



منظمة الوحدة الإفريقية

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

ORGANISATION DE L'UNITÉ AFRICAINE

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Bruxelles, le 9 janvier 1998

A : **MADAME VICTORIA OKU**
DIRECTEUR DU DEPARTEMENT ADMIN & CONFS.

DE : **WAWA OSSAY LEBA**
DIRECTEUR DU BUREAU PERMAENT

OBJET : **CONTRIBUTION AU RAPPORT D'ACTIVITES DU**
SECRETAIRE GENERAL POUR LA PERIODE DU
JUILLET 1997 A FEVRIER 1998

En référence à votre message CD/DOC/1/119.97 du 19 décembre 1997, je vous prie de bien vouloir trouver en annexe la contribution du Bureau de Bruxelles au rapport d'activités de S.E. Monsieur le Secrétaire Général.

Tout en m'excusant de cette transmission au-delà de la date du 5 janvier 1998, je voudrais attirer votre attention sur le fait que notre Bureau n'a pas de "traducteur anglais" et que par conséquent, la version française constitue la version originale.

Comme vous le savez, Monsieur E. Gassama, traducteur français, a toujours fait preuve de disponibilités et de collaboration franche en accomplissant cette tâche pour le compte du siège.

Sentiments distingués.

c.c. - Secrétaire Général Adjoint/EDECO
- Chef de la Division des Conférences.

ORIGINAL: FRENCH

TO BE REVISED

**CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACTIVITY REPORT
OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL FOR THE
PERIOD JUNE 1997 TO FEBRUARY 1998**

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE OAU IN BRUSSELS
BELGIUM**

INTRODUCTION

1. During the period covered by this report, i.e. June 1997 to February 1998, important events marked the relations between the African continent and its partners of the European Union, either within the framework of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), or within the framework of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).
2. Within the framework of the ACP, following a proposal made by Mauritius in November 1995 in Port Louis, the ACP Group of States organized its first Summit of Heads of State and Government, on November 6 and 7, 1997 in Libreville, Gabon.
3. As for Africa-Europe relations within the framework of the OAU, it is to be noted that a first meeting at ministerial level of the TROIKA of the European Union and the OAU took place on June 23, 1997 in New York; also to be noted is the acceptance of the principle of the organization of an Africa-Europe Summit of Heads of State and Government, scheduled for the Year 2000. Besides, the agreement in principle for the drafting of a legal instrument in view to formalize OUA-EU cooperation relations should also not be neglected.
4. This report shall, consequently, deal with the activities carried out in the political, diplomatic and socio-economic fields, as well as in the field of press, information and cultural affairs.
5. It shall also highlight the joint action carried out by the OAU General Secretariat and the African Group in Brussels in order to prepare the ACP Summit in Libreville.

II ACTIVITIES IN THE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC FIELDS

A. Relations with the European Parliament and the Joint ACP-EU Assembly

6. The Director of the Office was been invited by Mr. Rocard, European Parliamentarian, Chairman of the Development Commission of the European Parliament and former French Prime Minister, to take part in and take the floor during the debate on the issue of Western Sahara.

7. The session, which was held on June 18, 1997 in the seat of the Parliament in Brussels, was also attended by H.E. Bashir Mustapha Sayed, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Saharaoui Arab Democratic Republic.

8. In his intervention, the Director of the OAU Office recalled briefly; the background of the issue of Western Sahara, from the XV Assembly of the OAU Heads of State and Government, in July 1979 in Khartoum, to the XVIII Summit, held in June 1982 in Nairobi, and the XIX Summit, held in June 1983 in Addis-Ababa, which adopted Resolution AHG/Res.104(XIX) inviting Morocco to go into direct negotiations with the Polisario Front.

10. The Director also mentioned steps taken by the OAU since then, as well as the various meetings held by H.E. the Secretary General with SADR and UN authorities. Besides, the debate held in Harare on the issue and the appointment of Ambassador Yilma Tadesse as the Special Representative of the OAU Secretary General were mentioned.

11. The Parliament highly appreciated steps undertaken by the OAU, in particular the unequivocal definite position on the issue of Western Sahara in all international fora.

B. ACP-EU Joint Assembly

12. The Office took part in the proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Ordinary Session of the Joint ACP-EU Assembly held from October 27 to 30, 1997 in Lome, Togo, under the co-chairmanship of Sir John KAPUTIN (Papua-New Guinea) and Lord PLUMB (United Kingdom).

