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ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT

ON

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODU	1
1. SEMI-ARID FOOD GRAIN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (JP.31)	1
2. AFRICAN MEDICINAL PLANTS RESEARCH (JP.27)	3
3. MECHANIZATION OF AGRICULTURE	4
4. JOINT PROJECT AGAINST CONTAGIOUS BOVINE PLEURO-PNEUMONIA (CBPP) - (JP.28)	5
5. AFRICAN CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES	6
6. ESTABLISHMENT OF PLANT QUARANTINE CENTRES AND THE TRAINING OF PHYTOSANITARY INSPECTORS	7
7. TSETSE AND TRYPANOSOMIASIS RESEARCH AND CONTROL (JP.30)	8
8. <u>TECHNICAL BUREAUX</u>	
- INTER-AFRICAN BUREAU FOR SOILS (BIS)	10
- INTER-AFRICAN BUREAU FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES (IBAR)	11
- INTER-AFRICAN PHYTOSANITARY COUNCIL (IAPSC)	12
9. PUBLICATIONS	13
10. TECHNICAL MEETINGS	14
11. GENERAL	15

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL REPORT ON
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This report is a review of the existing field activities of the OAU/STRC Executive Secretariat for the period between January 1976 and June 1976. It covers progress reports on existing joint projects and measures undertaken in respect of follow-up measures for projects which have been completed in different Member States. The report also includes a resume of international activities in which scientific officers of the OAU actively participated during the period of report.

1. SEMI-ARID FOOD GRAIN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (JP.31)

In the Executive Secretariat's report to the February meeting of the Council of Ministers 1976, the Executive Secretariat reported that a Consultative meeting in Ouagadougou was planned for Crop Research Officers of OAU Member States in the Semi-Arid zone of Africa. This zone comprise Mauritania, Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde Island, Mali, Upper Volta, Ghana, Togo, the Republic of Benin, Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. The consultative meeting was successfully held with the full participation of important international agencies like the IITA and the ICRISAT. In addition, the FAO, the UNDP, the EEC, CEAO, FAG, USAID, ODM, Ford Foundation, and the IRAT also participated.

The meeting agreed that research priority be given in the Semi-Arid zone of Africa to sorghum, maize, millet, cow-peas, pignon-peas, and groundnuts.

It was admitted however that in certain areas, rice development will also be encouraged.

Secondly, the meeting agreed that priority be given to the encouragement of seed multiplication and distribution of research results through extension services of OAU Member States to the farmers. It was considered extremely urgent that this be given priority in view of the fact that Africa requires to insure against another onslaught of drought. To this end, it was suggested that each Member States of the OAU should have within its agricultural department an accelerated crop production officer whose main job would be to publicise new and improved high yielding disease resistant and drought resistant varieties of the grains enumerated above.

This project will replace the existing OAU/STRC JP.26 and it is recommended that it be code-named "Joint Project No. 31 (JP.31)". The emphasis on this Project is on the national research and extension services of each Member State. An OAU/STRC agronomist will be in charge of the co-ordination of the activities and organize regular technical meetings of all Crop Research Officers concerned with a view to ensuring that the minimum amount of research on grains and distribution of food grains are carried out in each Member State.

The details of this project are still being spelt out and it is expected that it would include the training of personnel at both research and production levels as well as the encouragement of mechanized agriculture to improve agricultural production. The Secretariat is in active consultation with the international agencies who will be supplying the research staff for this important assignment.

Consultations are also being held to ensure that each Member State is given facilities to train additional personnel to assist in its national research and extension service work.

2. AFRICAN MEDICINAL PLANTS RESEARCH (JP.27)

The research on African Medicinal Plants and Traditional Pharmacopoeia which has been in progress since 1968 is now attracting international recognition. After the 2nd Symposium on African Medicinal Plants and Traditional Pharmacopoeia held in Cairo, attention of the international scientific community has become focussed on this important aspect of industrial and pharmaceutical research. The OAU has been sponsoring research work in OAU Member States since 1970. The Inter-African Panel on African Medicinal Plants under the Chairmanship of Professor Adjanihoun of the Republic of Benin who is also the Vice-President of the Scientific Council of Africa (CSA) is at present editing documents on latest research results for publication at the University of Ife.

