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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON AFRO-ARAB CO-OPERATION



REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION

I. INTRODUCTION

During its Forty-fourth Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 21 to 26 July 1986, the Council of Ministers of the OAU adopted Resolution CM/Res.1068(XLIV) which among others,

- "1. Congratulates the Secretaries-General of the OAU and the League of Arab States on the efforts made to convene the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee requested to prepare the first session of the Joint Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference.
2. Supports the proposal by the two Secretaries-General of the OAU and the League of Arab States to maintain the Ad Hoc Committee as originally constituted, namely, Senegal, Bahrain, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the two Secretaries-General of the OAU and the League of Arab States."

II. PREPARATION OF THE MEETING OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE

The Secretary-General continued his efforts relating to the implementation of the relevant Resolutions of the Council and the programme of activities already approved by the joint OAU/League of Arab States institutions. The two Secretaries General OAU/League of Arab States held consultations alongside the Summit meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in early September 1986. On that occasion they recommended that the necessary steps should be taken to convene the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee in Tunis, Tunisia, in November 1986.

Soon afterwards, the OAU General Secretariat received a note verbale dated 18 September 1986 from the People's Bureau of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in which the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya informed the Secretariat of its inability to host the first Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference.

A copy of the note was transmitted to all OAU Member States by note verbale dated 29 September 1986. The Secretary-General by the same token requested "Member States of the OAU interested to submit at their earliest convenience their candidatures to host the Afro-Arab Ministerial Conference on a date to be fixed after consultations with all the parties concerned".

At the time of writing this report no State had indicated its interest in hosting the meeting.

Meanwhile, the two Secretaries-General have continued their efforts to convene a Ministerial Ad Hoc Committee in Tunis and even scheduled the meeting for November 6th, 1986. This led the OAU Secretariat to extend an invitation to H.E. the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal to participate in the meeting.

However, a few days before the scheduled meeting, the OAU Secretariat was informed that "Bahrain regretted that it could not carry out the responsibility of representing the Arab party for objective reasons which made it impossible for this State to ensure follow-up and discharge the duties ensuing from such responsibility on account of the limited number of its diplomatic staff and the mobilization of the staff and diplomatic structure for the follow-up of the developments in the Gulf Region.

By the same token, the Government of Bahrain requested that another Arab State assume the responsibility incumbent on the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee. It also expressed the will to participate actively in activities relating to Afro-Arab cooperation.

It was in the light of this development that the League of Arab States proposed that Bahrain be replaced by Algeria in its capacity as Current Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the League.

In view of these developments, the OAU Secretariat requested a postponment of the Ad Hoc meeting to allow for adequate consultations before the meeting is convened.

Given that the arrangement between the two Secretariats to maintain the original membership of the Committee in order to ensure follow-up and continuity of its activities was no longer tenable because of the withdrawal of Bahrain, and pursuant to the spirit of the recommendation of the Eighth Session of the

Standing Committee (Damascus - 15 to 17 January, 1986) relating to the Current Chairman of the two Organizations, the OAU General Secretariat informed Senegal about the changes proposed by the League of Arab States and requested His Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of the Congo to participate in the Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Committee as representative of the Current Chairman of the OAU and the African party.

III. MEETING OF THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE

The Ad-Hoc finally met on 12 January, 1987 in Tunis at the Headquarters of the League of Arab States with the following personalities participating:

OAU Delegation

- H.E. Mr. Benjamin Bounkoulou, Ambassador of the People's Republic of the Congo and Representative of H.E. the Current Chairman of the OAU; and
- H.E. Dr. S. Nsanzimana, Assistant Secretary-General in-charge of Coordination and Special Duties.

League of Arab States Delegation

- H.E. Dr. Messaoud Ait Chalaal, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and Representative of H.E. the Chairman of the Council of the League of Arab States; and
- H.E. Mr. Adnan Omram, Assistant Secretary-General in charge of International Political Affairs.

After reviewing the difficulties encountered, the Committee reaffirmed the commitment of the Arab and African sides to the holding of the Afro-Arab Conference of Ministers as a means of giving new dimensions to the

cooperation, strengthening solidarity between the two communities in the face of common challenges and so as to prepare the Second Afro-Arab Summit. In this regard, the OAU Delegation reiterated the right of all Member States of the OAU, without any exception to participate in the Conference prevent any legal, political or other obstacle from impeding its holding. In that connection, the League of Arab States Delegation stated that the two Organizations were each sovereign and that the League of Arab States fully respected OAU's decision on the participation of all its members in the meeting.

The Committee then considered the steps taken or to be taken and the consultations made or to be made to designate a country to host the Conference following the withdrawal of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Having noted that Libya had offered to host the Conference as a Member State of the OAU, the Committee requested the OAU General Secretariat to undertake consultations with a view to finding another OAU member country to host the Afro-Arab Conference of Ministers.

The Committee also underscored the fact that the two General Secretariats would jointly bear the expenses relating to the holding of the Conference in conformity with the provisions governing meetings on Afro-Arab Cooperation and within the scope of the appropriate budget allocations. That would also enable the country which would host the Conference to know its commitment.

Furthermore, the Committee considered the draft agenda of the First Afro-Arab Conference of Ministers adopted by the Eighth Session of the Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Cooperation held in Damascus from 15 to 17 January, 1986 and proposed that an item relating to the struggle against the racist regimes in South Africa and occupied Palestine be included. In other words, the agenda of the Conference would be the following:

1. Opening Ceremony.
2. Election of the Bureau and the Drafting Committee.
3. Adoption of the Draft Agenda.
4. Organization of Work.
5. Joint Report on the Activities of the General Secretariats of the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States in the various fields of Afro-Arab Cooperation since March 1977.
6. Report on the means to fight and boycott the two racist regimes in South Africa and occupied Palestine.
7. Report of the General Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States on the Activities of the Economic Financial and Technical bodies of Afro-Arab Cooperation (in coordination with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) since March 1977.
8. Report of the Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Cooperation to the First Session of the Joint Afro-Arab Conference of Ministers since March 1977.
9. Date and Venue of the Second Afro-Arab Summit Conference
10. Any Other Business.



Lastly, considering the need to keep the Standing Commission informed of the recommendations of the Ad-Hoc Committee and in order not to interrupt the activities and the implementation of the programmes on Afro-Arab Cooperation, the Committee felt that consultations relating to the Organization of the Conference could be held alongside the preparations for the Ninth Session of Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Cooperation. The Committee recommended that the OAU General Secretariat undertake consultations with officials of Burkina Faso, as part of the preparation of the Ninth Session of the Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Cooperation, in order to select a date in April 1987 for the meeting. In that connection the Committee requested the OAU/LAS Secretariats to

prepare the relevant draft agendas and working documents..

IV. THE AFRO ARAB CULTURAL INSTITUTE

The OAU General Secretariat was also involved in the follow-up of the issue of the Afro-Arab-Cultural Institute. It should be noted that during their last meeting in June 1986, the experts of the three related organizations, the OAU, the League of Arab States and ALECSO agreed to meet again on 23 and 24 October, 1986 to review candidatures submitted for hosting the Headquarters and for the post of Assistant Director General of the Afro-Arab Cultural Institute and make concrete proposals to the Chief Executives of the three organizations of the practical measures for launching the Institute in January 1987. However, the Secretariats involved have not received any new candidatures apart from Uganda (Kampala) and Mali (Timbuctu) for the African party which have already proposed to host the Headquarters. Through mutual agreement they decided to postpone the meeting until enough candidatures have been received from Member States.

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