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ORGANISATION DE L'UNITÉ AFRICAINE

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RÉF. OAU. BRU/DIR/CABINET/RA.CM/11.97

Brussels, 22 January, 1997.

TO : Mr SAID DJINNIT
Director of Cabinet

FROM : MOHAMOUD DAAR
Director of the Permanent Office a.i.

SUBJECT : **TRANSMISSION ACTIVITY REPORT FOR THE PERIOD
JULY 1996 TO FEBRUARY 1997 - ENGLISH VERSION**

Reference to our memorandum reference
OAU.BRU/DIR/CABINET/RA.CM/7.97 of 10 January, 1997. Please find, herewith attached,
the English version of the Activity Report mentioned above.

Regards.

c.i. : Chef de la division des Conférences

MD/so

TO BE REVISED - ORIGINAL FRENCH

CONTRIBUTION

OF THE OAU PERMANENT MISSION IN BRUSSELS

TO THE ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1996 TO FEBRUARY 1997

INTRODUCTION

1. Since the last sessions of the decision making bodies of the Organization in Yaoundé, Cameroon, i.e. the 64th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Summit of Heads of State and Government held, respectively, from July 1 to 5 and July 8 to 10, 1996, the OAU Permanent Mission in Brussels undertook some activities in connection with its mandate in the political, economic, social and cultural fields, as well as in disseminating informations on the activities of the Organization.
2. The Permanent Mission, which, besides, constitutes Africa's window towards Europe, observes the situation prevailing both in Europe and Africa itself and undertakes to forward, henceforth, its comments, in this framework, to the organs of the Organisation.
3. As for Europe, during the period under consideration, the meetings of the European Union were mainly focussed on the preparation, before the deep significant that go with the introduction of the single currency, the revision of the Maastricht Treaty, the institutional reforms under discussion within the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), the prospects of the enlarging to the associate states of Central and Eastern Europe, to the Baltic states, to Cyprus and Malta.
4. It goes without saying that these changes, which fall within the internal policy of Europe, dictates that a new approach be adopted, as far as its external relations with developing countries, in general, and the group of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), in particular, are concerned, taking into account the specific relations Europe entertains, since more than two decades, with this group of States, within the framework of the Lome Accords.
5. Europe is also concerned by the issues of security at its borders, that of employment, drugs and other stupeficients, pedophilia and corruption.
6. As for Africa, the persistence of conflicts areas with corollary issues of refugees and displaced persons, poverty, hunger, malnutrition, the few involvement of civil society and private sector in the socio-economic development process constitute some of the major problems on which the European public opinion, through the media and some meetings, put

emphasis and express frequently, pessimistic views, as far as a positive and accelerated change in the situation in Africa is concerned.

7. Despite this bleak image of the continent, it is gratifying to notice the progress made in some countries of the continent, at the political level : organization of democratic elections, mediation efforts in view to resolve some conflicts, efforts made in the field of development, in order to reinforce regional cooperation and integration, taking into account of ***“Women and Youth”*** dimension by their involvement in the development process, and many more other factors.

8. As far as the OAU is concerned, its involvement in conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa, its efforts in the implementation of the Abuja Treaty, through the establishment of the African Economic Community, its participation in all international meetings during which the OAU makes an effort to harmonize an African position, the financial effort made in order to restore the image of the continent, in particular in Belgium through the acquisition of premises to house its Permanent Representation constitute, for outsiders, positive elements which should encourage the Organization to continue its efforts in these various fields.

9. This report, which is a contribution of the Brussels Permanent Mission, shall cover, therefore, the essential activities undertaken, in the political, economic, social, cultural, press and information fields, since the last meetings of the Organization's higher organs.

POLITICAL MATTERS

A MEETING OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

10. To-date, the Organization is considered as being, essentially ***“political”***. It is for this reason that, following the participation of the Permanent Mission's representative to the Yaounde sessions (1-10 July, 1996), a meeting of the African Group was convened in Brussels, on July 30, 1996, i.e. some few days after the end of Yaounde meetings, in view, among other things, to communicate their outcome to the some fifty African diplomatic representations accredited to the Benelux.

11. Because, indeed, in the opinion of the Permanent Mission, the Yaounde meetings yielded concrete results, as far as the heavy attendance of Heads of State and Governments, representatives of the United Nations system, foreign countries, African and international institutions and agencies is concerned.

