

ORGANIZATION OF
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ORGANISATION DE
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ORGANISATIE VAN
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BUREAU PERMANENT DE L'OUA

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Bruxelles, le 31 janvier 2001

A : **l'Ambassadeur Daniel ANTONIO**
Secrétaire général adjoint chargé du Département de la
Communication et des Conférences

De : **Cheikh NIANG**
Fonctionnaire en charge

Objet : **Rapport d'activités pour la période juillet-décembre 2000**

En référence à mon mémorandum OAU.BRU/OIC/CC/1.1.01, en date du 16 janvier 2001, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire parvenir, en annexe, la version anglaise du rapport d'activités de ce Bureau pour la période allant de juillet à décembre 2000.

Je vous en souhaite très bonne réception.

Très haute considération.

c.c. - Secrétaire général adjoint (Affaires de la Communauté)
- Secrétaire général adjoint (Coordination)

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ACTIVITY REPORT OF
THE OAU'S PERMANENT OFFICE IN BRUSSELS
FROM JULY TO DECEMBER 2000

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INTRODUCTION

1. During the period under consideration, the OAU' Permanent Office in Brussels carried out activities in the economic, political and socio-cultural areas and also in terms of representation activities relating to cooperation between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP).
2. To that effect, the Office followed the final phase of the ACP-EU negotiations that led to the signing of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement as a successor to the ACP-EC Convention of Lome IV. As this event took place on the eve of the previous session of the Council of Ministers, the Office could not refer to it in the activity report to that very session, hence the need to include it in this present one.
3. In spite of a very limited staff, the Office managed, against all odds, to carry out its routine activities ranging from ensuring linkages between the headquarters of the Organisation and the European Institutions, the ACP, etc.. to representation activities and making available and disseminating information on the overall action of the OAU.

I. ACP-EU COOPERATION

4. During the period considered, ACP-EU cooperation focused mainly on the final phase of the negotiations for a successor Agreement to the Lome IV Convention on one hand, and on the other, on the organisation of meetings in the context of the implementation of the Agreement, such as the first session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the meeting of ACP ministers of trade, the 72nd session of the Council of Ministers of the Group of ACP States.

I.1. THE ACP-EU COTONOU AGREEMENT

5. The negotiations which started in 1998 between the European Union and the Group of ACP States on a successor Agreement to the Lome IV Convention, led to the signing of an "**ACP-EC Partnership Agreement , signed in Cotonou on the 30th of June 2000**"?

between the 15 member states of the European Union and the 77 members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. It covers a period of twenty years and provides for a revision every five years.

6. Globally, the main objectives of the Cotonou Agreement are on the one hand, to reduce and even to eradicate poverty in the the long term in ACP countries and on the other, to ensure the sustainable development and integration of the ACP economies into the world economy. The strategy adopted to that effect evoves around the ways and means that would make it possible to relate development support to the creation of a framework that would favour trade expansion and investment. Anumber of innovations have therefore been introduced in comparison to Lome IV. They range from the enlargement of cooperation to involve new non-state actors (private sector, trade-unions, civil society) to the deepening of the political dimension of the partnership (overall and continuous political dialogue with a view to respecting essential elements such as the rule of law, human rights, democratic principles, the fight against corruption, etc.), not to forget the commitment of parties to act for the consolidation of peace, conflict prevention and resolution , as well as an in-depth dialogue on the issue of migrations.

7. However, the main innovation of the Cotonou Agreement is in relation to trade cooperation. This happens to be a real revolution in so far as it provides for a total elimination from the year 2008, of the non- reciprocal trade preferences which ACP products have been benefitting from to date on the European market and for the introduction of **regional economic partnership agreements** that would be compatible wit the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The timetable adopted to that effect also provides that negotiations for those economic partnership agreements will start in 2002 and that the agreements will enter into force in January 2008. Progressive liberalisation of trade between the ACP and the EU would then be introduced gradually, over a 12 year transition period.

8. Another important innovation is in relation to to the re-structuring of the development finance cooperation aspect. On the one hand, the financial instruments are rationalised and grouped together and, on the other, programming of aid will, from now on be subject to regular reviews based on the results obtained on the field^{*1}. That is why the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) amounting to 13.5 billion euros^{*2} (to which are added 9.9 billion

¹This is what is called "rolling programming". The traditional National Indicative Programmes (NIPs) and Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs) are directly linked to the National Cooperation Strategies (NCSs) and to the Regional Cooperation Strategies (RCSs). They cover a five-year period with a mid-term review in between. Allocated funds will also no longer be limited to a country or region nor to a specific project, but can be subject to re-allocation based on the needs and performances of the countries and regions concerned.

