

OUAGADOUGOU DECLARATION

We, Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), meeting in our 34th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 8 to 10 June, 1998:

- Reaffirming the values and ideals of solidarity, unity, freedom, justice, independence, peace and the objectives of security, stability and development enshrined in the OAU Charter by the Founding Fathers;
- Noting that despite the end of the Cold War and gradual reduction in the conflicts it generated, conflicts in Africa remain a serious factor which impede the development of the Continent;
- Aware of our responsibility to deal with the present economic, cultural and political difficulties and the conflict situations prevailing on the Continent;
- Noting further that conflicts originate from such external factors as the sequels of colonization and foreign interferences;
- Aware of our special responsibility in the persistence of these conflicts which are also and especially caused by such internal factors as increase in poverty, adverse exploitation of the diversity and cultural and religious specificities;
- Deeply concerned over the continuous fall in Africa's share and participation in international economic exchanges and trade;
- Deeply concerned also over the debt burden on the economies of our countries and the reduction in international financial flows to Africa;
- Assessing the negative impact of social scourges such as malnutrition, AIDS pandemic, Malaria inadequate health and educational infrastructure on the populations of our Continent;
- Recognizing the inevitable place and role of women in the political, economic and cultural development of the Continent and their commitment in this process;
- Imbued with our common desire to steer Africa out of its precarious and externally dependent economic situation, as proven, among other things, by the drafting of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community and the Cairo Declaration which set up the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution;

- Convinced that only a concerted action will make it possible to strengthen Africa's position in the new world order;
- Reaffirming our genuine desire to enter the third millennium in "unison";

DECIDE:

1. At the Political Level

To make the search for peace, security and stability our primary concern and, to this end:

- recognise unequivocally that political issues are primarily national;
 - work towards the establishment and consolidation of effective democratic systems, taking into account the socio-cultural realities of our States, with the of all actors of the civil society;
 - give special attention to the establishment of a system of government based on permanent social dialogue and the search for political consensus;
 - work towards the establishment and consolidation of a credible and independent justice accessible to all;
 - ensure respect for human rights and fight impunity;
 - abolish exclusion and, in this regard, involve all and sundry without discrimination in the management of public affairs;
 - create or strengthen in each of our States an organ to deal with peace or conflict related issues;
 - create or strengthen within our respective States, structures charged with combating illicit arms circulation, drug trafficking, terrorism and the emergence of transborder criminality, and ensure coordination of these efforts by the OAU;
 - strengthen the Central Organ of the OAU Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Mechanism established in Cairo in June 1993, and coordination of the efforts deployed by the OAU and sub-regional organizations a factor which constitutes one of the corner stones of success of the mechanism;

- ensure necessary cooperation between the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations in the field of conflict prevention, management and resolution.

2. At the Economic and Social Cooperation Level

- endeavour to make of our continent a homogenous political force in international fora such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the African-Caribbean and Pacific Group (ACP), and ensure that the specific concerns and interests of our States are taken into account;
- make the debt question an issue for common action;
- operationalize sectoral policy coordination systems taking the private sector on board;
- devote energies towards strengthening the process of sub-regional integration taking into consideration macro-economic policy monitoring, and involving both the private sector and the civil society;
 - reinforce inter and intra-regional trade as a way of speeding up the integration process on the continent;
- strengthen the development of inter-and intra-regional communication facilities and transport infrastructure;
- exert effort to endow the continent with the New Information and Communication Technologies and make of those technologies a tool for Africa's progressive and harmonious insertion into the third millennium;
- reiterates the importance of intensifying cooperation among Member States in the field of Malaria Prevention and Control. In this context, the Assembly welcomes the convening of the African Ministers of Health in Cairo from 13 - 15 June, 1998;
 - eliminate all forms of discrimination against women to enable them play fully their role as development actors which can only be achieved through equal access to education and resources;
- reinforce protection of the Rights of the Child and increase the resources and facilities for the child's development;
 - work for the assertion of our cultural identities, recognition of our specific cultural values and their incorporation into our development strategies.

3. In the Institutional Level

endow our Organization with structures capable of meeting the dynamics of changes unfolding in our societies and worldwide through increased coordination of the activities of sub-regional organizations, coordination of the continent's sectorial policies and implementation of the decisions of the Specialized Commissions.