

DRAFT DECISION ON THE LAND QUESTION IN ZIMBABWE

Council:

1. REAFFIRMS that the inequitable colonial distribution of land where 1% of the population (mainly white British settlers) own over 70% of the best arable land in Zimbabwe has always been at the core of the political, economic and social struggle in Zimbabwe;
2. RECALLS that the liberation struggle was essentially, inter alia, a struggle by the people of Zimbabwe to reclaim the land which they were dispossessed of by British colonialism;
3. FURTHER RECALLS that, at the Lancaster House Conference, the British Government undertook to fund a land settlement programme in Zimbabwe;
4. NOTES that the land resettlement programme has been repeatedly frustrated by Britain's refusal to honour this commitment which it undertook at the Lancaster House Conference;
5. NOTES FURTHER that the introduction of extraneous political issues into the land question is aimed at shifting focus away from Britain's responsibilities;
6. REAFFIRMS that, despite efforts to internationalize the issue, the land question in Zimbabwe remains essentially a bilateral dispute between Zimbabwe and Britain;
7. NOTES that British lobbying has led to the European Union demanding a deep and wide-ranging political dialogue with Zimbabwe under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement;

8. URGES Britain to fulfill the outstanding commitment it undertook during the decolonization process by honouring its obligations on the land question made at Lancaster House;
9. APPLAUDS Zimbabwe's determination to solve this colonial issue once and for all by engaging in a dialogue with Britain;
10. CALLS on Britain to respond positively to Zimbabwe's readiness to enter into dialogue;
11. ACKNOWLEDGES the progress that has been achieved through the "fast track" resettlement programme instituted by the Government of Zimbabwe, in spite of severe resource constraints;
12. WELCOMES the tireless efforts exerted by Presidents Obasanjo and Mbeki and other African leaders to mediate in this bilateral dispute between Zimbabwe and Britain;
13. NOTES WITH CONCERN British moves to mobilize European and North American countries to isolate and vilify Zimbabwe leading to the imposition of formal and informal sanctions against it;

In the light of the above the OAU therefore:

14. RESOLVES to participate in the Zimbabwe-EU dialogue as provided for under paragraph 7 of Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement which states that regional and sub-regional groupings shall be associated with such a political dialogue;
15. DECIDES to establish an OAU Committee consisting of Nigeria (Chair), Algeria, Cameroon, Kenya, South Africa and Zambia to coordinate with Zimbabwe at all fora wherever the Zimbabwe land issue is raised.