



**ORGANIZATION OF  
AFRICAN UNITY**

Secretariat  
P. O. Box 3243

منظمة الوحدة الأفريقية  
السكرتارية  
ص. ب. ٣٢٤٣

**ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE  
AFRICAIN**

Secretariat  
B. P. 3243

Addis Ababa / أديس أبابا

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS  
Nineteenth Ordinary Session  
Rabat, June 1972.

CM/444

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL  
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN GROUP AT THE UNITED NATIONS

(Period from June 1971 to June 1972)



CMO 444

MICROFICHE

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE  
ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN GROUP AT THE UNITED NATIONS

(Period from June 1971 to June 1972)

1. The African Group at the United Nations, according to tradition, took the active initiative in the course of the twenty-sixth ordinary session of the United Nations General Assembly in accordance with the Charter of the Organization of the Heads of State and Government of our Organization. It fought to get the African viewpoint to prevail by co-ordinating its efforts with the Asian and Latin-American groups both in the domain of the right of peoples to self-determination and the more burning one of economic and social development.

2. During the traditional debate on the reports of the special committee on Colonialism, the African Group, in co-operation with the Asian Group, submitted numerous resolutions on the situation prevailing in Zimbabwe, in Namibia and in the Territories under Portuguese domination. Thanks to its cohesion and combative spirit, these texts were widely supported in the General Assembly. However, it must be realized that if, basically, all the African delegations accept the principle of the speedy liquidation of colonialism, serious divergences had appeared as to the method to be employed to definitively eradicate the colonial presence from our Continent. In fact, despite the clear declaration adopted by the seventh Conference of Heads of State and Government rejecting dialogue with the racist minorities in Southern Africa, this question had taken up a great deal of the time of the delegations during the debates devoted to colonial problems, to those of racial discrimination and to Apartheid, giving the impression of a divided battlefield in Africa in the Commission on Non Self-Governing Territories and that of the special Political Committee. The question of dialogue had even been raised by certain delegations during the debates devoted to questions of international security and to disarmament problems in political Committee. Supporters and opponents of dialogue showed, to the satisfaction of Africa's enemies that at the OAU there now existed a divergency in the approach to solutions to problems raised by the persistence of colonialism, racial discrimination and Apartheid in Southern Africa.

3. During these debates, the African Group came up against the refusal of the capitalist and imperialist countries, particularly that of the principal NATO powers, permanent members of the Security Council, to associate themselves with the sole measures capable of bringing about a notable change in the present situation in Southern Africa. A definite division thus existed in the Assembly. On the one hand, Africa, the Third World and the peace-loving States recommended isolation and sanctions in the name of Chapter seven of the United Nations Charter against the minority regimes in Southern Africa and against the Government of Portugal for so long as the latter refused to conform to the UNO decisions by recognizing the right to self-determination of the thirty million Africans living in sub-human conditions in their own territory. On the other hand, the imperialist powers continued to contribute their powerful support to these minority regimes and supply them with the means of oppressing the Africans with the aim of safeguarding economic and selfish interests in order to maintain strategic military bases in the south of the Continent against the wishes of the African peoples.

4. The General Assembly, and especially the Security Council were obstructed in their actions by this attitude of non-cooperation by the principal members of NATO who contribute capital and arms of every description to the minority and racist regimes of Southern Africa. This policy served the interests of the imperialist countries in the short term in so far as it retarded the liberation of the peoples of Southern Africa by prolonging the exploitation of the African peoples in the name of so-called Christian civilization, taking the communist threat as pretext at a time when Nixon was to visit Mao-Tse-Tung and Brezhnev and at a time when Europe was talking only about strengthening European security, which implied increased co-operation in numerous fields between capitalist and socialist countries.

5. The hypocrisy of such a policy was quite evident. The capitalist West desired to control Southern Africa by reason of its enormous underground wealth, particularly the gold nuggets and diamond necessary to support monetary stability in the market economy of the West. The important strategic position of Southern Africa, facing onto the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and Antarctic, with the covetousness such a position could excite, had also to be recognized.

