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ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE
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Monrovia, Liberia
7 - 15 July, 1979

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE PROMOTION
OF AFRICAN CULTURE

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE PROMOTION OF AFRICAN
CULTURE

POSSIBLE ACTIONS BY OAU AFTER THE MONROVIA COLLOQUIUM (February 1979)

I. Current Situation

1. The assertion of cultural identity is acknowledged as one of the landmarkers of contemporary African History.

However, after two decades of political independence and development strategies, the African economy remains today fundamentally under-developed. In the analysis of this failure, it evolves that during the elaboration of our programmes and development plans cultural components were not always considered. Consequently, whatever be the opinion of the economic development policies, the socio-cultural structures form a factor whose role is generally more decisive than it was acknowledged in the past.

2. In Africa, the assertion of cultural identity, which had in fact served as a basis for national independence, did not lead to the cultural emancipation or produce the initiatives capable of bringing a radical solution to the burning characteristics of under-development and alienation.

"Africa is the only Continent which uses languages other than its own" ^{1/}When the cultural realities and cooperation mentioned by our states in this field both among themselves as well as with the rest of the world, are examined, one cannot help but feel worried. Looking on the cultural map of the world, what is really our influence? Where goes our Culture? Don't we still maintain artificial barriers opposing cultural, Education and Training? What have we done with the Cultural Charter for Africa since 1976? Those are questions which need reflection.

3. Moreover, the world situation around us is not too reassuring either. The discomfort of among the consumption societies illustrated by the dramatic jolts, emanates not from the satisfaction of human beings but from the unbridled amassing of things. We must confess that the dimension of the human being has been neglected in favour of the unidimensional man.

^{1/} Declaration of President A. Sekou Toure at the fifteenth OAU Summit, Khartoun, July 1978.

B) THE NEED TO SET UP AN ORGANIZATION IN LINE WITH THESE OBJECTIVES

A Division of Culture and Education, recently created within the framework of the new working structures, provides the OAU General Secretariat with a means for further action, to which should be added UNESCO's contribution in making available to OAU a highly qualified African Consultant in Cultural Affairs within the context of the 1979-1980 participation programme.

This operation unit will be entrusted with injecting new vim into the African Cultural Council and the Conference of African Ministers of Culture.

C) INSTRUMENT OF REFERENCE

Several Declarations and Resolutions exist in this area. The Cultural Charter for Africa, adopted by OAU Heads of State and Government of its Ordinary Session held in Port Louis (Mauritius) in July 1976, was excellent.

The aims and objectives of this Charter are as follows;

- the liberation the African peoples from Socio-cultural conditions which impede their development;
- the rehabilitation, restoration, preservation and promotion of the African cultural heritage;
- The assertion of the dignity of the African and of the popular foundations of his culture;
- the combating and elimination of all form of alienation and cultural suppression and oppression everywhere in Africa, especially in countries still under colonial and racist domination, including apartheid;
- the encouragement of cultural cooperation among the States with a view to strengthening African Unity;
- the encouragement of international cultural cooperation for a better understanding among peoples within which Africa will make its original and appropriate contribution to human culture;
- promotion, in each country of popular knowledge of science and technology; a necessary condition for the control of nature;
- development of all dynamic values in the African cultural heritage and rejection of any element which is an impediment to progress.

7. Are we not very far from achieving these objectives? And yet so attain these objectives better, African countries have since 1976 affirmed the following principles;

- access of all citizens to education and culture;
- promotion of the people's ingenuity and respect for freedom of creativeness;
- respect for national specific features and authenticities in the cultural field;
- selective integration of science and modern technology in the cultural life of the African peoples;
- exchange and propagation of cultural experiences among African States in the field of cultural decolonization in all its forms.

4. The supposed absolute values of the Cultural Order of our life have been put to question. Here and there we are being warned; "the risk we are all running is not demographic, economic, ideological, social; it is first and foremost cultural; The material domination of the whiteman, mentally under-developed and technically over-developed, must give way to a joint and unprecedented effort for cultural emancipation and initiatives..^{2/} President A. Sékou Touré had even traced a path at the Fifteenth OAU Summit, in Khartoum in July 1978, when he said "... OAU should further increase its actions so as to hasten the complete political liberation first and then economic and socio-cultural liberation of Nations and Peoples of our Continent".

5. The OAU Monrovia Colloquium (12-15 February 1979) attended by some forty African experts also considered this question within the context of development prospects and economic growth in Africa.

II. POSSIBLE ACTIONS BY OAU

6. The success of OAU actions in this field demands certain conditions among which are:

A) A CLEAR DEFINITION OF OBJECTIVES If we want to emerge from the present disappointing situation in which the African economy is struggling, emphasis should be placed on the Cultural preeminence; our community projects and cultural aspect should be integrated in the national development plannings.

The Intergovernmental Conference on cultural policies in Africa organized in Accra in November 1975 by UNESCO in collaboration with OAU emphasised that there is no doubt that the assertion of cultural identity underlies the desire for the establishment of a new world economic order whereby the consideration of the unique values of various civilization will contribute to the definition of original models of endogenous development through the establishment of international cooperation on the basis of mutual respect and equitable reciprocity. It is because it is considered both as a factor of social transformation, liberation and unity and as a guarantee in international relations, that the assertion of cultural identity appears today as a common claim of all peoples of Africa.

The Report of the Monrovia Colloquium was, in fact categorical: ^{3/} It stated, inter alia that the prime objective of development could only be the establishment of a material and cultural environment conducive to progress and creative participation.