13. The solemn opening session was marked by speeches of His Excellency General Gnassingbe EYADEMA, President of the Republic of Togo and Mister PERE, Speaker of the National Assembly of Togo. In his statement, President EYADEMA highlighted the fact that the world should endeavour for a common destiny and that solidarity with poorest countries should prevail on the selfishness that characterizes rich countries. He mentioned the fact that respect for human rights and promotion of democracy should be part of freedom and progress.

14. The Joint Assembly focussed its proceedings on the impact of UN Conferences on the policy of development between the European Union and the ACP and on the future ACP-EU relations.

15. Within the framework of the future ACP-EU relations, participants noted the challenge put to the ACP by Commissioner Pinheiro: « *Give us the proof of your political commitment and the progress you have made in the fields of democratization and conflicts prevention and we shall be able to convince our citizens to remain in favour of the strengthening of the partnership between the Community and the ACP.* »

16. The Assembly also dealt with the dynamic partnership to be established within the framework of the future ACP-EU relations, the link between democratization and development, primacy of looking for African solutions to African problems, the coherence and coordination of the European Union policy, the consequences of globalization and the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

17. The Assembly adopted Resolutions on ACP-EU cooperation on climate changes, on the fishing sector, on the specific cases of countries like Angola, Congo Brazzaville, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Mali, South Africa, and on commodities (banana, sugar).

18. Other Resolutions were adopted on peace and conflicts settlement, including steps to ban antipersonnel landmines and to implement the decisions of the Rio Conference on Environment and Development.

C. OAU-EU cooperation

19. Within the framework of the cycle of consultations between the OAU and the EU, the two parties organized two formal meetings, the first one was held on June 23 in New York at Ministerial level and the second one was held on October 20, 1997, in Addis Ababa at experts level.

a) Meeting of the OAU-EU TROIKA

20. The New York meeting recognized the need to organize Ministerial meetings on regular basis, either alongside the UN General Assembly sessions, or alternately in Africa and in Europe, following a meeting of experts from the two Troika.

21. The two organizations' Troika recognized that dialogue should lead to concrete actions instead of mere expression of theories.

22. It is in that sense that issues of Conflicts Prevention and Resolution, the role of the OAU's Mechanism Central Organ, coordination of various initiatives in that field, the OAU capacity building have been debated in order to plan supportive actions in favour of the OAU.

23. On issues of economic cooperation, the African Troika insisted that it should be part of the agenda, taking into account the launching of the establishment of the African Economic Community and various challenges facing Africa and resulting from the joint effects of

globalization and liberalization of international trade. The meeting has also retained the proposal to organize an Europe-Africa Summit during the year 2000.

b) Seventh OAU-EU Consultative Meeting

24. This meeting was held in Addis-Ababa on October 20, 1997. The agenda included, in particular, the following items:

1. *the political situation in Africa and in Europe;*
2. *preparation of the proposed Africa-Europe Summit;*
3. *democracy, respect for human rights and post-conflicts peace building;*
4. *OAU projects funded by the EU;*
5. *antipersonnel landmines;*
6. *refugees and displaced persons;*
7. *economic matters*
8. *framework of the future OAU-EU cooperation.*

25. On the developments of the political situation in Africa, the meeting considered conflicts in Burundi, the Comoros, Congo Brazzaville, Sierra Leone, Somalia and made specific recommendations aimed at a peaceful negotiated solution between the parties to the conflict.

26. It insisted on the need for closer coordination between the OAU, Regional Organizations and the European Union.

27. As for the developments of the situation in Europe, the Troika exchanged views on the proposal to organize an Europe-Africa Summit, cooperation between the two Troika in the field of promoting democracy, respect for human rights, post-conflict peace building. This cooperation should also take place within the United Nations, in order, *inter alia*, to strengthen existing African institutions.

28. The issues of antipersonnel landmines and refugees were debated, in particular, in order to look for lasting solutions to these scourges which Africa is one of the most afflicted continents.

29. As for the framework of the future cooperation between the OAU and the EU, the African Troika insisted on the need to formalize this framework through a legal instrument. The OAU Permanent Office already had discussions with the European side in view to agree on the terms of reference of such a document.

