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ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE
AFRICAIN
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COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
Thirteenth Ordinary Session
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Addis Ababa

CM/277

THE SELECTION OF AN OAU EMBLEM



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The selection of an OAU Emblem has been a subject of considerable but fruitless discussions ever since 1964, when the Third Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers meeting in Cairo agreed in Resolution 45(III) to request the Administrative Secretary-General to appeal to African artists to submit sketches of emblem for the Organization of African Unity.

This was duly done but the response was very poor. Subsequently, it was said that this poor response was due to the absence of a reward to be given to a winning artist. Consequently a reward of US.\$5,000 (Five thousand) was offered to the winning artists in the second competition which was held in 1965. Altogether 1482 designs were received but the Council of Ministers which met in Accra at that time rejected all of them as unsuitable for the required emblem. Instead it recommended that the same competition should be repeated and that the reward should be reduced to US.\$1,000 (One thousand).

The third competition was done in two stages. First each Member State was asked to organize a national competition from which it was to select its best three designs and send these to the OAU General Secretariat. The few Member States that participated in this exercise sent their best selections to the General Secretariat, and the Secretariat in turn submitted them to the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers which rejected all of them as unsuitable. So once again the usual instructions were issued to the Secretariat to carry on with the competition.

The Secretariat therefore circulated this information concerning the competition for an OAU emblem for the fourth time among all OAU Member States. As a result, 374 sketches were received at the Secretariat, and were submitted to the Ninth Ordinary Session of the Council of Minister which again dismissed all of them as unfit for the OAU emblem.

During the fifth time that this competition was carried, the Secretariat took the liberty to making the following proposals:

- (1) Firstly the Secretariat took all the best designs received in 1966 and 1967 and included them in the 1968 collection. All of these were taken to Algiers where the 11th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers had ample time to examine them, and to select the most suitable one for an OAU emblem.

- (2) Secondly the Secretariat proposed that if the best design found in the collection in proposal above required improvement, then the Council could issue specific directions to the artist concerned asking him to make the necessary alterations.
- (3) Finally the Secretariat suggested that if proposal (1) and (2) above could not bring forth a satisfying design, then the Council should issue instructions either to the Secretariat or to a designated body of experts empowering them to; pick a good artist who would then be entrusted with the task of designing a suitable emblem for the OAU.

The Secretariat had indeed hoped that any of the alternatives above could have solved this problem of the OAU Emblem. But as it turned out, the Council rejected them all and issued instead the usual directions that yet another competition should be organized.

While organizing the sixth competition, the Secretariat, for the second time, took the liberty of making the following proposals:

- (1) Firstly it requested each Member State to contact some of its best artists and ask them to make several designs which would be submitted to the Council of Ministers in February, 1969.
- (2) Secondly it asked Member States to do their utmost to publicise the competition to the public at large and to stress to them the importance of the maturity of the artistic work required for this emblem in view of so many previous failures.

As a response to this request about one hundred sketches were received at the Secretariat and were presented to the 12th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers. But the Council of Ministers rejected all of them as unsatisfactory.

It appears reasonable, therefore, to conclude that there is something wrong either with the method used, or with our attitude towards this matter or with both the method and the attitude. Whatever the case may be it is quite clear that a revision is needed in our manner of approach to this matter. The Secretariat feels that it has exhausted all possibilities known to it and would therefore appreciate a re-examination of this matter by the Council of Ministers, bearing in mind, the efforts and various methods used previously.

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COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
THIRTEENTH ORDINARY SESSION
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER, 1969
ADDIS ABABA

CM/277
Addendum 1.

THE SELECTION OF AN OAU EMBLEM



THE SELECTION OF AN OAU EMBLEM

This addendum to the paper CM/277 is for the purpose of making additional proposals on the Selection of an OAU Emblem.

- (1) First of all the Secretariat would like to inform the Council that some of the designs that were retained until the very last rounds in previous competitions are still available should the Council choose to re-examine them. About 10 of these can be produced easily for this purpose. Others have been claimed by their designers. Furthermore, it is suggested that if the first sketch found in this collection still requires improvements, then the Council of Ministers may issue specific instructions to the artist concerned to make the necessary alterations.
- (2) Secondly, it has been observed that most of the best sketches in this competition had a map of Africa as a common factor. For this reason, it is suggested that if proposal (1) above is unacceptable to the Council, then this organization may choose to have, for its emblem, a plain map of Africa without boundaries, and placed on a suitable background. Perhaps a map of Africa in golden colour on a light-blue background could just as well serve the purpose. The Council may, however, wish to have other colour combinations. The golden colour would stand for wealth and the light-blue colour for peace. The map of Africa without boundaries would signify unity.
- (3) If proposal (1) and (2) above are still unacceptable to the Council, then it is proposed that in order to solve this matter within the minimum time-limit, a country, or a group of countries, or the Secretary General be empowered to carry out further studies, and produce a design suitable for this Organization's emblem.

This could be done in several ways. Either the Council can ask this designated body of "experts" to produce one emblem that would be acceptable to the Council of Ministers, or they can ask them to produce two or more designs from which the Council of Ministers would accept the most popular one.

The Secretariat indeed hopes that any of the alternatives mentioned above if properly carried out could end this question of the OAU emblem which is already so overdue.

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The selection of an OAU Emblem

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