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REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN GROUP AT THE
UNITED NATIONS COVERING THE PERIOD FROM
SEPTEMBER 1970 TO JUNE 1971



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1. In keeping with well-established and accepted tradition, the African Group at the United Nations took the initiative during the Twenty-fifth Ordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly in co-ordinating its efforts as much as possible in accordance with the Charter of the Organization of African Unity and in pursuance of the resolutions adopted by the Seventh Assembly of Heads of State and Government of our Organization. As in the past, the activities of the Group were based on the serious problem of the right of peoples to self-determination, problems of international peace and security as well as economic problems placed on the Agenda of the Twenty-fifth Ordinary Session of the General Assembly and the Special Session devoted to the Twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

2. During the debates based on the study of the Report of the Special Committee on Decolonization, the African Group, in collaboration with the Asian Group and against the background of OAU resolutions, submitted draft resolutions on Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and on territories under Portuguese domination; Namibia and others. These draft resolutions were adopted by a good majority of the General Assembly as a result of the cohesion of the Group within the Afro-Asian family and the support it had from the Latin-American and Socialist Groups.

3. However, as has usually been the case at previous sessions, the African Group faced a clear and categorical opposition from the Western Powers when it moved to take the only measures likely to put an end to the rebellion in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), to colonialism in Guinea Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and to apartheid in South Africa in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations Organization, the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to colonial countries and peoples, and in conformity with the numerous resolutions of the General Assembly condemning colonialism and apartheid as crimes against mankind. This opposition came particularly from the Big Powers which are Permanent Members of the Security Council as well as the trading

partners and military allies of Portugal and the minority and racist regimes of Southern Africa. It should be noted that this lack of co-operation continues to exist and each day, gradually undermines the very fabric of the United Nations because of the deliberate refusal of the Western Powers to adhere to the Charter and to implement resolutions adopted under the strong pressure of the African Group against the economic, strategic and military interests which enable the Government of Portugal and the White minority racists to keep millions of people in Southern Africa under the colonial and racist yoke.

4. The big Western Powers have deliberately chosen to boycott United Nations efforts aimed at putting an end to the most anachronistic situation in Southern Africa. The difficulties created for the African Group and to peace-loving States in drawing up the program of action for the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to colonial countries and peoples, the Declaration made on the occasion of the Twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations as well as the recent withdrawal of the United States of America and the United Kingdom from the Special Committee of 24, quite clearly substantiate this stand. This political stand of the Western Powers which are Permanent Members of the Security Council is the result of immense pressure exerted at the "lobby" by the big financial and other trusts exploiting the enormous natural resources (mining, forestry, agriculture and so forth) and cheap labour in the colonial territories in Africa and particularly, in South Africa. These economic interests, naturally linked with strategic and military interests, constitute serious obstacles in the path of independence of the dependent territories in Southern Africa and paralyse the diplomatic action taken by the African Group at the United Nations.

5. The Twenty-fifth Ordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly was a Session of frustration for the African Group. On the questions of decolonization and the struggle against apartheid, dialogue no longer exists. There is, on the one hand, Africa and its friends which call for self-determination and freedom for all peoples in accordance with the Charter and the historic Declaration on the Granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples and on the other, the powerful partners of Portugal and the racist minority White settlers

of Southern Africa OAU, in order to safeguard their economic and strategic interests, refuse to co-operate with the United Nations in the search for solutions that can put an immediate end to colonialism and apartheid. The study of the Report of the Special Committee on Apartheid by the General Assembly gave rise to the same difficulties due to the stand of the trading partners of the Pretoria regime. These difficulties were created with the sole object of safeguarding their interests in contempt of the United Nations Charter and the numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council on the question of apartheid. The question of Namibia has the same fate as the other colonial questions. Though that problem is essentially political, the big Western Powers have wilfully placed it in a legal bottleneck. However, in pursuance of resolution CM/231(XV), the African members of the Security Council and those on the International Law Commission held two meetings in New York at which H.E. Dr. Elias, Minister of Justice of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President of the International Law Commission and H.E. Dr. El Erian, Ambassador of the United Arab Republic to Paris were requested to prepare and submit a joint OAU Memorandum on Namibia to the International Court of Justice at the Hague in accordance with the Security Council resolution 284 (1970) of 9 July, 1970. (The document submitted on behalf of Africa by Dr. Elias is hereto attached as annex).

