



ORGANIZATION OF  
AFRICAN UNITY  
Secretariat  
P. O. Box 3243

منظمة الوحدة الافريقية  
السكرتاريات  
ب. ب. 3243

ORGANIZATION DE L'UNITE  
AFRICAINNE  
Secretariat  
B. P. 3243

Addis Ababa \* ادیس ابابا \* CM/967(XXXIII) Part I

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS  
Thirty-Third Ordinary Session  
Monrovia, Liberia  
6 - 15 July 1979

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT  
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OAU



Mr. Chairman,  
 Honourable Ministers,  
 Your Excellencies,  
 Distinguished Delegates,

Monrovia, this prestigious capital of Liberia, which has in the past, been the venue of fruitful meetings that have stood as milestones of African Unity, has once again opened its doors to us.

As we feel the wind of uncertainty coming closer and closer and as that "enormous deafening in the world" spreads its wings shaking the roots of our society in turmoil; as our continent, weakened by disputes as shocking as they are varied, struggles and makes haste slowly and as its momentum is being checked by regrettably fratricidal conflicts; as we challenge our identity and deep-seated traditions and our life style is governed by a "great principle of violence" ; as our future becomes as uncertain as a strange enigma, once again, Monrovia opens its doors to us.

Should this be a surprise to us? Is it not true that this city, this country, symbol of freedom, self-assertion, self-identity and a determined search for our personality through our unique way of life made us aware in the past of the great continental designs and inspired in us the living spirit of Pan Africanism?

Was this city not the dynamic cradle of African Unity?

Was it not here in defiance of all obstacles and challenges, three of our eminent leaders met at the initiative of President Tolbert to renew their friendship and further strengthen their brotherhood?

Was it not here also, that last February, in response to the call of the OAU, African experts met to consider the economic future of our continent, to lay the basis for a concept and for a dynamic action at a time when the year 2000 is at the threshold. Since then the Monrovia Colloquium has constantly been referred to as a manifestation of a new awareness in Africa.

Today, in a continued quest for our identity, in our desire to strengthen African Unity and prepare the future, it is yet to Monrovia that we come, as if brought here by the nature of things, to **think** together and to devise measures to further strengthen our co-operation and our solidarity.

Undoubtedly, today as in the past, Monrovia will be the door of hope and the **cradle** of the New Era.

Allow me in turn, on behalf of the Assistant Secretaries-General and all my collaborators, to say to the people of Liberia and to their distinguished leader, His Excellency Dr. William R. Tolbert, Jr., how very grateful we are for the hospitality extended to us in Monrovia on the occasion of the thirty-third Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, and for his highly inspiring speech which will surely guide us throughout our deliberations. We are sure that the kind hospitality accorded us by the Liberian people the facilities placed at our disposal will contribute to the success of our proceedings during which we shall have to analyse and overcome the delicate liberation and development problems facing our Continent.

Mr. Chairman,

Before we recapitulate the activities of the Secretariat during the period spanning February to July 1979, permit me to inform you that in the course of the period, the hand of fate

came to take away one of our officers in the person of the late Robert Bamizana. Together with his family and friends we shared the pain of bereavement, and the Secretariat with the required simplicity and dignity organized the repatriation of the body to Gbagadougou.

Mr. Chairman,

The activities of the Secretariat are covered in detail in the separate reports, under a specific item of the Agenda, and which will henceforth be submitted in four parts.

Part I embodies the Introduction to the report of Activities of the Secretary General which is the form of the customary exposé made to the Council to introduce the report on the Activities of the Secretariat contained in Part II and devoted only to the activities of the Headquarters, and Part III devoted in detail to the manner in which the Executive Secretariat and the Regional Offices have been able to accomplish the tasks assigned to them. Part IV is reserved for the Specialized Agencies, which submit the result of their work to the Council of Ministers.

In this connexion, we believe that the time has come in the Organization of African Unity, to set up a system to regroup our Specialized Agencies around the General Secretariat, after the manner of the United Nations System.

Whilst granting full autonomy to these institutions, as is the case in the United Nations, such an innovation, we are convinced, will allow a minimum of coordination in our action to integrate the Member States of our Organization and to promote African Unity.

