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**ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE  
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REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON CRITERIA FOR  
GRANTING OBSERVER STATUS WITH THE OAU



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REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON CRITERIA FOR GRANTING  
OBSERVER STATUS WITH THE OAU

At its 26th Session, the Council of Ministers directed the Advisory Committee to review the criteria for granting Observer Status with the OAU. In the past recent years, there has been persistent criticism by Member States of the OAU of the existing criteria for granting Observer Status with the OAU, as contained in CM/162/Rev.2. The existing criteria are as follows:

- Article 5
- (a) The request shall conform with the fundamental principles set forth in the Charter of the OAU;
  - (b) The activities of the body seeking Observer Status shall be in conformity with the objectives of the OAU.

Members have centred their objections on the grounds that:

- (a) there are no sufficient information regarding applicants for Observer Status,
- (b) applicants are seeking the status with the OAU, for the main reason of getting subventions,
- (c) membership of the applicant includes South Africa,
- (d) membership includes non-African elements,
- (e) sources of finance of the Applicants include sources external to Africa,
- (f) applicants are professional. The granting of the status will lead to a proleferation of such application,
- (g) applicant is a religious body,
- (h) applicant is not pan-African in scope,

- (i) application has not been made in accordance with the rules, as it is introduced at the Session, and members have not got the time to study it,
- (j) the granting of Observer Status was unnecessary as any African Organization could still contribute to the progress of Africa without first obtaining Observer Status with the OAU.

Grounds (c), (d), (e), (f) and (j) are further elucidated hereunder:

- (c) Membership of applicant includes South Africa: Members maintain that since the Government of South Africa practices apartheid, membership of any organization in that country which will certainly cater for the whites, will be organised in the lines of apartheid, a course of action extremely detrimental to Africa. Such membership cannot be in the interest of Africa.
- (d) Membership of the applicant includes non-African elements. Here members fear influences external and detrimental to Africa, especially where such membership has voting rights.
- (e) Sources of Finance of the applicant include ones external to Africa. Just as in (d) above, members fear that powers inimical to the cause of emerging Africa could infiltrate the ranks of the Organization and thereby exert influences wholly detrimental to Africa.
- (f) Applicant Organization is one of professionals, and as there are innumerable professionals, the granting of such status will unleash a large number of application from professional Organizations.
- (j) The granting of Observer Status was unnecessary as any African Organization could still contribute to the progress of Africa, without first obtaining Observer Status with the OAU. This ground of objection arose from the ever-increasing number of applications for Observer Status with the OAU. Members hold that they saw no reason why African Organizations cannot contribute to the cause of African progress without first obtaining Observer Status with the OAU. From experience, it is clear that why African Organizations seek Observer Status

with the OAU is simply because they seek financial assistance. Members contend that the OAU has meager financial resources, and cannot afford to pursue a course of action that will add to its financial burden.

Although all above grounds are reasonable, it should be mentioned that where a number of members are well disposed towards an applicant Organization, its application will be favourably considered, inspite of the fact that a number of the above grounds of criticism are applicable to it. This gives the impression that members, are in any case, well disposed to the granting of Observer Status to African Organizations, an impression which casts doubts on ground of objection (f). Besides there are the following strong reasons for continuing granting Observer Status to deserving African Organizations:

- (a) There is the need for the OAU to conduct its activities within adequate publicity limits. It is advisable for the OAU to consider all Organizations to which it wishes to maintain continuous links, and then to grant its Observer Status with a view to facilitating the Organizations' presence during OAU Meetings.
- (b) It will not be possible for the OAU to extend its activities to cover all fields of valuable services to Africa. Certainly there must be African Organizations with sound credibility in their fields of activities which serve the cause of Africa, but which have not the financial resources to get on. The OAU being the parent and main body for African Unity as well as African progress, has the moral and financial responsibility to support such Organizations. In this case, it will not do for it to grant subventions only to the Organizations. It would necessarily grant Observer Status as well.

Because of the above reasons, it will be necessary for the OAU to continue to consider and grant Observer Status and subventions to worthy African Organizations; and in order to ascertain which Organizations are worthy, it should establish sound criteria, which must be satisfied by an Organization applying for Observer Status. To this end the Advisory Committee may wish to consider the following criteria:

Generally an Organization applying for Observer Status with the OAU will show its genuineness; its credibility; its pan-Africanism; the impossibility of its being influenced by forces external and inimical to Africa; if it is a

professional Organization, it should include all various disciplines of the wider profession. For instance an Association of Engineer should include all Organizations of various disciplines of engineering, civil and mechanical, for the whole Africa. All organizations seeking Observer Status with the OAU should therefore:

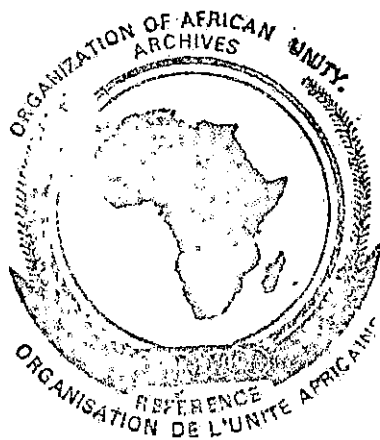
1. Have its objectives and activities conform with the fundamental principles and objectives set forth in the Charter of the OAU;
2. be an African Organization, registered in Africa with its headquarters in Africa. Membership should be African, excluding South Africa, Rhodesia and South West Africa, while minority Governments are still in power in these places. Membership external to Africa should not have voting rights;
3. have sound financial basis. Sources of finance should be African Donors external to Africa, should impose no strings. There should be clean accounting and auditing system.

To the above end, the Organization should be required to submit:

- (a) a written application and the following documents to the General Secretariat indicating its intention, at least six months before, it can be considered by the Council of Ministers, in order to allow for sufficient time for processing the application,
- (b) its Constitution or Charter, its list of up-to-date membership, sources of its finance, including copies of its most recent balance sheet, and Memorandum of activities all in the main languages of the OAU in sufficient quantity to facilitate circulation to Member States,
- (c) if a non-governmental organization, the particulars of at least two member states of the OAU, who have intimate knowledge of the Organization, and who are prepared to vouch for the genuineness and credibility of the Organization. One of these States should be that where the Organization has its registered headquarters.

No application for Observer Status shall be submitted for consideration of the Council of Ministers, unless it has been fully processed by the General Secretariat.

The Memorandum of Activities should contain the past and present activities of the Organization, its connections, including any connections external to Africa, and any other information, which will assist in determining the identity of the Organization, especially its scope of activities.



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# Report of the Administrative Secretary-General on Criteria for Granting Observer Status With the OAU

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