



**STATEMENT
OF THE
AFRICAN UNION (AU)
ON
THE OBSERVANCE
OF THE
WORLD FOOD DAY
17 October 2003-10-15**

The African Union (AU) commends the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on the occasion of the observance of World Food Day. We also acknowledge the efforts of the international community at resolving the problems of global hunger and poverty. Africa accounts for a large proportion of the 840 million people worldwide affected by hunger.

Desertification and drought are major impediments to food sufficiency in most African countries. The high levels of poverty that limit access to food and food production compound the problems of hunger in Africa. This is the reason why there is an urgent need for concerted international support to address the basic issues in hunger. This makes this year's theme **International Alliance Against Hunger** very appropriate. Given the advancements in science and technology, we are convinced that mankind today has the wherewithal to effectively resolve the problems of hunger in developing countries.

The issue of hunger covers more than food production, it also entails coping with issues of poverty and socio-economic development. At the moment, the African Union is engaged in a number of initiatives in the framework of its program, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to combat poverty and hunger at national, sub-regional and regional levels. NEPAD has provisions to improve agricultural production and enhance infrastructure at the regional level that will ultimately make Africa self-sufficient in food production. The AU also strongly supports United Nations and regional initiatives that are aimed at combating drought and desertification.

The African Union expresses best wishes during the observance of the World Food Day as we renew our commitments to combating global hunger.