



**ORGANIZATION OF
AFRICAN UNITY**

Secretariat
P. O. Box 3243

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Secretariat
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REPORT OF THE OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION



CM-1033

MIGROFICHE

REPORT OF THE OAU SECRETARY GENERAL ON
AFRO - ARAB COOPERATION

Since the last OAU Summit held in Monrovia in July 1979, the activities of the OAU General Secretariat with regard to Afro-Arab Cooperation were particularly geared towards finding ways and means of implementing the provisions of Resolution CM/Res. 721 (XXXIII) Rev. 1 on Afro-Arab Cooperation adopted by the thirty-third Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and approved by the OAU Summit.

The two Secretariats of the OAU and the League of Arab States consequently had regular consultations to study the ways and means of implementing the decisions and recommendations of the fourth session of the Standing Commission held in Kuwait in December 1978 on the one hand and the preparation and organisation of joint meetings of the Standing Commission and the Afro - Arab Ministerial Conference, scheduled respectively in December 1979 and January 1980, on the other.

With regard to the steps taken in the context of the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations of the Fourth Session of the Standing Commission held in Kuwait, it should especially be pointed out that the OAU Secretariat prepared draft documents for the Fifth session of the Standing Commission and the First Session of the joint Afro - Arab Ministerial Conference. The prepared draft documents were duly communicated to the Secretariat of the League of Arab States for views and comments as each document should be jointly presented by both Secretariats.

The OAU General Secretariat took the following steps with a view to finding ways and means of implementing Resolution CM/Res.721 (XXXIII) Rev. 1 on Afro-Arab Cooperation adopted by the Assembly during its Sixteenth Ordinary Session in Monrovia.

In the spirit of cooperation and consultation which should exist between the African and Arab specialised institutions, the OAU General Secretariat Communicated on 15/10/79 the complete text of the resolution to the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, the African Development Bank (ADB), the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

Each of these institutions and organisations was specifically requested to immediately communicate its views and concrete proposals to the OAU Secretariat on the effective means and procedures for the implementation of some provisions of this resolution, particularly the paragraphs relating to:

- (a) The definition by the Arab funding institutions of a clear policy on the transfer of their financial resources through Arab investments in Africa (Para 3);
- (b) The convening of a meeting of the African and Arab agencies, especially ADB, BADEA and ECA, with a view to studying together a formula for coordinating their efforts towards studying, programming and financing projects in Africa (Para 5);
- (c) The preparation of Long-term cooperation programmes by the Arab funding institutions by coordinating their action with similar African agencies (Para 3);

- (d) The appeal made to the African and Arab specialised institutions - ADB, BADEA and ECA - in particular, so that they could coordinate their action systematically and hermonize their short - medium and long term programmes of coopération (Para. 8);
- (e) The draft review of the operation and structure of the joint institutional mechanisms responsible for the implementation of the programmes of Arab-Arab Cooperation, so as to make relevant proposals to the First Session of the Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference (Para 9);
- (f) The fixing of dates and venue of:
- i) The joint Conference of African and Arab Minister of Labour; (Para. 10)
 - ii) The joint Conference of African and Arab Ministers of Information; (Para. 11)
- (g) The Organisation of a meeting of African and Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs, in Autumn 1979, which would have:
- to study ways and means of strengthening Afro - Arab Cooperation more concretely and with specific objectives;
 - to prepare the Afro - Arab Summit which would be held in 1980 and whose main objective would be to establish permanent structures leading to a more efficient operation and a more rational Afro - Arab Cooperation (Para 12).

Both OAU and the League of Arab States Secretariats undertook immediate consultations with a view to fixing a date for a joint preparatory meeting whose aim would be the exchange of views on the Programming of joint Afro-Arab activities for the period extending from November 1979 to June 1980.

At the same time, both Secretariats should give a thought to the consideration of ways and means for the implementation of the provisions of the above-mentioned Resolution CM/Res. 721 (XXXIII) Rev. 1.

