



**ORGANIZATION OF
AFRICAN UNITY**

Secretariat
P. O. Box 3243

منظمة الوحدة الأفريقية

السكرتارية
ب. ص. 3243

**ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE
AFRICAINNE**

Secretariat
B. P. 3243

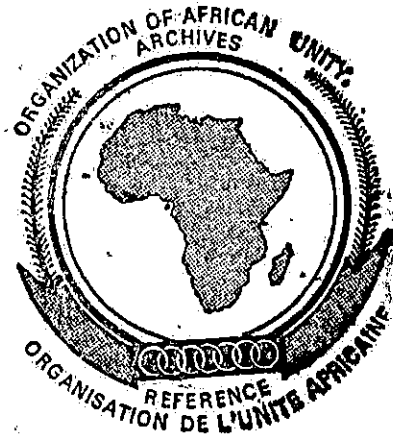
CM/684(XXVI)

مجلس الوحدة الأفريقية

Part II

Annex I

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN
GROUP AT THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE THIRTIETH
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY



PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
AT THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE THIRTIETH SESSION OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Thirtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly has undeniably been a difficult session for the African Group. There is, therefore, an urgent need for the higher policy-making bodies of the Organization of African Unity to come together, close their ranks and give precise and consistent directives to their representative to the International Organization.

Indeed, Africa's strength, OAU's strength has always been found in her unity, consistency and the active solidarity with which it has always approached its problems brought before the General Assembly of the United Nations. If this unity and solidarity were to disappear, that would be the end of the OAU and its noble objectives of liberation, economic advancement and the rehabilitation of the peoples of Africa.

However, before dealing with the deliberations of the Thirtieth Session, it is useful to say a few words about the Special Session of the United Nations Organization on international economic co-operation. This Session, we all know, took place from 1 - 12 September 1975 and was a follow-up to the April 1974 Special Session on raw materials and the establishment of a new world economic order. The special Session held in September therefore addressed itself to seeking concrete measures, ways and means of contributing to the establishment of the new economic order which, we all agree, the world now needs. After many difficulties, protracted discussions during which the action of the African Group was merged with that of the Group of 77, a series of measures which were finally approved by the developed countries of the west and, in particular, by the United States and the nine member-countries of the European Common Market which were initially reluctant, was adopted.

However, despite the agreement reached at the end of the Session on the more important matters, many observers are doubtful about the actual implementation of such measures and wonder when this new economic order will be effectively established. Hence the special interest aroused by the Paris Conference on International Economic Cooperation organized at the initiative of the French Government.

The question of Africa's representation at this Paris Conference led to serious friction within the African Group during the Thirtieth Session. Indeed, according to decisions adopted by the preparatory Conference, Africa was to be represented at this Conference by four additional countries, Algeria and Zaire already being members of the Preparatory Conference. When the matter was referred to the African Group, there were 19 candidates. Despite all appeals to withdraw, the nineteen countries concerned maintained their candidature for nearly three weeks and the African Group was obliged to call more than once for the postponement of the deadline for the submission of candidatures. After several meetings of the African Group to select its four candidates the Group Chairman and the Executive Secretary were instructed to hold consultations with the African States individually in order to ascertain their choice so as to be able to decide on the four countries with a majority. It is noteworthy that the Group had decided to allocate the four seats to the four regional groupings, namely, West, North, Central and East. Since the Central and Eastern regions submitted only one candidature each, the seats for these two regions were allocated to Cameroon and Zambia. As for the West and North, consultations on a sub-regional basis indicated that the majority gave preference to Ivory Coast for the West and Libya for the North. However, out of all the OAU States, the majority favoured Nigeria and Egypt.

Nigeria and Egypt rejected the results of the consultations on a sub-regional basis, contrary to the practice adopted by the Group in such cases. After lengthy and arduous debate within the African Group, during which there were heated arguments, the Group finally decided to allot the two seats to Nigeria and Egypt.

The Group also faced similar difficulties as regards candidatures for membership to the Security Council and the International Court of Justice.