6. Africa was thus a victim of the struggle being waged by the imperialists and the socialists for the control of the sea-lanes of the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean. In this connection one should note the efforts by the Imperialist powers to set up a South Atlantic Organization embracing South Africa, Argentina and other Latin American countries. It was up to the political bodies of our Organization to react vigorously to this initiative through appropriate approaches to the brotherly States of Latin America so as to foil these manoeuvres and maintain intact the solidarity of the African countries with those of Latin America.

7. The project of the so-called settlement of the Rhodesian question was of the same order. The OAU should denounce this collusion and maintain pressure at the United Nations so as to render effective the isolation of the Vorster and Smith regimes and the Fascist government of Lisbon so long as they refused to accept the fact that colonialism, racism and its ignoble form of Apartheid no longer had a place in this half of the twentieth century. The Secretariat believed that this aim could easily be attained if the African States preserved their unity and respected the freely-taken decisions within our Organization. Steps in this direction had been undertaken by the missions of Presidents Kenneth Kaunda and Me. Moktar Ould Daddah between 1970 and 1972. The enemy had to be - and could be - isolated if all the African States co-operated within the framework of the resolutions adopted by the OAU.

8. The end of 1971 and the beginning of 1972 showed the vitality of the liberation movements in Zimbabwe and in Namibia. The Liberation movements united in ANC had held in check the Government of the United Kingdom in its attempt to liquidate the Rhodesian question. The dead of Salisbury and Givelo had reminded the rest of the world of the explosive situation prevailing in the whole of Southern Africa. The strikes in Ovamboland had made the Vorster regime and its capitalistic masters pause. The destruction of an important portion of the Cabora-Bassa dam marked a new stage in the struggle for liberation in Mozambique. The upholders of white supremacy were banding together and the South African army was intervening more and more deeply in Mozambique and Angola through Zimbabwe. The conflict had become an international one and it was up to the political bodies of the OAU to learn from the situation and supply the material assistance the liberation movements were asking for so as to deal ever-

harder blows at the capitalist interests of the area, the only language understood by the great capitalist companies of the West.

9. Officials of the Portuguese Government privately recognized the loss of Guinea Bissau and were bringing pressure to bear on the American Government to purchase the Cape Verde Islands and the Bissagos. Portugal maintained itself in that colony in order not to harm its argument at the United Nations. What was at stake was the future of Angola and Mozambique. So the Government of Portugal had to be helped to leave Africa by stepping up the diplomatic pressure and by concentrating efforts on Guinea Bissau so as to take away this first enclave from it. One could also request the governments of Algeria, Libya, and Nigeria to give the Gulf Oil company the choice of either ceasing to exploit the oil in Cambinda or of getting its permits for oil exploitation in the other independent African States withdrawn.

10. The debates in the economic committees had shown that ideological problems took second place as between the Imperialist and socialist powers. For various reasons, socialists and imperialists adopted the same attitudes in the face of the legitimate claims of the Third World. The non-aligned countries, and particularly the Group of 77, had submitted a list of claims to the economic Committee calling upon the rich countries to allocate 1% of their national revenue to the development of the poor nations. This reasonable demand had so far obtained only insignificant support, the selfishness of the rich countries and the wish to keep us in poverty so as to impose economic blackmail on us prevented any serious agreement. Africa was within its rights when it asked to be helped after two centuries of exploitation of its natural resources by the super-industrialized countries of Western Europe and the United States of America. On this point too, the difference in development among the countries of the Group of 77 did not make the maintenance of our battlefront easy. The Secretariat believed that political bodies should devote particular attention to this important question. Perhaps the time had come for a thorough study of the exchanges between the African countries at regional and continental level by the creation of inter-State markets, by the stepping up of communications (inter-State routes, railway, installation of telephone and telegraphic communication etc., without the need to pass through former capitals as was now the case).

