

AHG/DECL.3 (XXIX)

DECLARATION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT ON
THE ESTABLISHMENT WITHIN THE OAU OF A MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT
PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION, (1993)

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, meeting in our Twenty-ninth Ordinary Session in Cairo, Egypt, from 28 - 30 June 1993, having considered the situations of conflict in our Continent and recalling the Declaration we adopted on 11th July 1990, on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World, declare as follows:

1. In May 1963, when the Founding Fathers met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to found the Organization of African Unity, they were guided by their collective conviction that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are legitimate aspirations of the African peoples, and by their desire to harness the natural and human resources for the advancement of the Continent in all spheres of human endeavour. The Founding Fathers were inspired by an equally common determination to promote understanding between the African peoples and co-operation among the African States, and to rekindle the aspirations of the African people for brotherhood and solidarity in a larger unity transcending linguistic, ideological, ethnic and national differences.
2. The Founding Fathers were fully convinced that to achieve these lofty objectives, conditions for peace and security must be established and maintained.
3. It was with this overriding conviction, and guided also by the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that our countries began on the arduous task of meeting the triple challenge of decolonization, economic development and maintenance of peace and security.
4. Today, thirty years later, we can look back with pride at the achievements which the Organization of African Unity has been able to make against heavy odds and the many obstacles it has had to surmount.
5. The ranks of independent countries have been strengthened; and the membership of the OAU has increased from thirty-two at its founding to fifty-two today. The frontiers of freedom in Africa have been pushed to the doors of Apartheid South Africa. And even there, significant progress has been made; and we have reasonable cause for optimism that we shall soon see the total eradication of the remaining vestiges of colonialism, racism, racial discrimination and apartheid.
6. We, however, continue to be faced by the daunting dual challenge of economic development and democratic transformation. Our countries have made tremendous efforts both individually and collectively to arrest and reverse the decline in our economies. Notwithstanding the many serious difficulties they have encountered, and the magnitude of what remains to be done, appreciable progress has been made in the social and economic fields.

7. The socio-economic situation in our Continent remains nonetheless in a precarious state. Factors including the poverty, the deterioration of the terms of trade, plummeting prices of the commodities we produce, the excruciating external indebtedness and the resultant reverse flow of resources have combined to undermine the ability of our countries to provide for the basic needs of our people. In some cases, this situation has been further compounded by external political factors.

8. We do recognise, however, that there have also been certain internal human factors and policies which have negatively contributed to the present state of affairs on the Continent.

9. No single internal factor has contributed more to the present socio-economic problems in the Continent than the scourge of conflicts in and among our countries. They have brought about death and human suffering, engendered hate and divided nations and families. Conflicts have forced millions of our people into a drifting life as refugees and displaced persons, deprived of their means of livelihood, human dignity and hope. Conflicts have gobbled-up scarce resources, and undermined the ability of our countries to address the many compelling needs of our people.

10. While reaffirming our commitment to the Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World which we adopted during the 26th Session of our Assembly, in Addis Ababa, in July 1990, we renew our determination to work in concert in the search for speedy and peaceful resolution to all the conflicts in Africa.

11. In June last year at the Twenty-eighth meeting of our Assembly in Dakar - Senegal, we decided in principle to establish within the OAU, and in keeping with the principles and objectives of the Charter of the Organization, a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. We took that decision against the background of the history of many prolonged and destructive conflicts in our continent and of our limited success at finding lasting solutions to them, notwithstanding the many efforts we and our predecessors expended. In so doing, we were also guided by our determination to ensure that Africa through the Organization of African Unity plays a central role in bringing about peace and stability in the Continent.

12. We saw in the establishment of such a mechanism the opportunity to bring to the processes of dealing with conflicts in our continent a new institutional dynamism, enabling speedy action to prevent or manage and ultimately resolve conflicts when and where they occur.

13. Now, having considered the report on the Mechanism prepared by the Secretary General pursuant to our decision on the principle of its creation, we hereby establish, within the OAU, a Mechanism for preventing, managing and resolving conflicts in Africa.

14. The Mechanism will be guided by the objectives and principles of the OAU Charter; in particular, the sovereign equality of Member States, noninterference in the internal affairs of States, the respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States, their inalienable right to independent existence, the peaceful settlement of disputes as well as the inviolability of borders inherited from colonialism. It will also function on the basis of the consent and the co-operation of the parties to a conflict.