6. The continued existence of colonialism constitutes a very big danger to the security of independent African States and a threat to international peace and security. The dastardly aggression perpetrated by Portuguese mercenaries against the Republic of Guinea on 22 November, 1970, is a crystal proof of this. Needless to say, that aggression which was another of Portugal's previous heinous crimes against Senegal, the Peoples Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Zambia, shows how mythical the independence of our States is in as far as colonialist and racist enclaves continue to exist on the African continent. It is therefore imperative and overriding that the liberation of the last bastions of colonialism and racism be made the prime objective of the Organization of African Unity. The outcome of Portugal's abuse of power was the strengthening of the African Group which remained on the side of the Guinean delegation during the debate on the matter at the Security Council. Notwithstanding the abstention of France, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Spain

during the vote on the resolution, the African Group achieved a diplomatic success by securing the condemnation of Portugal and the strengthening of Africa in its anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggle.

7. Doubtless to say, the African Group takes cognizance of the fact that as far as the question of decolonization and apartheid is concerned, the impasse at the United Nations subsists as a result of the contradictory interests of the political Groups constituting that Organization. Faced with this paralysis of the United Nations, what could be effectively done to get the questions of the right of peoples to self-determination and apartheid out of the legal bottle-neck in which they have wilfully been placed by the big Western Powers? Henceforth, it behoves the policy-making bodies of our Organization to answer this question and to give the necessary instructions to the African Group at the United Nations to defend the decision taken with mutual accord in conformity with the Charter of the Organization of African Unity. Against the background of the political atmosphere at the United Nations, the Secretariat wishes to submit the following suggestions for the consideration of the Council of Ministers in the hope that they would be of help to it in advancing the cause of decolonization where it exists and on the diplomatic plane:

- (a) It has become imperative to give the liberation movements the necessary material to enable them face the economic and military interests of the Western Powers that militate against their efforts to achieve independence in their various countries. This question can be studied in detail by the Liberation Committee and the Committee of Military Experts.
- (b) It is absolutely necessary to organize the explanatory campaign in Western Europe against colonialism and apartheid more rationally in order to sensitize European public opinion and thereby bring pressure to bear on the financial and government circles. This method was used last March by the Special Committee on Apartheid. During the International Day of the struggle against racism and apartheid, that Committee organized a seminar on the study of apartheid and measures to eliminate it. The Special Committee invited non-governmental organizations from France, the United Kingdom and Canada engaged in the anti-apartheid

and anti-colonialist struggle as well as Church, Youth, Trade Union and other representatives. The support of these Organizations was appreciated. They made very useful proposals and promised to further inform the opinion of their various countries of the baneful actions of Western European Governments through their support to Portugal and the racist regimes of Southern Africa. The Special Committee on Decolonization is preparing a seminar to be held next year in an European capital. All these measures should lead to the isolation of Portugal and the minority and racist regimes of Southern Africa. The Secretariat, for its part, this year organized a conference in Dar-Es-Salaam on colonialism. It hopes to continue to intensify this kind of action in the future.

- (c) In taking bilateral relations as basis, African leaders should bring their partners in Europe and the United States of America to appreciate the need to choose between their interests in independent Africa and their economic and military co-operation with Portugal and the supporters of the minority and racist regimes in Southern Africa. Above all, the Secretariat thinks of the enormous sources of energy exploited by European firms to cope with the needs of the developed countries (petrol, natural gas and soon, Africa's surplus electricity). These strategic resources should serve as means of exerting pressure for the elimination of the last bastions of colonialism and racism in Southern Africa.
- (d) At the multilateral level, the delegation of the Organization of African Unity led by H.E. President Kenneth KAUNDA, Current Chairman of OAU, that visited certain European capitals and the United Nations Organization achieved a certain amount of success considering that the mission made it possible to sensitize world public opinion. This effort should be continued in spite of the immense difficulties.
- (e) The African Group at the United Nations made contacts with black American Senators who expressed the desire to help Africa by intervening with the United States Congress and the White

House on behalf of African Liberation movements. Furthermore, groups of black American revolutionary workers and Presbyterian churches organized explanatory campaigns throughout the United States against American firms helping Portugal to pursue its dirty war of reconquest in Africa and the minority and racist regimes to remain in power in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and in South Africa. The African Group decided to encourage this initiative through frequent contacts.