11. The African Group was trying to co-ordinate its actions with those of the Asian and Latin American Groups in preparation for the International Conference on Sea law which was to take place in the coming year. On this problem, too, there were serious divergencies between the rich countries and the developing countries, the interests of both being contradictory. One had only to tackle the definition of national jurisdiction over territorial waters, on the continental shelf and the zone, to realize that these notions did not have the same significance for a developing country as for a rich one. There were also differences between the geology of our coasts and that of the rich countries. In general, the African coastal waters were very deep and a rational exploitation of the underwater riches would require complex techniques. The rich countries possessed these techniques because of their advanced development and we were not prepared to acquire them for the time being. What was to be done? The Secretariat believed that resolution CM/Res.238(XVI) adopted by the Sixteenth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers, on 13th June 1971, could facilitate the solution in the measure in which our experts, under the guidance of the OAU could place at the disposal of the political bodies of our Organization a study in depth that would cover the question. Meanwhile, however, the States would have the advantage of consulting with one another and coming to regional agreements regarding the limit of jurisdiction, as well as on the fishing, so as to safeguard the riches of these oceans and seas. The problem of the environment and the pollution of the seas could constitute an important chapter in this study and these agreements.

12. During the twenty-sixth ordinary session of the General Assembly, the African Group, by its discipline and cohesion, was able to elect to very important posts all the candidates submitted by the Organization of African Unity. Thus the Republic of Guinea and Sudan were elected for a two-year term at the Security Council. Burundi, too, was elected for a term of three years in the Economic and Social Council. The five African candidates had their term on the international legal Commission renewed. Africans had occupied the posts of vice-President of the General Assembly, and Nigeria had occupied the chairmanship of the administrative and financial Commission. Other Africans had occupied the posts of vice-chairman and rapporteur of certain important committees, etc... Noteworthy was Africa's failure in the elections that took place to find a successor to U-Thant. The reason

for this failure lay in the lack of directive in the African Group. During two or three meetings, the African Group was unable to agree on the name of a personality and Europe profited by this to get one of its eminent sons elected. The Secretariat was of the opinion that the political bodies of our Organization should learn from this election and prepare for the next consultation if the OAU thought it opportune to have an African at the head of the Secretariat of the UNO. For the elections to come during the twenty-seventh ordinary session of the General Assembly, the African Group held numerous meetings and submitted recommendations on African candidatures in the appendix to the present report.

13. By its dynamism, the African Group secured the adoption of resolution 2847 (XXVI) modifying the composition of the economic and social Council by increasing the number of its members from 27 to 54. This resolution, obtained after a hard struggle in the economic Committee, constituted an amendment to Article 61 of the Charter. It would be applied when 2/3 of the members of the Assembly had ratified it. The African Group drew the attention of the political bodies to this resolution and requested them to agree to envisage the speedy ratification of this amendment to the United Nations Charter by the appropriate bodies in each State, so as to hasten its application and enable the African representation at the ECOSOC to be doubled. However, while awaiting the ratification of the amendment, the General Assembly authorized the economic and social Council to immediately give effect to the provisions of the above-mentioned resolutions. Thus, Africa saw its representation doubled in the scientific and technical Committee as well as in the Job evaluation Committee, the number of representatives having increased from 7 to 14 for each Committee. These enlarged Committees normally functioned after the election of new members during the 52nd ordinary session of ECOSOC.

14. During the year just elapsed, the visit of His Excellency Me. Moktar Ould Daddah, current Chairman of the eighth Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at UNO, had resulted in a further strengthening of the co-operation between the OAU and UNO. Working sessions were held between the delegation of the OAU and the General Secretariat of UNO. The action of the OAU was recognized as complementary to that of UNO in all the domains of interest to Africa. The mission of peace undertaken by the wise men of Africa in application of resolutions

AHG/Res.66(VIII) was highly appreciated by the responsible authorities of UNO. The former Secretary-General U-Thant, his successor and Ambassador Jarring on numerous occasions paid homage to the action of the African Heads of State in the search for a just solution to the Middle East crisis.