12. It is also worth noting the spirit of consensus which characterized the open deliberations of African leaders.

13. The financial, political, economic, education, social, etc matters, which were debated by the Council and the Summit, gave an opportunity to the African leaders to reiterate their commitment towards getting the continent out of its under-development and for the building of peace and security.

B TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE ACP/EU JOINT ASSEMBLY

14. The ACP/EU Joint Assembly held its 23rd Ordinary Session from September 23 to 27, 1996, in Luxemburg. The meeting was preceded by an ACP meeting held on September 21 and 22, 1996. The OAU Permanent Mission was represented by the Director of the Office and the Press and Information Officer.

15. During this session, the joint Assembly debated, in particular, the following issues :

- 1) *Future ACP/EU relations;*
- 2) *Situation in some countries : Liberia, Nigeria, Angola, Somalia, Sudan, Western Sahara, Burundi, Rwanda;*
- 3) *Future relations between South Africa and the European Union and its implications on the SADC countries.*

1) Future ACP/EU relations

The Joint Assembly had a long debate on this issue and adopted resolution ACP/EU 17931 in which it noticed that international cooperation is more and more dictated by considerations of economic nature linked to the problem of security and that the current trend of globalization of the economy and liberalization of trade has taken precedent on the North/South solidarity.

Consequently, the joint Assembly invited the ACP and EU political leaders to open a public debate on the continuation of these relations. The debate should involve all social groups (labour partners, NGOs, research institutes).

2) Situation in some countries

Liberia

Two resolutions, one from the ACP and the other one from the EU, were adopted. The Joint Assembly welcomed the efforts made by ECOWAS countries and invited the parties to the conflict to respect the provisional peace agreement, while urging the international community, the EU, in particular, to mobilize resources in order to respond to the country's needs.

Nigeria

A lively debate took place under this item. The ACP did not submit a resolution and participated to the secret ballot on the EU draft resolution. The outcome was as follows :

- i) ACP side : 28 votes for, 12 abstentions, 2 against;
- ii) EU side : 30 votes for.

The European Union draft resolution was, therefore, adopted.

Angola

The compromise ACP/EU resolution on Angola was adopted. It invites UNITA and the Angolan Government to urgently set up a National Union Government and to engage into the process of national reconciliation and development.

Somalia

The Joint Assembly requested the OAU, the League of Arab States and Security Council to reinforce the pressure on armed factions in order to put an end to the hostilities and engage themselves in the process peace and national reconciliation.

Sudan

As for Nigeria, the debate on Sudan was very critical. The ACP supported resolutions proposed by the EU condemning the Government and the warring factions and inviting IGAD to reactivate its peace initiative.

Western Sahara

The Joint Assembly called on Morocco and Front Polisario (with a representative invited by the Joint Assembly) to start again direct negotiations, in conformity with the UN and the OAU resolutions.

Rwanda

The resolution adopted on Rwanda is the outcome of a compromise between the ACP and the EU. It is worth noting that the Rwandese delegation was very positive in its attitude. It gathered the sympathy of several European Parliamentarians.

Burundi

Two draft resolutions were tabled, one by the EU and the other one by the delegation of Burundi, on behalf of the ACP. The draft submitted by Burundi

was discussed in meetings between the countries which signed the measures adopted during the second Arusha Summit. The OAU was requested to propose a text that would take into account the Arusha decisions; that text was adopted by the Joint Assembly. It is to be noted that a very critical debate took place during the consideration of the situation in Burundi, especially after the briefings of, consecutively, Mr Ayelo, EU Special representative in the countries of the Great Lake Region and the Ambassador of Burundi in Brussels. The Buyoya regime was taken to task.

3) Future relations between South Africa and the UE and their implications for the economies of SADC countries

This issue was also subject of a controversial debate. The ACP/EU parliamentarians deplored the slowness of the negotiations and the fact that they are not involved. They insisted on the need that the agreement under negotiation for the setting up of a free trade area between the EU and South Africa, should not harm the interests of Southern Africa countries, in particular, and they requested that the EU assesses the consequences of the agreement on neighbouring countries.

As an observation, one should underline the more and more responsible attitude that the European and ACP parliamentarians adopt in the debates on political, economic, social and scientific matters that have implications on human nature.

