



منظمة الوحدة الافريقية

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

ORGANISATION DE L'UNITÉ AFRICAINE

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Brussels, April 4, 1998

TO : MR. SAID DJINNIT
DIRECTOR OF CABINET

FROM : WAWA OSSAY LEBA
DIRECTOR

Reference is made to yours CAB/68th Cms/037.98 dated March 4, 1998.
Please find herewith our contribution for the next Council of Ministers.

Best regards.

ENCL.12

T O B E R E V I S E D

ORIGINAL: FRENCH

DRAFT ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE OAU PERMANENT MISSION IN BRUSSELS

I. Introduction

1. In the framework of the activities the OAU General Secretariat undertakes with the view to implement the priority objectives of the Organization, in conformity with the directives of the OAU higher organs in general and that of the OAU Secretary General in particular, the OAU Permanent Mission in Brussels submits this report on the activities which were carried out during the period February to June 1998.

2. These activities fall in the political, socio-economic, cultural, communication fields and the support to the African Group.

II. Development

A. Activities in the political and diplomatic field

I. Relations with the Host Country

3. Since the signature in 1985 of a Headquarters agreement with Belgium, the host country, the OAU did not yet succeeded to benefit fully from the provisions contained in this agreement, as far as the privileges and immunities are concerned, due to difficulties which happened in their time in relation with the implementation of some articles.

4. Currently, these difficulties have been settled and the host country has just informed us that the Headquarters Agreement shall be signed soon as revised.

II. Relations with the European Parliament and the ACP/EU Joint Assembly

2.1. European Parliament

5. The Mission is making efforts to strengthen relations with this institution in order to sensitize it to the new priorities of the Organization in the field of peace and security building and in that of the establishment of an African Economic Community founded in a democratic society.

6. In this framework, the Permanent Mission welcomed the invitation sent by H.E. the Secretary General to H.E. Mister ROCARD, European M.P., Chairman of the Commission to Development, for an official working visit in Addis- Ababa.

7. On the other hand, in an exchange of correspondences with the Permanent Mission, the Secretary General of the European Parliament expressed his availability to organize a meeting between the Secretary General and some commissions of the Parliament, in the framework of an official visit he would be making in Belgium.

2.2 ACP/EU Joint Assembly

8. At the time of the drafting of the current report, the ACP/EU Joint Assembly is preparing its 26th Ordinary Session scheduled in Mauritius, from 20 to 24 April, 1998. This Session shall be preceded by an ACP meeting on 18 and 19 April, 1998.

9. The ACP/EU Joint Session shall be dealing with the following issues:

- i) Report of the Working Group on the future ACP/EU relations;
- ii) Report of the Working Group on regional cooperation between the ACP States;
- iii) Report on the situation in some countries and/or regions:

- *Great Lakes Region;*
- *Sudan;*
- *Republic of Congo;*
- *Zambia;*
- *Nigeria;*
- *SADC countries (negotiations between the EU and South Africa).*

- iv) Report on the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the 25th Session of the Joint Assembly held in Lome, Togo, from 27 to 30 October, 1997.

An addendum to this report shall be prepared in view to communicate to the Council of Ministers the results of the proceedings of the ACP/EU Joint Assembly.

III. OAU/ EU Relations

10. Within the framework of the cooperation relations with the EU, which the OAU is committed to reinforce, the Permanent Mission had working sessions with the European Commission on the follow-up of the projects submitted by the Centre for Conflicts Prevention, Management and Resolution for their funding by the Commission. More precisely, these are two projects which deal respectively with the strengthening of means of communication by satellite of the Centre, amounting to 860,000 Ecus and the strengthening of the Centre's capacities at the structural and human resources level. The latter project is under study and the financial intervention of the Commission has not yet been assessed.

11. The Permanent Mission had also consultations on the six-monthly consultations organized at the level of the Troika of the two organizations. The next meeting was scheduled for April 20, 1998, in Brussels, at the time this report was drafted. The said meeting is to consider, among other issues:

- *the framework of the OAU/EU cooperation;*
- *political dialogue;*
- *economic matters;*
- *the proposed Africa-Europe Summit in the year 2000.*

IV. Conference on Palestine

12. During the period under review, the conference on Palestine, organized by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States, was held in Brussels between February 24 - 25, 1998, under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Ibrah Deguène Ka, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, in New York and Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

13. The high-level conference was attended by eminent personalities, members of the UN Committee on Palestine, representatives of governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. As the Chairman of the conference stated, the main purpose was to re-launch the Peace process and strengthen the mobilization of European and international public opinion in order to ensure that the rights of the Palestinian people are respected and realized in practice. H.E. President Yasser Arafat also made a comprehensive report about the situation in Palestine and the Middle East.

