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UNITED NATIONS
Economic Commission for Africa

MISSION REPORT

**ON THE ATTENDANCE OF THE FOURTH
EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF HEADS
OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

SIRTE – LIBYA, 8-9 SEPTEMBER 1999

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The proposal to hold an Extraordinary Session of Assembly Heads of State and Government was made by H.E. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi during the Thirty-Fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Algiers, Algeria, from 12-14 July 1999.
2. The Summit of the OAU Heads of State and Government adopted Decision AHG Doc. 140(XXXV) accepting the offer by Col. Muammar Gaddafi to host the 4th Extraordinary Session in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The aim of the Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government was "to discuss ways and means of making the OAU effective so as to keep pace with political and economic developments taking place in the world and the preparation required of Africa within the context of globalization so as to preserve its socio-economic and political potentials".
3. In line with Rule 13 of the Rules of Procedures of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the agenda of an Extraordinary Session shall comprise only items submitted for consideration in the request for convening the Extraordinary Session. Consequently, the agenda for the 4th Extraordinary Session was thus summarized as: Strengthening Africa's Capacity to Meet the Challenges of the New Millennium.
4. The Algiers Summit Declaration provided the spirit and was at the heart of the decision to hold the 4th Extraordinary Summit in Sirte, Libya. In strengthening OAU's capacity in the next millennium, the Extraordinary Assembly was to address some key areas such as:
 - (i) The political and socio-economic situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World: Africa's Responses.
 - (ii) Peace, Security and Stability.
 - (iii) Democratization and Human Rights.
 - (iv) Economic Cooperation and Integration.
 - (v) Socio-Economic Challenge.
 - (vi) Charter Review, and
 - (vii) Restructuring of the OAU Secretariat.
5. In the light of the above challenges, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government were expected to come up with the Way Forward. In this regard, the African Political Leadership undertook to recommit itself to the ideals of African unity, solidarity and Pan-Africanism and to strengthen the capacity of the African people to participate in the global community as equal partners.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION

6. The objective of the ECA mission was to participate at this epoch-breaking Conference which was being held at the dawn of the 21st century. Since the Extraordinary Summit had been convened to discuss how to Strengthen Africa's Capacity to Meet the Challenges of the New Millennium, ECA's participation was therefore crucial, since it is the premier research and policy institution in Africa on socio-economic issues, and as such, it would be called upon to provide technical support in the implementation of the decisions that the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government would take at the Extraordinary Summit.

7. The issues that provided the background and justification for the holding of the Sirte Extraordinary Summit, constitute the main agenda of the ECAs work programme. The participation of ECA at the Extraordinary Summit, would therefore enable it to better position itself by gaining insight on the thinking of the Heads of State and Government and what their perception is in enabling Africa to claim the New Millennium.

8. The need for ECA to inform the debate on the key challenges facing Africa was another justification for ECA's participation at the Extraordinary Summit. Indeed, in its capacity as a member of the Joint OAU/ECA/ADB Secretariat, its participation at the Extraordinary Summit was therefore imperative.

III. SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS AT THE MINISTERS PREPARATORY MEETING IN TRIPOLI

9. The Preparatory Meeting of the OAU Ministers for the 4th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads State and Government was held in Tripoli on 6th September 1999. The Preparatory Ministerial Conference was officially opened by H.E. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi at 8.30 p.m. at the Mehari Conference Hall, Mehari Hotel.

10. In his opening address to the Preparatory Meeting of Ministers for the 4th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, H.E. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the Head of State of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya welcomed the delegates to Tripoli and underscored the importance of the Extraordinary Summit. He stated that Africa needed to move faster in confronting the challenges that faced it, in the light of dramatic changes taking place at the global level. It was with this profound global changes in mind, that he had invited the African Heads of State and Government to meet in Sirte, Libya to chart a new course. He stressed that it was imperative for African countries to create a new spirit of consolidating political unity and economic cooperation in Africa. He warned that unless this was done, Africa would not avoid the marginalization that had characterized its past history.

11. He deplored the fact that, a continent so blessed with such vast resources should always remain at the margins of development, and more or less be written off by the rest of mankind. It was against this background that the Sirte Extraordinary Summit was being convened to facilitate the honouring of the commitments which African countries had made in the past, before the New Millennium.