8. On the economic plane, through the dynamic action of the African Group within the framework of the Group of 77, the General Assembly succeeded in securing a majority adoption of the international development strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade. This document is one of those adopted by the Heads of State and Government and Special Envoys who participated in the deliberations of the Special Session devoted to the commemoration of the Twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Organization. In the course of drafting this basic document, the African Group had to put everything to the wheel to adopt stands considered by Africa as the lowest possible. For various reasons, African diplomacy here again faced the non-co-operation of the rich countries from both the capitalist and socialist camps. Through pressure exerted by the African Group, the General Assembly adopted an important text on the unlimited rights of States over their natural resources. At the international level, that text acknowledged the sovereignty of developing countries over their natural wealth, thus rendering legitimate any action that any Government may take to safeguard the interests of its people in the face of international Trusts.

9. It must be pointed out here that up to now, the African Group has not succeeded in adopting a common stand on the problem of disarmament which is, as is well known, linked with the general problem of peace which was discussed by the Political Committee of the General Assembly. The cause of this weakness is the short-term interests of our States and the alliance of African Governments in the general field of individual State policy. This disparity of stands had adverse consequences during the debate on the problem of sea bed. Prior to the Twenty-fifth Session of the General Assembly, our natural allies, the Asians and Latin-Americans managed to study the question of sea bed and knew

exactly what they were talking about during the discussions in the "lobby". This is how the African Group came to have varying views to the advantage of the other Groups.

The African Group, however, took a lesson from that weakness after the Session. It studied the important question of sea bed and succeeded in making certain points over which agreement was possible. It noted that for the preparation of the Conference on the law of the Sea scheduled for 1973, the preparatory Committee set up by the General Assembly should necessarily include at least four sub-Committees with the following mandate:

First Sub-Committee

will be entrusted with studying "the establishment of an equitable international regime - including an international machinery" - applicable to the area and resources of the sea bed, ocean floor and their sub-soil that lie beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and, with studying a precise definition of the area.

Second Sub-Committee

Will be entrusted with studying questions relating to those of the First Sub-Committee and, in particular, those relating to the regime of the high seas, the continental shelf, territorial waters (particularly, its limits), international straits of the adjacent area (of fishing and conservation of living resources of the high seas including preferential rights of riparian States).

Third Sub-Committee

will be entrusted with studying ways and means of promoting the exploitation and use of the resources of the area and of international co-operation to that end, bearing in mind the foreseeable development of technology and the economic implications of such exploitation.

Fourth Sub-Committee

will be entrusted with scientific research on the preservation of the sea bed and the ocean floor for peaceful uses and on the prevention of pollution.

10. On the basis of this document, it drove a hard bargain with the other groups during the last meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the conference on the sea-bed. It was able to obtain, as a compromise, the establishment of the Third Sub-Committee and the chairmanship of the Committee in charge of formulating an international regime on the exploitation of sea-bed and ocean floor for peaceful purposes. The African Group would like the Organization of African Unity to study the matter with a view to submitting an African document which would take into account the interests of land-locked as well as coastal countries.

The problem of exploitation of sea-bed resources preoccupies the big industrialized countries of the West, the socialist countries and Japan. Experts in marine sciences have discovered and are discovering daily the mineral resources buried under the sea in the remote geological ages, for example manganese nodules or other minerals and products such as copper, chrome, oil, nickel, bauxite, gas and iron. The United States of America recently invested more than 25 billion dollars in submarine research. All the scientists and specialists working in oceanography laboratories and geophysics institutes are perfecting techniques for exploitation of sea-bed mineral wealth.

Some of these methods are already being applied and it is expected that by 1973 the United States of America would be able to extract from the sea, at very low costs, the quantity of copper needed for its economy. The consequence of this exploitation would be the liquidation of the Zambian economy in Africa and the Chilean in Latin America. With regard to other resources, exploitation techniques would make it possible for the industrialized countries to dictate terms in negotiations between producing and consumer countries like the negotiations held in Teheran, Tripoli or Algiers. The exploitation of the sea can also give the enemies of Africa an additional means of exerting pressure on our countries with weak economies based most often on single commodities.

11. Considering the importance of the matter there would be the need to:

draw up a list of Africans qualified in the field of natural resources and study the problems of exploiting the sea-bed resources;

- establish, under the aegis of the Scientific Office in Lagos, a committee to study the matter;
- put at the disposal of that committee all available material to enable it to submit to the next session of the Council of Ministers a document which will deal with the matter in depth.

12. Through its cohesion and spirit of discipline, the African Group was able to have elected, without difficulty, all the African candidates at the elections held during the Twenty-fifth Ordinary Session of the General Assembly. In addition to the posts of Vice-chairman, two Africans were Chairmen of two major committees, the Committee on Non-Self-Governing Territories and the Legal Committee; one African was elected to the Security Council, three to ECOSOC, three to UNIDO, etc....