14. At the end of its deliberations, the Chairman and the other co-sponsors made a press release in which the conference supported the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of their State. It reaffirmed that these were basic prerequisites for the successful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which, is the question of Palestine.

15. The conference also stated that the peace process in the Middle East has come to a stalemate because of Israel's non-compliance with international law, UN resolutions and the agreements signed with Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and because of Israeli inhuman practices and measures which continue to violate the fundamental rights of Palestinian people, including the expansionist policy of illegal settlements and the economic blockade of the Palestinian territory.

B. Activities in the economic field

I. Regional Integration and Economic Cooperation

16. Within the framework of the work programme of the ACP/EU Joint Assembly, the Working Party on regional cooperation of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly held a meeting on 26 and 27 January, 1998, in Brussels.

17. On that occasion, the meeting heard statements from the President of the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Secretary of the Permanent Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). The speakers briefed the Working Group on the programme of activities of their respective organization.

18. It should be noted that the next meeting of the Working Group will be held in Mauritius during the 26th Session of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly.

II. Agricultural Cooperation and Commodities

19. During this period, the ACP Committee on Commodities of which, African countries form the biggest component continued to deal with the following issues :

- (i) *the use of vegetable fat other than cocoa butter in the manufacture of chocolate;*
- (ii) *follow-up of the recommendations of the 9th UNCTAD;*
- (iii) *the strategy for implementing, processing, marketing, distribution and transport (PMDT), (Articles 72 and 73 of the Convention).*

20. As far as the use of vegetable fat other than cocoa butter in the manufacture of chocolate is concerned, it would be recalled that the EU Commission had adopted, in 1996, a directive which permitted European Union the use of vegetable fats instead of cocoa butter for upto 5 % of the total weight of a chocolate product..

21. Since that time, the ACP Group continued to express its concern about this situation and in subsequent meetings at the level of ACP-EU Council of Ministers, the ACP Group continues to request that the EU insist on modifying Directive 73/24 on chocolate products unless certain conditions were met. Consequently, the matter was Referred to the European Parliament, at the end of 1997, for further discussion. Last October, the Parliament made amendments to the EU directives which are favourable to the ACP and the matter is now being followed up at the levels of the EU Council and Commission.

22. With regard to the follow-up of the Midrand Declaration (9th UNCTAD Session), it would be recalled that the ACP Group had requested that the recommendations made in the area of commodities during that session, in 1996, should be implemented, namely;

- (i) *Members of the Common fund should consider fulfilling their pledge for the second window of the fund to promote diversification in ACP countries' economies;*
- (ii) *the Common Fund should be urged to use resources of the first window.*

23. To that end, ACP countries proposed that the resources of the First Window should be utilized by way of transferring it to the Second Window to finance development programmes. The most important development in this area therefore is the adoption, in December 1997, of a five-year plan (1998-2002) by the Board of Governors of the Common Fund. This measure is supposed to promote the efficiency of the Fund.

24. As concerns the use of resources of the First Window, the following proposals were agreed upon :

- (i) *the transfer of the shares from the First Window to the Second Window. In its decision since last December, the Board of Governors decided to transfer Ecus 12 million to the Second Window;*
- (ii) *the extension of the Programme relating to the net earnings of the First Window to include measures financed through loans;*
- (iii) *the reallocation of part of the shares of the First Window to developing countries.*

III. Implementation of Articles 72 and 73 of the Convention

25. These articles deal with the promotion of investments and increasing participation in the PMDT of ACP products. Article 72 of the Convention provides for information and publicity campaigns for European businesses to invest in African and other ACP countries. This matter is being followed-up by the ACP Group.

26. Finally, it is to be noted that the various ACP sub-committees on Trade Cooperation, Finance Development, Stabex, Industrial Cooperation, LDLCS, Commodities are now re-activated and started having discussions in order to draw-up a memorandum for the negotiations which will commence in September 1998.

IV. Cuba's request to accede to the Georgetown Agreement and Lome Conventions

27. During this period under review, it is to be noted that, the Government of Cuba has made an official request for accession to the Georgetown Agreement and the Lome Convention. At this stage, the application of Cuba is under active consideration by the ACP Group.

C. Support to the African Group

28. Within the framework of the preparations for the negotiations on the ACP-EU future relations, the Office organized meetings at the level of the Bureau and the Plenary of the OAU Group of Ambassadors in Brussels.

29. These meetings dealt mainly with:

- consideration of the ways and means to take into account African positions during the ACP-EU negotiations, as reflected in the Libreville Declaration;
- exchange of views on methodology and programme of work of the OAU Group.

30. The Office has also disseminated conclusions of the last session of the Council of Ministers held from February 23 to 27, 1998, in Addis-Ababa, as well as other pieces of information received from Headquarters, Member States and partners of the Organization.

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