12. In conclusion, he stated that by establishing Union of African States, the basis would be created for overcoming ethnic and national differences; directing the utilization of Africa's own natural resources; creating the foundation for enhancing the continent's sovereignty to face global challenges and the emerging trading blocks. This he said, would enable Africa to have a more balanced relation with other countries of the world on the basis of mutual equality and respect. All what he would be asking during the Extraordinary Summit was, for Africa Leaders to speed up the implementation of the Abuja Treaty. Finally, he thanked the delegates for having responded so overwhelmingly to the invitation and requested them to enjoy their stay in Libya. Before declaring the Preparatory Ministerial meeting officially opened, he announced that he would pay all the arrears of US\$4.6 million owed to the OAU Secretariat by some of the OAU member States.

13. Prior to the opening address by H.E. Colonel M. Gaddafi, the Current Chairman of the OAU Council of Ministers reminded the 4th Extraordinary Session, of the decision that had been reached in Algiers for the convening of the Meeting. He, on behalf of the delegates, expressed his most profound gratitude to the Head of State of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the people of Libya for their warm hospitality. He observed that it was due to the visionary leadership of Colonel M. Gaddafi that he had invited his fellow Heads of State and Government to come to Libya and deliberate on Africa's future in the next millennium. He stressed that he had no doubt that the Sirte Meeting would go down in history as one of the watershed in the 20th Century in Africa's Struggle to be truly independent. He then invited H.E. Colonel M. Gaddafi to address the Preparatory Meeting of Ministers for the 4th Extraordinary Session on the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

14. After the opening session, the Meeting of Ministers preparing for the 4th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted the agenda of the meeting and organisation of work. Since there was only one agenda item, the meeting proceeded to examine the draft Sirte Declaration.

15. The discussion on the draft Sirte declaration was very lively. Some delegates felt that it was a bit too long and needed to be made more succinct. Others felt that although it had captured the basic essence of what needed to be portrayed there was need to make it a bit short. A further confusion was injected into the discussion when the Libya delegation informed the meeting that his country had prepared another Declaration which would be presented for discussion at Sirte, incorporating elements on the establishment of the Union of African States. In view of the intervention by the Libyan Minister, the Ministers decided that further discussions be postponed until the meeting in Sirte. The Meeting then adjourned at 22:30 hours.

16. The 7th of September 1999 was devoted to the celebration activities of the 30th Anniversary of the Revolution. The day was also used by the OAU Secretariat staff and other delegates to travel to Sirte for the Fourth Extraordinary Session Assembly of Heads of State and Government which was to be held there from 8 to 9 September 1999.

IV. THE 4TH EXTRAORDINARY ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

17. The 4th Extraordinary Meeting of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government was officially opened by H.E. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and Current Chairman of the OAU at 20 hrs. In his opening statement, President Bouteflika declared that Africa had decided to free itself from the blindness of self-interest by undertaking to consolidate interdependence through solidarity. He emphasized that at the Algiers meeting, the Heads of State and Government adopted a new impulse and tempo on economic integration. It was against this backdrop that they had decided to hold an Extraordinary Summit in order to give Africa an impetus to move forward.

18. He observed that the holding of an Extraordinary Summit was based on an intensive desire of the African peoples to better prepare themselves to face the challenges that would confront the continent in the next millennium. Amongst these would include political, economic and social issues; the speed with which the global changes were unfolding; the dangers of globalization; and the harnessing of the collective efforts. The imperatives of the time as characterized by the formation of bigger economic blocs and the emergence of such organizations like WTO, left

African countries with very limited alternatives, but to coordinate their approach in dealing with the rest of the world.

19. He underscored the fact that the resolution of these challenges would only be feasible if African countries laid down the basis for peace and political stability in Africa. He emphasized that peace and prosperity remained the top agenda in Africa, and stated that these could only be achieved through dialogue and the cultivation of a culture of tolerance.

