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COUNCIL OF MINISTERS <sup>Addis Ababa</sup> ادیس ابابا

THIRTY-SEVENTH ORDINARY SESSION

Nairobi, Kenya

15 - 21 June, 1981

CM/1138(XXXVII)

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE PAN-AFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK (PANAFTEL)



REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE PAN-AFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK (PANAFTEL)

The Secretary-General has the honour to present attached herewith as Annex I the Eighth Report of the Co-ordinating Committee for the implementation of the Pan-African Telecommunications Network (PANAFTEL) which met in Geneva from 21 - 22 May 1981.

2. The Committee in its Eighth Report brings to the attention of the Council the extent of its activities in the implementation of PANAFTEL and points out important questions to be considered by the policy-making bodies of the OAU.

3. Unlike the intervening period between the Sixth and the Seventh Reports, the Committee noted that certain progress has been realised in the PANAFTEL Network. However, it is noted again that there still exists a lack of funds to put under implementation new routes already surveyed and additional routes to be surveyed.

4. During its Eighth Session, the Committee reviewed progress made in the Transport and Communications Decade for Africa taking into account the outcome of the Second Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning that took place in Addis Ababa in March 1981 and decisions reached by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government during the Second Extra-Ordinary Summit devoted to economic matters, which took place in Lagos in April 1980 in their efforts to ensure a continuous developmental programme for the Transport and Communications Sector.

5. The Committee further reviewed the report of the 3rd African Telecommunications Conference (Monrovia, 8 - 19 December 1980) especially resolutions adopted by that Conference. (It is here recalled that the General Secretariat has prepared a report on this important Conference and is being presented to this Council under a separate agenda item).

6. The Coordinating Committee also discussed a proposal to participate actively in the forthcoming ITU TELECOM 83 and agreed to put up a PANAFTEL stand to be financed jointly by the participating members of the Coordinating Committee of PANAFTEL. The question of African Telecommunication Administrations participating actively in the World Telecommunications Year (1983) was also discussed.

7. The Committee noted with satisfaction the contribution of the ADB representative as regards that Bank's policy and other guidelines set for giving project loans either for national or multi-national projects in telecommunications.

8. Action required:

The Council is requested to take note of the attached report, and make any further suggestions it may deem necessary that would lead to the improvement of the PANAFTEL Network, and also assist the Coordinating Committee in its work.

EIGHTH REPORT OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE  
PAN-AFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK TO THE  
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE ORGANISATION  
OF AFRICAN UNITY

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Coordinating Committee for the Pan-African Telecommunications Network consists of the Executive Heads of the Organisation of African Unity, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the International Telecommunication Union and the Pan-African Telecommunication Union.

2. It was set up in response to a Resolution of the Heads of State of the Organisation of African Unity. There was no formal meeting of the Committee during 1980, however, the members of the Committee met informally during the Inter-Agency Meeting on Transport and Communications Decade programme in Addis Ababa early 1980, and again during the 3rd African Telecommunications Conference in Monrovia, in December 1980. Its 12th formal Meeting was held on 21 and 22 May 1981 in the Headquarters of the ITU in Geneva, Switzerland.

3. The Committee has the honour to present its eighth report to the Council of Ministers.

II. PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PANAFTEL NETWORK

(a) General progress

4. The Committee has the honour to report that since submission of its seventh report, considerable progress in the implementation of the PANAFTEL network has been achieved.

5. Approximately 3,000 kms of microwave systems have been brought into service and six cross-border connections. In addition, a further 4,500 kms of microwave systems and seven cross-border connections are under advanced implementation and will be brought into service before the end of 1981. Connected with these systems, nine modern international telephone exchanges were either brought into service or are about to be.

6. The progress in the introduction of satellite communication earth stations has been remarkable in that eleven such stations have been brought into operation in the international service since the previous report, bringing the number of African countries connected to the international satellite systems to 39.

