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REPORT OF SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES

OF THE STRC LAGOS



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This report aims at highlighting the activities of the STRC during the period between March and July 1982.

I. MEETING OF WORKING COMMITTEE FOR THE
DRAFT OF THE 1ST AFRICAN PHARMACOPOEIA

For the past 14 years, there have been several meetings of the Inter-African Committee on Traditional medicine. During these meetings, it has been unanimously agreed that the Organization should produce an African Pharmacopoeia which will have a continental coverage and application. A Working Committee, of 4 eminent African Scientists, was convened to prepare a draft of such a pharmacopoeia. The draft will be discussed and ratified at the forthcoming 4th Inter-African Symposium on Traditional medicine and medicinal plants taking place in Luanda from the 27th of September, 1982. The Committee worked very hard to achieve its objective and the 1st draft of the 1st African Pharmacopoeia is almost completed. This is considered to be a significant milestone in the history of the Organization. The pharmacopoeia will be of considerable importance to all the member states as soon as it appears in print. It will also be used for formulating strategies for the commercial production of pharmaceutical products from medicinal plants sources in member states.

II. MEETING OF OAU AND UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

The Executive Secretary of OAU/STRC was invited by the OAU Headquarters to join the delegation in Geneva where discussions took place with United Nations Agencies. The STRC made some contributions at this important meeting.

III. MEETING WITH IFAD

In accordance with the Council of Ministers resolution to establish an African Centre for Fertilizers and in accordance with the recommendation of the Site Selection Committee to look for funds for the establishment of the Centre, the Executive Secretary joined a team to solicit for funds for this Centre. IFAD promised to support relevant research projects which will be carried out at the centre but stated clearly that it cannot fund the construction of such a centre. The International Fertilizer Development Centre in conjunction with the STRC will develop projects proposals to be funded by IFAD. The OAU/STRC is of the opinion that such projects should primarily be of benefit to member states and they should not be projects that interest the IFDC. Suitable projects are being prepared by eminent African Scientists in the area of fertilizer technology.

IV. MEETING WITH OPEC

The visit of the Secretariat to OPEC was in connection with soliciting for funds for the African Centre for Fertilizer. After considerable discussions with the Executive Director of OPEC fund, it was possible to convince him that OPEC should support the construction of the centre. The Executive Director gave an indication that his Board will consider this request provided an African country was ready to host the centre and that other donors will support the centre financially. The STRC has been requested to report back to OPEC, with detailed information including architectural plans and costs of constructing the centre for the consideration of OPEC Board in October/November, 1982. The OAU/STRC, in conjunction with the IFDC, have commenced preliminary discussions on the modus operandi for providing the necessary information. Progress on this centre has been considerably slowed down by the inability of the STRC to obtain a formal letter of consent to host the centre from the four African governments visited. There is considerable international enthusiasm for this centre and it is hoped that one member state will agree to host the centre so that costing and construction of such a centre can be effected very quickly and sent to donors for their consideration.

V. SITE SELECTION

In accordance with the normal procedure for selecting Site to host a centre in Africa, a Site Selection Committee composed of representatives from the following countries visited Kenya, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, and Senegal; Liberia, Egypt, Malagasy Republic and Nigeria. Questionnaires were sent to the 4 governments and the report in respect of the centre was also sent to each of the Site Selection Committee and the relevant Ministries of the countries but none of the countries was able to give a definite answer at the time of the visit. They all promised to communicate such answers to the STRC before the end of June, 1982. The STRC has made efforts to contact the governments for answers and replies are still being awaited. Of all the countries visited, the officials of Zimbabwe government indicated their extreme willingness to host the centre and to satisfy nearly all the criteria stipulated in the questionnaire. A copy of the report of the Site Selection Committee of this centre including the questionnaire has been submitted as part of the 4 year report through the secretariat and also as an item on the agenda for the meeting of Council of Ministers meeting and summit in Tripoli. It is hoped that a resolution will be passed on this vital activity for further implementation by the STRC.

VI. VISIT TO IFDC

The IFDC has been actively involved in the establishment of the African Centre for Fertilizer. The Executive Secretary was invited to the meeting of the Executive Board of the IFDC to discuss possible relationships between OAU and IFDC in the establishment of the African Centre for Fertilizer (ACFERT).

The Executive Board of IFDC passed a resolution in support of a relationship between the centre and the OAU and also prepared a draft agreement between the OAU and the IFDC for the administration and management of the proposed centre. The IFDC has provided funds for virtually all expenses incurred for the activities relating to the establishment of the centre through a grant to IFDC by IFAD.

VII. VISIT TO USAID

Subsequent to a meeting in Paris at the United States Embassy (February 17 & 18, 1982) between the OAU/STRC and members of the CDA countries namely: U.S.A., U.K., France, West Germany, Belgium, Canada and Italy, the Executive Secretary visited the Africa Bureau of the USAID to discuss the implementation of the strategies proposed at the Paris meeting. The objective of the CDA countries is to establish agricultural research activities in 5 agro-ecological zones in Africa with a view to increasing production of food. The CDA countries would like to pull their resources for the total project each country assigned responsibilities for each of the agro-ecological zones. The Executive Secretary, who was accompanied to the Paris meeting by the International Coordinator for SAFGRAD, was able to convince the CDA countries that their efforts would be best co-ordinated under the aegis of the OAU. Although there is some reluctance by some members of the CDA Committee, a few members indicated their willingness to consult and collaborate with the OAU/STRC in this regional approach to agricultural research. The STRC has been requested to hold a workshop on behalf of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany where eminent African Agricultural experts will be able to present research projects which are considered to be of topmost priority to the coastal agro-ecological zone. This workshop will be held on July 15, 16 and 17, 1982 and will be attended by agricultural experts and Directors of Agricultural research from nearly all the countries on the west coast of Africa. It is hoped that some other workshops will be held in other regions of Africa as defined in the agro-ecological map by the CDA countries. This is the first time that the CDA countries have entered into a dialogue with any African group and it is hoped that this will be the beginning of a very fruitful and rewarding venture for all the member states of the Organization.

