
Monrovia Declaration of Commitment of the Heads of State and Government of the OAU 1979

Sixteen years had passed since the Addis Ababa Convention of 1963, yet the promise to coordinate and enhance efforts for improving the lives of the people remained unfulfilled, as outlined in Section 2 of Article II of the OAU Charter. The socio-economic realities of the 1970s illustrated a decline compared to the 1960s, highlighting the urgent need to reevaluate the policies and initiatives enacted after Addis Ababa. As a response, African leaders convened in Monrovia, Liberia, in 1979 to adopt the Monrovia Declaration, also referred to as Initiative 2. This initiative saw the leaders commit to taking immediate and decisive action to not only accelerate socio-economic development but also to secure the political backing necessary to realize the goals of unity, self-reliance, sustainable development, and economic growth.

Questions for consideration: What justifications do Heads of State and Government provide for endorsing the Monrovia Declaration, sixteen years after the Addis Ababa Convention? What was the main goal of Section 2 in Article II of the OAU Charter and why did the OAU fail to achieve these objectives sixteen years after the Charter's adoption? The Addis Ababa Convention seeks to enhance cooperation and economic integration for unity and improved living conditions for the people, yet OAU failed to realize these objectives after 16 years, why? What specific commitments of the OAU Heads of State and Government are articulated in the Monrovia Declaration to promote national and collective self-reliance in Africa's social and economic development? What steps can a group of people or nation take to achieve true independence and collective self-reliance?

In Monrovia, Liberia, 1979

Monrovia Declaration of Commitment of the OAU Heads of State and Government on guidelines and measures for national and collective self-reliance in social and economic development for the establishment of a New International Economic Order.

The OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government

Aware of the fact that Africa is a vast continent amply endowed with natural resources of all kinds, provided with a potentially rich human resource base and capable of a rapid transformation of its economies and improvement in the standards of living of its peoples;

determined to ensure that our member-states, individually and collectively, restructure their economic and social strategies and programmes so as to achieve rapid socio-economic change and to establish a solid domestic and intra-African base for self-sustaining, self-reliant development and economic growth; **realizing** that the political regime which protects basic human rights and democratic freedom is essential for mobilizing the creative initiative of our people for rapid economic development, including scientific and technological innovation;

recognizing the need to take urgent action to provide the political support necessary for the success of measures to achieve the goals of rapid self-reliance and self-sustaining development and economic growth;

hereby declares as follows:

1. That we commit ourselves individually and collectively, on behalf of our governments and peoples, to promote the social and economic development and integration of our economies with a view to achieving an increasing measure of self-reliance and self-sustainment;
2. That we commit ourselves individually and collectively on behalf of our governments and peoples to promote the economic integration of the African region in order to facilitate and reinforce social and economic intercourse;
3. That we commit ourselves individually and collectively on behalf of our governments and peoples to establish national, sub-regional and regional institutions which will facilitate the attainment of objectives of self-reliance and self-sustainment;
4. That more specifically, we commit ourselves individually and collectively on behalf of our governments and peoples to:
 - Give an important place to the field of human resources development by states to eliminate illiteracy;
 - Put science and technology in the service of development by reinforcing the autonomous capacity of our countries in this field;
 - Self-sufficiency in food production and supply;
 - Complete implementation of the programme for the UN transport and Communications Decade for Africa;
 - Sub-regional and regional, internally located, industrial development;
 - Cooperation in the field of natural resources control, exploitation, extraction and use, for the development of our economies and for the benefits of our peoples and setting up of appropriate institutions to achieve these purposes;
 - The development of indigenous entrepreneurial [and] technical manpower and technological capabilities to enable our peoples to assume greater responsibilities for the achievement of our individual and collective goals;
 - Co-operation in the preservation, protection, and improvement of the natural environment.
 - Ensure that our development policies reflect adequately our socio-cultural values in order to reinforce our cultural identity;
 - Take into account the dimension of the future in the elaboration of our development plans, including studies and measures aimed at achieving the rapid- socio-economic transformation of our states;
1. We hold firmly to the view that these commitments will lead to the creation at the national, sub regional and regional levels of a dynamic inter-dependent, African economy and will thereby pave the way for the eventual establishment of an African common market, leading to African economic community;
2. Resolving to give special attention to the discussion of the economic issues at each annual Session of our Assembly, we hereby call on the Administrative Secretary-General in collaboration with the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, to draw up annually, specific programmes and measures for economic co-operation on sub-regional, regional and continental basis in Africa.

Done in Monrovia, Liberia, 1979