7. At the initiative of PATU as well as the ITU, a number of sub-regional coordinating meetings were held at which all the other members of the Coordinating Committee also took an active part. These sub-regional meetings have helped member countries to harmonise their activities and formulate common policies of their network.

(b) Introduction of new techniques

8. Concern was expressed at the report that the efficient operation of part of the newly installed network will be hampered and delayed for at least two years as the Administrations concerned had contracted for certain equipment which was still under development. While the Committee fully supports the introduction of proven and appropriate modern technology within the Region, it supported the spirit of Recommendation No. 7 of the 3rd African Telecommunications Conference which advised countries to be cautious when introducing new technologies and especially when procuring equipment that has not been sufficiently proven in the field, or that has not been fully developed and proven in actual operation.

(c) Under-utilisation of the new systems

9. While commending the great effort and success achieved by several countries in bringing their PANAFTEL projects to fruition, concern was

expressed at the under-utilisation of many of the now available systems. ITU and PATU are to investigate the reasons for this under-utilisation and to propose ways and means to encourage the maximum use of these new PANAFTEL facilities in order to increase their viability and financial return.

(d) Financing of certain essential routes

10. Several PANAFTEL routes have still not obtained financing but it was noted that in certain cases, priorities had been changed. Nevertheless, there were a few routes which should be implemented as soon as possible for the benefit of the network as a whole, and where the concerned country is experiencing difficulty in obtaining financing. ADB and PATU were invited to continue their efforts by approaching the countries concerned and ensuring that appropriate action is taken to obtain the necessary financing.

(e) Coordination of satellite earth stations

11. The large number of satellite communication earth stations within the region was noted as well as the problems preventing the inter-connection of many of them. The difficulty is that the earth stations are of two different INTELSAT standards, A and B, and work with four different INTELSAT satellites, Atlantic Primary Path, Atlantic Major Path 1 and Major Path 2, as well as the Indian Ocean Primary Path. It is recommended that the Administrations operating earth stations within the Region should take appropriate action to coordinate the operation of their earth stations in order to permit maximum inter-connection between African countries.

(f) Operational and maintenance problems

12. The Committee is of the opinion that a major factor preventing Telecommunication Administrations from providing adequate resources for the maintenance of existing equipment, is the limited availability of foreign currency.

13. In view of the extreme importance of correct maintenance, the Committee recommends that all future procurement exercises should include a provision for all items, including transport, spare parts and measuring instruments required for the maintenance of the equipment being procured. The ITU is to study this recommendation and will propose typical lists of items to be included and the period of maintenance that should be foreseen. ITU will also study and propose an average percentage of equipment value that should be reserved for maintenance purposes.
14. While highlighting the problem of financial resources, the Committee draws to the attention of the Governments the need to establish efficient maintenance structures and procedures within their Telecommunication Administrations. Such action will encourage financial bodies to finance not only the maintenance of newly installed equipment, but also the maintenance or rehabilitation of existing equipment.
15. To assist countries to develop their maintenance structures and procedures, a new PANAFTEL Maintenance Project has recently been established with UNDP financing.
- (g) Acceptance testing
16. To ensure that equipment performs at the level specified in the contract documents, it is essential that great care is taken when performing acceptance tests on the commissioning of equipment. After considering the recent experience of several countries, the Committee recommends that the services of ITU and PATU should be requested to supervise system commissioning tests.
17. ITU is to produce guidelines on acceptance tests for the guidance of Administrations when they are preparing contract documents or arranging commissioning of systems.

### III. ACTION TO ENCOURAGE COUNTRIES TO USE IBRD AND OTHER MULTI-LATERAL FINANCING

18. The Committee reviewed the financial assistance being provided by ADB for PANAFTEL projects. It was also briefed on the significant advantages that countries obtain from multi-lateral financing as compared to bilateral financing or supplier credit. It was stated that the apparent strictness of the conditions of financing applied by multi-lateral institutions was meant for the long-term benefit of their member countries to ensure that they run viable projects leading to the ultimate goal of self reliance. The Committee hopes that the apparent reluctance of countries to request multi-lateral financing for their telecommunication projects will be overcome and accordingly agreed to call a meeting of multi-lateral sources of financing with the view of implementing Recommendation No. 6 of the 3rd African Telecommunications Conference.

