

RESOLUTION ON THE SITUATION OF REFUGEES IN AFRICA

The Council of Ministers of the Organization of Africa Unity meeting in its Thirty-fifth Ordinary Session in Freetown, Sierra Leone, from 18 to 28 June, 1980,

Deeply concerned with the ever increasing number of refugees in Africa and the alarming deterioration of their living conditions,

Recalling the principles enshrined in the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, and more particularly the aspect emphasizing the peaceful and humanitarian nature of granting asylum, and the obligations are provided for under Article 3 of the OAU Convention,

Aware that the serious situation arising from the growing number of refugees, currently estimated at 5 million, places a heavy social and economic burden on the host countries which provide the refugees with asylum or relief;

Expressing in particular serious concern over the alarming refugee situation in Africa, especially in Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, and the need for urgent international humanitarian assistance,

Desirous of adopting effective measures to improve the living conditions of the refugees and to help them lead a normal life,

Aware of the fact that the accession of all Member States to the 1951 UN Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa would contribute to a large extent to resolving the problem of refugees in Africa,

Cognizant of the fact that more than half of the world's total number of refugees are found in Africa,

Convinced that Africa cannot solve this distressing problem alone without the assistance of the international community,

Deeply concerned about the relatively insufficient attention paid by the international community to the plight of African refugees,

Recognizing, however, the continued effort of the UNHCR, governmental and non-governmental organizations in giving assistance to African refugees and the need for these organizations to increase their assistance,

Noting the desire expressed by Member States of the OAU to enlarge the composition of the Commission of Ten on Refugees in Africa,

Satisfied with the deliberation and conclusions reached at the recent “Meeting Between the OAU Secretariat and the UN System” (CM/1040 (XXXV) Part II Add.2) held in Nairobi, Kenya from 5^t to 7th June, 1980:

1. **CONGRATULATES** all Member States of the OAU which have relentlessly been extending assistance and granting asylum to refugees in Africa;
2. **APPEALS** to the OAU Member States and the international community at large to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to refugees in Africa, especially in Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan;
3. **MANDATES** the OAU Secretary-General, in collaboration with the UNHCR, to take all necessary steps in consultation with the OAU Member States to speed up the implementation of the Arusha Conference Recommendations especially that of establishing “National Refugee Machineries” and the appointment of competent National Correspondents to tackle the refugee problem more effectively (Vide REF/AR/CONF/Rpt.15, para.3);
4. **RECALLS** its resolution CM/Res.774 (XXXIV) requesting the Commission of Ten on African Refugees to undertake missions in those countries which express the desire to receive the missions in order to assess the effective ways and means of implementing the principle of “burden sharing”;
5. **DECIDES** to enlarge the composition of Ten on Refugees in Africa to 15 Members and appoints the following countries as members;

- 6. TAKES NOTE with appreciation the initiative and endeavors of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan in highlighting the plight of African refugees by declaring the year 1980 a Year of Refugees and by holding the recent International Conference on the Problems of Refugees in the Sudan;**
- 7. URGES once more African States which have not done so to become parties to the 1951 UN Convention and the 1967 protocol relating to the status of Refugees, and to the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa;**
- 8. INVITES the Secretary-General of the OAU in collaboration with the UN Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to hold consultations with governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as governments of countries which are likely to offer contributions and the UN Specialized Agencies, in order to assess the possibility of holding a pledging conference for African refugees under the auspices of the United Nations.**