Indeed, the parliamentarians are unanimous in recognizing that the relations between the European Union and the ACP are at crossroad, that it is important to adopt a new approach, taking into account, in particular, the changes that took place in all regions, as far as the democratic process, liberalization of the market, globalization of international economic relations are concerned.

The Joint Assembly pleaded for a language of solidarity, of partnership that shall not interfere with the sovereignty of states.

The ACP/EU parliamentarians have debated on economic matters such as : commodities (cocoa, banana, sugar) scientific matters (dangerous wastes, chemical weapons, climate changes) while putting emphasis on their relations with human development and the need to establish a true cooperation between the European Union and the ACP States.

The debate on political matters, especially that on conflicts in the ACP States and the setting up of democratic systems, the issue of refugees constitute areas in which several initiatives are taken and proposals made towards the European Union, the latter, unfortunately, talks of constraints at the implementation level. It is to be hoped that future of African National Assemblies shall be characterized by open debates.

C CONSULTATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

16. In the framework of the chairmanship of the European Union, the Permanent Mission and the representation of the Republic of Ireland to the European Commission had consultations for the organization of the fifth six monthly consultative meeting between the European Union and the OAU.

17. This meeting was scheduled at two levels : that of experts (on October 24, 1996) and that of Ministers (November 26, 1996). Unfortunately, for reasons of heavy schedule and because there was no consensus on the items to be put on the agenda, as well as on some procedural matters, the African side (the OAU Troika) suggested that the meeting be postponed.

18. New consultations should take place between the OAU and the Netherlands which, for the first six months of 1997, holds the chairmanship of the European Union. Consequently, it is up to the OAU, since it took the initiative of postponing the meeting, to propose new dates, as soon as the General Secretariat, in conformity with the Secretary-General's instructions, would have set up the mechanism as well as the strategies that should, henceforth, guide the management of the OAU/EU cooperation.

19. Despite the postponement of the six monthly meeting, the Director of the Permanent Office and the Information Officer took part in an informal consultation which was organized on November 5, 1996, by the European Union, the United States of America and Japan, in the framework of the crisis that was prevailing in the Great Lakes Region.

D SPECIAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE TO SUPPORT THE PEACE PROCESS IN LIBERIA

20. Under the auspices of Mister PRONK, Minister for Cooperation to Development of the Netherlands, a Ministerial Conference in support to the peace process in Liberia was held on November 21, 1996.

21. The Conference comprised of Member States of the ECOWAS, Committee on Nine on Liberia, several Ministers from the European Union, representative of US Government, Director General for Directorate General to Cooperation of the European Commission, representatives of various UN Agencies, the World Bank, IMF as well as special envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Liberia.

22. The OAU was represented by Mister Mohamoud DAAR, Director a.i. of the Permanent Office, and Mr WANE, Coordinator in the Political Department. This delegation submitted a detailed report on the outcome of the conference.

ECONOMIC MATTERS

23. During the period under consideration, the Permanent Mission took part in some meetings held in Europe and in Africa (Côte d'Ivoire), in the economic and social fields.

IN EUROPE

A ACP PREPARATORY SEMINAR TO THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)

In the framework of the participation of ACP States representatives to the WTO Ministerial Conference, scheduled in Singapour, Malaysia, from 9 to 17 December, 1996, the ACP General Secretariat organized on November 5 and 6, in Brussels, a seminar, in view to consider some specific issues, including :

- *The outcome of the Uruguay Round;*
- *Challenges and opportunities created by the Uruguay Round;*
- *Themes proposed by the conference, i.e. :*
 - * *trade and investment*
 - * *corruption*
 - * *coordination between WTO and Bretton Woods Institutions.*

The seminar was attended by representatives from the ACP Member States, the European Commission, the WTO Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Centre for International Trade (CIT), UNCTAD, World Bank and International Organizations such as the OAU.

Following the seminar, the ACP General Secretariat invited ACP representatives to remain in solidarity, during the Singapour sessions, in order to defend interests of the Group. The European partners were invited to defend preferences and other advantages given to the ACP through the Lome Convention.