2/ H. de Varine. La culture des autres. Editions du Seuil-Paris 1976

3/ Report of the Monrovia Colloquium: Paragraph 15

8. Today while relying on this instrument, we have to be resolved and move forward. This is why the General Secretariat would wish to propose the following actions to be undertaken by the institutions of the OAU:-

I) Setting up of Group of Experts.

A limited group of 10 African experts to be set up within the next few months to provide a summary of a number of cultural documents namely:

- . Recommendations of the Pan African Festival (Algiers 1966)
 - . Inter-Governmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa (Accra - November 1975)
 - . Resolutions of the African Cultural Council (Addis Ababa, 1976)
 - . FESTAC Colloquium (Lagos 1977)
 - . UNESCO Seminars on:
 - affirmation of cultural identity and development of national consciousness in contemporary Africa (Brazzaville - February 1978)
 - transcription and harmonization of national languages (Niamey 17 - 21 July 1978)
 - specific features and dynamics of Black and African Cultures (Yamoussokro - Ivory Coast, 2 - 6 October 1978)
- b) Prepare a Programme of cultural activities on these Recommendations. In the light of this, it would be interesting to consider instituting an African Cultural Year.

2) Inter-African Cultural Fund

Paragraph (b) of Article 31 of the Cultural Charter for Africa stipulates that in the framework of the Inter-African Cultural Co-Operation, African States have agreed to set up an Inter-African Fund to sustain and promote cultural studies and programmes.

What remains to be done is the implementation of the above and a draft resolution is being submitted to you to that effect. The provisions of this draft resolution are similar to those of the OAU Technical Co-Operation Fund as contained in Resolution CM/Res.412 (XXIV).

3) Colloquium on African Culture.

The programme of action proposed by the Monrovia Colloquium highlighted the need for scientific, cultural and social values which underlie a new development outlook. The Report stressed that it was important, first and foremost, to encourage in schools, vocational and political institutions as well as among the general public

"re-discovery" of African values of culture and solidarity, mutual respect, attachment to the environment:

the aims and objectives of the Cultural Charter for Africa (Port Louis, 1976) more than ever remained well founded and the participants urgently called for their immediate implementation with UNESCO support.

To this end, a colloquium on African Culture will be held in 1980 with the co-operation of UNESCO.

OAU financial contribution to this joint action is contained in the 1979/1980 budget.

CONCLUSION

The Intergovernmental Conference on cultural policies in Africa (Accra, November 1975) acknowledged that beyond the ideological barriers or the inherited frontiers brought about by colonialism, assertion of cultural identity regarded both a factor of national liberation and national unity, an instrument of African Unity and a guarantee in international relations, appears today as a common demand of all African peoples. As for us, we are aware that the only way of avoiding the disasters forecast for Africa in the years 2000 is to promote a new political determination in which culture will have its place. The Monrovia Colloquium (February 1979) affirmed this as one of the objectives before us. Now that the OAU General Secretariat has embarked upon the implementation of the recommendations of this colloquium, it is worthwhile recalling the importance of culture in development.

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE PROMOTION
OF AFRICAN CULTURE

The Council of Ministers of the Organization African Unity meeting in its Thirty-Third Ordinary Session in Monrovia, Liberia from.....to.....

Having considered the report of the OAU Secretary General on the promotion of African Culture in the light of the decisions of the Monrovia Colloquium (12 - 15 February, 1979),

Considering the objectives of the Cultural Charter for Africa adopted by the Thirteen Assembly of OAU Heads of State and Government in July 1979 at Port Louis.

Aware that the assertion of cultural identity underlies the desire to establish a New World Economic Order, whereby the unique values of the various civilizations would be taken into consideration to facilitate the definition of the original models of endogenous development,

- I. Takes note of the OAU Secretary General's report;
2. Calls on all Member States to ratify as early as possible the Cultural Charter of Africa;
3. Urges the OAU Secretary General:
 1. to set up, as early as possible the group of African Experts as recommended in the report;
 2. to convene, in collaboration with UNESCO, a colloquium on African Culture; and generally strengthen its cooperation with UNESCO and, to this end, open a OAU office within this Organization.
 3. to take all appropriate steps to reactivate the African Cultural Commission and the Conference of the African Ministers of Culture.

Council

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE INTER-AFRICAN CULTURAL FUND

The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity meeting in its Thirty-Third Ordinary Session in Monrovia, Liberia from 7 - 15 July, 1979.

Recalling the objectives set out in the Cultural Charter for Africa.

Desirous of strengthening and promoting inter-African cultural cooperation which is a factor for rapprochement and reciprocal enrichment of African cultures.

Decides to set up an inter-African Cultural Fund to sustain and promote cultural researches and programmes:

1. This fund will be different from the ordinary budget of the OAU, but will be managed according to the Financial and Administrative regulations of the OAU General Secretariat and be made available for auditing by the OAU internal and external auditors
2. The fund will not be financed by the ordinary budget of the OAU;
3. The fund will be fed by voluntary contributions in cash and kind from:
 - a. Member States;
 - b. African Governmental and non-Governmental Organizations;
 - c. United Nations and Agencies and Institutions within the UN System;
 - d. The various Arab Funds for cooperation and development within the context of Afro-Arab Cooperation;
 - e. Friendly African States, within the framework of their technical cooperation programmes of the Continent;
 - f. The various African and Foreign Foundations.
4. Contributions from non-African funding sources specified in sub-paragraphes d, e, and f should be submitted to the OAU Advisory Committee for approval.

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