The WHO and other agencies have now expressed their desire to participate in this gigantic programme, code-named, "JP.27". The Secretariat expects to cooperate with all international agencies on this programme to ensure proper evaluation of the laboratory and clinical tests in respect of the therapeutic value of African Flora and fauna.

As has been reported earlier, important areas of research are:-

Anti-biotics
Anti-sickling
Anti-cancer
Insecticide
Anti-diabetic drugs.

Each of the laboratories cooperating with the Executive Secretariat on this programme is undertaking extensive studies with a view to securing a breakthrough in any of these areas at any time.

3. MECHANIZATION OF AGRICULTURE

The problem of food shortage aggravated by the recent drought has focussed attention on the need to encourage Member States to improve on the methods of agricultural production. At a recent meeting of the Inter-African Panel on the Mechanization of Agriculture, it was agreed that if Africa would not continue to suffer in the midst of plenty, it would be in the interest of each Member State of the OAU, as far as possible, to introduce mechanized farming as much as is feasible.

To this end, the Panel has issued a questionnaire to the Member States of the OAU with a view to obtaining an inventory of farm implements and equipment at present in use so that suggestions might be made for the development of an appropriate equipment for various agricultural production processes including harvesting and storage. The OAU Expert Committee also suggested that OAU should accelerate training of all cadres of personnel in the use of different agricultural

machineries. It was suggested that 'on-the-job' training is preferable, particularly, for production officers or intermediate level officers, while high level officers will be trained in Universities or Institutions of higher learning in Africa or elsewhere. International Agencies like the FAO might be of help to Member States in ascertaining the usefulness of different types of farm implements in different areas of each country. To this end, the Committee suggested liberal use of the services of the FAO and other international agencies with the man-power capability to do the research as to the usefulness of different implements in different soil types.

The report on the work of this Committee is submitted by the Secretariat under a separate cover.

4. JOINT PROJECT AGAINST CONTAGIOUS BOVINE PLEURO-PNEUMONIA (CBPP) - (JP.28).

As previously reported, the work on this project has advanced to a considerable extent in the Lake Chad Basin area of West and Central Africa. The feasibility report on the rest of Western Africa affected by the disease has been submitted to various funding agencies, particularly the UNDP who are already assisting in the execution of the project in some Member States. It is hoped that the project will receive enough financial assistance from donor agencies to combat the spread of the disease in Western Africa.

With regard to Eastern Africa, inoculation against this disease has been carried out simultaneously with the inoculation against the rinderpest throughout the period of the Anti-Rinderpest Campaign between 1968 and 1975.

5. AFRICAN CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE
AND NATURAL RESOURCES:

The Secretariat would invite attention to the 1968 Algiers Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. This Convention stipulates among other things that there should be closely knit inter-African cooperation in the field of conservation, preservation and utilization of the natural resources of Member States to ensure proper and judicious exploitation and development of these natural resources. The International Agreement specifically states that the OAU shall be supplied with:-

- (a) the text of Law, Decree, Regulations and Instructions in each Member State which are intended to ensure the implementation of the Convention;
- (b) each Member State agreed to report on the results achieved in the application of the provisions of the Convention;
- and (c) to supply to the OAU Secretariat details of all documentation on all matters provided for in the Convention.

The Secretariat now considers that this Convention which has become operative since 1969 now deserves amendment. The Secretariat would like, for example that provision be now inserted to spell out the problem of preservation of aquatic life following the pollution of our shores through drilling for petroleum products. A number of Member States also consider that amendment is required in respect of a number of the provisions of this OAU Convention.

The Secretariat would convene shortly a meeting of experts to set machinery in motion on this proposal.

6. ESTABLISHMENT OF PLANT QUARANTINE CENTRES AND THE TRAINING OF PHYTO-SANITARY INSPECTORS.

During the period of report, the Administrative Secretary-General made an appeal to the UNDP in respect of the execution of this project. The appeal of the Administrative Secretary-General followed the need to increase training facilities for francophone candidates in Africa.

