

**ORGANIZATION OF  
AFRICAN UNITY**

Secretariat  
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**ORGANISATION DE L'UNITÉ  
AFRICAIN**

Secretariat  
B. P. 3243

Addis Ababa أديس ابابا

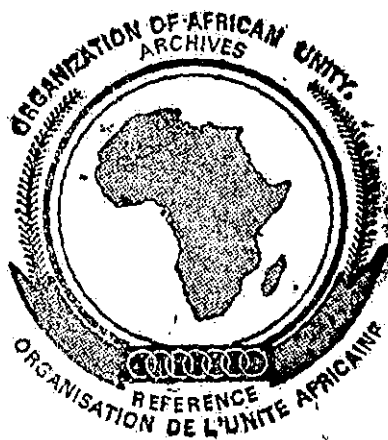
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COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Twenty-Sixth Ordinary Session

Addis Ababa - February 1976

REQUEST FOR OBSERVER STATUS - ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES



CM/704

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ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

(Application for Observers Status with the OAU)

The AACC is an Association of Churches in Africa and at present has a membership in 31 African Nations. Please see attached list of membership. Its membership is composed of churches, confessional bodies and the National Christian Council in Africa.

The functions of the Conference are:

1. To keep before the Churches and National Christian Councils the demands of the Gospel pertaining to thier life and mission, for evangelism, for witness in society, for service and for unity, and to this end to promote consultation and action among the Churches and Councils.
2. To encourage closer relationship and mutual sharing of experience among the Churches in Africa through visits, consultation and conference, and the circulation of information.
3. To provide for a common programme of study and research.
4. To assist the Churches in finding, sharing and placing personnel and utilising other resources for the most effective prosecution of their common task.
5. To assist the Churches in their common work of leadership training, lay and clerical, for the task of the Churches today.
6. Without prejudice to its own autonomy, to collaborate with the World Council of Churches and other appropriate agencies in such ways as may be mutually agreed.

The Conference has involved itself in a number of African problems including:

1. The Liberation Movements of Africa by granting donations
2. Refugees Problems by granting donations.
3. Political problems, notably the settlement of the Southern Sudan political problem.

In these fields, the AACC has so far earned approval from some African Heads of States and other responsible Africans.

From attached balance sheet, the sources of the Conference's finance is generally foreign to Africa. It may be necessary to mention, at least in passing that involvement of religious bodies in politics might result in a misplacement of functions. Records are not, however, available, but it is believed that the Conference contributed substantially towards the peaceful settlement of the Sudan political debacle. Against this, however, is the memory in recent times of accusations levelled against such humanitarian christian organisations as the "Caritas" for subversive political involvement in the internal affairs of countries. All this will be judged against the background of financial support emanating from non-African sources. Yet considering all the AACC's activities so far, in the emancipation of Africa from foreign domination, and in particular, the promotion of the dignity of the African, the Council of Ministers may wish to consider the Conference's application for Observer Status.

The application of AACC for Observer Status was first put before the Council at its 23rd Session in Mogadiscio. It was not then considered as the Council wanted more time to study the application.

In accordance with CM/162/Rev.2, the conditions under which observer status can be granted to applicants are as follows:-

Any Organization seeking to enjoy observer status shall attach to its request;

- (a) The convention, charter or status governing its functions;
- (b) A memorandum describing its programmes and activities and indicating the number of its members, or its supporters in one or more Member States.

"Consideration of the request with a view to granting observer status shall be subject to the following pre-conditions:

- (a) The request shall confirm with the fundamental principles set forth in the Charter of the OAU.
- (b) The activities of the body seeking observer status shall in conformity with the objectives of the OAU".

Annexed, to this paper are the Constitution of the Conference Annex I, its memorandum of activities Annex II, including its list of membership and financial sources and comments of African leaders on the Conference Annex III.

If the application is approved, the Conference will be granted observer status under category C in which case;

1. It can attend as observer to the public sessions of the OAU, Specialised Commissions during discussions of a matter of particular interest to them.
2. Communicate a written declaration to the Commission through the medium of the Administrative Secretary-General, after approval by the Chairman of the Session.