²The overall financial package is distributed as follows : 10 billion euros from the 9th

euros outstanding from previous EDFs) could be used to finance different operations such as macro-economic budget support, sectorial programmes, infrastructure development, compensation for export earnings, debt relief, humanitarian aid and decentralised cooperation. This is what justifies the elimination of such instruments as STABEX and SYSMIN which were used under Lomé IV to compensate respectively for loss of export earnings in agriculture and in the mining sector.

9. cooperation has been clearly strengthened. In the same vein, the political aspect of ACP-EU is strengthened. This is proved by the inclusion in the Cotonou Agreement of the "essential elements" whose observance and respect are pre-requisites, and to some extent even conditionalities which all parties must adhere to. This has also led to the parties' will to broaden the range of the actors in cooperation by including civil society to it and also, from an institutional stand-point, by substituting a "Joint Parliamentary Assembly" to the "Joint Assembly" which existed in the previous Conventions. Similarly, the Cotonou Agreement gives its members ways and means of contributing "to promote peace and prevent, manage and resolve violent conflicts" within the framework of a "political dialogue" to which, if need be, regional and sub-regional organisations can be associated.

2. FIRST SESSION OF THE ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

10. The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly instituted by the Cotonou Agreement, held its first ordinary session from the 9th to the 12th of October 2000 in Brussels. The session was co-chaired by Mr John CORRIE, member of the European Parliament and Mr Serge CLAIR, member of Parliament from Mauritius. It was preceded by a seminar organised by the General Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) on "Regional Cooperation".

11. The OAU participated actively in these two events first through its Permanent Representation in Brussels which participated along with the parliamentarians, to the

EDF+1.3 billion euros from the regional programmes + 2.2 billion euros from the EIB (European Investment Bank) for the investment facility.

deliberations of the session and also through a presentation made at the seminar by an officer from the Political Department on the following subject "Regional Cooperation in terms of Conflict Management". Furthermore, the Executive Secretary of the Representation made an important communication to the session of the Assembly, which underlined the need for

enhanced cooperation between the OAU, the EU and the ACP, to promote peace and security, as well as regional integration and sustainable development in ACP States.

12 General report on the ACP-EU Partnership and the challenges of globalisation -Under this item, the Parliamentary Assembly addressed the final report of Mr. A. S. NKOJANE, member of Parliament from Lesotho on "Globalisation and ways and means to allow the ACP and EU Group, to react together to its advantages and disadvantages"

13. In summary, the report underlines the fact that the endemic and extreme poverty which affect the southern hemisphere constitute a threat for the whole world without any exceptions. It points out that the fruits of globalisation are distributed in an unequitable manner between and within countries. It referred to the Seattle and Prague debates to demonstrate that globalisation requires some ruling. It therefore calls upon ACP-EU partnership to abide by this principle in dealing with the following areas :

- * Adoption of trade rules that would not be unfavourable to LDCs;
- * Resolution of the problem of the debt of poor countries;
- * Integration of development objectives of LDCs into WTO decisions;
- * Equitable transfer of information and communication technology to avoid a dual world;
- * Mobilisation of the international community against HIV- AIDS and other serious diseases.

14. In conclusion, the report called for greater mobilisation of the EU and the ACP to ensure a rapid implementation of the Cotonou Agreement hailed as an example of North-South commitment in a globalised world and for laying emphasis on poverty eradication, the protection of the environment, conflict prevention and the fight against technological marginalisation.

15. In the very rich debate that followed the introduction of the report, speakers, some of which from civil society, violently castigated "neo-liberal ideology" on which, they said, globalisation is traditionally based. They therefore called for a "dismantlement of globalisation" (Third World Forum).

16. All parliamentarians, both from the ACP and EU sides, spoke against the trend followed by the WTO negotiations which rather tend to officialise a greater marginalisation of

developing countries. Generally speaking, parliamentarians expressed some concern about the consequences of globalisation in those countries.

17. After examination of the report, the Assembly adopted upon the rapporteur's recommendation, a resolution whose provisions point to the problems raised in the report and to the solutions recommended therein.

