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**ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE
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COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

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REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON

THE OAU LABOUR COMMISSION



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REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
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INTRODUCTION

The Conference of African Ministers of Labour, meeting for the first time as the OAU Labour Commission, was convened in Freetown, Sierra Leone, from March 30 to April 3, 1976. The documents from the Conference are attached herewith for examination of the Council before forwarding them to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

2. These documents include, attached herewith as Annexes:
- (a) Report of the Rapporteur of the First Session of the Commission - - - Annex I
 - (b) Resolutions passed by the Session - Annex II
 - (c) The Rules of Procedure adopted by the Commission in line with its new status - Annex III

DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION

3. The following points, arising from the deliberations of the Commission deserve particular mention:

(a) In Resolution LC/Res. 1(I), the Commission, in operative paragraph 8, recommends that a Research and Statistical Section be set up in the ECOSOC Department of the General Secretariat, to be responsible for carrying out research and studies in economic, labour and social questions.

- The Council should consider this recommendation against the background of suggestions made by many delegates in Kampala last, that the ECOSOC Department should be strengthened.

- That the Department needs to be strengthened in this manner was also underlined by the 4th Session of the Conference of African Trade Ministers, which was held in Algiers in November 1975.

- The General Secretariat hopes, therefore that the Council will this time decisively authorize the creation of a Research and Statistics Section in the Economic and Social Affairs Department.

(b) The Council's attention is also drawn to operative paragraphs 2, 4 and 5 of the resolution, which deals with the subject of Multinational (or Trans-national) Companies or Corporations. Those three paragraphs request the OAU Member States to pay attention to certain aspects of the problem created by Multinational Companies to which they play host. In these circumstances, the General Secretariat invites the Council's close attention to those paragraphs.

(c) Also deserving of the Council's attention is resolution LC/Res.2(I), which especially in its operative paragraph 3 requests African Governments to assist the General Secretariat in the study of the question of creating an African Labour Organization.

(d) At operative paragraph 2 of resolution LC/Res. 5(I), the African Governments and organizations concerned with labour and related social matters are urged to render all possible assistance to Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Sao Tome é Principe and Guinea-Bissau. The Council will no doubt wish to take a close look at that recommendation.

(e) A very important decision of the Commission relates to the structure of the International Labour Organization (ILO). In general, the resolution addresses itself to the need to make the ILO more democratic. The best way of doing this, it is believed by the Third World, is to restructure that Organization.

- Due to pressures brought by the Third World within the ILO, a committee of the ILO has been working on this question. However, the results of the work of the Committee have fallen short of the requirements and expectations of the Third World. It is in the light of this that the OAU Labour Commission passed resolution LC/Res. 7(I) which, among other things, requests the OAU Member States to take certain measures to continue the pressure on ILO to democratize itself.

- Operative paragraph 5 of the resolution also puts some responsibility on the Member States. In view of the fact that the Commission is to some extent responsible to the Council of Ministers, its hand -- that is, the hand of the Commission -- would be greatly strengthened if the Council were to declare formally its full support for the position taken by the Commission.

- In this regard, special attention might be drawn to sub-paragraph (d) of operative paragraph 3 of the resolution. That sub-paragraph suggests that all necessary measures be taken to convene a special session of the International Labour Conference on ILO structure as soon as possible. The Commission has included this provision in the resolution because such a conference would be the last resort. It would be the last resort because all attempts to use existing machinery within the ILO set up has failed, because of obstructionist tactics of the industrialised countries within the ILO Governing Body. The Council might, therefore, at least wish to endorse this particular provision on the resolution.

(f) The Council will also find interesting resolution LC/Res. 11(I), which refers to the activities of the ILO in Africa in the fields of employment and population. In this regard, it might be mentioned that employment and population have become crucial elements in the efforts being made by developing countries to speed up their economic and social advancement. Moreover, this is an area in which the ILO and the OAU, particularly at the level of the Secretariats, have co-operated much to the benefit of Africa. Hence operative paragraph 1 of this resolution urges the African Ministries of Labour and other related Ministries to make sustained efforts to ensure the success of programmes on employment and population in which the OAU and the ILO co-operate. Specific reference may here be made to UNFPA - United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

- The Council will of course notice at operative paragraph 6 of the resolution that a seminar dealing with this subject was held in Zambia; hence paragraph 5 calls on the OAU and the ILO to organize similar seminars in other African sub-regions and sensitize public opinion on the issues under reference. In this regard, the General Secretariat

would welcome offers by the Member States in the remaining four sub-regions of Africa to invite ILO and OAU to hold such seminars in their territories.

(g) A very important resolution is resolution LC/Res. 12(I), which deals with the activities of the OATUU in the year 1975-76. Seven important points are in fact covered in this resolution. These are as follows:

- (i) The resolution refers to the principle of setting up an African Labour Consultative Committee, to examine national labour disputes and allegations of violation of fair labour standards, including Trade Union Rights. At the purely political level the OAU has established a Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration. The proposed Consultative Committee is to operate along similar lines on matters relating to labour. It would greatly strengthen the decision of the Commission if the Council of Ministers would endorse this principle.
- (ii) The Resolution, in operative paragraph 4 sub-paragraph (a), appeals to the Member States to introduce check-off systems and education levy to ensure constant financial contribution to OATUU by its affiliates. Here also the support of Member States is essential if OATUU is eventually to become financially independent, and so cease to rely on subventions from the OAU and the Member States as at present.
- (iii) Because the situation at sub-paragraph (a) of operative paragraph 4 has not yet been brought under control, the Commission urges Member States to consider granting OATUU subventions in order to enable it to carry out its activities. Such a recommendation was in fact made by the Commission - then the Conference of African Ministers of Labour - in Libreville, Gabon, in 1975. To date, however, only Ghana, Kenya, Libya and Nigeria have responded to this worthy call.

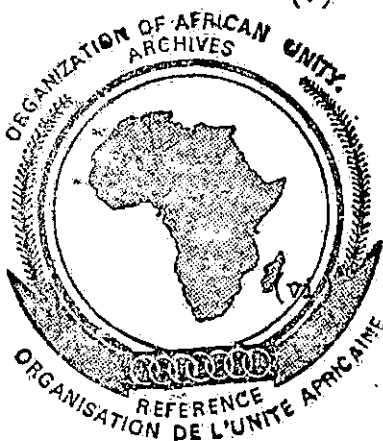
(iv) At sub-paragraph (c) of operative paragraph 4, the Commission urges the Member States to send women worker delegates to the Women Workers Conference in Accra - May 24-29, 1976. If this conference had been held as stipulated here the appeal being made here would have been irrelevant. However, due to adverse circumstances, the Conference will not now take place until October this year. Accordingly, the Council might wish to strengthen the appeal of the Commission by facilitating assistance by Member States to the Women Workers of Africa, to enable them to hold this very important Conference of the other half of Africa.

(v) In operative paragraphs 5 and 6, the Commission appeals to Member States to accept OATUU principle for involving trade unions in the economic life as well as the economic and social planning of the Member States and in their implementation.

In operative paragraph 7, the Commission calls upon the Member States and the ILO to assist the OATUU to establish an independent Pan African Workers Institute for the education of African workers and their leaders.

(vii) Finally, the Commission reaffirms two previous resolutions of the Conference of African Labour Ministers, which call upon Member States to support the Liberation Movements of Southern Africa and trade union sanctions against the illegal minority and racist regimes in Southern Africa.

4. With these observations, the General Secretariat commends the report (in Annexes I - III hereto) from the First Session of the new OAU Labour Commission to the attention of the Council.



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