CONSTITUTION  
of the  
ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

NAME: The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)

PREAMBLE: Believing that the purpose of God for the Churches in Africa is life together, in a common obedience to Him for the doing of His will in the world, the Churches and the National Christian Council of Africa subscribing hereto have constituted the All Africa Conference of Churches as a fellowship of consultation and cooperation within the wide fellowship of the universal church.

I. PASIS:

The All Africa Conference of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and only Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

II. FUNCTIONS:

The functions of the All Africa Conference of Churches shall be:

1. To keep before the Churches and National Christian Councils the demands of the Gospel pertaining to their life and mission, for evangelism, for witness in society, for service and for unity, and to this end to promote consultation and action among the Churches and Councils.
2. To encourage closer relationship and mutual sharing of experience among the Churches in Africa through visits, consultation and conference, and the circulation of information.
3. To provide for a common programme of study and research.
4. To assist the Churches in finding, sharing and placing personnel and utilising other resources for the most effective prosecution of their common task.

5. To assist the Churches in their common work of leadership training, lay and clerical, for the task of the Churches today.
6. Without prejudice to its own autonomy, to collaborate with the World Council of Churches and other appropriate agencies in such ways as may be mutually agreed.

III.

MEMBERSHIP

1. The AACC shall be composed of those Churches and National or Regional Confessional Bodies in Africa which express a desire to join the AACC, which accept its basis and which satisfy such criteria as the Assembly may prescribe.
2. National Christian Councils in Africa which express a desire to join the AACC and which accept its basis may become associate members of the AACC.

IV.

STRUCTURE:

The All Africa Conference of Churches shall discharge its functions through the following organs:

1. The Assembly
2. The General Committee
3. The Executive Committee
4. The Finance Committee
5. The Institutions and Departments
6. The Registered Trustees.

V.

THE ASSEMBLY:

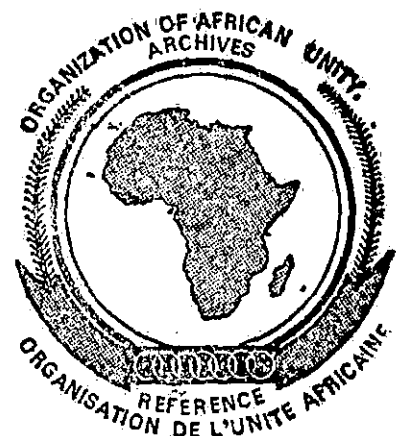
1. The Assembly shall be the principal authority of the AACC.
2. The Assembly shall be composed of the official representatives of the member Churches, Regional Confessional Bodies and National Christian Councils, directly appointed by them, in accordance with the By-Laws of the Constitution, the President and Vice-Presidents and Members of the General Committee, and such consultant non-voting members as the Assembly or General Committee shall invite. Provision shall be made in the By-Laws also for adequate representation of laymen and women and youth.

3. The Assembly shall ordinarily meet once every five years.
4. The officers of the Assembly shall be:
  - a) The President and not more than four Vice-Presidents elected by the Assembly from among its own voting members.
  - b) Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen of the General Committee.
  - c) The General Secretary of the AACC (Ex-Officio).
5. In consultation with the General Committee the Officers shall convene the Assembly.
6. The Officers shall preside over meetings of the Assembly.
7. The Assembly shall prescribe criteria for membership of the AACC.
8. The Assembly may establish By-Laws by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.
9. The Assembly shall have no power to legislate for members.

## VI.

THE GENERAL COMMITTEE:

1. The General Committee shall, between meetings of the Assembly, fulfill all the functions on the AACC.
2. The General Committee shall consist of:
  - (a) The Officers of the Assembly.
  - (b) Not more than 25 nor less than 20 voting members, elected by the Assembly from among its own voting members, taking into account full participation of laymen, women and young people as well as geographical, linguistic and confessional considerations. For every elected member an alternate shall also be elected.
  - (c) Not more than five consultants co-opted by the other members of the General Committee to participate in its deliberations. They shall have no right to vote.



