

AFRICAN UNION

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Avenue Molière 186 - 1050 Bruxelles (Belgique) Tel: (322) 346.97.47/48 Fax: (322) 346.97.28
e-mail: africanunion@skynet.be

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ANALYTICAL STATEMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
5-40 PROGRAMME BUDGET OF THE PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE AFRICAN UNION IN BRUSSELS
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY – JUNE 2004

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Introduction

1. From January to June 2004, the Permanent Mission of the African Union in Brussels endeavoured to implement its activity programme covering the 2004 budget year (cf. Programme Budget 5.40). Most of its activities related to the follow-up and participation of the Mission in the work of the following institutions:
 - The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) as regards the implementation of the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement;
 - The joint ACP-EU institutions (Council of Ministers, Committee of Ambassadors, Joint Parliamentary Assembly, etc.);
 - The African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels;
 - The European institutions (Council of Ministers, Commission, Parliament, etc);
 - The civil society association movements, including the African diaspora;
 - The education and research sectors, etc.

2. The activities carried out covered the following areas:
 - Political and diplomatic matters (Sub-Program 5.40.1)
 - Economic and trade matters (SP 5.40.2)
 - Cooperation with civil society (SP 5.40.2°)
 - Socio-economic issues (SP 5.40.3)
 - Representation activities (SP 5.40.1)
 - Information and documentation on the African Union (SP 5.40.4)
 - Coordination of the activities of the African Group of Brussels (SP 5.40.5).

3. The following is a summary analysis of the above activities and of their impact, based on the strategies and objectives that the African Union has set for itself through its representation in Brussels.

I. POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC MATTERS

a) Working visit of the African Commission to the European Union Commission

4. The most important activity involving the Mission during the period under review was without any doubt, the working visit of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union to the European Union Commission in Brussels, in the company of an important delegation including almost all the members of the African Commission. The visit was described as one of contact between the two Commissions and was particularly useful for the African Commission which took advantage of it to get a better insight of its European counterpart's working and functioning methods. Indeed, apart from the bilateral contacts between the African and European Commissioners, a working session involving both Commissions was held for an in depth exchange of views on issues of common interest relating to the African as well as international current affairs. The two Commissions also discussed possible ways and means of strengthening their cooperation and beyond that, cooperation between the EU and the AU and Europe and Africa.

b) Togo/European Union consultations in the framework of the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement

5. The Permanent Mission represented the AU Commission during the consultations organised last April in Brussels between Togo and the EU, in the framework of Article 96 of the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement. The aim was to open talks between the two sides, to agree on conditions to be met by Togo for the restoration of its cooperation with the European Union, in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement. Cooperation with Togo had indeed been suspended for more than ten years, following the EU's blame on Togo, for breaching Article 96 which deals with the Rule of Law.
6. At the close of the consultations, Togo committed itself to implement a total of 25 measures relating to the political sphere and the restoration of the Rule of Law.

c) Guinée/European Union consultations in the framework of the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement

7. The Mission represented the AU Commission during the consultations held in July 2004 in Brussels between Guinée and the EU, in the

framework of the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement. As for Togo, the aim of the consultations was to allow Guinée to give explanations on the rather worrisome situation which prevailed in the country before and after this year's presidential elections. In summary, the EU was blaming Guinée for having failed to comply with the very foundations of ACP-EU cooperation characterised by the respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good economic governance.

8. In the "conclusions" that it drew from the consultations, "the European Union noted with satisfaction that the Guinean side had made a number of commitments and had come up with some positive elements aiming at strengthening the democratic environment and the rule of law on the one hand, and on the other, at creating the structural conditions for macro-economic stability and sustainable development in the country".

d) Meeting of the European Parliament on Darfour

9. In July 2004, the Mission was invited by the Development Commission of the European Parliament to make a presentation on action undertaken by the African Union to resolve the Darfour crisis in Sudan. After a detailed description of all the AU's initiatives from the beginning of the crisis in 2003, the Mission stressed, in its presentation, the AU's willingness to act on this case, in true partnership with the key actors from the international community, such as the UN and the EU. The presentation dwelled on the need to mobilise additional financial resources to support the AU's efforts. The Mission lastly welcome the support of the European Parliament for the creation by the EU of a "Facility for Peace Support in Africa", to which 250 million euros were allocated, following the request of the AU Assembly reflected in its decision Assembly/AU/Dec.21 (II) adopted in 2003.

II. ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATED MATTERS

10. Pursuant to Declaration Assembly/AU/Decl.5 (II) and in the framework of its implementation process, the Mission continues to follow up the ACP-EU Negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), as provided for in the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement. The negotiations began in September 2002 and will be in two phases. Phase one which lasted from September 2002 to September 2003 was carried out at the "All ACP" level. It dealt with cross-cutting issues of interest to all parties. Phase two started in October 2003 for the ACP countries and regions.

11. All the four African regions which are parties to the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement agreed on their EPA configuration and launched the negotiations to that effect. These will last up to 2007.
12. To ensure a better coordination of the positions of the four regions engaged in the negotiations, the Mission undertook to set up within the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels, "a working group on EPA negotiations". Furthermore, the regions concerned hold all their coordination meetings on the premises of the Mission which has been endowed with interpretation facilities for that purpose.

III. VISIBILITY OF THE AFRICAN UNION IN BRUSSELS

13. In the framework of the implementation of sub-programmes 5.40.1 and 5.40.4, the Mission regularly undertakes action to ensure visibility of the African Union in Brussels and elsewhere in Europe, vis-à-vis the EU institutions, the ACP Group, the European public opinion, etc. Hence the Mission participates regularly in seminars and cultural events organised in Brussels or in other EU member countries by the European institutions, the association movements and other international organisations represented in Brussels.
14. In the same vein, the Mission coordinated various activities undertaken by the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels to celebrate "Africa Day" 2004. This year, there were cultural entertainments by cultural groups from Burundi, Djibouti and Mauritius on the one hand, and on the other, conferences on NEPAD and Conflict Resolution. The conferences were led by a joint panel of EU representatives, including the Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Assistance, and of the African Commission representatives, including the Commissioner for Peace and Security. There was a massive participation of all the AU international partners, of the European public and of the African diaspora in those events.

IV. INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION

15. Dissemination of information and documentation on the AU could have been included as part of the cross cutting activities under sub-programme 5.40.1 and 5.40.4, together with those relating to the visibility of the AU referred to here above. Indeed, as the post concerned has been removed from the new structure of the Mission, the related programmes have not been mentioned specifically. However, the Mission took it upon itself to carry on with the activities concerned and even intensified them, bearing in mind that they form part of its main functions and given the fundamental need to facilitate in

Brussels and in Europe, sustained communication on the AU, its objectives and strategies.

16. Such efforts could have been supported by the continued publication of the Bulletin entitled "OAU News" which the Mission used to publish. However, the main posts in the Mission having remained vacant, other forms of communication and sensitisation were used as described above.
17. Yet, given the importance of the matter, it would be advisable to consider allocating more financial resources to the Mission, to enable it to fulfil this task which is fundamental for the visibility of the African Union and its action in Europe.

CONCLUSION

18. Even though some key posts in the new structure (Principal Economist and Socio-Economist) remained continuously vacant, the Mission did its utmost best to implement the programmes assigned to it. As the economic and trade aspects are mainly articulated around the implementation of the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement, including the EPA negotiations, the Mission follows up all the so related activities and coordinates all actions of the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels in that regard. The AU should strengthen its presence amongst African negotiators, to ensure a better coordination of the EPAs with the Abuja Treaty.
19. Furthermore, the Mission carries out on a sustained basis its functions as representation office to the European institutions and the ACP. It also works constantly towards the strengthening and follow-up of cooperation between the AU and the EU.

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