B 64TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ACP COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (13-15 NOVEMBER, 1996 - BRUSSELS)

During this meeting, the ACP Council of Ministers considered a number of important issues, which included, among other things, the following :

- *the Common Fund for Commodities;*
- *the International Agreement on Cocoa (1993);*

- *Strategy for the implementation of Articles 72 and 73 of the Lome IV Convention;*
- *the future ACP/EU relations.*

With respect to the *Common Fund for Commodities*, the Minister of Commodities of Côte d'Ivoire, who is the President of the Ministerial Committee of Article 75, H.E. Mr A. GAUZE, briefed the Council on developments relating to the Common Fund, the International Agreement on Cocoa as well as the strategy for the implementation of Articles 72 and 73 of the Lome IV Convention. He informed the Council that the ACP Ministerial Committee on Commodities examined the report of the meeting of the Governing Board of the Common Fund which was convened in June 1996 and the question of allowing the borrowing of resources from the first window of the Fund to the second window was discussed because the Agreement establishing the Fund did not contain such a procedure in the first place. The objective of the first window was intended to achieve price-stabilization for the International Commodity Agreements by means of lending resources to those Agreements which were based on buffer-stocks coordinated at the international level.

The Minister said that, since these international agreements do not function, at present, with the exception of the International Rubber Agreement which uses its financial resources, the Ministerial Committee on Commodities recommended that the resources of the first window, which amount now to US 185 million, should be transferred to the second window in conformity with the recommendations adopted by the 9th UNCTAD Session held at Midrand, South Africa, at the beginning of 1996. He also informed the Council that most of the developing countries, including OAU Member States want that the Agreement setting-up the Common Fund be amended in future to make it possible for the resources of the first window to finance development projects through loans.

In conclusion, the Minister recommended to the ACP Council of Ministers to continue consideration of this issue at the level of the Joint ACP/EU Ministerial Committee to be held in May 1997, in case no acceptable solution is found before that. The Council was informed that of the four (4) proposed projects to be funded through the second window, three (3) are of exceptional concern to African countries, which deal with development of gourmet-coffee, improvement of rice production in West Africa as well as study of policy and marketing systems of coffee.

Following an exhaustive debate of this issue, the Council adopted a resolution in which it requested the Board of Governors of the Common Fund to lend resources of the first window to the second window for financing projects in ACP countries.

The Council also considered the issue of tropical fruits, such as pineapple, avodaco and metals namely; tin, bauxite, iron and manganese for which there were no international agreements. After discussing this item, the Council decided to refer them to UNCTAD. It requested UNCTAD to organize meetings for the main producers of these products to study the possibility of setting-up international Commodity bodies.

So far as the International Cocoa Agreement was concerned, the Council received a briefing from the President of the ACP Committee on Commodities relating to the question

of the use of vegetable fats other than cocoa butter in manufacture of chocolates. The President informed the meeting that further consultations had to be made and that the interests of both the cocoa and vegetable fat producing countries should be safeguarded.

As regards *the strategy for the implementation of Articles 72 and 73 of Lome IV Convention*, the Council was informed about the objectives of these articles which are part of the financial protocol of the Convention which deal with horizontal and vertical diversification of the Commodity sector and the promotion of processing, marketing, distribution and transport (PMDT) as well as the enhancement of the competitiveness of African and ACP Commodities on the world-market. During the discussion of this issue, the ACP Council of Ministers agreed to call upon the European Union to allocate adequate financial resources to implement these articles to enable ACP countries to attract external investments to promote PMDT and service-sectors in ACP countries.

Following the conclusion of these items, the Council heard statements from ACP spokesmen on sugar and bananas. The spokesman on sugar spoke about ACP concerns of the impact that the enlargement of the EU might have on its common agricultural policy. He said the ACP countries have called on the EU to ban imports from OTC (Overseas Countries and Territories) to as not to destabilize the acquis of ACP sugar producers. He added that attempts by some countries to open debate of the EU sugar regime at the WTO should be stopped.

With respect to bananas, the Council was informed about the challenges against the banana regime posed by some Latin America countries which insist on the compatibility of the EU banana regime with WTO rules. At present, the banana regime enjoys a waiver under the Lome Convention. Finally, the Council adopted resolutions in which it expressed its support for the EU sugar and banana regimes.