3. A quorum shall consist of 50% of the voting members.
4. The General Committee shall ordinarily meet once a year.
5. The General Committee shall elect the following officers from among its own voting members:
  - a. The Chairman
  - b. Two Vice-Chairmen.
6. The General Committee shall appoint an Executive Committee;
  - a. The Executive Committee shall be empowered to take decisions in the name of and on behalf of the General Committee within the framework of the policies, programmes and budgetary provisions already established by the Assembly or the General Committee.
  - b. The Executive Committee shall consist of the following:

The Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the General Committees; six other members elected by the General Committee from among its own voting members with six alternates to such members, and the General Secretary (Ex-Officio).
  - c. Only those members of the Executive who are voting members of the General Committee shall have power to vote.
  - d. A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the voting members.
  - e. Copies of the Minutes of the Executive Committee meetings shall be distributed to all members of the General Committee, to which body the Executive Committee shall furnish such reports as may from time to time be required.
7. The General Committee shall appoint a Finance Committee whose functions shall be:-



- a) To formulate an annual budget for the AACC.

To secure financial support to maintain the work of the AACC from:

i. membership fees prescribed by the Assembly and payable by members.

ii. Grants, donations and legacies.

- b) To present to the General Committee annual audited accounts. After approval by the General Committee, they shall be circulated by the Finance Committee to all members of the AACC.

- c) To receive and scrutinize the annual budget prepared by the institutions and departments and to make recommendations to the General Committee in regards thereto.

- d) The Finance Committee shall consist of seven members:

- four of whom shall be elected by the General Committee from among its voting members.

- one of whom shall be elected by the General Committee because of his financial experience and ability.

- two of whom shall be co-opted by the other members of the Finance Committee and shall be selected because of their financial experience and ability.

- e) A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the voting members.

8. The General Committee shall appoint the staff of the AACC, which shall include the General Secretary and Associate General Secretaries.

- a) The General Secretary shall be the principal Executive Officer of the AACC.

- b) The General Secretary shall be responsible to the General Committee for ensuring the detailed implementation of the policies and plans approved by the Assembly or the General Committee, within the framework of the budgets and staffing patterns established by these bodies.
- c) The General Secretary or, in his absence one of the Associate General Secretaries, shall act as Secretary to the General and Executive Committees but with no right to vote.

## VII.

INSTITUTIONS AND DEPARTMENTS:

- 1. The Assembly or between Assemblies the General Committee shall establish such Institutions or Departments as may be needed to carry out particular functional interests.
- 2. The General Committee shall appoint Boards of Management and Departmental Committees and shall be represented in the membership of all such bodies by at least two members. It shall give oversight to their work and shall receive regular reports from them.
- 3. Such staff as is deemed necessary to serve each Institution or Department shall be appointed by the General Committee in consultation with the Board of Management or Departmental Committee concerned.
- 4. No Institution or Department shall have the right to pledge the credit of the AACC or to enter into any contract which would commit the AACC to any expenditure whatsoever without the previous written approval of the General Secretary, who may permit the same within those limits laid down by the General Committee.
- 5. In approving the budget and limit of expenditure for any Institution or Department the General Committee shall satisfy itself that a reasonable portion thereof shall be contributed by member Churches and associated Councils.

## VIII.

REGISTERED TRUSTEES:

- a) Seven Trustees appointed by the General Committee, and incorporated as registered Trustees shall hold all land and properties belonging to the AACC in their corporate name "The All Africa Conference of Churches Registered Trustees".
- b) The Trustees shall have full power to purchase, take on lease or in exchange or otherwise acquire for investment or otherwise land and buildings of any tenure or description and in their absolute discretion may sell, lease, improve, manage, develop, exchange or otherwise dispose of or deal with the same as if they were the absolute owners thereof;
- c) The Trustees shall have power to raise money on loan for the purchase, erection, development or repair of any land or buildings and for that purpose may mortgage, charge or pledge any immovable property vested in them.
- d) Any documents requiring execution by the Registered Trustees shall be deemed duly executed if their Common Seal shall have been affixed thereto with the prior written consent of at least four Trustees and in the presence of at least two.