18. Situation in some countries and/or regions - Under this item, the Joint Parliamentary Assembly examined the situation in the following countries and regions :

- West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone)
- Central Africa and the Great Lakes (Burundi, DRC)
- Southern Africa (Zimbabwe)
- East Africa (Ethiopia, Erythrea)
- Caribbean (Belize, Haïti)
- Pacific (Papua-New-Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands)

COTE D'IVOIRE : During the debate on the situation in this country, the majority of parliamentarians agreed to support the efforts made by the OAU and ECOWAS countries to restore peace and stability there. Further, EU parliamentarians requested that the restoration of the rule of law in that country be a pre-requisite to the resumption of cooperation between the EU and Côte d'Ivoire. For its part, the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire expressed the hope that by pulling all efforts together, "institutional rule " will be brought back in its country. It rejected the accusations of xenophobia expressed against its country. In the compromise resolution that it adopted, the Assembly welcomed the initiatives of the "Group of ten" set up at the OAU's July 2000 Summit and which, at its meeting held on September 25th in Lome, called for a process that would aim at putting an end to the state of exception and at fostering the return to constitutional order in Côte d'Ivoire. The resolution also encouraged and supported the mediation efforts of ECOWAS to create the conditions for a quick return to democracy.

SIERRA LEONE : During a brief debate on the situation in Sierra Leone, some delegations pleaded for support from the international community in general and the EU in particular, to the MONUSIL efforts . In the compromise resolution that was adopted, the Assembly firmly condemned the criminal acts perpetrated by the FRU (?) Against the civilian population as well as the assassination of UNITED NATIONS's peace-keeping soldiers and of civilians and the kidnapping of members of the MONUSIL peace-keeping force. The Assembly also welcomed the decision of the United Nations' Security Council to increase from 12.440 to 20.500 men the MONUSIL force and "to re-inforce the MONUSIL mandate". It calls on neighbouring countries to refrain from any action that could contribute to a continuation of the war in Sierra Leone and to rather support regional peace building efforts in the OAU and ECOWAS framework. It therefore invited the EU to join efforts with the OAU. It further appealed to the European Commission to offer humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone

and to the neighbouring countries confronted with the problem of inflow of refugees.

BURUNDI : The delegation of Burundi welcomed the Arusha Peace Agreement. It however underlined its precarious nature failing a rapid cease-fire and an early beginning of the socio-economic rehabilitation process. It therefore asked the EU to use its influence to bring pressure to bear on the rebels for them to deposit their arms on the one hand, and on the other, to resume its aid to Burundi to help the re-habilitation process of its economy. In

response to this appeal, the European Commission recalled some of the initiatives it took to help Burundi, including the organisation of a meeting of donors in favor of Burundi on last 15th of October and the implementation of a 50 million euros programme (+/- = US \$). In the compromise resolution that was adopted, the Assembly took note with satisfaction of the signing of the peace protocol at the Arusha Summit and congratulated President Mandela, the team of mediators and the negotiators from Burundi for this result which constitutes a big step forward in the peace process. It underlined the fact that structural aid should again be given progressively to Burundi once the following conditions are met : active participation of all political parties to the peace process and improvement of the human rights' and security situation.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO : On the need to help the process of rehabilitation of the DRC's economy , the European Commission responded that its programme of support to the populations continues and that it is about to meet representatives of member States to discuss the possibility of committing the available outstanding resources from the 8th EDF and preparing the indicative programme for the 9th EDF. In the resolution that it adopted, the Assembly regretted the delay in implementing the Lusaka Agreement and re-affirmed its "attachment" to the Agreement which offers the only realistic prospect for sustainable peace and security in the Great Lakes Region and constitutes a fundamental element for the return and re-integration of refugees and displaced persons in their regions of origin. It called upon the government of the DRC to accept the services of the facilitator of the inter-Congolese dialogue, the former President of Botswana, M. Ketumile MASIRE and to cooperate fully with the MONUC in its implementing its mandate. It reaffirmed the intangibility of the territorial borders and the national sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including over its natural resources and in accordance with the United Nations and OAU's Charters.