30. The OAU General Secretariat (Brussels Office) shall continue its efforts aimed at finalizing a draft text to be submitted, for comment, to the European side.

31. As far as the Portuguese proposal to organize an Africa-Europe Summit during the first half of the year 2000 is concerned, the European side forwarded its first reflections to the OAU. It is up to the latter to react, by, *inter alia*, setting up a preparatory structure which should be active both in Addis-Ababa and Brussels.

32. The Permanent Mission recommends to the Council of Ministers to give a mandate to the Secretary General to the effect for him to coordinate preparations of the Summit, the fact being that, at the level of Europe, it is the European Union and not the individual countries which prepare the proposed meeting. It is important for the Secretary General to obtain a consensus from Member States for the organization of such a meeting.

c) Brussels Conference on the banning of antipersonnel landmines

33. The Permanent Mission took part in the Conference on the banning of antipersonnel landmines held in Brussels. The OAU delegation was led by the OAU Executive Secretary in Geneva, H.E. Ambassador BENSID.

34. During the debate, the OAU Head of delegation made a statement which was welcomed by the Conference, particularly with regard to the actions undertaken by the OAU in the framework of the campaign for the eradication, the banning of antipersonnel landmines use, stockpiling, production, transfert and for their destruction.

II. ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION

a) The ACP Group and the ACP-EU future relations

35. As mentioned in the introductory part, the OAU actively participated in the preparation by the African Group in Brussels both of the First Summit of the ACP Heads of State and Government and the negotiations on the ACP-EU future relations after the expiry of the current Lome IV Convention by the year 2000. These negotiations are to start in September 1998.

36. After having participated in the meeting on the ACP-EU future relations organised by The Netherlands, on April 17 and 19, 1997, in Maastricht, as well as to the Session of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers from April 23 to 25, 1997 in Luxemburg, the OAU, in compliance with decision CM/Dec.331(LXVI) of the Council of Minsters adopted in Harare, organized, from July 1 to 3, 1997, in Addis-Ababa, an experts meeting in that context.

37. The experts meeting was an opportunity to identify elements that could be the substance of a Convention to be concluded in the framewpork of a dynamic partnership and to draft a general policy declaration on cooperation. The OAU Office in Brussels, as well as an important delegation of representatives from Diplomatic Missions in Brussels took part in the Addis-Ababa experts meeting.

38. Within the framework of that process, on the initiative and invitation of the Togolese Government, with the technical and financial support of the OAU, an African Ministerial conference on the ACP-EU future relations was organized on October 7 and 8, 1997 in Lome, Togo.

39. A tribute must be paid to the Togolese Government for the material and financial sacrifices made for the successful organization of this conference, not to mention the technical support (secretarial and interpretation services, as well as a financial assistance obtained from the European Commission) given by the OAU General Secretariat to the Republic of Togo.

40. The Lome Ministerial Conference adopted a declaration which contributed substantially and in quality to the preparation of the First Summit of the ACP Heads of State and Government held on November 6 and 7, 1997 in Libreville.

41. As for this Summit, also attended by the OAU, it is to be noted that the OAU delegation was led by Ambassador V.S. MAKHAN, Assistant Secretary General in charge of economic affairs. The OAU Permanent Office in Brussels was part of the delegation.

42. The Summit adopted « *the Libreville Declaration* », as well as four decisions.

43. In substance, the declaration identified the major challenges the ACP Group could face during the coming years, subject to the climate of the current international environment, the scope of the ACP-EU future relations beyond the year 2000 and, finally, the institutional framework for a strategic organization of the Group.

44. As far as the decisions are concerned, they dealt with the preparation of the negotiations with the EU, trade, monetary and financial issues and with the institutional and organizational framework of the ACP Group.

45. This Summit was unique in the history of the ACP-EU cooperation, because it was successful in harmonizing the views of the States of the ACP Group in anticipation of the negotiations on the future relations with the EU.

46. It is to be recommended that the OAU General Secretariat continues to support the African component of the ACP Group, through, *inter alia*, the setting up of a team of technical experts, which shall be entrusted with the task of studying some elements and fields identified in the Libreville declaration, in view to better assess their scope and consequences at the level of international economic and trade relations with the ACP Group.

b) Annual Meeting of the representatives of the ACP-EU economic and social interest groups

47. During this period, the 21st annual meeting of the representatives of the ACP-EU

economic and social groups met in Brussels from October 13 to 15, 1997. The theme considered by the meeting was :

Conditions for successful integration of the ACP States, on favourable terms, into international trade.