Such a "historic" vision, such a global approach can only be workable if the minimal coherence is established and adequate coordination of these multiform actions provided. Without bearing prejudice to the specific nature of each of these Agencies, without deforming their identities and their objectives, and bearing in mind their RAISON D'ETRE whilst taking cognisance of their differences, we feel that it has become clearly imperative today to better coordinate, to strive to harmonize, in a nutshell, to better bring to bear the tides of our actions on the overall objective of our liberation and our Unity.

A Resolution prepared together with the leaders of these Agencies of the OAU is submitted to your Council for consideration. It is indeed necessary to devise a global perspective for the activities and decisions of the galaxy of institutions each of which in its own way and field, is working in the building of the Africa of tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman, as far as our Administration is concerned, we should mainly mention the implementation of the new structures of our departments at Headquarters, which operation began on the first of June last and which will proceed by stages. We trust that the new structure will become, for the General Secretariat, the instrument to guarantee the fulfillment of its multiple functions of a driving force and of coordination in the service of Africa.

These functions can be accomplished all the more easily if in the future, at the same time as we adopt the budget, we adopt the time-table of the conferences to be organized by the Secretariat.

Indeed all the resolutions adopted in each of our sessions

require in most cases that we convene meetings and that we report to the following session. Hence the frequency of our meetings reach a dizzying tempo, to the extent that it becomes almost impossible at the Headquarters to attend to work requiring real presence, research, follow-up and coordination. This avalanche of meetings and consultations of all types, an addiction of the times and an uncontrollable characteristic of contemporary society, is attended by innumerable problems of organisation, of the adaptation of the structural and administrative machinery of the OAU, of its preparedness and ability to react and even of the participation of Member States at the required representational level. It is necessary to arrest this tendency today, to make a careful selection from this tide of meetings and retain only the essential ones. In this respect the Chairmen of the Committees could exercise solitary influence by using their offices to assure that resolutions adopted do not give rise to a multiplicity of meetings and gatherings in the future.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding finance, our main concern ever since the creation of the Department has been to adapt the whole of our system to the exigencies of our objectives which dictate far-reaching changes in our present practices. To this end, we have for the past month been studying a project to mechanize the accounting system and the conference administration of the OAU, desirous as we are to bring the machinery of our Organization into the era of modern management.

The Ad Hoc Committee mandated by your council to review the Scale of Assessment of Member States of the Organization of African Unity was unable, in default of a quorum, to meet in Addis Ababa several weeks ago and it is only here in Monrovia that it accomplished the task entrusted to it.

The work of this Committee was done with the necessary balance as to participation by Member States which thus does

away with the classical criteria of the appreciation of economic potential and population, which criteria had often led to assessment out of proportion with the modest means of our countries almost half of which are classified among the poorest in the world. We believe that we are justified in thinking that the new scale will take into account the actual capacity of our states to pay their contributions, so that we can control the endemic state of arrears of contribution which hamper certain areas of the Secretariat's activities.

Mr. Chairman

In the fields of Education, Culture, Science and Social Affairs, coordination has been the primary purpose of the activities of the Secretariat in the course of this period.

On the occasion of the 12th Extraordinary Session of the Council on the Law of the Sea, it was in Geneva that Africa had to continue consultations in order to face the intentions of the more technologically advanced countries. Once again the Geneva Conference on the Law of the Sea was unsuccessful and the African Group asked us to draw the Council's attention to this situation which dictates the determination of an African position before the resumption, this month, of the proceeding of the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea.

In point of fact, since the Ninth Session which is to be held in a few days will be the final session, the African Group must make the necessary efforts to ensure that its concerted and united action will help us safeguard our vital interests.

A detailed report on this question is submitted in document CE/967 (XXIII) PART II and the Chairman of the African Group will make a report to the Council on this matter.

Besides, Mr. Chairman, our normal activities still continued up to April when the OAU Labour Commission met in Mogadishu.

Among other things, the Mogadishu meeting adopted decisions requesting the General Secretariat to conduct studies on three

subjects dealing with labour, education, employment policy and migration and social security.

Furthermore, with regard to the World Health Conference, the Secretariat organized and co-ordinated the work of the African Group.

