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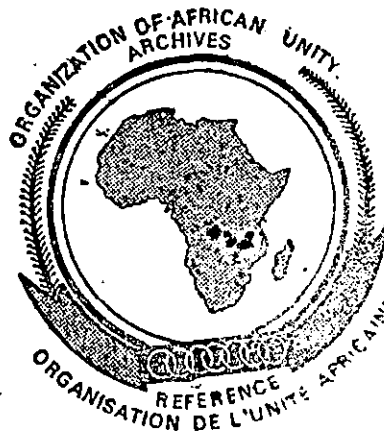
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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE THIRD MEETING BETWEEN THE OAU
SECRETARIAT AND THE SECRETARIATS OF THE UN SYSTEM



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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE THIRD MEETING BETWEEN THE OAU
SECRETARIAT AND THE SECRETARIATS OF THE UN SYSTEM

1. In accordance with the agreement reached during the Second Meeting between the OAU Secretariat and the Secretariats of the OAU System in April 1981 in Geneva, the Third Meeting was convened in Geneva from 6-8 April 1982. The OAU was represented by a high level delegation led by the Secretary General H.E. Mr. Edem KODJO, and including Assistant Secretary-General (Political) Dr. Peter ONU and Assistant Secretary-General (EDECO) Mr. Paul Etiang. The United Nations delegation was led by the Secretary General Javier Perez de Cullar and included representatives of the UN Headquarters, led by Dr. A. Farah, under Secretary-General for Special Political Matters and Heads or deputy Heads of all the Secretariats of the United Nations System.

2. Dr. Peter Onu and Mr. A. Farah acted as Co-Chairmen of the meeting. The representatives of the OAU and the UN System held very useful exchanges of views on respective areas of cooperation particularly on information system, environmental programmes, implementation of Lagos Plan of Action, improvement of the food situation in Africa and on assistance to refugees in Africa. On all the issues discussed the meeting arrived at certain conclusion and made recommendations which are reproduced below.

3. INFORMATION SYSTEM

The creation of the Pan African Documentation and Information System (PADIS) is a welcome development, catering for a felt need in the region. However, special attention should be given to the following:

a) Information systems in African countries vary greatly. Their conceptual frameworks are far from identical; even comparable, and they relate to or reflect interests which are not always easy to reconcile;

b) African countries, in the process of developing their own information systems, are often pressed to acquire equipment and hardware which may not

be relevant to their real needs or that may exceed, in the long term, their financial capacities;

c) In the United Nations Family, as in the OAU, information systems will require prompt technical coordination if they are to contribute efficiently to enhancing the capacity of PADIS to supply accurate and timely information and documentation to its users;

d) PADIS as a service should be carefully assessed from the point of view of its utilization, as well as from that of its support requirements.

The meeting therefore agreed to recommend:

(Regarding the utilization of PADIS)

- (i) Updating of information and coordination of information and documentation activities, both within the UN system and between the UN and OAU, through active and regular participation of all organizations concerned in the meetings of the PADIS Coordinating Committee, and, in certain specific cases, through secondment of technical advisers to PADIS-CCO.
- (ii) At the national level, all institutions interested in development information and documentation should be associated with a collective effort to ensure proper coordination of the national effort in the field of information, and subsequently to relate to PADIS and its data base.

(Regarding the support requirements for PADIS)

- (i) The Inter-agency Committee established in Addis Ababa in March 1982 to coordinate and harmonize all telecommunications projects in Africa should study and define the technical and support requirements of the PADIS system. Organizations from within the UN and OAU systems wishing to follow or contribute to the work of the Inter-agency Committee, especially for what relates to PADIS and its

support requirements, would be invited to communicate their wish to the Committee, through ECA, its lead agency.

- (ii) Agencies already having developed data bases should consider at least supplying PADIS with copies of their records so as to ensure that all central technical data be gathered at a central point, PADIS, thus permitting easy retrieval for the benefit of development in Africa.

4.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMES

a) Desertification

The meeting noted the following constraints impeding implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification:

- i) Failure of countries facing desertification to assign high priority to desertification prevention and control.
- ii) Need to strengthen cooperation within the UN system.
- iii) Need to fill gaps in the knowledge of techniques of desertification control.
- iv) Insufficiency of financial resources available for anti-desertification activities.