## IX.

ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS:

1. The Assembly or between the Assemblies the General Committee, may negotiate agreements with other organizations to prosecute together work in which AACC and such other organizations are mutually involved or interested.
2. Such Associated Organisations shall have the right of non-voting representation in the Assembly, the General Committee and such Boards of Management or Departmental Committees as they may wish and as the General Committee may approve, on the advice of the Boards of Management or Departmental Committees concerned.

## X. DISSOLUTION

A proposal for the dissolution of the AACC can be made by not less than one-third of the member Churches and Christian Councils through the General Committee. The General Committee shall notify all member Churches, Christian Councils and Associated Organizations of the dissolution proposal. If 50% of the total members of the AACC support the proposal, the General Committee shall summon the Assembly. A proposal for dissolution of the AACC can be passed only by three-quarters of the members present and voting at the meeting of the Assembly.

If upon winding up or dissolution of the AACC there remains, after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, the same should be given or transferred to such other institutions having objects similar to the objects of the AACC or to such inter-Church organizations in Africa as the Assembly shall determine.

## XI. AMENDMENTS:

Amendments may be proposed by a member Church or member Council or the General Committee. Amendments proposed by a member Church or member Council shall be reviewed by the General Committee before they are considered by the Assembly. Notice of all amendments proposed or approved by the General Committee shall be sent to all member Churches and Councils not less than six months before the meeting of the Assembly. Amendments shall require for adoption a two-thirds majority of Assembly members present and voting.

## XII. ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution shall become effective on adoption by a two-thirds majority of the votes of the representatives present and voting at the first Assembly.

MEMORANDUM ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE  
ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

Liberation Movements:

The stand of the AACC in regard to the liberation of South Africa, Rhodesia, and the Portuguese - controlled parts of our Continent is well known. Not satisfied with just speaking out against racism and imperialism the AACC has given financial assistance to the Liberation Movements as follows:

- 1971 - US \$100,000 was distributed among 4 Liberation Movements.
- 1974 - US \$10,000 was given to Liberation Movements through OAU.
- 1974 - US \$5,000 was given to two Liberation Movements.

In addition to this, the AACC from time to time meets the expenses of Liberation Movement leaders who travel through Nairobi.

Refugees:

The AACC in co-operation with other refugee-serving agencies, including the OAU has tried to alleviate the suffering of Africa's one million refugees since 1965. As a member of the OAU/BPEAR Co-ordinating Committee, of which we are currently Chairman, we have participated in planning the programmes of the BPEAR.

Since the establishment of the BPEAR, our financial contributions have been as follows:-

- 1971 - US \$5,000
- 1972 - US \$5,000
- 1973 - US \$5,000
- 1974 - US \$10,000.

In recognition of this commitment, African Heads of State and other leaders have expressed the following:

On the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the AACC:

Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia -

"We are mindful of the useful contributions which the All Africa Conference of Churches is making for the well-being and development of our continent and the service of humanity".

General Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria -

"We very much appreciate the laudible role which the All Africa Conference of Churches has been playing in African affairs. I recall, with pride your sincere efforts to mediate in the Nigerian civil war and your prayers for the return of peace to Nigeria. Of particular note, was the outstanding contributions of the Organization to the amicable settlement of the Southern Sudan problem in Addis Ababa in February 1972. The personal efforts of the Secretary-General, Rev. Canon Burgess Carr as "Moderator" during the negotiations to resolve the very delicate problem that faced our brothers in Sudan, will always be remembered as a positive contribution of an honest and dedicated man fully committed to the cause of peace in Africa".

I also note with satisfaction the determination of the All Africa Conference of Churches to continue to serve as an organ for promoting peace and harmony wherever there is civil or racial conflict in any part of Africa. This is highly commendable and deserves the support of all of us who are equally anxious to rid the African continent of all vestiges of racism and human indignity to man. I am confident that with God on our side and with continuous perseverance by all of us, our cause of unity and freedom in Africa will triumph in the end".

Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, President of Kenya:

"My Government has noted with satisfaction the recent significant role you have played in the solution of Sudan conflict. In that, you have scored for yourselves a special place in the history of African struggle for

peace and justice. I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours in the services which you will continue to give our people and nations".

