



OAU SCRIBE CANVASSES END TO WARS

Rotimi Oyekanmi, The Guardian, Tuesday 5 march 2002
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AWARE that hostilities on the African continent constitute a clog in the wheel of progress, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Mr. Amara Essy has called for an end to such conflicts.

He also canvassed religious commitment to the pursuit of regional integration on the continent.

Speaking before delegates at the opening ceremony of the third African Development Forum (ADF) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Essy said that regional integration was both the only way to stop the various conflicts plaguing the continent, and also the means to jumpstart real development.

To underscore the determination of Africa to move forward against all odds, Essy said the formation of the African Union (AU) was expected to be ratified by the OAU Summit of Heads of State, scheduled for July in Pretoria, South Africa.

Essy said that one of the mandates he received upon assuming office on September last year was to give the greatest attention to realising the formation of the African Union.

Echoing Essy's call, Ethiopian Prime Minister, Ato Meles Zenawi described regional integration as the "premier and political challenge that Africans are facing" at the moment.

His words: "We have committed ourselves to the maximum practical level of economic and political integration. There can be no other meaning for the constitutive act of the African Union, which we have embraced. All successful efforts at regional integration have been underpinned by political commitment in carrying out obligations assumed by governments and political leaders."

Essy said that regional integration would eliminate all barriers and stop all conflicts since it would foster understanding and dialogue.

He made a plea to all participants to work hard for the success of the initiative, insisting that Africa had no other way.

Meanwhile, a draft document, currently under scrutiny at a meeting of the committee of African Ministers of Finance and Governors of Central Banks, which yesterday began at the on-going third African Development Forum (ADE111), has put the Sub-Saharan share of foreign direct investment in the world economy at only one per cent.

Besides, the Gross Domestic Investment of the region, the report stated, "stands at only 17 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product," due largely to absence of good corporate governance and endemic corruption." Nigeria is located in the region.

The draft document was woven around eight themes: the importance of good economic, corporate and political governance; codes and standards of good economic and corporate governance for Africa, and promoting sound public financial management and accountability.

The other three themes were: Protecting the integrity of monetary and financial systems; strengthening accounting and auditing systems, and developing an effective corporate governance framework.

The document was of the view that good economic governance could only exist where institutions of government have the capacity to manage and raise resources efficiently, and be able to formulate, implement and enforce sound policies and regulations.

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