORMANCE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT. WE SHALL GO THROUGH THE FIRST HURDLE WITH THE ASSISTANCE THAT THE UNDP HAS PROMISED TO GIVE US IN THE FORM OF PRINTING EQUIPMENT AND WORD-PROCESSORS WHICH WE HOPE WOULD BE INSTALLED SOON. THIS WILL DEFINITELY BE A GOOD BEGINNING TOWARDS THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF THE SECRETARIAT. BUT CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME. I HAVE ALREADY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAL TO THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OFFICERS OF THE SECRETARIAT. I HAVE ALSO CALLED ON THEM TO WORK IN A TEAM SPIRIT. IT IS MY BELIEF THAT, WITH GOODWILL ON ALL SIDES AND PROPER COORDINATION, WE WILL SUCCEED IN ENHANCING THE OUTPUT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SECRETARIAT, FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS NOTWITHSTANDING.

THE FACT STILL REMAINS, HOWEVER, THAT THE ORGANIZATION CANNOT OPERATE WITHOUT A MINIMUM INFLOW OF FUNDS TO ITS BUDGET. I WISH TO POINT OUT, IN THIS RESPECT, THAT THE OPERATION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT ARE AFFECTED ADVERSELY BY THE DEFAULTS IN THE PAYMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS BY MEMBER STATES. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAL TO THEM TO MAKE THEIR BUDGETARY CONTRIBUTIONS. A STATEMENT ON THE OUTSTANDING OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BUDGET HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO YOUR COMMITTEE. IT CLEARLY SHOWS THAT JUST US\$ 3.5. MILLION HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN PAID IN OUT OF A TOTAL OF US\$ 29 MILLION FOR THE CURRENT BUDGET. SOME MEMBER STATES REMAIN IN ARREAS TALLING ABOUT 30.4 MILLION DOLLARS RANGING BACK FROM THE 1975/1976 to 1988/1989 FINANCIAL YEAR. APART FROM ITS NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE OPERATION OF THE SECRETARIAT, SUCH DELAY IN THE PAYMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS DOES RAISE QUESTIONS AS TO THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ORGANIZATION IN THE MINDS OF AFRICAN AND WORLD OPINION.

IT IS THE CREDIBILITY GAP THAT OUR ORGANIZATION NOW HAS TO FACE AT A TIME WHEN OUR CONTINENT IS THREATENED WITH MARGINALISATION. OUR ORGANIZATION SHOULD, MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, ACT AS THE CATALYST AND FOCAL POINT OF ALL THE ENERGIES WITHIN THE CONTINENT.

MR CHAIRMAN,

WE CAN NOT TALK OF A STRONG OAU, WITHOUT PUTTING AT ITS DISPOSAL, THE REQUISITE POLITICAL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES. OVER THE LAST THREE MONTHS, I HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES I HAD TO MEET SOME HEADS OF STATES TO IMPRESS UPON THEM ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING OUR ORGANIZATION WITH THE NECESSARY RESOURCES IF WE EXPECT IT TO PERFORM WELL. OUR OWN COMMITMENT TO THIS ORGANIZATION MUST FIND EXPRESSION IN OUR READINESS TO EQUIP IT MATERIALLY. FOR IT IS ONLY THROUGH SUCH VISIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF SUPPORT THAT WE CAN MANAGE TO CONVINCING OUR SUPPORTERS AS WELL AS OUR DETRACTORS THAT WE TAKE THE OAU SERIOUSLY.

I AM GLAD TO REPORT THAT I HAVE FOUND ALL THE LEADERS FAVOURABLY DISPOSED AND AMENABLE TO THE PRINCIPLE OF PROVIDING THE OAU WITH THE RESOURCES IT NEEDS.

OUR ORGANIZATION IS SMALL BUT IT DOES BEAR HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY ON ITS SHOULDERS. WE CAN TOGETHER PLACE IT ON A PEDESTAL COMMENSURATE WITH ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.

I THANK YOU.