President W R Tolbert Jr. of Liberia;

"Some of your laudable project include an emergency programme for ecumenical action to aid unemployed African youths and refugees; the Urban Africa programme in mission and evangelism among industrial workers; Christian education; etc. All this point to the fact of your involvement in the challenge posed in the human development of African Nations".

General Gaafar M Nimeri of Sudan:

"The goal of religion is moral perfection. Man is so burdened by contradictions that he seeks to free himself from evil. The supreme meaning of being can only consist in attaining liberation and freedom from need, slavery, hunger, disease, ignorance and unemployment. These services rendered are to God. Real service becomes possible only when we have done all that we are able to do, when we have already devoted ourselves to a cause and participated in it to the utmost.

The All Africa Conference of Churches has been painstakingly pursuing and activating the noble acts that induce the pride and dignity of man in our continent".

Mr Nzo Ekangaki, OAU Secretary-General:

"AACC has greatly contributed to shattering the myth that Churches should limit themselves to a narrow interpretation of their spiritual vocation and has guided African Churches towards full participation in Social, Political and other forms of liberation of African Nations and peoples as an integral part of the spiritual emancipation of these peoples.

Your bold actions in the field of decolonization and the struggle against apartheid and racism everywhere is a fitting example of this new philosophy of African Churches. It is also in this context that your initiatives and positive role in the settlement of the Civil War in the Democratic Republic of Sudan must be seen".

Mr R K A Gardiner of the UN ECA:

"You have with unstinting devotion to African interests managed through Christian action to achieve great things and I think in particular of the significant role played in resolving the Southern Sudan issue, and your efforts to help heal the scars of the Nigerian Civil War. Your efforts in many other fields though not publicized or as spectacular have helped to promote brotherhood between Africans and between Africans and other peoples of the world".

On the occasion of the 3rd General Assembly of the AACC in Lusaka, Zambia, in May 1974.

General Gabriel Ramanantsoa of the Malagasy Republic:

"As the 3rd General Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches begins its meeting in Lusaka, may I extend in my own name and in the name of the Malagasy Government and People, our best wishes for its success and reassure you of our constant support in the just combat in which you are unceasingly engaged on the Continent of Africa for the liberation of African humanity and for the development and cultural renewal of all Africa. I am convinced that your totally Christian action will be an effective contribution to our common struggle".

Col. I K Achiempong of Ghana:

"It is with particular interest that I note that the 3rd Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches will devote urgent attention to underdevelopment and its attendant poverty .... the Assembly will consider issues related to the world all subjects of development, the refugee problem, the search for authentic cultural renewal in Africa, the perennial struggle for social justice, evangelism, liberation and unity".

"There is no doubt this programme reflects not only your earnest concern for Africa's well-being but also confirms the fact that the Church cannot be divorced from the day-to-day activities of Government and the individual, and that all of us are intricately bound together by the same ultimate purpose of ensuring the material and spiritual welfare of society".



OAU Secretary-General:

"As a matter of fact, the OAU has always applauded your interest and concern in the welfare of the African people, your loan projects and scholarships for African refugees, your 1973 Tananarive Declaration calling on all Member States to facilitate the placement of refugee in their respective countries, especially in the private sectors and your important contribution towards the settlement of disputes between Member States through mediation and reconciliation are among your practical ways of contributing towards peace and unity among the African peoples.

Moreover, not only has your organization come out in support of the Liberation Movements, but it also advances the latter's cause during meetings at which your organization is represented all over the world. The OAU sees this as a great contribution towards the struggle of the African peoples to eradicate the last vestiges of colonialism and foreign domination with a view to restoring the dignity of the African peoples and guarantee their territorial integrity. The task ahead of us is formidable but I am more than convinced that justice will triumph in the end".

It is in seeking to further our commitment as set out here that we are submitting this application for observer status at the OAU.

The legal Headquarters of the AACC is at Nairobi, Kenya. It also has a regional office in Lome, Togo. It employs a staff of some seventy persons drawn from thirteen African nations.



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# Request for Observer Status- All Africa Conference of Churches

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