The resolutions adopted by the African Group enjoin us to increase our attendance at the meetings of the World Health Organization and give more support to the activities of Member States in the field of health.

In the field of Culture, needless to say, we have developed our collaboration with UNESCO, and as I mentioned at our Session in Nairobi, UNESCO has taken the necessary measures to second to the Geneva Secretariat an Expert whose role will consist in assisting us to inject more dynamism in our activities in this area.

Moreover, with UNESCO we envisage organising a Colloquium on culture as of the incoming financial year. Indeed in this field, it must be recognised, with regret that our Organisation can only boast of very little significant attainments. The Cultural Charter adopted at Port Louis is, yet to be ratified by all our Member States and only stands as a "decorative banquet". As yet we have the ambition of making Culture the objective basis of our development.

We do not intend to base it on an incomplete and inadequate process of growth fashioned and observed elsewhere but to make it a cornerstone on which to build a solid foundation of our collective advancement and embark on our harmonious march towards the future.

The rebirth of African culture is - we must admit - a sine qua non for development that takes into account African peculiarities. In this respect, culture should be promoted in such a way as to serve as a support for African men and women committed to the achievement of a modern and adapted development based on the very roots of their personality.

This is why, in strengthening our co-operation with UNESCO, we should identify the fundamental cultural values which should form the basis of the development projects for our society.



Finally, Mr. Chairman, we should like to inform the Council that we were unable to hold the meeting of African Ministers of Agriculture in Tunis, nevertheless, the Experts discussed the most important items and laid the basis for the African position for the next World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. A select Committee was appointed to prepare a report which the African Agriculture Ministers would study and finalise prior to this Conference where Africa is expected to present a common front.

Mr. Chairman, over this entire Continent prey to internal dissensions, a Continent in search of its stability and equilibrium, proves a great risk that development, the mystic of our times and a fundamental undertaking of our generation, might appear only intermittently in our actions, thoughts and endeavours. This is why, after Addis Ababa, Arusha and Monrovia, we left no stone unturned and our path was marked by the milestones of Rabat, Brussels, Manila and Addis Ababa.

In Rabat, the African Ministers of Planning met following our Nairobi Session to decide on a new development strategy for Africa.

Guided by the Report of the Monrovia Colloquium which concluded in favour of a new approach to African Unity and the need to take into consideration the scientific, cultural and social values as a basis for any new development prospect and any control of technical and financial instruments that are indispensable thereto, as well as in favour of a new orientation of international co-operation fostering ties among developing countries.

Realising that the African Continent is more seriously affected than other regions of the world by the adverse effects of development strategies adopted by most countries,

Realising further that Africa is chronically and excessively dependent on other countries even for foodstuff, and that trade patterns almost invariably remain on a North-South basis,

"The Conference of Ministers of the UN Economic Commission of Africa recommended to Member States for adoption, the Draft Declaration of Commitment by the Heads of State and Government of the OAU on Guide-Lines and Measures for National and Collective Self-Reliance in Social and Economic Development for the establishment of a new international economic order".

The relevant documents of the ECA Conference are submitted for the consideration of the Council which will in turn refer them to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of our Organization.

In Brussels, too, the proceedings of the Ministerial Conference for the renewal of the Lome Convention which we attended, led to a new agreement governing the pattern of economic relations between Europe and most African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries. This agreement crowned the efforts made by both sides, the most remarkable outcome being the adoption of new co-operation measures (particularly the stabex on mineral resources). More detailed information on this subject, will be provided to the Council during our Session.

In Manila, finally in the face of the intransigence of the developed countries and the division within the Third World, it was impossible to translate into action our desire to establish a new world economic order.

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, from all these gatherings, and in particular from that of Manila we returned home with the mixed feeling that decidedly "this earth is evermore shrinking from itself" and that "this world is no longer the world".

Hence it is imperative that Africa must become more and more self-reliant, counting on its own strength and resources for development and self-sufficiency.

The Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications meeting recently in Addis Ababa under the aegis of the OAU and the ECA, has partly provided an answer to this problem. By defining a new strategy in this vital field, the Conference decided that Africa's main goal should be independence, self-reliance and co-operation in transport and communications.

