



**ORGANIZATION OF  
AFRICAN UNITY**

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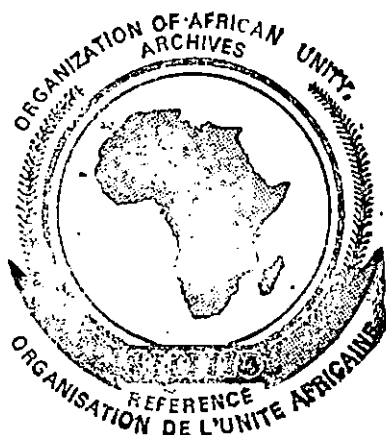
اديس ابابا \* Addis Ababa

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS  
Twenty-First Ordinary Session  
Addis Ababa, 17 - 21 May 1973.

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REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE TRADE  
UNIONS CONSTITUENT CONGRESS

Addis Ababa, 6-14 April 1973.



REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE TRADE  
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Addis Ababa 6-14 April 1973

I. OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

a. Opening of the Meeting

1. The first plenary sitting of the Constituent Congress was held on Monday April 9, 1973 at Africa Hall. The plenary session was attended by thirty one delegations from the national trade union organizations; representatives from the ATUC and AATUF and the observer delegations from countries still under colonial and foreign domination, namely, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau and FOFATUSA. The Conference unanimously elected Comrade Ato Fisseha, General-Secretary of CELU (Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Union) who was unanimously elected to chair the deliberation of the meeting as a national trade unionist of the host country.

2. The Meeting was opened by H.E. Lt. Michael Amede, Vice-Minister, Ethiopian Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs. In his opening address, the Vice-Minister warmly welcomed the delegates and appealed to them to approach their mighty task which they would bring to fruition if they worked in a spirit of give and take, compromise and maturity of purpose. H.E. Maftre Kamanda wa Kamanda, Assistant Secretary-General of OAU also addressed the plenary session of the Congress. In his address the Secretary-General reviewed the history and problems which had beset African efforts towards the achievement of African Trade Union Unity. He told the trade union leaders that the time had come for African Trade Unions to assert their rights and form themselves into one Pan-African Trade Union Organization on which would not only cater for their national and continental aspirations but also their international place, under the spirit and aspiration of the OAU Charter.

3. The plenary session was also addressed by the representatives of the ATUC, the AATUF and the autonomous national trade union organisations. In their speeches the trade union leaders appealed to their comrades to iron out and forget their differences and form the long-cherished Pan-African Trade Union Movement to defend their interest at national, continental and international forums.

b. Election of Officers

4. After the opening addresses, the Conference proceeded to elect the members of the bureau : 1 President, 2 Vice-Presidents and 1 Rapporteur. Consequently the bureau was unanimously formed as follows :

President	: Ethiopia
First Vice-President	: Zaire
Vice President	: Tanzania
Secretaries	: Kenya, Gambia, Ivory Coast

c. Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work

5. The Constituent Congress then considered the draft agenda as prepared by the Secretariat in Document (ATU/Const. Congress/1/Rev.1) appended to this report. The Conference after studying the agenda adopted it and decided that the working hours were to be from 9:00a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and from 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. In order to expedite its work, the Conference established three committees to deal with the three major aspects of its deliberations: (a) The Credentials Committee; (b) the Resolutions Committee; and (c) the Statutes Committee.

6. In his letter ES/SOC/26/42 of 9 March 1973, the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Economic and Social Affairs Department clearly explained to the AATUF leaders the OAU Secretary-General's position with regard to their initiative. He had appealed to them, in a brotherly spirit, inviting them to agree to attend the meeting in Addis Ababa. He had suggested to them the possibility of their perhaps

raising, if they so desired, any issue whose solution they considered would be helpful, as an interlocutory question at the beginning of the meeting before continuing with the proceedings.

7. It is gratifying to point out that the responsible authorities of AATUF reacted favourably to this appeal by the Secretary-General. The former, in a message to their affiliates, revised the stand they had adopted in Cairo. They, in their turn, appealed to all member central organizations, inviting them to proceed to Addis Ababa and to attend the meeting of the Constitutive Conference. The latter was held from 6 to 13 April 1973. Trade union organizations from 30 independent African countries and Angola, as well as ATUC and AATUF, took part. Trade Unions from South Africa, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau attended the meetings as observers.

8. At the conclusion of its meetings, the Conference adopted and signed the Charter setting up a Pan-African trade union entitled the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU). It also adopted a general resolution and a recommendation. The Charter stresses that "the unity of the workers is as indispensable as the independence of the trade unions ... the unity of the workers should primarily be attained at the national level of each state and then at the continental level". As regards international relations, the Preamble to the Charter states that "the Organization of African Trade Union Unity shall be an organization that is independent of all international central trade unions. It shall be composed of African national trade union organizations ... these organizations subscribe fully to the principle of non-alignment and to the other principles set forth in the OAU Charter".