ZIMBABWE : The Assembly discussed at length the prevailing situation in Zimbabwe. Parliamentarians from the Southern African region (Namibia and South Africa) as well as from Zimbabwe took the floor during the debate to speak, namely, on the United Kingdom's responsibility in this crisis. They underlined the fact that the economic crisis affecting the country is mainly due to the failure of the agrarian reform. They appealed to the British government to resume dialogue with the government of Zimbabwe as provided for in the Lancaster House Agreement. The delegation of Zimbabwe noted that the agrarian reform in question required a multidisciplinary approach and rejected the arguments claiming that the

big commercial farms exploited by whites are much more productive than the smaller ones exploited by blacks. It pointed out that the latter produce 60% of the cotton and 80% of the corn marketed in the country. The delegation supported the appeal made by a number of European parliamentarians for an international dialogue facilitated by SADC, the EU and the UN. A number of British parliamentarians supported the principle of their government's participation in a conference on the land issue, with as a sine qua non condition, the end of the violence. In the same vein, they spoke against President Mugabe's decision regarding the amnesty for political crimes, as it does not tally with his statement calling for unity and reconciliation. In the ACP resolution that it adopted, the Assembly welcomed the smooth running of the legislative elections held on the 24th and 25th of June and recognised the fact that their outcome is the reflection of the authentic wishes and aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe. It noted that the serious difficulties which Zimbabwe is confronted with from the economic point of view, constitute a threat to the economies of Southern Africa. In relation to the agrarian reform crisis, the Assembly called upon the United Kingdom to honour its binding obligations, by virtue of the 1979 Lancaster House Agreements governing the financing process for land acquisition and re-settlement of the populations and concerning millions of landless Zimbabwean peasants.

ETHIOPIA/ERITHREA DISPUTE : The Assembly followed a presentation by a representative of the European Council who gave an up-date on progress made in the settlement of the conflict between Ethiopia and Erithrea. The epresentative welcomed the respect of the cease-fire for a number of months so far, and noted the fact that preparations are taking place for the arrival of the UN's peace-keeping force. He also pointed out that a number of problems such as war compensations, border limitations, the return of refugees and the demining process are still awaiting solutions. He pointed to the need for patience on the sensitive issue of borders and exhorted the international community to have confidence in the agreements arrived at. In conclusion, he called upon the EU to pursue its humanitarian aid and take on board the development programmes elaborated for the two countries. He was convinced that peace-buiding in those two countries would have a positive impact on neighbouring countries, namely, Somalia and Sudan. Both delegations Ethiopia and Erithrea then took the floor to confirm their respective country's will to respect the cease-fire. However, they both accused each other of violating the rights of displaced people and war prisoners. In the adopted compromise resolution, the Assembly welcomed the agreement to cease hostilities and congratulated the OAU, the United Nations, the United States of America, the EU and all the other partners for the efforts made and the results arrived at during the peace process. The resolution also called for the consolidation of the peace process and asked that necessary resources be released for the deployment of the UN peace-keeping force as soon as possible. It called for a delimitation of the borders through a process of peaceful international arbitration as provided for by the OAU peace plan and requested that aid giving to the two countries be resumed, with priority being given to food security, health and education. It also called for the civilian populations to be protected in each of the two countries.

19. **ON THE ECONOMIC ISSUES**, the Assembly also discussed the scope of the existing fisheries agreements between the European Union and some ACP countries, as well as some of their impacts on the activities of artisanal fishermen in ACP countries. The latter were also represented during the debate.
20. Some European and ACP parliamentarians underlined the need to safeguard and properly manage the resources of the sea. To that effect, they warned against the over-exploitation by industrial fishermen. They pleaded for a close watch over illegal fishing and appealed for the depletion of fisheries resources to be stabilised and for the stocks to be re-constituted.
21. Given the unproportional means available to European industrial fishing, it was suggested that fishing zones be reserved exclusively to ACP populations which, very often, practice artisanal fishing as a mean to survive.
22. The representative of the European Commission pointed out that artisanal fishing in ACP countries is all the more important as it is linked to food security, employment and development of the rural communities. He first underlined the importance for the Commission of the role played by local and professional organisations and then went on to talk about its support to them.
23. The conclusions of this debate which focused on these principles were confined in the resolution adopted by the Assembly on the subject. The resolution also called upon ACP States to adopt a regional approach when negotiating fisheries agreements with the European Union and other countries as, in many cases, fish stocks are shared by two countries if not more.
24. **Under social issues, the Assembly addressed the HIV-AIDS problem** through a long hearing of representatives of public institutions and of civil society associations. It appears that the impact and devastating effect of AIDS on the developing countries and Africa in particular is so broad that the international community now considers that the disease must be classified as a security problem.
25. Indeed, the evidence and other arguments put forward during the hearing confirm this analysis. For it has been clearly demonstrated that in some countries, whole sections of the living forces are taken away by the disease, thus causing in-depth and lasting damage to the economies of those countries. The African NGOs which intervened (ENDA-Third -World) were particularly convincing in this respect.
26. Having been questioned on this, the European Commission indicated its willingness to act together with governments and civil society in ACP countries as well as with other international organisations involved to contribute to the fight against the epidemic. It referred to the deliberations of the round-table which it had organised last September in Brussels on

transmissible diseases, namely VIH-AIDS.