Furthermore, we had the opportunity of developing in all fora this idea, both new and old, young and ambitious, to establish an African Common Market, better still, an African Economic Community, a need and exigency for the year 2000.

Aware of the fact that we must henceforth distinguish between the important and the trivial and that we should therefore focus our attention more than ever on the vital interests of Africa by transcending our differences and preserving our good relations. We must give tangible proof of our determination to live and develop together. One of the appropriate avenues indeed lies in the economic unity of our Continent.

This is why it is vital to promote a vast continental economic body integrating all our regional economic communities. The increasingly deteriorating world economic situation impels us to take action and to make the idea of an African Common Market a driving force to increase African awareness for common and rapid development aimed at improving the living standard of the African people.

Because, at the risk of repeating ourselves, we should not lose sight of the fact that the economic projections for the year 2000 are such that our Continent can no longer exist without pooling our development resources.

As far as co-operation is concerned, new developments led to the postponement of the Joint Ministerial Meeting on Afro-Arab initially scheduled to be held last June in Tripoli.

Although it is obvious that developments of the situation in the Arab World have slowed down this ambitious undertaking, we must here and now devise ways and means of hoisting this co-operation over and above the fluctuations and vicissitudes of politicking, lest we see it lost its credibility and fade away.

Why, should we not envisage proposing to our partners, the establishment of a small structure that is flexible, effective and able to implement and follow-up the decisions of the joint bodies of our two Organizations whilst pursuing our common will to forge an integrated cooperation?

We believe that it is through such an initiative that Afro-Arab Cooperation can be consolidated and allowed to develop to become an oasis from which we can give sustenance to the spirit of solidarity and unity which should characterise the relations between the Arab and African Worlds.

Indeed, Afro-Arab cooperation is an undertaking of great dimensions, an exalting idea, a gateway to the future. It would serve no purpose to jeopardize it with political considerations, and to eclipse it with ideological differences. To make it immune to politicking which does not mean it should exclude politics; to make it flexible institutionally by diversifying it of certain structures inherited from the Euro-Arab pattern; to endow it with greater strength by simplifying it as to its procedures; and above all to prevent this great idea from sinking in the quicksands of a mistrust cleverly maintained between "Black Africa" and "White Africa", between Arabs and Africans; to bring it out of the obscure labyrinth of backward thinking and ulterior motives. Such are the directions that would appear to be a matter of course if we are to revive and usher in new vistas and an unparalleled new era. Afro-Arab cooperation must be salvaged at all costs, and its foundation strengthened as a prerequisite for our collective development. And if there were still any doubts about it, we should be brought back to reason and enlightened by recent developments and the emergence of new ideas geared to transcending this co-operation and making it the basis for a wider Euro-Arab-African cooperation. At this moment of greatest distress when our hopes for a new order have been dashed, we must definitely restore to this vast objective its full meaning, for it is indeed an objective commensurate with our expectations of tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman,

As is customary it is political matters and decolonization that have engaged most of our attention and commanded most of our energy.

Firstly in Zimbabwe where the situation characterised by pressure from Freedom Fighters of the Patriotic Front forced the supporters of the Internal Settlement to change their strategy by precipitating the elections and limiting participation only to those parties that had accepted to uphold the plan for an internal settlement, the Ian Smith system once again follow its usual evasive tactics. Yet even to the disappointment of those who may at all cost wish to find some democracy in such a process, these elections were unfair and unacceptable.

They were unfair in two respects because they were organized on the basis of an iniquitous Constitution that gives overwhelming rights to the white minority, that structures and perpetuates the advantages of one class to the detriment of the entire community, that creates two types of citizens in the nation, that imposes all sorts of limitations and increases safeguards to guarantee indefinitely for some that has been denied to others . . . . a Constitution indeed formulated and adopted under the undemocratic conditions we all know. In this respect we may wish, for once, to pay tribute to the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Mr. Raphael whose offices, in a most brilliant study, laid bear this so-called constitution on which the new Rhodesian System is based.

These elections were all the more bogus as they were held in a country where war was raging, where a state of seige was in force and where many coercive measures were taken against the electorate.

Unacceptable indeed are these elections because it is clear that so long as the Patriotic Front is not associated in the decolonisation process of Zimbabwe there cannot be any real independence and peace inside Zimbabwe or security in Southern Africa.