15. The Mechanism will have as a primary objective, the anticipation and prevention of conflicts. In circumstances where conflicts have occurred, it will be its responsibility to undertake peace-making and peace-building functions in order to facilitate the resolution of these conflicts. In this respect, civilian and military missions of observation and monitoring of limited scope and duration may be mounted and deployed. In setting these objectives, we are fully convinced that prompt and decisive action in these spheres will, in the first instance, prevent the emergence of conflicts, and where they do inevitably occur, stop them from degenerating into intense or generalised conflicts. Emphasis on anticipatory and preventive measures, and concerted action in peace-making and peace-building will obviate the need to resort to the complex and resource-demanding peacekeeping operations, which our countries will find difficult to finance.

16. However, in the event that conflicts degenerate to the extent of requiring collective international intervention and policing, the assistance or where appropriate the services of the United Nations will be sought under the general terms of its Charter. In this instance, our respective countries will examine ways and modalities through which they can make practical contribution to such a United Nations undertaking and participate effectively in the peacekeeping operations in Africa.

17. The Mechanism will be built around a Central Organ with the Secretary General and the Secretariat as its operational arm.

18. The Central Organ of the Mechanism shall be composed of the States members of the Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government elected annually, bearing in mind the principles of equitable regional representation and rotation. In order to ensure continuity, the States of the outgoing Chairman and (where known) the incoming Chairman shall also be members of the Central Organ. In between Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly, it will assume overall direction and co-ordinate the activities of the Mechanism.

19. The Central Organ shall function at the level of Heads of State as well as that of Ministers and Ambassadors accredited to the OAU or duly authorized representatives. It may, where necessary, seek the participation of other OAU Member States in its deliberations particularly, the neighbouring countries. It may also seek, from within the Continent, such military, legal and other forms of expertise as it may require in the performance of its functions.

20. The proceedings of the Central Organ shall be governed by the pertinent Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. The Central Organ shall be convened by the Chairman or at the request of the Secretary General or any Member State. It will meet at least once a year at the level of Heads of State and Government; twice a year at the ministerial level; and once a month at Ambassadorial and duly authorized representatives' level. The quorum of the Central Organ shall be two thirds of its members. In deciding on its recommendations and without prejudice to the decision-making methods provided for in the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, it shall generally be guided by the principle of consensus. The Central Organ shall report on its activities to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

21. The venue of its meetings shall ordinarily be at the Headquarters of the Organization. Meetings may also be held elsewhere if so decided through consultations among its members. The provisional agenda of the Central Organ shall be prepared by the Secretary General in consultation with the Chairman.

22. The Secretary General shall, under the authority of the Central Organ and in consultation with the parties involved in the conflict, deploy efforts and take all appropriate initiatives to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. To this end, the Secretary General shall rely upon the human and material resources available at the General Secretariat. Accordingly, we direct the Council of Ministers, in consultation with the Secretary General, to examine ways and means in which the capacity within the General Secretariat can be built and brought to a level commensurate with the magnitude of the tasks at hand and the responsibilities expected of the organization. In his efforts, the Secretary General may also resort to eminent African personalities in consultation with the Authorities of their countries of origin. Where necessary, he may make use of other relevant expertise, send special envoys or special representatives as well as dispatch fact-finding missions to conflict areas.

23. A special Fund governed by the relevant OAU Financial Rules and Regulations shall be established for the purpose of providing financial resources to support exclusively the OAU operational activities relating to conflict management and resolution. It will be made up of financial appropriations from the regular budget of the OAU, voluntary contributions from Member States as well as from other sources within Africa. The Secretary General may, with the consent of the Central Organ, and in conformity with the principles and objectives of the OAU Charter, also accept voluntary contributions from sources outside Africa. Disbursement from the Special Fund shall be subject to the approval of the Central Organ.

24. Within the context of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the OAU shall closely co-ordinate its activities with the African regional and sub-regional organizations and shall co-operate as may arise in the different sub-regions of the Continent.

25. The OAU shall also co-operate and work closely with the United Nations not only with regard to issues relating to peace-making but, and especially, also those relating to peace-keeping. Where necessary, recourse will be had to the United Nations to provide the necessary financial, logistical and military support for the OAU's activities in Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa in keeping with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter on the role of regional organizations, in the maintenance of international peace and security. In the like manner, the Secretary General of the OAU shall maintain close co-operation with other international organizations.