



BUREAU PERMANENT DE L'OUA A BRUXELLES

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Bruxelles, le 30 avril 2002

A : Amb. Daniel ANTONIO
SGA, Communication & Conférences

DE : Cheikh NIANG
Fonctionnaire en Charge

Objet : Rapport d'activités pour la période février – juillet 2002

En référence au mémorandum OAU.BRU/SIO/COMM&CONF/RAP/31.04.02, en date du 29 avril 2002, je vous prie de trouver, ci-joint, la version anglaise du rapport d'activités de ce Bureau pour la période allant de février à juillet 2002.

Je l'envoie également par courrier électronique à l'adresse suivante :

oau-ews@telecom.net.et

Je vous en souhaite bonne réception.

Très haute considération.

CC :

- Secrétaire général adjoint / Dept. Affaires de la Communauté
- Chef de la Division des conférences.

**ORGANIZATION OF
AFRICAN UNITY**

**ORGANISATION DE
L'UNITE AFRICAINE**



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**ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE OAU PERMANENT OFFICE IN
BRUSSELS FROM FEBRUARY TO JULY 2002**

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INTRODUCTION

For the period under consideration, the Permanent Office of the OAU in Brussels carried out activities relating to cooperation between the European Union and Africa in general and more particularly to the specific context of the implementation of the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement. The Office also pursued its activities as OAU's Representation to the European Union. It also offered support and assistance to the African Group of Brussels.

It is worth mentioning that the Office continues to function with very limited staff as some of the key post, namely those of senior economist, socio-economist and interpreter/translator have remained vacant for more than two years.

I. 4th SESSION OF THE ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Through the Executive Secretary, the Office participated in the 4th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, held in Cape Town (South Africa) from the 18th to the 21st of March 2002 and co-chaired on the ACP side by co-President Mr Adrien HOUNDBEJI (Benin) and on the EU side by co-President Mrs Glenys KINNOCK, British member of the European Parliament.

The joint session on the JPA was preceded on the 15th and 16th of March by preparatory meetings of ACP members of the Bureau and of the Assembly. During those meetings, ACP members adopted a position of their own on items on the agenda for the 4th session and exchanged views on the question of setting up an ACP Assembly. They also listened to presentations made on the following subjects :

- The ACP parliamentary observer missions to watch the presidential elections in the Republic of Congo (March 10th 2002) and in Zimbabwe (9th-11th of March 2002);
- The progress report of the working group on the rules of procedure of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

The proceedings of the 4th session focused on subjects and themes relating to ACP-EU cooperation, workshops on sustainable development, migration and the education system and social organization in South Africa.

I. 1. PLENARY MEETING

In plenary, as is customary, a number of presentations were made to the Assembly by way of introduction to the various debates on the subjects concerned. Thus, the Executive Secretary, Mr Victor DJOMATCHOUA-TOKO, who was representing the OAU at the session made a presentation on an item entitled : "the African Union and NEPAD – program of action, strategy and implementation". In his presentation, he explained the background and spoke on the spirit and will which gave birth to the African Union. He then talked about the transition from the OAU to the African Union and laid emphasis on the provisions of the Act instituting the African Union and on the important role that the pan-african Parliament would have to play in building up the African Union. He made an appeal for cooperation from ACP-EU parliamentarians in view of the implementation of the Union and execution of NEPAD.

The second part of the item on NEPAD was addressed by the deputy Director General of the steering committee on NEPAD who underlined the need for coordination and cooperation between the NEPAD program and the objectives of the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

The following presentations were also made :

- On behalf of Dr. KPAKOL, President of the ACP Council of Ministers, the important role that the JPA would have to play in the implementation process of the Cotonou Agreement was highlighted. While expressing his concern regarding the slow process of disbursement of EDF funds, the President urged parliamentarians to follow closely the timely and effective implementation of the Agreement. On the negotiations for new ACP-EU trading arrangements, His Excellency M. Gabriel S. AKUNWAFOR admitted that the ACP Group had not yet adopted a negotiating mandate;
- For his part, M. Ramon de MIGUEL, President of the EU Council and Spanish Secretary of State for European Affairs paid tribute to South Africa for having attacked the problem of inequalities in the framework of the transition to democracy and the national reconciliation process. He pledged his full support to efforts towards the objective of poverty elimination. He also underlined the need to go beyond the improvement of market access and stressed the important role that the Partnership Agreement could play as a mean to introduce new approaches to improve regional integration and investments in ACP countries;
- M. Prega R AMSAMY, Executive Secretary of SADC, informed the Assembly of the recent changes made to that organization. Thus, the structure of SADC has been subject to an in-depth review in view of a more centralized approach to promote sustainable development, the fight against poverty and a common view of political and social values;
- M. Ben NGUBANE, South African Minister of Arts, Culture and

Languages, Science and Technology spoke on successful scientific and technical cooperation between SADC and the European Union;

- Civil society representatives stressed the need for greater involvement of civil society in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement.