The future of Zimbabwe cannot be shaped without those who face daily the enemies of our Continent's progress.

The future of Zimbabwe cannot be shaped without the Patriotic Front. It lies in the hands of all its sons.

The Organisation of African Unity made its position clear on the problem of elections and the manoeuvres to secure recognition of the Muzorewa regime and paid tribute to the countries which stood firm on this question and refused to lift the embargo imposed by the International Community on the territory in spite of the many manoeuvres and pressures. In this respect your Council should bear in mind the forthcoming Commonwealth Summit Conference and call upon the African Members of that Organization to exercise vigilance and steadfastness.

In Namibia the situation has reached a deadlock.

Last February we had the opportunity of stating in Nairobi that South Africa was attempting to implement an adjusted internal settlement made to measure, in that territory. The fortuous South African diplomatic manoeuvres were most likely at the origin of the playing down of the initiative of the United Nations. We wish to reaffirm that in our opinion, the Waldheim Plan constitutes the only objective basis for a peaceful settlement that would bring about independence for Namibia under the auspices of SWAPO and once again ensure peace and security in the sub-region.

In the face of this arrogance and attitude of defiance by South Africa, which tend to delay the time of independence for Namibia by advocating a Constituent Assembly as a first step towards a Rhodesian style settlement, the UN Security Council should take appropriate measures by imposing sanctions on this country pursuant to Chapter VII of the UN Charter. For our part, we should strengthen SWAPO in its efforts to intensify the armed struggle.

As regards the specific problems of South Africa, it must be said with a certain amount of bitterness that the hopes we had pinned on the unification of the Liberation Movements did not achieve the expected results but were responded to by more competition within the movements concerned to the extent of slowing down the liberation struggle. It is incumbent upon this Council to appeal to these movements and to take measures for the solution of the internal problems of these movements in a responsible manner to avoid dissensions between the ranks of the PAC and ANC in South Africa.

This will further strengthen independent Africa's commitment to the liberation movements and their ability to combat the South African regime which takes delight in carrying out with impunity executions of the African freedom fighters, including Solomon Mahlangu as well as other martyrs brutally slaughtered or killed under inhuman conditions in concentration camps.

In the same vein, the Frontline States have daily been victims of various forms of aggression. Moved by the gravity of these attacks, your Council at its February Session did express the desire that a delegation of the Committee of Ten follow this distressing problem and submit a report to the present Session.



Indeed the time has come for the Council to go further decide on the appropriate measures to take in assisting the Front-line countries victims of such obnoxious aggressions to avoid dissensions.

Mr. Chairman,

The question of the Western Sahara which has always been a subject of debate in all the sessions of the Council over the last five years has been followed most attentively by the Secretariat since the Thirty-First Session of the Council in Khartoum.

Considering this question as one whose solution is vital for the basic balance of all our continent, aware of the dangers inherent in the present situation and concerned about preventing the worst between the parties concerned, the Secretariat has many a time intervened and endeavoured in its own way to contribute to the reduction of tension in North-West Africa. Not less than nine visits were made to the area during the last three months either "PROPRIO MOTU" or in the company of the Heads of State of the Sub-Committee Mandated by the Ad Hoc Committee.

The Report of Activities described the developments that have taken place in the sub-region during the period.

It must however be stressed, that the Heads of State, members of the Ad Hoc Committee have boldly taken up their responsibilities and that the OAU Current Chairman and the other Heads of State, Members of the Committee namely the Presidents of the Republic of Mali and the Federal Republic of Nigeria mandated by their peers, shared neither effort nor time and took initiative upon initiative, adopted approach upon approach, and did their best to clear the way and enhance the solution to this distressing problem.

The Ad Hoc Committee finally met on the 23rd and 24th of June in Khartoum where with the Current Chairman of the Organization it assessed the efforts deployed and mapped out action to be undertaken. The Ad Hoc Committee will report to the Summit Conference as to the results of its work.

