



Organization of African Unity

**STATEMENT BY
DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM,
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OAU,
UPON RECEIVING THE 36TH INSTRUMENT OF RATIFICATION
OF THE CONSTITUTIVE ACT OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

ABUJA, NIGERIA

27 APRIL 2001

**Excellencies Heads of State,
Distinguished Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is with a sense of particular satisfaction and gratitude that I wish to bring to the attention of this Assembly the historic event which has taken place in the last 24 hours.

Yesterday evening, 26 April 2001, in the presence of the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Al Hajj Sule Lamido, deposited with me as Secretary-General of the OAU, the Instrument of Ratification of the Constitutive Act of the African Union. Thus Nigeria becomes the 36th Member State of the OAU to do so.

In conformity with Article 28, the Act shall enter into force thirty days after the deposit of the instruments of ratification by two-thirds of the Member States of the OAU. With the deposit by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the legal requirement of the ratification by two-third of the Member States has been attained. Consequently, the Constitutive Act of the African Union shall now enter into force on the 26th of May 2001.

As I have already stated, this is a historic development with far-reaching consequences for our countries and people and for our Continent as a whole. The African Union, whose establishment was proudly declared by African Heads of State and Government at the 5th Extraordinary Session of their Assembly in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, has now become both a political and legal reality.

As we look forward to its coming into force on 26 May 2001, one day after African Liberation Day (25 May), I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the Member States of the OAU for their commitment as evidenced by the fact that all of them have signed the Constitutive Act. I would now appeal to all those who have not yet ratified the Constitutive act to do so as soon as possible and to deposit the Instruments of Ratification expeditiously.

I wish to pay tribute to all our leaders for living up to the spirit of the Sirte Declaration of 9.9.99. I wish to recognize their role in making this moment possible. I wish in particular to recognize the contribution of the Leader of the Great Al-Fatah Revolution, Brother Muammar Ghaddafi, our host for Sirte I and Sirte II, for his commitment and persistent advocacy. I wish also to recognize the role of the previous Chairman of the OAU, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, who also chaired Sirte I; and the Current Chairman of the OAU, President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, on whose capital the Constitutive Act was adopted and who also chaired Sirte II. All these three leaders have been in the forefront in the implementation of the Sirte Declaration. They have also been other leaders including yourself, Mr. Chairman (President Konare), who have been real militants for this cause. To all of them, indeed to all African leaders, history will recall their commitment to the cause of the unity and cohesion of our Continent.

I thank you.