I. 2. SUBJECTS AND THEMES RELATING TO ACP-EU COOPERATION

During the deliberations, the Assembly examined the following subjects and themes relating to development cooperation between the ACP states and the EU member countries in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement :

- trade and multilateral negotiations on economic partnership agreements (EPAs)
- gender issues;
- health issues;
- Rio + 10; and
- EDF funds.

I. 3. ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

After its deliberations, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted resolutions on the following themes, issues, regions and countries :

- trade and multilateral negotiations on EPAs;
- gender issues;
- health issues;
- Rio+10;
- West Africa;
- Central Africa;
- Southern Africa;
- East Africa;
- The Caribbean;
- The Pacific;
- Zimbabwe;
- Madagascar;
- Cuba; and
- NEPAD.

There is a need to underline the fact that after the vote on Zimbabwe, the ACP members of the JPA issued a political declaration to express their disappointment regarding the way in which the vote had been conducted and,

namely, the unilateral adoption of the declaration by the European Union. However, the JPA decided to send to Zimbabwe, a mission led by its two co-presidents, to help re-open dialogue between Zimbabwe and the EU.

Furthermore, in its resolution on the situation in Madagascar, the Assembly made it a point to hail the efforts made by the OAU in an attempt to contribute to finding a solution to the political crisis affecting that country.

The session also discussed the future ACP-EU negotiations in view of the new trading arrangements. It then adopted the "Cape-Town Declaration" on the matter, in which it highlights the main objective of the future agreements which should be to promote sustainable forms of development which would contribute, on the one hand to the reduction of poverty in the economies of ACP countries and on the other, to the integration of ACP countries in the world economy.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN GROUP OF BRUSSELS

II. 1. Meeting with the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs

As a result of the Office's coordination, the Deputy Prime Minister and Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Louis MICHEL, took the initiative last March, to host a lunch for the African Ambassadors in Brussels at the Chateau Val Duchesse in Brussels. The Belgian Minister seized the opportunity to reaffirm Belgium's commitment to the strengthening of cooperation between the European Union and Africa. Indeed, the meeting took place at the end of the Belgian presidency of the European Union marked by the special emphasis laid on identifying ways and means to enhance EU's cooperation for the development of AFRICA. He referred to bilateral cooperation between Belgium and African countries and stressed Belgium's contribution to conflict resolution in Africa, in close collaboration with the OAU, namely. He welcome the coming into being of the African Union which he qualified as a "good vision" as well as the initiative that created NEPAD.

The African Group expressed great appreciation of the Minister's initiative to meet with them. The Group also hailed Belgium's bilateral cooperation with Africa and its unflinching commitment to strengthen cooperation between the European Union and Africa.

III. 2. PREPARATIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS OF ACP-EU TRADE AGREEMENTS

Under the Office's coordination, the African Group in Brussels has set up a working group called "Group of experts on Europe-Africa cooperation". The Group is to reflect and contribute to the coordination of the OAU Group of Ambassadors in Brussels in relation to cooperation between Europe and Africa

as reflected by the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement and the Mediterranean Agreements between Europe and the North African countries. The group of experts should focus, namely, on the preparations for the negotiations of new trading arrangements between the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the European Union (EU), due to start in September 2002.

III. REPRESENTATION ACTIVITIES

III. 1. Information, documentation, sensitive

The Office continues to disseminate information and distribute documents and useful material on the OAU and its action, to African embassies in Brussels, international partners of the OAU, Universities, development NGOs and other European civil society associations. Such action is carried out not only in Brussels but also in neighboring countries, and even beyond that, in all member countries of the EU. The Office is also often invited by various fora to represent the OAU and make its positions known at conferences and seminars.

III. 2. Special mission

Upon instruction of the Secretary General, the Executive Secretary of the Office, M. Victor E. DJOMATCHOUA-TOKO, led an important OAU delegation of observers to watch the presidential elections in Congo-Brazzaville last March. After the mission, a press release was issued on the elections.

III. 3. African day on malaria

In close cooperation with the WHO Office in Brussels, the Office organized on April 25th 2002 an information and sensitizing session on malaria and its consequences in Africa, to celebrate the "African day on malaria" proclaimed by the African Summit on "the initiative to reduce malaria", held in April 2002 in Abuja, Nigeria. The information meeting took place at ACP House, and was attended by members of the diplomatic missions and representatives of the international community.

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Activity report of the OAU Permanent Office in Brussels from February to July 2002

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