Mr. Chairman,

We are just as deeply worried over the situation in Chad as any others. A country at the crossroads of four regions of Africa, as it is between North Africa and East Africa, Chad's stability and unity are of fundamental importance to the countries that surround it and to the continent as a whole. This explains why the strife between the various components of the nation of Chad has brought these countries together in two consecutive meetings for reconciliation in Kano (Nigeria) and a third one in Lagos. However the outcome of the discussions and the decisions arrived at neither achieved the expected results nor enabled Chad to recover its internal stability and peace.

Here again we expect that placing the interests of the nation of Chad above their differences and any other consideration, the Factions will be able to sit around the Conference table and arrive at a platform of reconciliation so that the country can regain the peace, concord and understanding so much desired.

The Ugandan-Tanzanian conflict that erupted in October-November last year was a major challenge to the Organization.

It called into question a certain number of the cardinal principles of the OAU among which the inviolability of frontiers inherited from colonization, non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States and non-aggression. This fratricidal conflict posed many a problem to the conscience of the African peoples and generated much passion. The spate of criticisms that were leveled at our Organization at the time are the clearest proof of this. However, it is fair to say that the OAU did not shirk away from its responsibilities. By avoiding the solution of facility and untimely declarations of position, the Organization acted with promptness and consistency until such a time as it exhausted all the avenues that were opened to it.

You would remember that the Ad Hoc Committee of the OAU on the settlement of inter-African disputes met in Nairobi along-side the last Session of the Council of Ministers without being able to resolve the substance of the dispute between the two sister States. The conclusions of the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Committee calling for an intervention at the level of Heads of State were duly submitted to the Current Chairman of the Organization.

However, events quickly developed, culminating in what we are now experiencing.

The report on the Organizations activities contains a chronological account of the developments of this situation, presented as objectively as possible.

Talking further about conflicts, we must underline the complexity of the situation in the Middle East. Both the report on the Organizations activities and the sectoral reports supply useful information on this situation which has been rapidly developing since the signature of the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty, and concerning which we must reaffirm the position of our Organization calling for the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination, and their return to their fatherland.

Mr. Chairman,

Whereas the exposé we have just made of the political state of Africa is bleak enough and dictates that we must show greater vigilance, it should be said that our normative action has not been in vain.

Indeed in pursuance of the resolution adopted by the Thirty-First Ordinary Session in Khartoum, the OAU Defence Commission met in Addis Ababa to lay the foundation of an inter-African Defence Force.

This question appears in the Agenda of the Council and obviously constitutes a major problem. The OAU Defence Force is today an imperative necessity. It is true that this is a question that should be approached through extremely detailed discussions and mental exertion. OAU's ability to carry out its primary mission and maintain its credibility and effectiveness in the future will depend on the decision that will be taken on this question. Perhaps, it would be necessary for once to limit the prospects and ambitions and to measure with the yardstick of realism and pragmatism the role, functions and objectives of such a force. But it is no longer possible to overlook or abandon this budgeting concept, to desist from demonstrating creativity, to cast aside our will as if we are incapable of further effort. Indeed we must make an option, in other words we must endow our Organization with a minimal force after the manner of the forces operating under the blue banner of the United Nations, that is we must have a sort of peace-keeping force able to intervene in difficult situations and capable of giving the executive bodies of the OAU something other than their naked will, something other than empty words.

After sixteen years of existence of our Organization, it is time that we abandoned the oversimplified and easy solution of, "Where there is a will there is a way", without the means to fulfill that will.

The OAU Defence Force is one of these elements which if conceived in a realistic manner, without an overambitious objective, can enhance the hope that our Organization continues to raise among the peoples of Africa. Instead of safely cloistering ourselves in our egoisms we should seize the opportunity offered to us today to act for the greatest benefit of the Organization and a better future for our Continent.

Mr. Chairman, furthermore, during the period between the Thirty-Second and our present Session we witnessed the realization of an old project, as the Ministers of Information have finally established the Pan-African News Agency that the Heads of State have so earnestly been calling for since sixteen years.

Your colleagues, the Ministers of Information have considered this project to be of strategic importance to us.

It is indeed of strategic necessity to the Organization of African Unity in the pursuit of its objectives because we believe that the OAU could have chalked up greater success in the difficult process of the integration of our States if, at the beginning, it had control over information and the power to inform. For it is a fact that events in Africa, their origin and development have not always been reported to the outside world with objectivity and accuracy.

