

**AFRICAN UNION**

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**Opening Statement delivered on behalf of the Chairperson of the  
African Union Commission, H.E. Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare, at  
the AISA/DPMF Conference on  
“Africa and Global Governance in the Aftermath of 9/11:  
Prospects and Challenges”  
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**By**

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**Addis Ababa**

**Excellencies,**

**Participants,**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of His Excellency, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, I wish to extend a note of welcome to all participants at this very important meeting. It is our fervent hope that you will enjoy your stay in Addis Ababa, the diplomatic heartland of our continent and the seat of the African Union. Addis Ababa, with its serene and tranquil environment and café culture is particularly suitable for this kind of exercise. The city, of course, has its delightful distractions which we shall also invite you to enjoy. After all, education is an all around development of the body, mind and soul. Ethiopia with its rich history and diverse cultural monuments underscore this vitality. We are confident therefore, that during this meeting you will come out with appropriate and suitable recommendations that will reflect the character and tempo of the city; one that will marry intellect to policy and provide building blocs for African renaissance in the twenty-first century.

The Commission of the African Union perceives your participation at this “Conference on Africa and Global Governance in the aftermath of 9/11”, as being very significant for three main reasons. First, it reconfirms our view that the process of Africa renewal must be based on a foundation that marries intellect and policy. The political emancipation of the African states in the 1960s was spear-headed by an intellectual corps of African nationalists and Pan Africanists, in the persons of Leopold Sedar Senghor, Nnamdi Azikwe, Kwame Nkrumah, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Franz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, Jomo Kenyatta and many others. They were the standard-bearers of the African struggle for liberation – the champions of African Unity. The cultural milieu in which independence was won was bifurcated. There was on the one hand, hope, confidence and optimism about the future of Africa. We knew where we were going because we knew where we came from. We were determined to get there by scientific inquiry. However, we were caught in the milieu of the Cold War period, when dominant and single-party systems became the order of the day, and showed no regard for good governance, human rights and the rule of law. It was as a matter of fact, a period of the autocratic nihilism of one party states, of dictatorship and repression. The milieu gave rise to anti-intellectual campaigns that spurred the

Brain drain, especially in the period between 1960s and 1980s. We unfortunately, celebrated “mediocrity”, a mediocrity that permeated all aspects of political, economic and social life. It consequently, triggered the decline and marginalization of the African continent. Some of our states became pawns and objects of international politics.

The African Union clearly associates the decline of the continent in the global scheme of things with the death of intellectualism. History teaches us that ideas precede development and we are determined to recreate an environment that marries intellect to method as a foundation for renaissance. It is because of this that the African Union held its first Conference of Intellectuals in Dakar, Senegal from 6-9 October 2004. The report of this Conference is being finalized and will be circulated to all and sundry. I invite you to peruse it so that together we can construct an appropriate way to move forward. We do not see Dakar as a one-off event. Our expectation therefore, is that the proceeds of your meeting will feed into this wider effort.

This Conference is also important, because of its theme and subject. It focuses on the character and contour of the international

environment in which Africa must find and rediscover itself and the parameters that would define behaviour in that context. The events of 9/11 must be located within the framework of a rapidly changing international landscape. First, came the end of the cold war which destroyed old mindsets and defined new trends of behavior. 9/11 came just as critical global actors were seeking to re-construct themselves in this new milieu. The events associated with 9/11 defined and developed that unique character of the post-cold war era. It highlighted a vulnerable side of the rising global hegemon that inspired a vigorous and vehement response. It was also an attack on the bastion of western capitalism that threatened to become a clash of culture and civilizations. The wave of international solidarity in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 defined and shaped a global pattern of response. The search for the culprits of 9/11 grew into an international war on terrorism.

Common concern about the apparent effects of 9/11 served to conceal layers of contradiction that became manifest with the invasion of Iraq. What precisely are the ingredients of the war on terrorism? What does it involve? How should it condition behaviour? Should the emphasis be on containment or counter-terrorism or the

need to address root causes? How would the war impact on the different regions of the world and in what context? What is the value and role of the UN and multilateral diplomacy in this milieu? In systematic terms, how would this reflect upon the framework or structure of international alliance models? What role will 9/11 play in re-shaping the post-cold war environment and the emergence of a new international order? What would be the significance and impact on Africa?

These are some of the questions that you will be tasked with in the process of this Conference and it is not our intention to presume or anticipate outcomes. However, it is important that we separate myth and reality and distinguish between imagined and real outcomes in order to assess opportunities and challenges and effectively map out responses.

9/11 affected Africa directly, and the casualties of terrorist bombings in Kenya, Tanzania, are manifestations of the new brand of extremism. Citizens of our countries with Muslim populations have been subject to malicious and prejudicial scrutiny in western countries. International political differences over American actions in

Iraq and Afghanistan have had spill-over and spin-off effects in those countries, with consequence for social relations, peace, security and development. As the US in particular, and the West in general have become more circumspect about the ideological character for the Middle-East and the challenge of Islamic fundamentalism, the oil-belt of Africa has assumed increasing importance in the global arena. Hence, the need for African States to be diligent, industrious and in control of Africa's resources. Our leaders are now feted in Washington.

We hear much more about the need for good governance, democracy and reform of political structures in Africa and the Middle East. The value for popular participation in governance and development is touted as an anti-dote to religious extremism. The political furor over Iraq has also accelerated the pace of demand for reform of the United Nations. There is rising controversy over the dividends of unilateralism and the doctrine of pre-emption.

How far can this process go? Will the changes be deep and significant or simply cosmetic? What is important is that time will tell. Africa confronts opportunities and challenges in this context.

We have to seize opportunities and overcome the challenges in a manner that strengthens our unity and solidarity as African people.

For instance, the demand for reform of the Security Council offers us the prospect of increased representation on this powerful body. Yet we must approach the issue with a sense of cohesion and integrity otherwise it could promote and foster antagonisms that would undermine the fabric of the African Union. We need also to perceive the desire to deepen democracy as an internally driven process to give it meaning. We must observe the fact, that the demand for democracy, transparency and reform by leading global actors is not at par in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and draw the necessary lessons from it. The search for democracy is benign and tolerant in Pakistan but far more threatening and inquisitive in Iraq and Afghanistan. The definition of democracy is still hampered by considerations of national interests and global geo-politics.

Finally, if the war on terrorism is a global phenomenon, the challenge of building a commonwealth of developing democratic States within our continent must also be perceived as a global imperative beyond

containment of terrorism. The continent requires answers from its intellectuals; answers that will be married to policy.

We are confident that given the bright array of our brilliant minds that are gathered here today, this gathering would come up with critical analysis and strategic options that would enable us to develop a concise route map for this purpose.

The African Union looks forward with keen interest to receiving the outcome of your deliberations.

I thank you.