20. In conclusion, he stated that, Africa was not starting from a vacuum at the dawn of the new millennium, but from an organization that had rules, and that had served Africa well. He observed that what was needed more than ever before, was the improvement of the legal treaty that had set up the Organization of African Unity, in order to improve its effectiveness so that it could provide new perspective and ideas that would enhance Member States' capacity to face the challenges. It was for these reasons that the Sirte Meeting was being held to chart a way forward, by: cementing greater determination among African leaders; instilling greater vision and bridging the gap in knowledge of what needed to be done; and committing themselves to the setting up of an African entity that would guarantee the optimum exploitation of African resources.

21. In welcoming his fellow Heads of State and Government, H.E. Col. Muammar El Gaddafi, Leader of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, expressed his happiness at being able to host the 4th Extraordinary Meeting of Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU in Sirte on the occasion of the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the El Fatah Revolution. He observed that the presence of a large number of Heads of State and Government at the Extraordinary Summit underscored the seriousness and commitment which the African Member States have in shaping their destiny.

22. He stressed that the need for unity was imperative if Africa was to be able to move away from the statehood of slavery and to repudiate the status of being a permanent backyard of exploitation. He contended that the liberation of Namibia and South Africa had removed the last obstacles to achieving African Unity. The only struggle that remained was for Africa to fight against the indirect or internal colonization, he observed. It was through unity, he stressed, could Africa gain the high moral ground and be able to contribute to the progress of mankind. He urged the African countries to use the instrument of the UN system in order to demand the return of Africa's wealth and heritage that had been plundered especially those of archaeological nature.

23. In conclusion, Col. Gaddafi recalled that when, Kwame Nkrumah in 1963, advocated the formation of a Union Government and an African High Command, his proposal was scuffed at and met with strong opposition. Nearly, forty years later, the Nkrumah's dream had been exonerated by the events that had occurred in Africa. In this regard, it was necessary for the African countries to recommit themselves to the immediate implementation of African unity, which is already enshrined in the OAU Charter and the Abuja Treaty. This was a commitment that the African people had to undertake before the end of the 20th century. Finally, he paid tribute to the past and the current African leaders who had acted as "firemen for conflict" in Africa. He wished his fellow brother Heads of State and Government a happy stay in Libya.

24. In his statement to the 4th Extraordinary Meeting of the Heads of State and Government, the OAU Secretary-General, H.E. Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, paid tribute to the Leader of the El-Fatah Revolution, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi for hosting the Extraordinary Summit. He also paid

Tribute to the Heads of State and Government for their attendance. He saluted the people of the Great Arab Libyan Jamahiriya on their 30th Anniversary of the revolution and congratulated them for the achievement which they had recorded under the leadership of Colonel Gaddafi. He expressed satisfaction at the impressive military parade that was held on the 7th of September at which more than thirty other African States had participated. He noted that the presence of so many Heads of State and Government in Sirte, was an acknowledgement of the Libyan people long-standing support to the collective struggle against colonization and apartheid.

25. The OAU Secretary-General underscored the fact that the Sirte Extraordinary Summit was being convened to discuss the specific issues of strengthening the continental organization in order to enable it to meet the challenges in the next millennium. He noted that, whereas some notable achievements had been recorded despite many constraints and shortcomings, useful lessons had also been learned which could assist the continent to confront the daunting challenges posed by globalization. He emphasised that it was imperative for African countries to act with greater conviction to promote deeper economic cooperation and integration and unity, if the continent had to match in steps with the speed of regionalization and globalization.

26. Dr. Salim emphasized that experience had shown that where Africa had acted with conviction, and commitments tremendous progress has been made. It was for this reason that African leaders had to renew their resolve to implement and honour the commitments which they had made. He concluded that, the Sirte Summit provided a unique opportunity for taking decisive action to strengthen the capacity of the continental organisation to play its historic role of translating into reality, the Pan-Africanist's and the Founding Fathers' dream of a United Africa. There was therefore an urgent need to rekindle the vision of a united Africa.

27. After the end of the opening ceremony, the 4th Extraordinary Assembly of Heads of State and Government went into a closed door session at about 22 hrs.

28. Libya tabled two documents for consideration namely: Draft on the Establishment of the Union of African States; and the Sirte Declaration. A heated debate followed. Some of the Heads of State and Government felt that such a Draft on the Establishment of the Union of African States was premature as it would require prior consultations at the various national levels before any country could append its signature to it. Indeed, since it was being presented for the first time in Sirte, member States would not be in a position to have a meaningful discussion on it. This was also true with respect to the Sirte Declaration.