A strategic necessity, because the Pan-African News Agency should enable us to accelerate the process of development of our Continent stricken, as it is, with ever increasing impoverishment while the developed world gets richer day by day.

A strategic necessity indeed for it is true that with regards to structural information and from experience, it seems to us that Africa can give the world a new dynamism, and, why not, a new concept of information.

Until such time as the Convention adopted by the Ministers of Information shall enter into force through the procedure of individual accession by Member States, the technical problems and the terms and conditions for the establishment of a Pan-African News Agency have been settled by practical provisions adopted by them.

At their explicit request, a special item on this question has been included in the Agenda of the Summit Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

We must admit that this year has been a year of tempest and hard work for us.

A year of tempest and hard work, indeed, but despite the difficulties of a highly explosive political nature, we have, during the past few months, actively embarked upon measures which will ensure and guarantee the success of the future.

This is the case of the Structural Reform of the OAU which had been pending for ten years and was finally happily adopted this year in Nairobi and whose implementation at least in its administrative aspects began since the 1st of June last. This is the case of the implementation of the exceptional and all-important project of the Pan-African News Agency that our Heads of State have advocated ever since the creation of the OAU but which had been in the past blocked by various vicissitudes and has now become a reality.

This is equally the case of the OAU Defence Force submitted for your consideration. The Defence Commission which had not met for six years has tirelessly worked on this question which symbolizes the hopes and desires of the African peoples to resolve their problems themselves.

This is the case for the Monrovia Colloquium which from the economic point of view is unheard of in the contemporary world, since it outlines with remarkable clarity the ambition of our countries and our understanding of development. Its proposals are in reality the African strategy for development as assessed by the ECZ Ministers and whose essential configuration is nothing other than the continental economic integration of Africa through the creation of an African Economic Community.

A year of labour, a year of fire and brimstone, Mr. Chairman, a year marked by crisis: crisis in the Western Sahara, in Chad, in Uganda - Tanzania, in the Middle East and in Southern Africa, a strange melee, difficult and decisive events that have made this year a "terrible year". In the face of all these tidal waves of conflicting situations converging upon us, shall we still be what we have been, in other words, shall we be everlastingly repetitive in unusual complaints? Shall we continue to studiously compile stereo-type speeches, always high-sounding, and always as empty as the wind? Indeed we believe that we must learn lessons from experiences and be guided by them to improve our Organization for a better future.

The first conclusion that clearly comes to light is the urgent necessity to have in the OAU today an emergency machinery which over and above its day-to-day tasks would be responsible, by virtue of its being able to intervene rapidly, for managing situations of conflict by doing the spade work for action to be undertaken by the executive organ of the OAU. The composition, operations and objectives of such an emergency machinery which would work after the manner of the United Nations Security Council could be a subject of a study that could be entrusted to an Ad Hoc Committee meeting alongside this Council. It could operate within the framework of the OAU Defence Force, but to our mind its role transcends such a framework because it is not all situations of crisis that necessarily would imply commissioning of the OAU Defence Force.

Just as the Defence Force, the emergency machinery is one of the conclusions to be drawn from the events that have occurred over the last few months. It should be said that the hopes pinned by our peoples on the Organisation are still as vivid as they have even been, but it should also be said that such hopes can only remain if the imbalance noted between OAU's objectives and resources do not become too blatant and too obvious.

It was a year of hard times as I have already stated, but as well a fruitful year in the course of which we have organized the Conferences of the Ministers of Trade, Information, Defence, Labour, Transport and Agriculture and participated in the Organization of crucial conferences such as that of the Ministers of Trade of the Group of 77 in Arusha, that on Refugees in Arusha, that of the Ministers of Planning in Rabat, not to mention the implementation of our numerous resolutions within the framework of our various Committees and our participation in the annual Sessions of many Organizations such as UNCTAD, ADB, ECOWAS, UNESCO, WHO, ILO, FAO, OIC, the Islamic Conference and the meetings of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries. We have visited twenty-six countries, consulted more than thirty Heads of State of our Organization, given support to the African Group in Brussels within the framework of the re-negotiation of the Lome Convention and took part in the work of our Specialized Institutions etc. etc.