During the first half of 1976, the OAU sponsored 2 international training courses with the support of the Governments of Egypt and Nigeria and the UNDP/FAO in Ibadan, Nigeria and Cairo, Egypt. Trainees were drawn from Upper Volta, Cameroon, Madagascar, Mali, Tanzania, Senegal, Central African Republic, Malawi, Mauritania, Ethiopia, the Gambia and Kenya.

These training courses have revealed the need to improve the facilities available at present for francophone candidates. Scientific Officers of the OAU have noted that there are not enough Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine officers to man the services of most Member States so as to insure against infestation of diseases. Since agriculture and allied industry is still one of the most important back-stay of economies of most Member States, it is extremely urgent that this project be given full support by all Member States.

The Secretariat is happy to report that it has been informed that the project in Niger has received a grant of 155 million CFA from CEAO. Scientific Officers of the OAU are being sent to Niger to assist in the establishment of the Plant Quarantine Centre in cooperation with the FAO officials. The Secretariat appeals to Member States that officials trained under this project be assigned to Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine duties in Member States. In this way, they would be of great help to the agricultural departments in Member States.

7. TSETSE AND TRYPANOSOMIASIS RESEARCH AND CONTROL (JP.30)

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Scientific Council for Trypanosomiasis Research and Control (ISCTRC) was held early April, 1976. The meeting reviewed the position of the 2 field projects, proposed sometime in 1972, namely, a Survey

of the Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis situation from the Gambia to the border of Nigeria in Western Africa and a Survey of the Juba-Schebéli River Basin in Eastern Africa. The scientist concluded that the WHO and FAO be asked by the Executive Secretariat to assist in providing experts for the survey to be conducted in Western Africa. This is because these two agencies now have research and control work in various parts of Western Africa.

With regard to the Eastern Africa however, the OAU staff in IBAR have conducted a survey of the infestation of the diseases in the Juba-Schebéli River Basin. The survey has revealed that the most important work required at present is in the Somalian part of the Basin. Consequently, a feasibility report has been drawn up and this has been submitted to the UNDP and FAO for sponsorship.

The tsetse distribution map of Africa which is the other part of the project is being pursued. It is now hoped to print either in colour or in black and while maps showing the infestations of the 3 groups of the disease in the next financial year. The OAU has however asked the UNDP and FAO to assist on this project also. This is particularly significant because the World Food Conference in Rome in 1975 considered the problem of tsetse and trypanosomiasis as of supreme importance for improvement of food production in Africa. In fact, the FAO has been instructed to establish the tsetse and trypanosomiasis research and control unit in its Headquarters in Rome with the full participation of the scientific officers of the OAU.

TECHNICAL BUREAUX

The technical bureaux of the Executive Secretariat has been functioning as usual during the period of report. Liaison visits were made to a number of Member States at their requests during the period.

(a) INTER-AFRICAN BUREAU FOR SOILS (BIS).

In addition to the liaison visits carried out by the scientific staff of this Bureau reported in February, the officers have also taken active part in a number of international soil conferences and in agronomic activities which impinge on the economic development of Africa. With the expansion of the OAU/STRC cooperation with international organizations, the Director of the BIS has participated in the work of the ICRISAT and learnt first hand of the value of the work of this important international agency to Africa. ICRISAT has been cooperating with the OAU on Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development. The Deputy Director of the Bureau who acts as International Co-ordinator of JP.26 will now work on Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development. He has recently visited Guinea Bissau and the Cape Verde Island and submitted proposals for agricultural cooperation and development at the instance of the Member States concerned.

(b) INTER-AFRICAN BUREAU FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES (IBAR)

The staff of IBAR as indicated in earlier reports now takes charge of Follow-up Measures on Anti-Rinderpest Campaign (JP.15). To this end, the scientific staff of this bureau have visited some of the member states where the mass inoculation campaign were completed a few years back. The IBAR staff work in close collaboration with the Veterinary staff of these Member States to ensure regular vaccination standard against the disease.

In addition, the Director of the Bureau is the International Co-ordinator of JP.28 - CBPP field control and has been in regular touch with both the FAO and the Veterinary Departments of Member States in respect of the execution of this project. The Director and his staff have participated in a number of international meetings during the period of report, particularly FAO Animal health and production meetings, OIE and CBPP meeting. IBAR is also taking a hand in Wildlife conservation measures.