Future ACP/EU Relations

In its discussion of this important issue, the Council dealt with the following items which would underpin future relations between the ACP and the EU :

- a) *Regionalization of ACP Cooperation;*
- b) *Differentiation;*
- c) *Expansion of the membership of the ACP Group;*
- d) *Focus on poverty, fight against hunger and food security;*
- e) *Conflict prevention and management;*
- f) *Trade and investments.*

During the discussion, the Council generally agreed to the new concepts regionalization and differentiation proposed by the EU Commission in its green paper which are expected to feature prominently in the future ACP/EU Cooperation. It was maintained that regionalization would enable the EU and different ACP regions to adapt their cooperation to specific regional conditions. Under differentiation, the EU would also be able to deal with ACP countries on the basis of their different levels of development. Furthermore, the provision of aid and grants would be restricted to least development countries in future EU development cooperation policy.

Regarding expansion of membership of the ACP Group, the Council reaffirmed the unity of the ACP Group and its desire to maintain the group as it is presently constituted and without additional non-ACP members. The Council also urged the EU to provide support to regional organizations, namely the OAU, by means of strengthening their capabilities in the area of prevention and management of conflicts. In the area of Trade, the Council called on the EU to give more concessions to the ACP countries and enhance their participation in the export of manufactured and/or processed products. Finally, the Council reaffirmed the serious need to fight against poverty, malnutrition and hunger.

During the period under consideration, the Office also participated in the annual session of the representatives of ACP/EU Economic and Social Interest Group held in Brussels from 4 to 6 November, 1996, as well as in the ACP Seminar on ACP Migrant Workers held in Amsterdam in September and Brussels at the beginning of December 1996. The Office also participated in various ACP Committee meetings such as the Committee on Industrial Cooperation as well as the special Ministerial Conference to support peace process in Liberia held in Brussels on 21st November, 1996.

Environment

Implementation of the Convention to combat Desertification

During this period, in addition to the above activities, the Office took part in a round table discussion on the implementation of the Convention on desertification organized by the United Nations Interim Secretariat of the Convention in Geneva and the European Bureau on Environment which was held on 5th December, 1996, at the ACP House.

The main purposes of the round table discussion in which ACP countries, the European Union, non-governmental and other inter-governmental Organizations took part was to raise public awareness and promote knowledge of the Convention on desertification especially in the European Union. Following its ratification, the Convention is now to enter into force by the beginning of 1997.

During the general debate, it was agreed that the implementation of the Convention should be given high priority similar to the Convention on biological diversity and climatic changes. It was observed that diversification occurs because dryland eco-systems, which cover more than one third of the world land area, especially in Africa, are very vulnerable to

over-exploitation and inappropriate land-use. Poverty, political instability, deforestation, overgrazing and inappropriate irrigation systems all destroy the land's productivity. The objectives of the Convention are, inter-alia, to enhance effective action through the establishment of local programmes and to obtain supportive international assistance.

During the discussion, many speakers pointed in their interventions the need to speed-up the process of implementation of the Convention and that initiatives should be taken to obtain resources from the international community. Furthermore, it was agreed that the implementation of the Convention should be carried out within the framework of national and regional indicative development programmes of ACP countries to qualify for additional funds from the Lome Convention. Proposals were also made that the implementation of the Convention would be discussed at the level of the forthcoming Summit of the ACP Heads of State and Government scheduled to be held in Gabon, in 1997.

Finally, Mr DIALLO, the Executive-Secretary of the Interim Executive Secretariat in Geneva, whom the delegates congratulated for organizing the seminar, informed the meeting that no decision has yet been taken about the Headquarters of the Convention, although Canada, Germany and Spain have applied to host the Secretariat.

IN AFRICA

C FIRST MINISTERIAL SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (ECOSOC) OF THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

The Permanent Mission took part in the first session of this Ministerial Conference, which took place on November 20 and 21, 1996, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The session was preceded by a one-day experts meeting (November 19, 1996) in view to finalize consideration of the Draft Protocol on the relations between the African Economic Community and the Regional Economic Communities. Following their deliberations, the experts adopted a paper containing 8 chapters and 33 articles which were submitted to the Ministers.