29. The Draft on the Establishment of the Union of African States which contained 37 Articles advocated that the concept of Union of African States was based on the previous provisions of the OAU Charter and the Abuja Treaty and that such a union be set up as of 1 January 2000. Furthermore the general secretariat of the Union of Africa states be entrusted with the preparation and supervision of the selection process of the African Supreme Congress members in a manner that would guarantee the convening of its first session on 1 January 2000. Articles 5 of the Union Draft Treaty sets out the fundamental principles on which the Union of African States would be established. The copy of the Draft on the Establishment of the Union of African States is attached herewith for information.

30. After protracted debate, which proved inconclusive, the Heads of State and Government agreed to adjourn and to hold another session, on the 9th of September 1999. The intervening

period gave an opportunity to the Member States to hold further consultation in order to come up with a compromise position on the following day.

31. The session on the 9th of September 1999, opened at about 12 hrs. Further explanations and clarification on the concept of Union of African States was given by Col. Muammar Gaddafi at the beginning of the session. He stated that his vision of the Union of African States was based on the OAU Charter and the Abuja Treaty to which the OAU Member States were already signatory. It was for those reasons that it would be unrealistic to have the matter referred back to the experts, or to seek the views of the various national governments or participants. He emphasized that there were no new elements in the proposal which Libya had tabled the previous day. Perhaps what might be new he stated, were the various appellations which had been used, however the various proposals were already contained within the OAU Charter. For example, a Summit of Heads of State, which he referred to as the Council of Union. Indeed, everything that had been proposed, he stressed, were all based on the OAU Charter and the Abuja Treaty.

32. He decried the fact that, all the interventions that had taken place the previous day, were aimed at delaying the process of uniting Africa. Rhetorically, Col. M. Gaddafi posed the question: Why have the people of Africa not asked why there had been delay in implementing the decisions that had been taken at the various OAU conferences? He stated that if African leaders had no intention of taking concrete action, then this should not be used as an excuse to create division and evoke extraneous factors in order to justify inaction. Indeed, nothing in the proposal that had been tabled warranted the demand for a referendum, or required legislative approval at national levels. He concluded that, inaction would only play into the hands of those who would like to see Africa revert to the state of slavery. Time, he observed, was not on the side of those people who never act.

33. President Olusegun Obasanjo in his intervention, observed that none of the African Heads of State and Government would disagree with the proposals that had been tabled before them, since it was a matter of cardinal importance to the African countries. He thanked Colonel Gaddafi for his clarification which had allayed fears and underscored the fact that the OAU Charter and the Abuja Treaty had formed the basis of the Libyan proposal.

34. President Obasanjo went on to explain that since there was nothing new in the Sirte Declaration that could not be found within the Abuja Treaty there was no need to split hairs. The need to move forward was therefore paramount. In this regard, there was a definite need for the Declaration and he saw no reason why the Extraordinary Summit could not sign such a Declaration. He reminded the Summit that the whole concept of State was becoming outdated and would be unviable unless it was supported by firm action. He argued that there was need to be serious and realistic. In this regard it would be more prudent to perhaps undertake "a hop-step-and jump" instead of one big jump. Such a move, he observed, would reflect the reality in Africa.

35. In arguing against the statement that had been made by President Chissano of Mozambique, President Obasanjo referred to Article by Article of the Abuja, which in its 5th stage had evoked political, economic, social and cultural imperatives. The sixth stage of the Abuja Treaty we stated called for the establishment of Pan-African Parliament. In his view there was nothing that should stop the Summit from accelerating the process of bringing the creation of Pan-African Parliament forward by 20 years. In his view, the Sirte Declaration should deal with three issues: the OAU Charter and the Abuja Treaty; the formation of Pan-African Parliament should be brought into a fast track to assist in setting a framework that could be used in the next millennium. This should be set up by the year 2000 without necessarily writing a new Treaty.

Lastly, he suggested that The Sirte Declaration should include the issue of debt and mandate the current Chairman and the President of South Africa to negotiate with creditors on behalf of the African countries.