The meeting recommended the following measures to accelerate the implementation of PACD:

- (i) As the PACD adopted by the General Assembly emphasized that national governments had the primary role in its implementation, OAU and ECA Secretariats would urge, as appropriate, governments of states faced with desertification to assign high priority to their respective development plans and programmes and to urge governments which had not yet done so to prepare, with the assistance of UNEP and other UN organizations, national plans of action to combat desertification.

- (ii) UN organizations should, through the appropriate machinery, seek ways and means of strengthening cooperation within the UN system so as to ensure an effective multidisciplinary approach to projects and to arrange for effective pooling of the efforts and resources of various agencies and bodies, with a view of their most efficient utilization in Africa.
- (iii) OAU and ECA should encourage research institutions in Africa to play their role in filling the gap in knowledge in the techniques of desertification control, particularly in regard to integrated inter-disciplinary approaches, and UN bodies concerned should assist these research institutions in this respect.
- (iv) OAU, ECA and UN organizations should seek all possible ways and means to mobilize additional financial resources for the implementation of the PACD, and governments should be urged to contribute to the special account established by the General Assembly for combating desertification at the initiative of the African States.
- b) Regional Seas

The meeting took note of the fact that cooperation in the preservation, protection and development of the marine environment and coastal areas resources has been given high priority by African Governments. At present, thirty-seven African coastal and island States are cooperating either in the implementation or development of UNEP-sponsored action plans for the protection and development of marine and coastal areas resources. In order to make this cooperation more effective special efforts should be made to generate the required financial resources to support the implementation of activities called for by the action plans and to strengthen and develop the national capabilities for undertaking these regional co-operative activities.

5. THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION: Progress Report on its Implementation

Having carefully considered this important issue, the meeting agreed as follows:

1. While efforts are made at the national level, in the African region, to build up awareness of the Lagos Plan of Action, its importance and implications, the UN Agencies are requested to help in publicizing the LPA, each one in its respective field.
2. The UN Agencies are also requested to make available, as early as possible, their respective programmes of work for the implementation of the LPA.
3. The UN Agencies should try to assist the OAU in enhancing the capacity of its Secretariat to cope with its role in monitoring the implementation of the LPA at the national level.
4. The institutional framework of cooperation between the OAU and each one of the UN Specialized Agencies should be established defined, so as to ensure that concerted actions and coordinated activities could be launched to implement the LPA.
5. Coordination would entail that a focal point be agreed upon, e.g. the OAU/ECA Committee, whose reactivation should be brought to the attention of all concerned, to regularly receive periodical reports from the Agencies of their ongoing activities regarding the implementation of the LPA. This reporting exercise should include information on the requisition of funds for the implementation of projects (so far this information has been received from UNDP).
6. OAU should endeavour to strengthen its regional offices outside Africa, i.e. in Geneva, New York and Brussels, so that the efficiency and effectiveness of these offices could be improved.
7. OAU should try to evolve specific activities, programmes or projects in the major sectors identified in the LPA, through joint programming sessions or exercises with ECA and the UN body(ies) concerned. It would be also take an active part in the implementation of these activities, depending on its technical capacities and expertise, or at least help to promote such activities through the role which African govern-

ments could play within the governing bodies of the agencies directly concerned.

8. OAU should investigate the possibility of having one or two Heads of UN Agencies to address each annual meeting of the OAU Summit on specific aspects of the Lagos Plan of Action. This would help to ensure a greater understanding of the technical aspects of the implementation of the Plan.
9. OAU Heads of State and Governments, the Secretary-General or their representatives are requested to increase their frequencies of addressing the meetings of the legislative bodies of UN Agencies. This would help to reinforce the efforts of the African delegates in influencing the policy direction of the UN Agencies in greater favour of Africa.
10. UN Agencies should expand the scope of their assistance to the OAU Secretariat by financing the participation of their relevant staff in policy and technical meetings and other appropriate activities of the Agencies. This would help to enhance the capacity of the OAU Secretariat for the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action.
11. Note has been taken with interest of the significant amount of work jointly carried out by the Secretariats of the OAU, ECA and UNIDO and the conclusions reached at the UN Inter-Agency Meeting held at UNIDO Headquarters in Vienna in March 1982 on the Industrial Development Decade for Africa. It is therefore agreed that all UN Agencies should intensify their efforts towards the reorientation of their relevant activities for greater support in the implementation of the programme for the Decade which were formulated within the framework of the Lagos Plan of Action. In order to ensure a greater coordination and harmonization of the actions being taken by the UN Agencies, it is proposed that report on the Industrial Development Decade activities for Africa should be made under the overall report on the progress on the implementation of the LPA, which, in turn, should become a permanent item of the Agenda of this meeting.

