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Secretariat  
P. O. Box 3243

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**ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE  
AFRICAINNE**

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B. P. 3243

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



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

The Secretary-General has the honour to present attached herewith as Annex I the Seventh Report of the Co-ordinating Committee for the implementation of the Pan-African Telecommunications Network (PANAFTEL) which met in Geneva from 10 - 11 December 1979.

2. The Committee in its Seventh 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. Since the Sixth Report not much progress has actually been realized in the PANAFTEL project due to certain inhibiting factors, notably lack of adequate and assured regular sources of financing to complete certain phases of the Network and lack of funds to put under implementation, new routes surveyed and additional routes to be surveyed.

4. During the same period the Co-ordinating Committee reviewed progress made in the newly proclaimed Transport and Communications Decade for Africa especially the results of the Pledging Conference that took place in New York in November 1979. Though the outcome of that Conference was disappointing it however helped to bring to the attention of the international community, especially the developed countries, Africa's urgent need in the development of her transport and communications sectors.

5. The Committee further looked into proposals for holding the 3rd African Telecommunications Conference. It drew up the agenda for the Conference and welcomed the invitation from the Government of Liberia to host that Conference during December 1980. The African Telecommunication Conference (last one took place in Kinshasa in December 1975) appraises the over-all development of telecommunications in Africa over the intervening period with a view to co-ordinating programmes and integrating planning policies.

6. The Co-ordinating Committee also reviewed its performance at the PANAFTEL stand at TELECOM 79 which was set up jointly by the participating members of the Co-ordinating Committee of PANAFTEL. It was pointed out that the "activity was successful in publicizing the efforts of African countries to extend and modernize their telecommunications systems .....".

7. Actions 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 Co-ordinating Committee in its work.

## Annex I

SEVENTH REPORT OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE  
PANAFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK TO THE  
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE ORGANIZATION  
OF AFRICAN UNITY

Introduction

1. The Coordinating Committee for the Panafriean Telecommunications Network consists of the Executive Head of the Organization of African Unity, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the International Telecommunication Union and the Panafriean Telecommunication Union.

2. It was set up in response to a Resolution of the Heads of State of the Organization of African Unity. The PANAFTEL Coordinating Committee met twice during 1979 on the 16th of April in Addis Ababa and on the 10th and 11th of December in Geneva. The Committee has pleasure in presenting its 7th report to the Council of Ministers.

Progress with the implementation of the PANAFTEL network

3. The progress of the implementation of the PANAFTEL network was examined in detail by the Committee. By the end of 1979, it is expected that there will be twenty automatic international telephone exchanges in service in African countries. Almost all of the countries operate automatic international telex exchanges. Seven new earthstations for international satellite communications were brought into service during 1979. It was noted, however, that the bulk of the traffic carried by these earth-stations is intercontinental and they are little used for circuits between African countries. This is partially due to technical reasons but a coordinated effort on the part of the African Administrations could probably overcome some of these difficulties and enable them to profit more fully from the heavy investments they have made in this type of communication equipment. With this in mind the Committee invites

PATU and ITU to cooperate in organizing regional meetings of African earth-station operators at traffic manager level to ensure closer coordination and cooperation between such stations. Many terrestrial routes have also been brought into service and many others are already under construction and will be in service 1980 or early 1981.

4. Although good progress is being made in many areas, a number of difficulties are being experienced where implementation is not progressing for lack of finance or for other reasons. These difficulties have been referred to in the previous report of the Coordinating Committee following which a letter signed by three of the members of the Committee was despatched to the countries concerned requesting information on the action being taken to implement those systems which were causing concern to the Committee. So far, there have been few responses of this letter and the Committee proposes to address a further letter to those who have not so far replied.

5. A further subject to which greatly increased attention will have to be paid in the future is that adequate maintenance will have to be carried out on the system. Many systems already installed are suffering premature degradation or frequent and lengthy interruptions due to lack of fuel, spare parts, measuring instruments and preventive maintenance. The UNDP plans to provide considerable additional finance to support the PANAFTEL project during the next 3 years and the bulk of this finance will be allocated to maintenance.