Thus at the invitation of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, a delegation of the OAU General Secretariat, led by Dr. Nsanzimana, Assistant - Secretary - General, went to Tunis, the Headquarters of the League of Arab States, from 15 to 17 October 1979.

The delegation of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States to the deliberations of this meeting of consultation was led by Dr. Abdel Hassen Zuzela, Assistant - Secretary - General.

During this meeting of consultation, at the highest level, between the two Secretariats, both parties, after thorough consideration and discussions, agreed on the following specific points.

1. Calendar of Joint Afro-Arab Meeting:
from November 1979 to June 1980.

The two Secretariats agreed on the provisional calendar, attached to the present report as annex, awaiting the outcome of consultations with the host countries.

The Programme for the important Afro-Arab joint meetings prepared during this meeting should be noted.

- Joint Conference of African and Arab Ministers of Information:
From 3 to 8 December 1979, Tunis.

On the OAU delegation's return to Addis Ababa, the OAU General Secretariat took the necessary measures to communicate the dates fixed by both Secretariats, to all the Member States.

It was on 24 November 1979, one week before the opening of the Conference, that the S.A.U Secretariat was informed by the Tunisian Ministry of Information that the joint meeting was postponed. A few days later, the information from the Tunisian Ministry of Information was confirmed by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States.

After fresh consultations between the representatives of both Secretariats at the Headquarters of the Arab League from 17 to 22 December 1979, attempts were made to organize and re-schedule this joint Conference of African and Arab Ministers of Information for August/September 1980, depending on the arrangements by the host country, Tunisia.

- Fifth Session of the Standing Commission:
From 19 to 21 December 1979, Addis Ababa

The meetings of this joint institution for implementing the Programmes of Afro-Arab Cooperation are held every six (6) months.

The last meeting of the Standing Commission was held in December 1978 in Kuwait.

The fifth session was previously scheduled for the first fortnight of June 1979 but was postponed at the request of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States.

During a consultation meeting between the two Secretariats which was held in the Headquarters of the League of Arab States in Tunis, it was agreed that the Fifth Session of the Standing Commission would be held during the first half (10-13) of December 1979 in Tripoli followed by the Joint Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference (from 15 to 17 December 1979).

At the request of the Arab League, the calendar of joint Afro-Arab activities and meetings was modified during the meeting of consultation held at the Arab League Headquarters from 15 to 17 October 1979.

This time the date of the fifth session of the Standing Commission was fixed for 19 to 21 December 1979 at the OAU Headquarters as the Libyan Government was not ready to host it separately from the Joint Ministerial Conference.

The Member States of the OAU Committee of Twelve for Afro-Arab Cooperation were informed of these dates and venue. These dates were once again altered by the Arab League Secretariat which informed the OAU Secretariat by a telegraphic message dated 26:11:79 that Libya had agreed to host the meetings of the Standing Commission and the Joint Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference in Tripoli from 10 to 12 and 13 to 15 January 1980 respectively.

The OAU Secretariat agreed in Principle to the period and Venue of both meetings by suggesting that the deliberations of the Standing Commission should take place from 10 to 12 and those of the Joint Ministerial Conference from 14 to 16 January 1980.

The same dates were immediately communicated to the Member States of the OAU Committee of Twelve for Afro-Arab Cooperation, requesting them to take all necessary measures to participate in this meeting.

As from 6 January 1980, some delegations, members of the OAU Committee of Twelve, started arriving in the Libyan capital; they were namely from Rwanda, Niger, Madagascar, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho and Benin.

Other delegations were on their way when a unilateral decision of the Arab League was announced on 6 January 1980 regarding the cancellation of the joint meetings whose preparations were at an advanced stage in Tripoli.

- First Session of the Joint Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference.

The Joint Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference is one of the most important institutions (after the Afro-Arab Summit) for Afro-Arab Cooperation. It is scheduled to be held every eighteen (18) months. Its first meeting after the Afro-Arab Summit of Cairo should have therefore taken place in September 1978.