Apart from the Animal Health and Disease Control Measures which IBAR adequately covers in Africa, the livestock production section of the office has commenced a survey of trypanotolerant cattle in Africa. The idea is to encourage formal breeding by Member States, particularly in the zone infested by tsetse and trypanosomiasis, of cattle which are resistant to trypanosomiasis. To this end, the Director of IBAR has suggested in one of his latest reports that the breeding of the N'dama cattle be encouraged in Guinea,

so that Guinea might be able to supply this breed of cattle to other African States badly infested by tsetse and trypanosomiasis. The Secretariat notes however that livestock breeders in Guinea require plenty of fund to meet this additional demand from other African States.

Meanwhile, the Secretariat is asking the next meeting of the Directors of Veterinary Services and Livestock Officers of Africa to consider this proposal at its next meeting in Algiers and made a concrete proposal for a regional cooperative action in this very vital area of livestock development. The Secretariat would report progress of this project at the next meeting of the Council of Ministers.

(c) INTER-AFRICAN PHYTO-SANITARY COUNCIL (IAPSC)

The Scientific Secretary of the IAPSC and his other scientific staff have undertaken, during the period of report, gigantic amount of work in the area of Plant Quarantine and Plant Protection and Pest Control. This Bureau has been responsible for the supervision of the training centres under the OAU/STRC JP.29 and has been instrumental to the establishment of post-entry plant quarantine centres in Member States. They have also advised other international agencies operating in Africa like the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the

International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and regional organs like the West African Rice Development Association (WARDA) on the requirements of the OAU Kinshasa Phytosanitary Convention for Africa.

The Bureau has also worked in close collaboration with Pest Control Agencies in Africa. At present, it is proposing a technical meeting of Locust Control Organizations in Africa. It is expected that such a meeting would assist the OAU to assess the need to reduce the number of locust control organizations serving the 32 Member States affected by the pest and thereby reduce the over-head cost of the Organizations.

9. PUBLICATIONS

During the period of report, the IBAR, BIS and IAPSC published their respective bulletins. The Secretariat regrets however that the printing of these bulletins have been severely handicapped by shortage of fund. Printing cost have gone up by 200% in recent past and this has been a constraining factor on the publication of the scientific journals of the Secretariat. In addition, the Executive Secretariat is publishing shortly, the scientific reports on the symposia on Building Research Technology, Cartographic and Training of Cartographic man-power, the report on JP.15 Eastern Anti-Rinderpest Campaign and the report of the Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development.

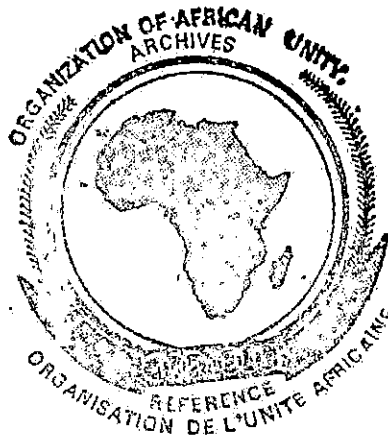
10. TECHNICAL MEETINGS

During the period of report, the Executive Secretariat and its bureaux organized the following technical meetings :-

<u>MEETINGS</u>	<u>VENUE</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development (JP.31)	Ouagadougou	8 - 9 Jan.
Inter-African Committee on Agriculture and Mechanization	Lagos	19 - 23 Jan.
Executive Committee on Trypanosomiasis Research and Control (ISCTRC)	Lagos	6 - 8 April
13th Meeting of Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC)	Algiers	18 - 22 Oct.
Inter-African Panel of Experts on Cartography	-	Sept. 1976
Panel of Scientific Experts on Iron & Steel Development in Africa	Lagos	-
Meeting of the Executive Committee on Drought (CSA)	-	-
CSA Committee on Scientific Priorities	-	-
Panel on African Medicinal Plants	Lagos	Sept. 1976

11. GENERAL

The Executive Secretariat still suffers from shortage of scientific staff. It also requires qualified translators in its scientific documentation division. These calibre of personnel are not easy to come by the whole world over. It is hoped that the Administrative Secretary-General can count on the support and cooperation of Member States in getting the work of science and technology arm of the OAU on an even keel.



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