6. FOOD SITUATION IN AFRICA & COORDINATION OF UN AGENCIES IN AFRICA

1. It is important that African countries should be fully informed as to the kind of assistance, whether financial, technical or national, which they are eligible to receive from individual agencies and organizations of the UN system, in times of emergency, or in support of their development efforts. The OAU requests such information so that this can be communicated to Member States.
2. The meeting suggested that the African-Inter-ministerial Committee on Food, which was to meet in Addis in May, might wish to take up the question of Food and Coordination in addition to its existing concern with harmonizing information on food production, storage and supply.
3. The meeting recommended for the consideration of the WFP that countries which are the subject of General Assembly resolutions on special economic assistance, but which are not included in the list of least developed countries, should be accorded by the WFP similar privileges to those granted to LDCs in the provision of a contribution to the internal cost of transport, storage and handling of food aid.
4. As there is a large number of donors involved in Africa and only two of them (IFAD and the World Bank) were present in this meeting, it might be desirable to sponsor a meeting consisting of all donors and other relevant agencies to discuss the Lagos Plan of Action with a view to building up and establishing a common and coordinated approach towards the implementation of this plan.
5. OAU should participate in the inter-country consultations organized by FAO and UNDP to promote technical cooperation among developing countries in agricultural extension training. The second such consultation is scheduled to take place in October or November 1982.

6. As FAO is settling up a staff programme on rural development, participation of the OAU staff in the seminars under this programme is welcome. FAO also offered to supply orientation materials to OAU for similar seminars that the OAU wish to organize itself.

7. As there is lack of expertise in disaster management, both at the international donor and in particular at the receiving end, training disaster managers and establishing foci of expertise at the country level would go a long way in making emergency and disaster action more pertinent and protective. This is all the more applicable to the countries at risk (which in fact include most of the developing countries).

WHO has established training programmes for management of emergencies and other disasters. The courses are not restricted to health and it is proposed that the establishment of such training programmes would promote prevention and more effective emergency action by the UN system and by the countries themselves.

8. It is proposed that for the OAU to be more fully and regularly informed on WFP activities full use be made by OAU of its observer status in the WFP's governing body, the CFA, that meeting twice a year and where all new projects, as well as project evaluations and policy issues are discussed.

In order to improve the operational aspects of food aid at the field level, WFP took this opportunity to recommend that OAU promotes, within its appropriate fora, the adoption by the African States of the following measures:

- i) recipient countries and countries of transit to provide highest priority to customs clearance and transport of food aid,
- ii) expert formalities for the procurement of food aid in neighbouring countries,

- iii) UN Agencies concerned should pool the financial resources and transport means to ensure the internal transport of food aid.

REFUGEES

1. The OAU meeting called upon the competent developmental or funding agencies such as the World Bank, UNDP, WFP, IFAD, UNICEF to inform the Steering Committee of ICARA, as soon as possible and not later than July 1982, of their programmes, current or planned, to provide assistance to countries of asylum to enable them to strengthen their social and economic infrastructure to cope with the caring and resettlement of refugees in those countries.
2. Recognizing that emergency situations can disrupt the development process, taking into account the long term nature of the African refugee situation and its grave adverse impact on the fragile economies of the countries of asylum, the meeting agrees:
 - a) that the list of additional needs submitted to ICARA be studied by UNHCR to ascertain which projects fall within its area of competence;
 - b) that the remainder be included in a new list which could form the basis for submission to the international community, including the UN development financing agencies, for possible funding;
 - c) that the additional assistance requested for the refugee-related projects should not be at the expense of the host countries own development needs;
 - d) that the competent UN Agencies should assist the countries concerned in preparing credible and pertinent project documents to facilitate consideration by funding agencies;
 - e) that every support be given to the sponsors in the organization of a second international conference, should this be approved by the General Assembly.



It should be noted in this respect that technical feasibility studies to prepare for a possible second ICARA is in line with some of the recommendations of the 1979 Arusha Conference which called for setting up of an ad hoc task force to consider such studies.

8. The OAU Secretariat is of the view that the annual joint meeting with the Secretariats of the UN systems provide an invaluable forum for the evaluation and enhancing the cooperation between the two sides for social and economic development of Africa. This is a view that is also shared by the United Nations and the Secretariats of the UN Systems. The importance of these meetings is underscored by the personal involvement and participation of the two Secretaries-General. It is hoped to hold a fourth meeting of the two sides in 1983.



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