The first ordinary session of this Joint Ministerial Conference which was seriously organised was to be held from 7 to 10 June 1979 in Tripoli.

The Government of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had taken all the necessary measures to host the Conference.

The OAU Secretariat, informed the OAU Member States about the dates jointly agreed upon and requested them all to endeavour to ensure their participation.

The Acting Secretary-General of the Arab League; by his telegraphic message No. 127247 dated 6.5.79, proposed the postponement of the dates of the meetings of the Standing Commission and the Joint Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference scheduled respectively for 4 to 6 and from 7 to 10 June 1979 in Tripoli, to a date which would be agreed upon jointly.

The Council of Ministers of the OAU showed at its thirty-third ordinary session great concern about the repeated postponements of the meetings of the joint executing institutions of Afro - Arab programmes.

The Council recommended that all joint meetings and conferences should henceforth be held at the scheduled time and insisted that the Afro-Arab summit be held in March 1980.

The OAU General Secretariat began consultations soon after the Monrovia summit with a view to fixing the dates of the first ordinary session of the joint ministerial Conference and of the Afro - Arab summit.

The agenda items of the joint ministerial Conference included in the consideration of the agenda, the date and venue of the second ordinary session of the Afro-Arab summit.

After consultations with the host government, the secretariat of the League of Arab states informed, on 26, November 1979, the OAU General Secretariat by telegram that the Afro - Arab ministerial Conference would take place in Tripoli after the meeting of the standing Commission from 13 to 15 January 1980.

The two secretariats immediately held consultations so as to prepare and finalize common documents.

The OAU member states were informed soon after of the new changes and requested to make the necessary arrangements for their participation as recommended by the Monrovia resolution.

A permanent contact was then established between the two secretariats and the host government for the material, financial, technical and administrative preparation of the conference.

It seemed everything was ready on January 1980. Forty member states of the OAU and of the League of Arab States were willing to participate in joint Tripoli conference and the government made the necessary arrangements to accommodate them.

The advance teams of both secretariats were in Tripoli since 4 January 1980 to supervise preparations. The technical staff members recruited on contract were beginning to arrive in Tripoli.

It was at that moment we heard the announcement that the Council of the League of Arab states decided, without holding consultations with the OAU and the host country, that the joint ministerial Conference which took eighteen months to prepare was post-poned.

Without a previous notice, the Secretariat and the member countries of the OAU were presented with a fait accompli the only alternative then was to take note of the decision of the Council of the League of Arab states.

The Afro - Arab Ministerial Conference was therefore post-poned when it was necessary to make a critical review of the methods, procedures and structural mechanisms of the Afro-Arab co-operation. Its main purpose was to pave the way to the Afro-Arab summit and, it is needless to say that non tractable and dynamic trends were expected from the summit in order to translate the whole ideas solemnly set forth by the first Afro-Arab summit of 1977 into reality.

Preparation of the joint conference of Afro - Arab labour ministers.

In accordance with the provisions of 11 (b) of resolution CM/Res. 721 (XXXIII) Rev. 1 adopted at the Monrovia summit in July 1979, the OAU and LAS secretariats already held consultations so as to fix the dates and venue of the joint conference of Afro - Arab labour ministers.

During a preparatory meeting which brought together in Baghdad (IRAQ), from 12 to 15 December 1979, the officials of the two secretariats in it decided: that the conference of Afro - Arab labour ministers would be held in Tunis (Tunisia) from 21 to 24 April 1980. The venue of the Conference had been proposed by the secretariat of the League of Arab state at a meeting held from 15 to 17 October 1979 by the OAU and LAS secretariats;

- that the joint conference would precede a meeting of the Inter-ministerial Committee of eleven scheduled for Baghdad in March 1980. The Inter-ministerial Committee would be requested to prepare the joint Conference.

We still have to know whether the conference will take place as anticipated under the present circumstances.

ADDF, BADEF, ECA and LAS Coordinating Meeting.