Such a task of course could not be accomplished if the General Secretariat is not strengthened through the recruitment of qualified staff, of people that are comitted and disciplined. Concerning this question it must be noted with gratification that some progress has been made although some effort still remains to be made. Such efforts indeed can only be made if Member States give us encouragement and support us by abstaining from frequent interferences in the operations of the Secretariat, and by considering as questions of national concern, matters that are purely administrative in the day-to-day management of our activities.

The staff of the Secretariat, especially those based at Headquarters are at present facing housing crisis in Addis Ababa. It is our duty to inform the Council without interfering in the affairs of the host country that house rents have been increased in a substantial manner in Addis Ababa.

Such a situation has the serious consequence of putting staff members not in a position to honour their obligations in this respect and it would appear urgent and vital that the Council studies the financial implications and at the same time formulate proposals for a solution in order to enable our staff that are already under paid as compared to their counterparts in other international and sub-regional Organizations to accomplish their mission of serving Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

Before concluding, we wish to perform the pleasant duty of extending our sincere congratulations to the new Chairman of the Council of Ministers and to assure him of the total commitment of the Secretariat to assisting him in his mission.

Your task, Mr. Chairman, will be arduous, difficult and complex in view of the problems facing our continent. However, we are aware of your experience and your numerous qualities as a man of wisdom and seasoned diplomat, bearing in mind that you are at the moment performing a rare, if not unique, task in the history of our Organization by presiding over two crucial sessions namely



the Twenty-Sixth and Thirty-Third. We fervently hope that under your able guidance, our deliberations will be placed in their proper perspectives and that at the end of the Session, we will formulate for our Heads of State clear and concrete proposals in the interest of Africa so that Monrovia will go down in the history of the OAU.

To the outgoing Chairman, we would like to say how thankful we are for his appreciation of our co-operation and to pay him tribute for the singular alertness and the effectiveness with which he has shouldered his great responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished Delegates,

At the end of our statement we would like to stress once again the situation in a world overwhelmed by a serious economic crisis, an intricate and difficult world where in spite of all, we must act in such a way that OAU, that Africa, may live, develop and guide its own future.

Therefore we must realise as of now that it is our duty to solve our differences courageously and to fight with faith and determination against discussions and divisions which in the final analysis will only be used by our enemies to dominate us and to prevent us from working towards our continental unity which constitutes this source and best guarantee for a new African era.

In this Capital of the oldest Independent State of Africa, let us take a closer look at the fundamental problem of our survival in a world that is divided so that we may leave here, strengthened in our conviction that unity is indispensable to our forward march for progress.

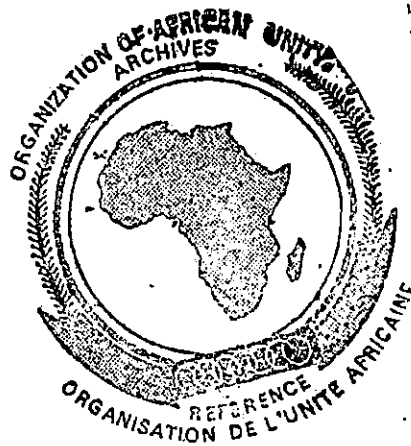
A Unity which will give us a stronger voice in world affairs, and will enable us to tip the scales in favour of peace. Because Africa needs peace within and among its States as well as with the rest of the world, in which if we stand united so as to be protected from the slightest tendencies of

supremacy, Africa can, should and will be able to pave its way towards economic and social well-being in an atmosphere of security and stability.

In this very Capital City, President Tolbert said some time ago that Africa wants more than simply satisfying the basic needs of its people. It must diversify its resources and acquire a new stature. It requires new dimensions and opportunities.

Indeed, at the time when certain people all over the world are in doubt about us, we must have the courage to remove the sources of distress through our conviction, on zeal and our faith in order to usher in a new era for our mother Africa.

Thank You.



AFRICAN UNION UNION AFRICAINE

African Union Common Repository

<http://archives.au.int>

---

Organs

Council of Ministers & Executive Council Collection

---

1979-07

# Introduction to the Secretary-General's Report on the Activities of the OAU

Organization of African Unity

African Union

---

<https://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/10001>

*Downloaded from African Union Common Repository*