The EDECO Department, which organized and supervised these meetings, shall submit the relevant reports to the Council of Ministers. However, as for the OAU Permanent Mission in Brussels, its representative noticed the heavy attendance of both Member States and international Organizations, the high level of participants and, in particular, the relevance of matters and observations raised in an intelligible, clear and concise debate, without neglecting the strong commitment undertaken by the representatives of Member States, in view to start, once for all, the establishment of the African Economic Community. Several delegations emphasized the need to integrate African economies, which are already complementary, in order to promote a true development.

The representative of the Permanent Mission has, besides, noticed, with a strong appreciation, steps taken by the ECOSOC Ministerial Conference, in view to prepare Africa

for its participation in the first Summit Conference of Heads of State and Government of ACP countries, scheduled in October 1997, in Libreville, Gabon.

To this effect, the conference requested, as for the future ACP/EU relations, the Joint OAU/ECA/ADB Secretariat and the Regional Economic Communities to reflect, most particularly, on the Africa/European Union relations, as well as on the relations between Africa and other components of the ACP Group. It suggested the convening of a preparatory meeting of African countries on the issue before the Libreville Summit.

It is worth mentioning that, in view of this Summit, the ACP Committee of Ambassadors set up a Working Sub-Committee on the future ACP/EU relations. This Sub-Committee has already submitted several reports to the 63rd and 64th Ordinary Session of the ACP Council of Ministers.

As far as the European Union is concerned, it has recently published, through the European Commission, *“a green Paper”* on the relations between the European Union and the ACP countries, at the beginning of the 21st Century. This paper reviews the challenges and options for a new partnership. For the European Union, the *“green Paper”*’s aim is to set some reflection, a wide debate, to prepare dialogue between partners who are to face the expiry of the Lome Convention.

At the level of the African Group in Brussels, the Permanent Mission was given the mandate, in its capacity as the Secretariat of the Group, and to a group of African States, to react to the *“green Paper”*, to prepare a first draft of an African common position, a position to be considered, first of all, at the level of the Group of the OAU Ambassadors in Brussels and then, at the level of the Joint OAU/ECA/ADB Secretariat, as well as at that of Regional Economic Communities, before its submission to the OAU Council of Ministers and Summit of Heads of State and Government, in June 1997, in Harare, Zimbabwe.

SOCIAL MATTERS

16TH WORLD CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

24. During the period under consideration, the Permanent Mission covered the 16th World Conference of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) which was held from June 25 to 29, 1996, in Brussels, on social issues.

25. This Congress was the more important this year because the main theme was : *“World market : the main challenge for Trade Unions”*. In fact, the some 800 delegates and Trade Unions leaders, who came from 150 countries, were to discuss the ways and means Trade Unions could face the globalization of the economy, considered as the biggest challenge ever encountered by international Trade Unions in its entire history. To this effect, the participants considered three sub-themes :

- 1) *the international Trade Union programme of action : action priorities;*
- 2) *Child labour in world economy;*
- 3) *to achieve our objectives : need to organize solidarity at the dawn of the next century.*

26. Besides, the Congress listened to communications centered on both the main theme and the sub-themes, from eminent persons, including Mr Jean-Luc DEHAENE, the Belgian Prime Minister, Mr Michel HANSENNE, Director-General of the International Labour Organization and Mr Michel CAMDESSUS, Director-General of the International Monetary Fund.

A THE PROBLEMATICS OF THE GLOBALIZATION OF THE ECONOMY

The proceedings of the Congress were focussed on the main theme and the sub-themes which were, in turn, organized around issues raised in a report that the ICFTU prepared on the problematics of the globalization of the economy; this report was entitled : *“World Market : the biggest challenge for Trade Unionis”*. In this report, ICFTU noticed the main phenomena :

- 1) *The potential of generalized prosperity which was foreseen in the globalization of the economy happened to be fictitious. Of course, says the report, the world economy did advance notably, while creating a grue prosperity. But, alas ! this prosperity has been confiscated by capital holders and multinational companies.*
- 2) *Inequalities within countries and between countries have deepened more;*
- 3) *Elementary rights of the Trade Union movement are flouted everywhere.*

These facts were illustrated in the report by relevant examples taken from the five continents. As for Africa, for example, the report noticed the aggravation of poverty, the compounded effects of the drop in per capita income, which is today lower than what it was some twenty years ago, the reduction in foreign investment on the continent, etc.