15. The General Assembly, moreover, adopted, almost unanimously, a resolution calling for the strengthening of cooperation between the OAU and UNO. The adoption of this resolution enabled the holding, at the beginning of the year, of the historic meeting of the Security Council in Addis Ababa, during which important resolutions were adopted on the situation in Southern Africa. The Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, visited South Africa and Namibia in execution of the mandate entrusted to him by the Security Council. However, the negative attitude of the Government of the United Kingdom was to be deplored during the meeting of the Security Council in Africa; an attitude supported by its partners in NATO and the Common Market and one which prevented the Security Council from adopting the only measures capable of bringing a satisfactory solution to the problem of Zimbabwe.

16. Within the framework of co-operation between ONU and the OAU, the resolution of the General Assembly called upon the specialized institutions and Institutions connected with UNO, particularly the UNDP, to strengthen or establish adequate co-operation with the OAU. At the beginning of the year, the Board of Directors of the UNDP authorized that body to sign a cooperation agreement with the OAU, enabling the two Organizations to more effectively assist the liberation movements by the drawing up and execution of concrete plans in the cultural and social domains. It must be noted that UNESCO, ILO and WHO began carrying out concrete programmes of assistance to the victims of colonialism and Apartheid in full consultation with the OAU in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. The specialized Institutions were to be thanked for their understanding and their positive attitude.

17. Close contact was maintained between the General Secretariat of UNO and the Executive Secretariat of the African Group on all questions of interest to the two Organizations. The Executive Secretariat participated



in the Seminar organized by the special Committee on Apartheid, on racism and the policy of Apartheid practiced by the Vorster regime, as well as in the Seminar organized by the Office of public information by African journalists. The General Secretariat of UNO moreover, organized training courses in New York for the staff of the OAU. It dispatched specialists from the Trusteeship department to the OAU Headquarters to organize certain services. This fruitful co-operation should and could continue to the benefit of the two Organizations.

18. The Executive Secretariat maintained contact with the Afro-American movements or groups which were interested in the liberation of Africa. During the stay in New York, by the current Chairman of the OAU, many of these groups visited him. These contacts were developing to the advantage of the liberation movements. Thus in February last, the Secretariat was able to send the Committee of liberation in Dar-es-Salaam a ton and a half of medicines, clothing and other articles, the donation of the Afro-American students to the liberation movements and the victims of racism and Apartheid. The Executive Secretariat was able to participate in a certain number of conferences in the institutes and universities in the South and South West of the United States whenever the facilities for travelling were offered, it by these institutes or universities so as to bring home to the students and teachers the menace threatening international peace and the persistence of colonialism, racism and Apartheid in Southern Africa. It was true that the Executive Secretariat could have accomplished more if its mandate had been clearly defined and extended in this sense. There was an enormous amount of lobbying on South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. This tendency had to be stopped by enabling the thirty million Afro-Americans living in the United States of America to find themselves. It was a pity that, lacking a mandate, the Executive Secretariat was unable to participate in the first black convention organized by Imama Baraka (Leroy Jones) and his friends in Tennessee at the beginning of March. This convention marked a turning-point in the awakening consciousness of the Afro-American world by the quality of its debates and the resolutions it adopted on the struggle for liberation of the blacks both in the U.S.A. and Africa.

19. The participation or presence of the Executive Secretariat at these conventions, seminars or meetings sometimes raised problems of security and privilege which the Office at New York had not been able to enjoy because of the refusal of the Government of the U.S.A., the host country for the Headquarters of the United Nations, to recognize any sort of diplomatic status for our Office. The adoption by the Heads of State of resolution CM/Res.233 (XV) did not solve the question. Perhaps the political bodies of the OAU would wish to make a more thorough study of the question and enter into negotiation with the American Government so as to reach an agreement satisfactory to both parties. A speedy solution to this question would give our Office more freedom of movement to better perform its multiple and important obligations both at the United Nations and throughout the United States of America.

1972-06

# Report of the Administrative Secretary-General on the activities of the African Group at the United Nations (Period from June 1971 to June 1972)

Organization of African Unity

Organization of African Unity

---

<https://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/7756>

*Downloaded from African Union Common Repository*