



**ECONOMIC COMMISSION
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**ORGANIZATION OF
AFRICAN UNITY**

OPENING REMARKS

by

**Wzo. Tadelech Haile Michael
Minister for Women's Affairs
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at

**The Consultative Meeting Preparatory to the Ad Hoc Expert Group
Meeting/Forum for African Women Leaders on Peace
8 - 9 August 1996
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia**

UNECA/African Centre for Women (ACW)

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WOMEN'S AFFAIRS, ETHIOPIA AT THE CONSULTATIVE MEETING
PREPARATORY TO THE AD HOC EXPERT GROUP MEETING/FORUM FOR
AFRICAN WOMEN LEADERS ON PEACE**

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND PARTICIPANTS,

Allow me, on behalf of the Government and people of Ethiopia and on my own behalf, to welcome you all to Addis Ababa, the seat of the ECA and OAU, our continental organizations. May I wish you a pleasant stay with us. Allow me also on behalf of the ECA and the OAU, the co-organizers of this consultation meeting to welcome you heartily to this meeting and to express my confidence that, as committed African women to the cause of peace on the continent our deliberations will yield the desired results, a successful and useful outcome.

DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS,

Nearly three years ago, a Regional Conference on Women, Peace and Development was organized by the Ugandan Government, in particular, the then Ministry of Women in Development, Youth and Culture, in collaboration with the ECA and OAU. That Conference adopted the Kampala Action Plan which, among other things, called for the establishment of a Committee of Women Ministers and Plenipotentiaries, which, among other things, was to articulate women's views on regional and global issues, and participate at all levels in the new institutions and mechanisms being created by the Organization of

African Unity (OAU) for conflict prevention, management and resolution and in all other policy organs and sectoral fora of the ECA and OAU."

Since the adoption of the Kampala Action Plan, more African countries have joined those that were already embroiled in internal conflicts and strife. During the same period, many African women's associations, movements and organizations for peace within government and civil society have sprung up and most of them have been actively engaged in various peace activities and efforts. These efforts, however, have been on ad hoc bases and have had little impact on policies related to peace or conflicts nor have they received the publicity they deserved. Since the African Regional Conference on Women in Dakar and the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, both of which identified the question of women in the peace process a critical area of concern, African women's peace activities have picked up great momentum. The momentum, however, stops short of influencing decisions related to issues of peace and conflict. This situation is likely to continue unless women find a mechanism for channelling their inputs into the peace process. It is therefore imperative and timely that such a mechanism be established for this purpose.

The ECA and the OAU have therefore planned to call an ad hoc Expert Group Meeting/Forum for African women leaders, sometime in October to devise concrete ways and means of increasing active participation of women in the peace process in accordance with the provisions of the Kampala Action Plan. In this connection I am happy to note that most of you present here, have, on behalf of your organizations, prepared background

documents related to peace on the continent. It is my belief that these documents will enhance our deliberations during the two days we shall be working together to find the best ways in which African Women's voices will be heard and listened to, their opinions respected, and their perspectives incorporated into the decisions and activities relating to peace on our continent.

The purpose of this small meeting, as we all know, is to consult and brainstorm on the modalities for setting up the committee called for in the Action Plan, taking into account the developments on the continent with respect to conflicts and peace since the adoption of the Kampala Action Plan. We should also set up a time frame for operationalizing the Committee.

To assist this meeting, draft terms of Reference as well as a draft time frame for operationalizing the Committee have been proposed for our consideration.

I look forward to working with you all and I am sure our joint efforts will bring success to our deliberations. Once again may I wish you a pleasant stay in Addis Ababa.