36. The President of Mali supported the views expressed by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and suggested that the Declaration should contain five principles, namely: the review past vision; stages of crisis through which Africa had undergone; consolidation of regional economic communities; declaration of Intent of African Union; and the setting up of the Commission to redraft the OAU Charter, combining it with the Abuja Treaty and setting up the Pan-African Parliament by the year 2000 and reconvening in Sirte in the year 2001 to review the progress achieved. He further proposed that mention should also be made of the institutions cited in the Abuja Treaty, namely: the Court of Justice, African Monetary Union and African Central Bank in the Declaration and that their establishment should also be realized by the year 2000.

37. In supporting the two positions of the Presidents of Nigeria and Mali, the President of South Africa moved that the Meeting be adjourned to give the drafters a chance to put together the Declaration for adoption by the Summit before the departure of Heads of State later that day.

38. Several Heads of State and Government supported the proposals as put forward by the Presidents of Nigeria, Mali and supported by South Africa. The Heads of State that expressed support include those from Guinea Bissau, Chad, Eritrea, Senegal, Mauritania and Congo Democratic Republic, and the King of Swaziland.

39. The President of Congo Democratic Republic in his intervention observed that since the idea of Union Government was a revolutionary one, he felt that some of the OAU Member States might not agree to proceed with its immediate implementation. He stated that, judging by the statements that had been made at the conference, it was his considered view that the idea should not be thwarted by countries that were trying to buy time. He therefore proposed that the process should be launched by those who were willing to move forward but that, provision should be made for others to join at a latter time. The process should not be delayed by the requirement that all should participate at the same time.

40. In his intervention, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Egypt stated that the Sirte Declaration should incorporate a forward looking vision for the 21st century, and should accelerate the implementation of the various phases of the Abuja Treaty by moving them forward. The Sirte Declaration should also contain new concepts of sovereignty.

41. The President of Sudan, on the other hand underscored the need to shorten time of applying the legal aspects of the Abuja Treaty. Those, he stated, should be applied within a period of between 5 and 10 years.

42. In the adoption of the Ministerial Draft Sirte Declaration, paragraph 8 caused a heated debate. The amendment by Kenya to the effect that "we commit to decide to" was soundly rejected after a protracted debate. Mauritania also expressed reservation on paragraph 8. However, the overwhelming majority of countries, including, Liberia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Eritrea and Libya which intervened during the adoption of the Declaration rejected the amendment introduced by Kenya and reaffirmed that the paragraph as drafted in its original form namely: "we decide to" should stay.

V. THE CLOSING SESSION

43. In his closing statement, H.E. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the current Chairman of the OAU paid a glowing tribute to H.E. Col. Muammar El Gaddafi, Leader of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and the people of Libya whose revolutionary foresight would change the cause of history in Africa. He stated that he had the conviction the seeds of unity which the 4th Extraordinary had sowed in Sirte would germinate to yield fruits of salvation for Africa and would have deeper roots that would lift Africa to greater heights. He wondered whether African people would protect themselves if they were not able to participate in the on-going global changes. He equally wondered whether who among them would have not admired pyramids and would have not liked to be the builders of the pyramids. It was with such thoughts in mind, he stated, that the present generation of Africans would deem it an extreme honour to be considered part of the people who moved history.

44. In conclusion, the Current Chairman thanked all the delegation for their participation at the 4th Extraordinary Summit, and announced that Libya had made a contribution of US \$200 million to UNESCO be used in providing scholarships to the African students.

45. The Current Chairman of the OAU also made a statement on behalf of the 4th Extraordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the political situation in East Timor which urged the United Nations and the International Community as a whole to do its utmost, and as a matter of urgency, to take decisive measures to put an end to the dramatic situation in East Timor and to ensure above all, the respect for human rights and to prevent the loss of life.

46. The 4th Extraordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted the Sirte Declaration (attached as annex II) after which, the current Chairman of the OAU declared closed, the 4th Extraordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

47. During the Conference, H.E. Col. Muammer Gaddafi decorated the past and some of the current African heads of State and Government. He also posthumously, decorated late Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba by decorating their sons who had been invited to attend the Sirte Extraordinary Conference of Heads of State and Government of the OAU member States.

48. Indeed, one would hope that the African Heads of State and Government will live up to the decisions they took during the Sirte Extraordinary Conference, and that the rest of the African people will join them in the realization of this noble goal.