27. In the resolution adopted after the hearing, the Assembly welcomed certain initiatives, such as the international initiative for a vaccine against AIDS, the pilot project submitted at the Nairobi conference, the multi-sectoral approach adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the round-table mentioned above, the provisions adopted at the World Congress on AIDS held in Durban, the outcome of the United Nations Special Session on the incidence of AIDS on peace and security in Africa as well as the initiatives put forward at the "Millennium Summit" in New York, etc.. It also *"called upon member states of the EU and the European Commission to give, from the political and financial levels, the highest degree of priority to the struggle against the HIV/AIDS pandemia"*.

I.3. THIRD MEETING OF ACP MINISTERS OF TRADE AND MEETING OF HEADS OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

28. The ACP Ministers of Trade held their third meeting on the 11th and 12th of December 2000 in Brussels. The meeting was preceded on the 7th and 8th of December 2000 by a meeting of Heads of regional integration organisations belonging to the ACP fraternity which focused on the policies and strategies to adopt for the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement as well as on the regional programming thereof. The ACP Group was thus preparing itself for the ACP-EU negotiations for new trading arrangements (NTAs) also called WTO compatible economic partnership agreements (EPAs), in article 36 of the New Partnership Agreement, signed in Cotonou.

29. During the meeting, participants examined the ACP Plan of Action elaborated by the ACP General Secretariat in preparation for the negotiations. The Plan of Action gave a run down of activities that need to be carried out by the ACP in order to be ready for the negotiations due to commence as agreed in September 2002 as provided in Article 37 of the Cotonou Agreement. It also contains provisions on how the ACP Group should proceed to determine the geographical configuration of these future NTAs and to define a negotiating mandate.

30. In their conclusions, the Heads of Regional Integration Organisations underlined the importance of the potential contribution of regional integration to growth and development in ACP countries. There was agreement on the need to define clearly and rapidly the ACP regions that would be benefiting from regional programming as provided for in the Cotonou Agreement. They rejected the idea of creating a link between programming regions and the geographical configuration of ACP regions in relation to the NTAs. They expressed the wish to provide for themselves ways and means of strengthening intra-ACP cooperation.

31. After their deliberations, the ACP Trade Ministers adopted a Declaration calling upon the ACP General Secretariat to undertake in consultation with ACP States and regional

organisations, an impact study on the possible options for the new trading arrangements. They expressed their will to do everything possible to make ACP countries participate effectively in the multilateral trading system. They recalled the ACP and EU's commitment to strengthen the ACP's capacity to deal with new trade-related areas. They also welcomed the "All But Arms" initiative launched by the European Commission to ease LDC's access to the EU market. They expressed their willingness to put in place the appropriate structures to improve the flow of direct foreign investment to ACP countries. They decided to include in their national well as their regional indicative programmes (NIPs and RIP's) measures to support ACP regional organisations to enable them to carry out their mission properly. They underlined the fundamental importance of institutional and human capacity building in ACP countries.

32. There a need to point out that the OAU's General Secretariat, together with the members the OAU's Group of experts-advisors on international negotiations participated actively in all of these meetings.

1.4. THE 72ND SESSION OF THE ACP COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

33. The Council of Ministers of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States held its 72nd ordinary session from the 14th to the 16th of December 2000 in Brussels. The session dealt mainly with administrative and financial matters. However, the Council also addressed a number of political matters as well as issues relating to the ACP Group's preparations for the ACP -EU negotiations for the new WTO compatible trading arrangements.

34. From the administrative point of view, the Council discussed the issue of the institutional and administrative re-structuring of the ACP Group of States, including the review of the Georgetown Agreement that created the Group. It also adopted the new organisational chart of the Group's General Secretariat including, namely, the appointment of three Assistant Secretaries General. According to the agreement arrived at by the Group's six regions, the three posts of ASG's have been allocated to the following three regions : the Pacific, East Arica and Southern Africa.

