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AFRICAN UNITY**

Secretariat
P O Box 3243

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE OAU PROGRAMME TO ESTABLISH
REGIONAL FOOD RESERVES IN AFRICA



ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL STOCKS OF FOOD GRAINS IN
AFRICA

(Progress Report)

1. The OAU programme to establish regional stocks of food grains in Africa, is not progressing as fast as was expected. The feasibility study that was to cover nine countries in eastern Africa, i.e. Burundi, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire and Zambia, has not been commissioned yet. The problem is to raise an estimated US\$ 200,000, which would cover the cost of carrying out that study. The external donors who were approached to finance the cost of the feasibility study have so far been unwilling to do so, or have made additional requirements to be met before they consider whether or not to finance that study.

2. Regional food reserves mainly in the four grains that serve as staple foods in various parts of Africa, i.e. maize, rice, wheat and millets/sorghums, were conceived as an insurance against food shortages in any part of Africa. The reserves are expected to form a useful line of defence against food shortages once national food reserves prove inadequate to meet the demands for staple foods by sections of the population that may be affected. It is also envisaged that inter-regional trade in foodstuffs, would very much be facilitated by the existence of such regional food reserves, which would take advantage of natural specialization in food production. Furthermore, OAU efforts in research and development in food science, technology and nutrition, would similarly be facilitated. The gaps in the availability of, and accessibility to food reserves by Member States, which the proposed regional food reserves would fill, are too glaring to require elaboration. In this regard, mention needs to be made of the current hardships and food shortages which drought is causing to sections of populations in western Africa. Food relief has had to be asked for from outside Africa. Excessive flooding has recently occurred in parts of northern Africa, and their effects on availability of adequate food in these areas is not yet known.

3. All told therefore, the Secretariat continues to be fully convinced of the urgent need to establish regional food reserves of staple grains in various regions of Africa. The programme's early stages are being reviewed, with a view to securing alternative ways of carrying out the required feasibility studies - not only for eastern Africa, but also for western and northern Africa as well. Any useful developments in this regard, will be notified to the Council of Ministers.

April 1973
Addis Ababa



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