48. The representatives of the ACP-EU economic and social groups had an extensive and interesting discussion on how to integrate ACP countries into the global economy. Following its deliberations, the meeting adopted a declaration in which, first of all, it expressed its concern over the decline of the ACP world market share in spite of the fact that world trade is growing by 8 % to 10 % annually. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the world market share for the ACP countries, thirty most important export dropped from 20,8 % in 1975 to 9.7 % in 1995.

49. It was observed that the ACP countries' present difficulties are due to a combination of factors including, among other things, the inadequacy of both local and foreign investments, heavy external debt which curtails investment potential and the development of efficient public infrastructure and services, over-dependence of many ACP countries on a few traditional markets as well as inadequacy of exploiting the potential of domestic markets.

50. It was also noted that the Lome Conventions preferential trade systems were eroded on account of the extension of generalized preferences for other least developed countries, the existence of non-tariff barriers, the dumping of agricultural products and due to the rigid interpretation of the rules of origin.

51. In addition, concern was expressed in the agricultural sphere over the incompatibility of the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules with the provisions of the Lome Convention.

52. Consequently, the declaration stated that successful integration of the ACP countries into international trade could only be sustainable if domestic and regional markets are expanded. To that end, it pointed out the following :

- *the processing of resources and raw-materials into finished or semi-finished products (agriculture, mining, energy and services) should take place in the ACP countries;*
- *increase in the purchasing power of urban and rural populations by means of increasing employment and income;*
- *promotions and mobilization of resources to develop small and medium-size enterprises.*

53. The declaration called also for foreign and local investment and the alleviation of the debt burden to enable ACP countries to invest in education, training infrastructure and more efficient administration.

54. The future successive arrangements to the Lome Convention should also promote the principle of fairer trade terms focusing on sustained economic and social development. In conclusion, the representatives of the economic and social interest groups emphasized in the declaration the role played by the civil society in promoting development.

III. ACTIVITIES IN THE INFORMATION FIELD

55. During the period under review, the Information service of the Office continued its activities which fall within its competence, i.e.: **dissemination of information on the OAU action, documentation and public relations.**

56. In the field of **Information**, it is to be noted, in particular, that the publication of the bi-monthly bulletin « *OAU News* », with its issues 12 and 13 covering respectively June/July and November/December 1997, has been resumed. Through this publication, the European public opinion and institutions, to whom it is widely disseminated, perceive better the OAU actions and concrete reactions in the political and socio-economic fields. This is testified by the high level of appreciation expressed over the « coverage », in issue 12, of the OAU Council of Ministers and Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe.

57. Likewise, within the extension of this sensitization activity, and in order to put a better documentation on the OAU and its activities at the disposal of the academic, institutional and association circles, the brochure on: « *OAU = action and programmes of action* » has been updated. This is a publication which presents the OAU, its main achievements and its programmes of action, since its inception. This third edition is well documented and covers, in a rather exhaustive manner, the OAU achievements and programmes of action. Hence, it is an important tool for the work and the sensitization on the OAU.

V. SUPPORT TO THE AFRICAN GROUP

58. During the period under review, the OAU Permanent Office functioned as the secretariat to the African component of the ACP Group by offering to the latter the possibility of organizing meetings of its sub-regions in the premises of the Office and offering interpretation services.

59. The Permanent Mission, in particular, mobilized all its resources during the preparation of the Libreville Summit by closely working with the African Group for the preparation of the meeting of African experts on the ACP-EU future relations held in Addis-Ababa, as well as for the organization of the African Ministerial Conference in Lome (October 7 - 8, 1997).

60. In that specific framework, the Permanent Mission negotiated and prepared, in collaboration with the Embassy of Togo in Brussels, a request for an additional funding of some expenses towards the Conference.

61. Thus, the Mission obtained an amount of Ecus 209,000 (Ecus Two hundred and nine thousands) as a contribution to support the efforts made by the Togolese Government.

62. The Permanent Mission continued, without interruption, the dissemination of information on the activities of the OAU, particularly those relating to the various conflicts, as well as on the efforts OAU is making in the socio-economic development field.

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