In denouncing all foreign interference "tending to modify or influence the conceptions and methods of African trade unionism", the Charter provides that "all trade union member organizations shall have as their fundamental principle independence from all other international trade union organizations".

9. Among these objectives, it should be pointed out that OATUU sets itself the paramount aim of "achieving trade union unity both

at continental level and at the level of each African country, to contribute its aid and assistance to trade union organizations, particularly to those of countries still under colonial and foreign domination so as to speed up the liberation of the African continent". Moreover, it has the following additional aims:

- to fight against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and their agents, as well as feudal systems and any other form of oppression and exploitation, for the independence of Africa and the total emancipation of its peoples;

- to liquidate the after-effects of colonialism and all obsolete structures with a view to the establishment of a social order of democracy, progress and peace, based on the scientifically planned development of African resources for the benefit of Africans, and to ensure the education and advancement of the working masses of the continent;

- to encourage a policy of full employment;

- to foster relations of friendship and solidarity with all the workers of the world and international trade union organizations on a basis of equality and against a background of strict respect for the guidelines set forth in its Charter.

10. The Constituent Conference established the headquarters of OATUU at Accra (Ghana). It appointed the following members to the OATUU Bureau:

Chairman	:	Mr. Lanciné Sylla (Guinea)
5 Vice-Chairmen	:	Mr. Gabriel Fogam (Cameroon)
		Ato Beyene Salomon (Ethiopia)
		Mr. Afilah Abderrazak (Morocco)
		Mr. Sido Hassane (Niger)
		Mr. Barnabo Raphael (Togo)
Secretary-General	:	Mr. James Denis Akumu (Kenya)
3 Assistant Secretaries-General	:	Mr. Houbda Samba (Upper Volta)
		Mr. E.O.A. Odeyemi (Nigeria)
		Mr. Basil R. Kabwe (Zambia)

11. In the general resolution, the Conference stigmatized the hypocritical and injurious activities being carried out directly or indirectly by the enemies of Africa with a view to dividing the workers of the Continent, destroying their fighting spirit or diverting them from their fundamental objectives by plunging them into ideological quarrels alien to Africa. It also declared its solidarity with all the workers and peoples of the world fighting for their legitimate independence, particularly in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, the Middle East, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. It likewise called upon States and trade union organizations to promote a social policy based on guarantees of employment, and trade union and democratic freedoms and rights, and to carry out a programme of workers' education and vocational training so as to raise the level of awareness and productivity, with a view to the development of the continent. Finally, at the economic level, the Conference instructed the Executive Committee of OATUU to draw up a detailed programme on the creation of an African Common Market; deterioration in the terms of trade; the utilization, processing and marketing of raw materials; the integration and harmonization of economies with a view to the establishment of an African currency; and the free movement of goods and persons.

12. In its recommendation, the Conference took into account the fact that the Charter of OATUU lays down that trade union member organizations shall have as their fundamental principle independence vis-a-vis all foreign international trade union organizations, and it advocated that:

(a) All central organizations of national trade unions which are members of OATUU should review the concept of international relationships and adopt a stance enabling this principle to be fulfilled before the next Ordinary Conference of OATUU;

(b) All central organizations of national trade unions should adhere to OATUU as soon as possible.

The text of the Charter of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) and the two Resolutions are annexed to the present Report.

ATU/Const. Congress/1/Rev.1

MEETING OF THE CONSTITUENT TRADE UNION CONGRESS

Addis Ababa, 6-14 April 1973

Provisional Agenda

- I
  - a) Opening Ceremony
  - b) Election of Officers
  - c) Adoption of the Agenda
  - d) Organization of Work
- II Adoption of the Rules of Procedure
- III Establishment of Committees
  - a) Credentials Committee
  - b) Resolutions Committee
  - c) Statutes Committee
- IV Introduction of the Report of the Preparatory Committee
- V Introduction, Discussion and Adoption of Committee Reports
- VI Selection of the Headquarters of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity
- VII Election of Members of the Executive Board (1 President, 5 Vice-Presidents, 1 Secretary-General and 3 Assistant Secretaries-General)
- VIII Date and Venue of the First Ordinary Session of the OATUU Congress
- IX Any other Business; - Preparation of the Forthcoming Trade Union Conference Against Apartheid.



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# Report of the proceedings of the trade unions constituent congress Addis Ababa, 6-14 April 1973

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