It will be recalled that at the Kampala Summit, all the recommendations of the African Group on African candidatures to International Organizations had been approved except the candidature to the Security Council, which was to come from the Western Sub-Region. In this connexion, Nigeria and Togo had raised objections to the candidature of Benin (Dahomey). The Summit referred the matter to the African Group for further consultations. At the United Nations level consultations were held until after the opening of the Thirtieth Session. A solution was found to this problem when the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Togo arrived barely two days prior to the vote. Togo then agreed to withdraw her candidature. Earlier on, Nigeria had also withdrawn in favour of Benin. The African Group was, however, less fortunate when it had to present only one African candidature to the International Court of Justice. Despite the numerous consultations held by the three countries, namely: Kenya, Liberia and Nigeria, which had presented candidates, and despite the numerous meetings held by the African Group on that question, it was not possible to agree on one candidate. The African Group was obliged to go to the vote at the General Assembly and the Security Council with its three candidates. Nigeria was eventually elected by an overwhelming majority although the impression had been created that there was a deep disagreement among the Africans.

The African Group also had a difficult time during the preparation and adoption of the Resolution on Zionism by the Third Committee and the General Assembly. The problem was to find a formula which would prevent the linking of Zionism with the decade of struggle against racial discrimination. The Group did not meet formally to discuss this problem consequently, each Member State acted in accordance with directives from its Government.

However, the question which seriously preoccupied the African Group during the Thirtieth Session was undeniably that of Spanish Sahara. Immediately after the publications of the report of the mission of the Committee of "24", the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice and the Declaration of Principle Signed in Madrid between Spain, Morocco and Mauritania, two trends of thought developed within the African Group. The first insisted that whatever the formula envisaged, the people of Spanish Sahara should be free to decide on their future in accordance with the right of the people to self-determination and independence enshrined in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial countries and peoples.

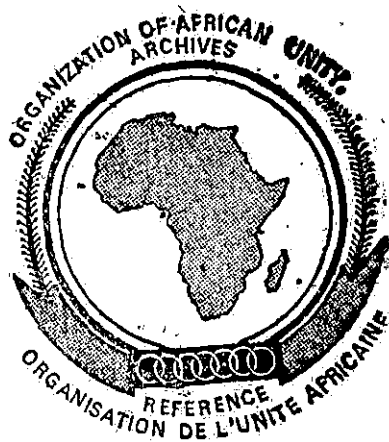
The second, stressed that the problem of Spanish Sahara was a special one and that once a concrete and realistic agreement had been reached between the parties directly concerned, then this agreement would have to be supported. Faced with this situation, the Group found it impossible to present a common draft resolution as in the past. Two draft resolutions sponsored by the representatives of the two trends of thought were presented to the Fourth Committee which adopted both. Nevertheless, the difficulties which confronted the African Group did not end with the question of Spanish Sahara. Indeed, towards the end of the Session, six African countries submitted a draft amendment to be inserted in the resolution of the Ad Hoc Political Committee on the Apartheid Policy of the South African Regime. This draft amendment condemned, in substance, the invasion of Angola by the South African forces and regarded such invasion as aimed at perpetuating and extending the policy of Apartheid to independent African countries. When the Plenary Session of the General Assembly was about to vote on this resolution and the amendment, another African country introduced an amendment to the abovementioned amendment and which condemned all foreign intervention in Angola.

The co-sponsors of the amendment explained that while they agreed that all other interventions in Angola should be condemned, they were of the opinion that the resolution on the South African Regime's Apartheid Policy was not the appropriate context for such condemnation. This happened five days to the end of the General

Assembly's deliberations. The group therefore met as a matter of urgency to find a solution. However, all its attempts proved unsuccessful and it went back to the Assembly with the amendment and the amendment to the amendment. Very fortunately, ten minutes before the casting of the vote the co-sponsors withdrew their amendment and the amendment to the amendment was also withdrawn.

From the foregoing, it will be noted, that the thirtieth Session was fraught with serious contradictions within the African Group which, during this meeting, met and held more consultations than it had ever done before. Perhaps these various crises and difficulties are part of a general situation of disguised crises that our Organization is going through. Besides, it is these same tendencies that characterized the thirtieth session which surfaced during the first extraordinary summit conference on Angola.

There were, nevertheless, some positive aspects during the thirtieth session. Many resolutions were adopted on Southern Africa and on economic problems, not to mention the particularly positive one on the problem of Zionism which after all continues to be of concern to the International Community. In the final report on the thirtieth session, we will make it our duty to analyse succinctly the most important of these resolutions.



1980

Progress report on the activities of the African Group at the United Nations during the Thirtieth Session of the General Assembly

African Union

African Union

<https://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/9560>

Downloaded from African Union Common Repository