VIII. VISITS FOR SAFGRAD'S FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Executive Secretariat of the STRC has been highly impressed by the activities and results of SAFGRAD which is based in Ouagadougou, Upper Volta. This centre has been predominantly

funded by the USAID and to a very small extent by the French Government. The recent evaluation on the activities of this centre indicate that it holds considerable promise for agricultural research in the Sahel and the extensive semiarid zones of Africa. The USAID has indicated its intention to reduce its level of financial support to this laudable centre but suggested that the centre be funded as part of CDA activities on the entire continent. The decision to reduce such a financial support comes at a time when SAFCRAD has just entrenched itself successfully and has just begun to extend its activities into other parts of Africa. The Executive Secretary, accompanied by the International Co-ordinator of SAFCRAD, visited several donors including EEC, IFAD, UNDP, WORLD BANK and USAID. The only rays of hope for SAFCRAD support are likely to come from IFAD and USAID since other donors have neither received project proposals nor formal requests for funding from the OAU. The STRC shall prepare project proposals and requests for financial consideration of the other donors and it is hoped that such requests will be fully endorsed by Headquarters.

IX. PREPARATORY MEETING FOR 1st OAU CONFERENCE ON COMPUTER

SCIENCE AND INFORMATICS

In accordance with the resolution of the Council of Ministers to hold the 1st OAU Conference on Computer Science and Informatics and in conformity with the acceptance to host such a conference by the Government of Algeria, the STRC had preliminary meeting in Lagos in February, 1982 with the representatives of IBI, UNESCO, ECA and Algerian Government. The preliminary arrangements for this meeting were discussed and the final meeting to finalize these arrangements will be held in Addis Ababa in June with representatives of IBI, UNESCO, ECA and the Algerian Government. The Conference is now scheduled to be held in Algiers in September, 1982.

VISIT TO ZAMBIA: WORKSHOP ON ENERGY
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Executive Secretariat of STRC has proposed that this workshop should take place in Zambia. The authorities of the Zambian government have been contacted about the proposed date for this workshop. The workshop which is being co-sponsored by UNIDO is scheduled to be held in July, 1982. UNIDO has approved 4 workshops in the area of Solar Energy Technology. Two workshops shall be held in Francophone countries and two in Anglophone countries. The UNIDO has indicated that ECA should also be involved with the workshops. The Zambian workshop has had to be postponed because there has been no reply from the authorities of Zambia to host the workshop and the Executive Secretary has decided to visit Zambia to convince the authorities about the value of hosting such a workshop in Zambia. It is therefore hoped that as soon as the authorities agree in principle to host the workshop, a suitable date will be agreed upon and communicated to the participating International Organizations. It is hoped that similar workshops will be held in other parts of Africa during the next two years as suggested by UNIDO.

XI. VISIT TO ZIMBABWE

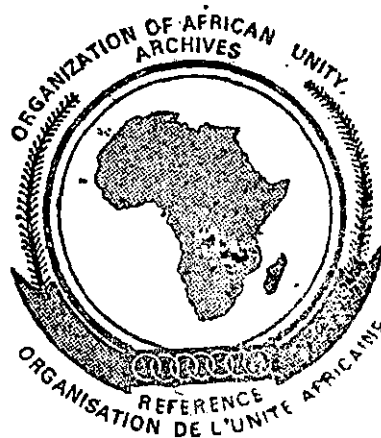
In view of the strong indication by the government of Zimbabwe to host the African Centre for Fertilizers, the Executive Secretary has decided to visit Zimbabwe on his way to Angola to finalize the questionnaire. It is hoped that a positive response will be obtained so that a firm recommendation can be forwarded to the Council of Ministers in Tripoli. It is also hoped that replies from the other 3 countries contacted will be obtained as reminders have already been sent to the governments of Cameroon, Senegal and Kenya.

XII. VISIT TO ANGOLA

The 4th Inter-African Symposium on Traditional Medicine will be held in Luanda, Angola, from 22nd - 25th. of September, 1982. In accordance with the usual practice for holding such a symposium

the Executive Secretary will be visiting Angola to have detailed discussions with the authorities for the preparation of the symposium. The authorities have been contacted and the visit is scheduled to take place between July 7 - 10, 1982.

In view of the extreme shortage of scientific staff in the STRC Lagos Office, there is considerable strain on the only two existing Scientific officers in this office. The Executive Secretary is only 6 month old in the Organization and the Assistant Executive Secretary has recently been bereaved by loss of his wife - a situation which compelled him to go on leave. This in effect means that there is only one Officer functioning in the STRC Lagos office. This officer is expected to carry out all the activities of the office and to co-ordinate effectively the activities of the existing 3 sub-regional offices. If the staff situation had been better, the Executive Secretariat of the Lagos office would have liked to implement the resolution to open the sub-regional office for Forestry in Libreville, Gabon. However, it is hoped that as soon as the newly appointed officers to STRC Lagos office assume duties, the office in Libreville shall be opened and begin to function as directed.



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Report of the Secretary-General on the Activities of the STRC Lagos

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