35. The distribution takes account of the fact that the Secretary General comes from the Central African region and that a consensus had been reached, pending approval by the European side, to allocate to West Africa, the post of Deputy-Director of the CDE (Center for the Development of Enterprises) and to the Caribbean region, the post of Director of the CTA (Center for Technical Agriculture).

36. Pre-empting amendments to the Georgetown Agreement which should so provide, the Council also adopted a decision to confer executive powers to the Secretary General of the

ACP Group of States. Up till that time, his powers were rather limited to the administrative aspects of the General Secretariat.

37. At the political level, the Council adopted a Decision by which admitting Cuba as a member of the Group of ACP States. To that effect, it decided "to amend the Georgetown Agreement to provide for accession to the ACP Group of eligible states which are not party to the Partnership Agreement signed between the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the European Union". As it is, Cuba had been enjoying an observer status in the ACP Group and had applied to join the Cotonou Agreement. It however had to withdraw its application as a result of political divergences between itself and the European Union. Yet, according to the present provisions of the Georgetown Agreement creating the ACP Group, only States involved in ACP/EU cooperation as enshrined in a Convention or Agreement can

be members of the ACP Group. Cuba's admission increased to 78 the number of member states of the ACP Group.

38. With regard to the future ACP-EU negotiations for new trading arrangements, the Council decided to set up an ACP ministerial committee on trade which it mandated to adopt the Plan of Action for the negotiations prepared by the ACP General Secretariat.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

39. The Office continues to foster the activities of the African Group of Brussels which are carried out, on the one hand, in relation to the African component of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and on the other, for the benefit of the whole Group, including its North African members who do not belong to the ACP Group.

40. The Group's action coordinated by the Office has thus proved itself to have played a determinant role in the Group's choice of Benin to host the signing ceremony of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement signed in Cotonou on June 23rd 2000. There was indeed tough competition between the ACP States and even between the three main components of the Group, i.e Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, to host the ceremony and thus give the name of the chosen capital to the Agreement. Hence, Africa's objective was to retain its stamp which over and beyond the diplomatic and political aura created by the association of the name of a capital to ACP-EU cooperation, is seen as a symbol of Africa's presence on the arena of international trade relations. Most certainly, the association of the name of the Agreement to a capital other than an African one, would have highlighted the image of an Africa forever marginalised from the world economy and international relations in general.

41. Furthermore, the Group is now striving to coordinate the action of the African component of the ACP in view of the future negotiations for the New Trading Arrangements

(NTAs) or New Partnership Agreements (NPAs) compatible with WTO rules , as provided in the Cotonou Agreement. It should in principle be assisted in this task by the OAU Group of experts on international relations.

42. On the other hand, the Group continues under the coordination of the Office, to carry out the multi-dimensional aspects of the mandate that it was given as the African Group of Brussels, called upon to contribute to searching ways and means of contributing to multilateral relations between Africa and the European Union.

III. REPRESENTATION ACTIVITIES

43. During the period considered, most of the Office's representation activities focused first , on covering the first meeting of the bi-regional Group of senior officers on the follow-up of the Africa-Europe Summit which took place in Cairo, and also on following-up the working and cooperation relations between the Office and the European Institutions, the other representations of international organisations and the association movements. To this should be added the routine services provided by the Office to disseminate information and documentation on OAU action.

44. The first bi-regional Group meeting of senior officials on the follow-up of the Africa-Europe Summit took place in Brussels on November 17th, 2000 and offered the bi-regional Group an opportunity to draw up the list of priority subjects to be examined first hand, after it having re-affirmed its attachment to all the subjects listed in the Cairo Plan of Action. The priority areas are the following :

- foreign debt of African countries
- restitution of cultural goods stolen or exported in an illicit manner
- regional cooperation and integration, Africa's integration into the world's economy and trade;
- conflict prevention and resolution, including anti-personal mines;
- human rights, democracy, good governance;
- HIV/AIDS and other pandemics;
- food security;
- the environment including the fight against drought and desertification.

45. A mid-term ministerial conference is to take place at the end of 2001 to make an assessment of the Cairo Plan of Action.

2001-01-31

Rapport d'activites du bureau permanent de l'OUA a Bruxelles pour la période allant de juillet a décembre 2000

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