Paragraph 5 of resolution CM/Res. 721 (XXXIV) Rev 1 on Afro - Arab Co-operation adopted at the Monrovia summit requested the OAU secretary general to enter into consultation with his counter part of the league of Arab state with a view to convening a meeting of the African and Arab specialized institutions, namely HDB, BADEF and ECA to consider together a formula to help coordinate the efforts of these institutions in matters of research, programming and financing of projects in Africa -

After consultation, the two secretariats decided that the meeting to be jointly sponsored by the OAU and LAS general secretariats should be held before the joint ministerial conference, and, preferably with the proceedings of the fifth session of the standing Commission.

The General Secretariat of the OAU soon informed the Presidents of the ABD and the BADEA as well as the Executive Secretary of the ECA. It was decided to hold this meeting in Tripoli on 13 January 1980. The date was communicated to those concerned. The Chairman and Managing Director of the BADEA and the Chairman of the ABD arrived in Tripoli for the meeting on 3 January 1980.

The postponement of the meetings of the Standing Commission and of the Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference prevented some of those concerned from coming to Tripoli.

Meetings of the Afro-Arab Working Groups

The Fourth Session of the Standing Commission had decided to appoint five Working Groups which should meet in the June 1979 to May 1980 Financial period.

The OAU and LAS Secretariats decided on the dates and venues of these meetings, taking into account other joint Afro-Arab meetings. These meetings are of no use before getting a clearer idea of Afro-Arab Co-operation, unless the recommendations of these specialized committees reflect the basic options of the supreme institutional political organs of Afro-Arab Co-operation.

As regards the activities of the OAU General Secretariat in matters of Afro-Arab Co-operation, it should be mentioned that the OAU Committee of Twelve for Afro-Arab Co-operation met at the Headquarters of the OAU, at the level of plenipotentiaries, on 28 and 29 November 1979 under the Chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. C. Kabanda, Ambassador of Rwanda in Ethiopia.

The Committee considered the draft agenda of the Fifth Ordinary Session of the Standing Commission and was informed by the Secretariat of the steps it took in finding ways and means to implement Resolution CM/Res.721(XXIII) Rev.1 adopted in Monrovia.

Schedule of the Joint Afro-Arab Meetings
provisionally adopted after consult-
ations between the Secretariats of
the OAU and of the League of Arab States.

15 to 18 October 1979

I November/December 1979

- a) 28 November to 1 December Meeting of African and Arab Information Experts requested to prepare the Conference
TUNIS
- b) 3 to 8 December Joint Conference of the Afro-Arab Information Ministers
TUNIS
- c) 19 to 21 December Fifth Ordinary Session of the Standing Commission
ADDIS ABABA.

II January 1980

- a) 11 to 13 January Working Group on Industry
ADDIS ABABA
- b) 15 to 17 January Meeting of the Working Group on Trade
ADDIS ABABA

III March 1980

- a) 22 to 24 March Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference
TRIPOLI
- b) 26 to 28 March Second Afro-Arab Summit
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* The two Secretariats decided in Tunis on the provisional dates of 22 to 24 March 1978, for the Joint Ministerial Conference.

After holding consultations with the Libyan Government on these dates, the latter, taking into account its commitments in March 1980 in Tripoli proposed:

- either the first fortnight of January 1980;
- or the second half of May 1980.

It seems the first period is more appropriate if we want to facilitate the preparation of the Afro-Arab Summit scheduled for March 1980.

** The date and venue of the Second Afro-Arab Summit will be considered by the Joint Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference scheduled for Tripoli.

This Conference should normally precede the Summit.

IV April 1980

a) 17 to 20 April

Working Group in charge of Social Affairs, Labour and Employment and of the preparation of the Joint Meeting of African and Arab Labour Ministers.

TUNIS

b) 28 April to 2 May

OAU/LAS Meeting of African and Arab Labour Ministers

TUNIS

V May 1980

a) 26 to 29 May

Meeting of the Working Group on Transports and Communications

TUNIS

VI June 1980

a) 1 to 4 June

Sixth Ordinary Session of the Standing Commission

TUNIS



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