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FBM/4 (LXIV) (d)

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CARFOP PROJECT

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1. In implementation of the request advanced by the Advisory Committee at its 63rd Ordinary Session Paragraph 116 of its Final Report, Document Ref: CM/1908 (LXIII), the General Secretariat (ESCAS Department) considered the convening of an Extra-Ordinary meeting of the Governing Board of CARFOP, which the Committee recommended to be convened not later than 31st March, 1996. Considering the availability of space and other logistics necessary for holding the meeting, the Secretariat proposed to the Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon in Addis Ababa on 12th of February, 1996 that the meeting take place from 29th February to 1st March, 1996 at the OAU Headquarters. This decision was taken in order to benefit from the presence of most of the delegates of the concerned members attending the 63rd Session of the OAU Council of Ministers. The Secretariat, as well informed the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and the Chairman of the Committee of 14 on Structural Reforms about these arrangements, (copy of the Secretariat's Note Verbale Ref: ASG/ESCAS/6/5.96 dated 12 February 1996 attached).

2. On 13th of February, the Secretariat received a Note Verbale Ref: No.33/96/NV/ACA/1 from the Embassy of Cameroon in Ethiopia in reply to the Secretariat's Note Verbale. The Embassy in its communication mentioned that the Secretariat did not follow properly the contents of document CM/1908 (LXIII) in particular paragraph 115 D which stipulates the need for the consultation meeting before the proposed Session of the Governing Board of CARFOP. In conclusion, the Embassy did not accept the proposed dates for convening the Extra-Ordinary Session of the Governing Board of CARFOP. At the same time, the Embassy proposed to hold this envisaged Session before the 64th Session of the OAU Council of Ministers scheduled in Yaounde from 1 to 5 July, 1996. (copy attached).

3. The Secretariat replied the esteemed Embassy of Cameroon in Addis Ababa in its Note Verbale Ref: ESCAS/ST/32.92/96 dated 5th March, 1996 through which more explanation on the issue was given to the Embassy (copy attached).

4. By this brief report, the Secretariat is seeking the advise of the Advisory Committee on the issue as it was not possible for the Secretariat to hold the meeting before 31st March, 1996 as was requested by the Committee.

ESCAS/ST/32.92/96
5th March, 1996

The General Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity presents its compliments to the Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon in Addis Ababa, and with reference to the Embassy's Note Verbale Ref: No.33/96/NV/ACA/1 dated 13 February, 1996 concerning "CARFOP", the Secretariat took note of the views expressed by the Embassy and will inform the members of the Advisory Committee accordingly. However, the Secretariat has the honour to inform the Embassy of the following:

1. The Secretariat has had the intention to convene the preparatory meeting referred to in paragraph 115 of the Final Report of the Advisory Committee, if the proposal of organizing the Extra-Ordinary meeting of the Governing Board of CARFOP was accepted and maintained, in order to help and prepare for the said session of the Board.
2. Regarding the issue that the Secretariat made an infringement ("grave entorse") to the OAU rules and regulations, the Secretariat wishes to draw the Embassy's attention to the fact that this extra-ordinary meeting was planned for, immediately after the meeting of the Council of Ministers and not before, which means that the Council would have had the opportunity to decide whether this meeting was relevant or not. Indeed, the Secretariat was of the view that foreseeing the issue was rather wiser than being questioned by Member States on why the Secretariat did not plan for such a meeting.
3. As for the timing of calling the meeting to convene after the Council, described as irrelevant, the Secretariat would like to remind the Embassy that the Board does not include necessarily all Ministers of Foreign Affairs, rather than the experts in the fields covered by CARFOP. It was assumed that the delegations would comprise of both diplomats and experts. The attendance of the partners of the project (non-diplomats) would also have been beneficial for the discussions. Moreover, it has even been demonstrated that quite a good number of delegates (including Ministers) did attend the meeting on Burundi which took place after the 63rd Council of Ministers on 29 February and 1st March 1996.

4. Finally, as there are financial implications related to the issue, the Board cannot report directly to the Council of Ministers as suggested by the Embassy, without passing through the Advisory Committee as per its recommendations.

The General Secretariat of the OAU avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon in Addis Ababa, the assurances of its highest consideration.

To: Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon in Addis Ababa presents its compliments to the General Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity, and has the honour to acknowledge receipt of the latter's Note Verbale No. ASG/ESCAS/6/5.96 dated 12 February 1996 in connection with the convening of an Extra-ordinary Session of the Governing Board of the African Centre for Phytosanitary Research and Training (CARFOP).

Although the Embassy does not call to question the absolute need to hold the said meeting, it would however like to express surprise at the General Secretariat's interpretation of Document CM/1908 (LXIII).

Whereas paragraph 115 (d) of the said Document, recognized the need for convening "a Consultation Meeting before the proposed Session of the Governing Board of CARFOP", the Embassy would like to point out that, to its knowledge, the meeting in question had never taken place.

The Embassy wishes to state, furthermore that recommendations formulated by the Advisory Committee, be it in relation to CARFOP or to other issues that had been the subject of its deliberation, do not come into effect except such recommendations have been approved by the Council of Ministers in conformity with the relevant provisions of Article 100 (b) of the OAU Financial Rules and Regulations. The Embassy is therefore of the view that convening a meeting of the Governing Board of CARFOP along the lines proposed by the General Secretariat would constitute a serious infringement of the rules and regulations governing the operations of the Organization of African Unity.

The Embassy would also like to point out that the reasons advanced in the General Secretariat's Note Verbale under reference, would appear to have ignored the fact that, according to established practice of Council Sessions, most of the Ministers never stayed in Addis Ababa beyond the dates scheduled for such sessions owing to time constraints. As a matter of fact a number of them often left Addis ababa even before the end of Council Sessions.

In view of the aforesaid, the Embassy requests the General Secretariat:

- 1) to use the opportunity offered by the 63rd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers to obtain the consensus of Member States including the host country, on the possible dates as well as on the agenda for an extra-ordinary Session of the Governing Board of CARFOP; and
- 2) conduct an indepth study on the future of CARFOP in consultation with all the Member States whose nationals are students of the Centre;
- 3) paragraph 115 (e) of Document CM/1908 (LXIII) requested the Secretary-General to report to the November 1996 Session of the Advisory Committee, on the progress made in the implementation of the provisions of paragraph 226 (b) of Document CM/1800 (LXI) Rev.1. The Embassy however feels that, to avoid hasty decisions and a repeat of past mistakes, an Extra-ordinary Session of CARFOP, properly prepared, could hold shortly before the 64th Ordinary Session of the Council of Minister stated for Yaounde in June 1996. The advantage offered by such a date is that the decisions of the meeting would be endorsed by that Session of the Council.

The Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the General Secretariat, of the Organization of African Unity the assurances of its highest consideration.

General Secretariat of OAU
Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa, 13 February, 1996

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