6. It was reported that both ITU and PATU were planning seminars dealing with maintenance during 1980. It was further reported by ECA that provision had been made to finance such a seminar in the Decade programme. It was agreed that these activities should be coordinated.

#### Transport and Communications Decade in Africa

7. The PANAFTEL Committee has followed carefully the progress of the communications sector of the Transport and Communication Decade in Africa during the past year. Immediately prior to the April session of the Committee in Addis Ababa, a technical committee of experts and an inter-agency meeting examined the work of the ECA's consultants and input on telecommunications prepared by the ITU. The report of the technical committee was approved by PANAFTEL Committee and became the basis of the telecommunications programme

put forward to the Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications, Information and Planning held in Addis Ababa from the 9th to the 12th of May 1979.

8. At the December 1979 meeting of the Committee, the ECA representative reported on subsequent activities up to and including the Pledging Conference organized by the United Nations Secretary-General in New York on the 20th of November 1979 and indicated the steps which the ECA, as lead agency for the Decade, is taking to work out a strategy based on the results of that Pledging Conference. It was noted that much of the finance which was indicated as being earmarked for Decade projects will be supplied in the form of bilateral aid by donor countries and organizations. While these proposals for aid are subject to further negotiation and agreement, a contribution by the UNDP can be made available immediately. The UNDP representative confirmed that UNDP had pledged a sum of US\$ 5,2 million for the year 1980-81-82 which can be made available immediately out of which US\$ 1,96 million is allocated to telecommunications.

### 3rd African Telecommunications Conference

9. The programme for the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa calls for an African Telecommunications Conference to be held during 1980. The Committee discussed the proposals for the holding of this Conference. The dates of the Conference are still to be determined but it is expected that the Government of Liberia will undertake to host the Conference in Monrovia.

10. The Committee drew up an agenda for the Conference and this is being circulated to all African Administrations early in 1980 to ensure adequate time for preparation.

11. The Conference will look at the whole range of telecommunications development in Africa with a view to coordinating programmes and integrating planning policies for the remainder of the Decade.

Relations with sub-regional Economic Groups and Investment Banks participating in Telecommunications Development

12. The members of the Committee agreed to take all possible steps to coordinate the work of the sub-regional economic groupings in the field of telecommunications and in particular the subregional PANAFTEL coordinating meetings should be closely associated with the activities of the MULPOCs.

Inter-country coordination

13. The Panafrican Telecommunication Union has increased its activity during the year by fostering inter-country coordination on a number of specific projects in the PANAFTEL network.

PANAFTEL Stand at TELECOM 79

14. In In September 1979, a telecommunications exhibition known as TELECOM 79 was organized 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 publicizing the efforts of African countries to extend and modernize their telecommunications systems and attracted a great deal of interest from the many visitors who included 50 ministers and 80 ambassadors from all over the world. Associated with the Exhibition a telecommunications symposium took place which brought together over two thousands specialists to listen to papers by eminent Authorities in the field of telecommunications. Among the papers describing regional achievements in telecommunications in different parts of the world, was one of PANAFTEL given by Mr. Egbe Tabi, Minister of Communications of the Republic of Cameroon.

Geneva, December 11, 1979

The Secretary-General of the  
International Telecommunication Union

For the Secretary-General of the  
Organization of African Unity

SIGNED

SIGNED

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M. MILI

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O. MUNTASSER

For the Executive Secretary of the  
UN Economic Commission for Africa

For the Secretary-General of the  
Panafrikan Telecommunications Union

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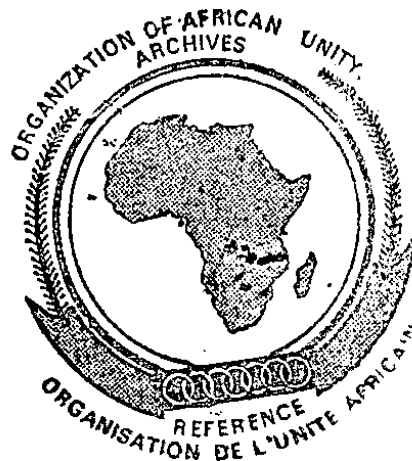
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W.F. COLEMAN

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R. YUSUF





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