B DEBATE ON THE GLOBALIZATION

During the very lively debate on the globalization, the above-mentioned eminent persons, with, of course, some reservations, supported the ICFTU ideas. The Belgian Prime Minister, for example expressed his support to the introduction of a

“social clause” in Trade Accords, such as WTO. Liberalization of the economy should be based on a minimum protection of workers, he pleaded. This idea was shared by the IMF Director-General who stressed the need to reduce the **“human cost”** of structural adjustment through the adoption of supportive social measures. However, he remains convinced that globalization of the economy has more advantages than disadvantages. As for the ILO Director-General, he was of the view that, indeed, globalization has contributed to increase the **“cake available”**, but it has also aggravated income inequalities and exclusion within societies and between countries. He thinks that to overcome these obstacles, governments could, among other things, be encouraged to ratify ILO Conventions.

In closing its proceedings, the Congress adopted resolutions which constitute a true advocacy in favour of the ideas ICFTU has expressed and defended in the above-mentioned report on the globalization of the economy. It is clear, therefore, that if this Trade Union movement does recognize that globalization is non reversible and that some of its aspects are positive, it does have some serious concerns about its consequences, which are so far negative, in general, at the social level and for workers rights.

PRESS AND INFORMATION MATTERS

27. During the period under consideration, the Press and Information service, besides its usual contribution to other activities, pursuant to the instructions of the Director, continued to carry out its task. This is focussed on :

- *dissemination to the national and international Press represented in Brussels, the European and international Institutions, the African and other Embassies, the socio-economic circles, etc, of informations related to the action and programmes of action of the OAU;*
- *the documentation service for students, in particular, but also for other interested circles such as economic partners of either the OAU or the African countries, NGOs and Association movements;*
- *public relations activities towards the public opinion, in general, opinion leaders, in particular, in order to promote the OAU and its action.*

For a better efficiency of such an action, after the service was provided with some of the means it was requesting (a computer), it shall resume the publication of the bi-monthly **“OAU News”**, which it has initiated in 1989 and had to suspend it because of the lack of financial means, in particular, and of relevant equipment.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

28. The Permanent Mission, in Brussels, was invited, similarly to other representations of the Organizations in Africa and outside Africa, to take part in some statutory meetings and programmes, during the period under review.

These were :

1) 65TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS HELD IN ADDIS ABABA, FROM NOVEMBER 25 TO 28, 1996

During this session, the Permanent Mission has, most particularly, submitted a report on the acquisition of a new building that houses currently the services of the OAU Representation in Brussels.

2) SEMINAR ON THE RESTRUCTION OF THE OAU AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

This seminar constituted a self-criticism exercise of the Secretariat as far as its management methods, its functioning, its performance and efficiency, its means and areas of action, its staff and their work conditions, at the level of their moral, their equipment and resources, are concerned. The Permanent Mission sent, like other regional offices, a written contribution, very tick in its observations, proposals and recommendations. The Director of the Permanent Office was appointed general rapporteur of the seminar.

Besides the activities that it has carried out itself, the Permanent Mission assisted and contributed to some working missions carried out in Brussels by some authorities and staff of the Organization :

- 1) Mission of the Budget Control Division to audit the Office accounts, from July 11 to 16 July, 1996;*
- 2) Mission of the External Auditor from August 19 to 25 August, 1996;*
- 3) Mission of assessment in the framework of the restructuring of the OAU General Secretariat, in general, and the regional and sub-regional offices, in particular, from October 12 to 15, 1996;*
- 4) Working visit of Ambassador Anatole TIENDREBEOGO, Assistant Secretary-General in-charge of the Department of Administration and Conferences, from October 21 to 25, 1996.*

5) *Working visit of Ambassador Pascal GAYAMA, Assistant Secretary-General in-charge of ESCAS Department, to the Commission of the European Union and the ACP General Secretariat, from October 25 to 29, 1996;*

6) *Mission of contact with the European Commission and the ACP General Secretariat of the four members OAU/LAS/MAURITANIA/EAU delegation, in view to look for a financial and technical assistance, within the framework of the Third Afro-Arab Trade Fair and the Second Afro-Arab Business week, from November 14 to 16, 1996.*

1997-01-22

Contribution of the OAU Permanent Mission in Brussels to the Activity Report of the Secretary-General for the period July 1996 to February 1997

Leba, Wawa O.

Bureau Permanent de l'OAU a Bruxelles

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