### IV. THE UNITED NATIONS TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION DECADE IN AFRICA

19. The Coordinating Committee took note that the programme for the second phase of UNTACDA is to be elaborated by the concerned specialised agencies of the UN in close collaboration with the African Governments and their inter-governmental organisation and hoped that funds would be made available to assist in the preparation of soundly-based projects and hence to diminish the delay in implementation. It is understood that the lead agency, ECA, will ensure the overall coordination of all the sub-sectors of the programme.

20. It was also observed that all telecommunication projects being proposed for the 3rd cycle of the United Nations Development Programme are chosen from those included in the Decade Programme and hence an integral part of the Lagos Plan of Action.



V. REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF PROJECT AMTT/IRD

21. The PANAFTEL Coordinating Committee took note of the report of the Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Prefeasibility Study of the Project Application of Modern Telecommunications Technology for Integrated Rural Development, and agreed to take the necessary action on the recommendations made therein.

22. It was considered essential that the various prefeasibility studies that have regional satellite implications should be harmonised and subsequently integrated with the view of carrying out a single follow up feasibility study as per the Resolution of the 2nd Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning. To this end, the Committee requested the OAU Secretary-General to transmit on its behalf the relevant recommendations to concerned organisations with the view of achieving the desired harmonisation.

VI. WORLD COMMUNICATIONS YEAR 1983

23. The Committee was briefed on the progress being made for the declaration of 1983 as World Communications Year. A definite decision to declare the Year is expected in the Autumn of 1981. All the countries, concerned specialised agencies and regional organisations will be intimately associated with the planning of activities during the Year which, it is hoped, will focus attention towards the preparation of concerted and harmonised development policy of communication at the national and regional levels.

VII. PANAFTEL STAND AT TELECOM 83

24. In September 1979, a telecommunication exhibition known as TELECOM 79 was organised by the ITU in conjunction with the World Administrative Radio Conference. The Coordinating Committee for the PANAFTEL mounted a stand at this Exhibition, grouped together with the stands of a number of African

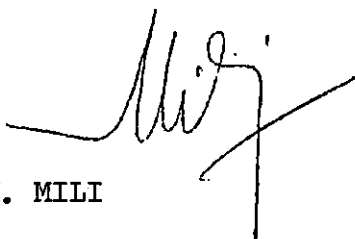
countries also exhibiting in the Exhibition. This activity was successful in publicising the efforts of African countries to extend and modernise their telecommunication systems and attracted a great deal of interest from the many visitors from all over the world. A similar Exhibition, TELECOM 83, is to be organised from the 26th October to the 1st November 1983. The Committee agreed, in principle, that it should again have a stand in the Exhibition and accordingly requested that action be taken to reserve a suitable central location for the stand.

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The Secretary-General of the  
International Telecommunication Union

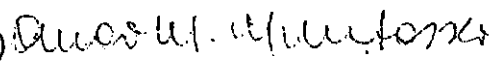
For the Secretary-General  
of the Organisation of African Unity

(Signed)



M. MILI

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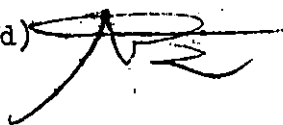


O. MUNTASSER

The Secretary-General of the  
Panafrikan Telecommunications Union

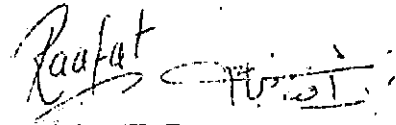
For the President of the African  
Development Bank

(Signed)



Mamadou Bobo CAMARA

(Signed)



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