The African Group is now negotiating with a view to selecting its candidates to the elections of the Technical Committees of ECOSOC which should be held soon. Negotiations with regard to the elections of the twenty-sixth session will continue (for the present position of the African candidates and the records of the meeting of 26 March, 1971 held by the African Group on candidatures, see Annex.)

13. The relations between the Executive Secretariat and the United Nations Secretariat are being reinforced daily to the benefit of both organizations. Correspondence has been an exchange between the OAU Administrative Secretary-General and the United Nations Secretary-General with a view to rendering co-operation between the two organizations more effective in pursuance of resolution 2011 (XX).

14. Between September 1970 and June 1971, the Executive Secretariat was invited by a number of American universities to explain OAU policy on decolonization and inter-African co-operation. The black organization "American Foundation for Negro Affairs" (AFNA) invited the Executive Secretariat to Philadelphia to participate in a symposium on African problems (cultural and social Development) and the role of OAU in finding a solution to these problems. The United Presbyterian Church organized a conference in New York and a seminar in Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) on the territories under Portuguese domination. The Executive Secretariat was invited to attend these two meetings.

African Liberation Day afforded the Executive Secretariat the opportunity to receive black American senators and businessmen who promised to contribute to the liberation of Africa by collecting funds, drugs, clothes and food to be sent through OAU to the Liberation Movements.

15. All these organizations require the assistance of the Executive Secretariat in the information campaign that they are conducting against colonialism and racism in the various cities of the United States of America. The participation of the Executive Secretariat poses constitutional and financial problems at times. The Executive Secretariat enjoys no recognition or diplomatic immunities from the welcoming authorities of the United Nations. The United Nations Secretary-General who was contacted on the matter by the OAU Administrative Secretary-General in pursuance of resolution CM/Res. 233 (XV) adopted by the Heads of State was unable to solve the problem. The American Government still refuses to grant official recognition to the OAU representation at the United Nations.

16. The United Nations Secretary-General has written to the Administrative Secretary-General to suggest that the Executive Secretariat officials be placed on the diplomatic list of their respective missions to the United Nations. Despite this procedure and the fact that the present Executive Secretary who represented his country at the United Nations since 1964 is still on the diplomatic list of his country, the American Government continues to deny him diplomatic privileges and does not give him any protection. He is subject to payment of all federal taxes and those to the state of New York, in addition to the fact that neither he nor his family enjoys diplomatic protection in the exercise of his duties.

Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly difficult for diplomats accredited to the United Nations to exercise their functions peacefully. Members of permanent missions receive death threats daily. The Ivory Coast Permanent Mission was partly destroyed by a bomb planted by unknown persons on the night of 26-27 September, 1970. The North African permanent missions are under daily threats. The Spanish Ambassador was attacked in broad daylight by an individual in front of his Mission. At the time of the Portuguese aggression against the Republic of Guinea



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the Guinean Ambassador received a letter from his landlord threatening him with expulsion. The European socialist countries are experiencing the same difficulties.

In view of these facts, the United Nations General Assembly set up a Committee on relations with the host country to examine the situation. Africa is represented on this Committee by Cameroon, Liberia and Libya. This Committee is trying its best to resolve the difficulties with the host country. The African Group decided, during its meeting of 12 January, 1971, to put the matter before the policy-making bodies of OAU in order that an African initiative may be taken to approach the American Government with a view to enabling the African diplomats to discharge their heavy responsibilities under the best conditions.

17. The campaign against colonialism, racism and apartheid dictates permanent contact with non-governmental organizations in the United States of America and Western Europe. It would be useful to extend the mandate of the Executive Secretary and give him the necessary material means to accomplish his heavy responsibilities. Unfortunately, there is no provision in the budget to enable the Executive Secretary to establish such contacts. A decision of the Council of Ministers would be welcome.

Furthermore, the importance of the African missions in Geneva, the possible holding of the General Assembly in that city, the contacts with the Specialized Agencies within the framework of the General Assembly resolutions, the importance of the co-ordination of African action in UNESCO in Paris and UNIDO in Vienna, the necessary contacts with anti-colonialist and anti-apartheid movements in Western Europe urgently call for the opening of an Executive Secretariat in Geneva to cover all the sectors enumerated above. Such an absence constitutes a handicap for the continuity of the action of the African Group at the United Nations particularly as regards the preparatory negotiations for the Conference on the law of the sea and the negotiations on several other matters under discussion at ECOSOC.

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