

# OAU launches education decade in Africa

PAN-AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — The OAU has launched the "Decade of Education in Africa (1997-2006)," aimed at equipping the continent "to cope with the realities of the 21st century."

The program was launched by Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim at the OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The ceremony was attended by education ministers of Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Uganda, deputy education ministers of Ghana and Zimbabwe as well as African ambassadors accredited to the continental body. Salim said the launching of the decade provides yet another opportunity for member states to rededicate themselves to the objectives of promoting education and ensuring education for all. The decade is meant "for equipping the African society to cope with the realities and conditions of the 21st century: a society where ignorance, poverty, disease and conflicts are outlawed," he said.

In his message, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe said the decade should be one of change in education in Africa and the integration of academic training with technological know-how. Mugabe, current chairman of the OAU, cautioned

## Briefs

Africa "not to remain behind in information technology" during the decade, so as to be able to share global experiences in technological advancements.

*Ghion Hagos*  
**Caribbean looks to South Africa for trade**

GEORGETOWN, Guyana — Africa and the United States it seems is being reduced to a mere trickle, the banana industry is threatened by a recent World Trade Organization ruling and preferential markets for the region's produce seem to be drying up. And these, observers say, are clearly some of the reasons why the 15-nation Caribbean Community is looking to push trade with South African mainland countries like Venezuela and Colombia and other markets further afield. One of those outside the general geographic area that the region seems to be eyeing is South Africa. The region has been looking to the South African market since there were signs that years of apartheid rule were ending and business people were even more encouraged when President Nelson Mandela was sworn in as that country's first

Black head of state in 1994. It is against the background of finding alternatives to traditional markets that the regional private and public sectors came together in Trinidad on Nov. 20 to hold a promotional workshop showcasing opportunities for Caribbean business people in South Africa.

They are now looking at the various commodities which could be traded between the two regions. A joint private and public sector team is expected to head out on a South African tour next January to follow up on November meeting. Later in the year a regional ministerial team will follow and it is hoped that trade arrangements will be finalized then.

*Bert Wilkinson*  
**1936 invasion of Ethiopia was a mistake**

ADDIS Ababa, Ethiopia — Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, concluded his four-day state visit to Ethiopia last month, by expressing his country's regret over the 1936 invasion and five-year occupation of Ethiopia which he described as a "mistake." Scalfaro, the first Italian leader to visit Ethiopia since the two fought two wars in 1896 and 1936, stopped short of making an

apology for the atrocities committed by fascist dictator Benito Mussolini during the brazen invasion of the country and its occupation until 1941. He said at a crowded press conference that the trip was a rewarding experience and that Italy is committed to Ethiopia's development and efforts at democratization and poverty alleviation. Scalfaro also said he had "frank words" with President Negasso Gidada and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi about Italy's "mistakes and guilt" for attacking Ethiopia in 1936 and violating the human rights of its people during the five-year occupation. Asked if he had made a formal apology about this, Scalfaro said "what I have said says more. I sincerely believe in what I said. It is not easy to deny what had happened. I spoke the truth, but did not ask for forgiveness." Scalfaro also laid wreaths at the Ethiopian Liberation Monument honoring the victims of the 1936 invasion and those who fought Mussolini's fascist troops during their occupation of Ethiopia, and at the Gulale War Cemetery in western Addis Ababa, for about 1,600 Italians killed in Ethiopia. He said he prayed on both occasions for the dead.

*Ghion Hagos*

# Farrakhan embarks on 50-nation tour

THE FINAL CALL

WASHINGTON — Black America's most controversial Muslim is touring the Third World.

Louis Farrakhan was given a warm send-off Nov. 28, during a rally/press conference at Union Temple Baptist Church, where some 3,000 Muslims, Christians, black nationalists and leaders of organizations came to wish him well as he embarks on a 50-nation World Friendship Tour.

At the celebration, Farrakhan discussed his Third World Friendship Tour and the reasons for it. It is time for blacks in America to get involved in international

affairs to lead a world gone off course back to peace, he said.

Blacks in the U.S., the descendants of slaves "must understand that you are an international people," he said. "It's no accident that we live in America... that your fathers were brought here in the holds of ships."

Most of the Minister's 90-minute lecture was spent detailing his hopes that the tour would help bring peace to a world engulfed in conflict and yield trade, cultural and intellectual relationships for the black community.

Farrakhan detailed plans to visit Israel, where a peace deal brokered by the United States, Egypt and Jordan three years

ago has nearly dissolved and violence between Palestinians and Jews has escalated.

"That area is so critical to world peace that if war breaks out there it may bring the whole earth into the war which is called Armageddon," he said.

Other tour stops include Iran (for an Islamic conference), Iraq, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Israel, Palestine, China, Malaysia, Singapore, 20 countries in Africa, Libya, North and South Korea, the former Soviet Union and nations in the South Pacific, the Caribbean and South America.

"I would like to demonstrate how diplomacy and friendly relations should be carried

out," Farrakhan said, explaining how the U.S. and other world governments have strayed from the path to peace.

Farrakhan also pointed out the double standard employed by the U.S. in dealing with Arab governments as opposed to European governments.

"The Cold War is over so America wants to help Russia," he said. "The war with Iraq has been over nearly seven years and seven years after the war is over, nearly a million and a half Iraqis have died. The war has continued in the name of sanctions. What's the problem America?... Well we have a mad man over there, Saddam Hussein and he is making weapons of mass destruction."

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