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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE

Twentieth Ordinary Session

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

PRC/5(XX)

**REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON
CONFERENCES AND PROGRAMES**

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES AND PROGRAMMES

1. The PRC Sub-Committee on Conferences and Programmes met on 7 June 2010 in Committee Room 1 of the AUC Conference Complex under the Chairmanship of Mr. John Ejinaka, Minister Plenipotentiary, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Addis Ababa, deputizing for H.E NKOYO TOYO, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Permanent Representative to the African Union, to consider the Report of the Bureau of the Sub-Committee on Conferences and Programmes.

2. In attendance were representatives of the following Member States: Algeria, Chad, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Togo and Tunisia.

3. The above meeting was in keeping with paragraph 11 of Decision EX.CL/Dec.522 (XVI) which " requests the Commission to prepare and submit to the PRC Sub-Committee on Conferences and Programmes a quarterly report on the implementation of the approved Calendar of Meetings".

I. Consideration and Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the Meeting

4. The meeting considered and adopted the following draft agenda:

1. a) Introductory remarks
b) Organization of work
c) Adoption of the draft agenda
2. Consideration of the Report of the Bureau of the Sub-committee on Conferences and Programmes on the Implementation of the Approved 2010 Calendar of Meetings – **Doc.S/Cttee/Conf/2- (2- 2010)**
3. Any Other Business

II. Presentation of the Report of the Bureau of the Sub-Committee on Conference and Pogrammes on the Implementation of the 2010 Calendar of Meetings during the First Quarter

5. Following the adoption of the agenda and after succinct opening remarks, the Chairperson called upon the representative of the Commission (CSD) to present the Report

of the Bureau of the Sub-Committee on Conference and Programmes on the Implementation of the 2010 Calendar of Meetings during the First Quarter.

6. In his presentation, the representative of the Commission informed the meeting that out of 80 meetings planned between January and 14 May 2010 including the Ministerial ones, 26 were held, 20 were postponed and the status of 34 was unknown, as reflected in the following up-dated table:

Statistics of Meetings January – 14 May 2010	
Meetings held	26
Meetings postponed	20
Meetings whose status is not known	34
Total	80

7. He expressed the fear that if the present trend was allowed to continue, a greater chunk of meetings would be jumbled into a few months with serious risk of overlapping, a situation the Conference Services Directorate and representatives of Member States would find difficult to grapple with, and which was contrary to the provisions of the relevant Decisions of the Executive Council recommending that steps should be taken to avoid overlapping and congestion of meetings within specific months of the year, and also scheduling important meetings during the month preceding meetings of the Assembly.

8. The representative of the Commission also informed the meeting that the main reasons given by Departments for the postponement of their meetings included inaccessibility to budget codes two months after the approval of both the Budget and Calendar of Meetings, and the pressure by the host countries and partners to hold meetings on their own terms and not according to the dates set or recommended by the Conference Services Directorate. He further stated that a major problem which needed to be resolved by the Sub –Committee was the organization of meetings by Departments without the involvement of the Conference Services Directorate.

9. He concluded his presentation by informing the Sub-committee that a total of 29 new proposed meetings from three (3) Departments were tabled before the Bureau of the Sub-committee at its last meeting and that out of that number only 6 were favourably considered by the Bureau. The Department with the largest number of meetings (Peace and Security)

later reduced its original number to ten meetings but these were not considered by the Sub-Committee (See table below). He also drew the attention of the Sub-Committee to the fact that some Departments had already held three ministerial meetings and were planning to hold additional ones, in violation of paragraph 8 of Decision EX.CL/Dec .522 which clearly stipulates that no single Department should exceed three (3) ministerial meetings in a year.

Peace and Security Department								
PROPOSED MEETINGS								
N°	Meeting	Date	Month	Programme	Budget Code	Venue	Organizing Dpt.	Remark
1	Workshop on Peace Processes in Southern Africa	10-11	June			Maputo Mozambique		
2	Command Control Communication & Information Systems Workshop	19-23	July	APF	PPSD003	South Africa	PSD PSOD	
3	Development of a Joint AU/Regional RDC Deployment Plan	17-Dec	July	APF	PPSD003 PPSD003 04	EASBRIG & ECOWAS	PSD PSOD	
4	AMANI AFRICA Exercise Final Planning Conference	27-30	July	AMANI AFRICA Trust Fund	AMANI AFRICA Trust Fund	Debre zeit Ethiopia	PSD PSOD	
5	AU Lessons Learnt and Evaluation Manual Workshop	3-5	August	APF		Accra Ghana	PSD PSOD	
6	Consultative Meeting on AU POL Manuela POL Doctrine and FPU Training Curriculum	TBD	August	GTZ	GTZ	TBD	PSD PSOD	

Peace and Security Department								
7	AMANI AFRICA Exercise/CPX	13-29	October	AMANI AFRICA Trust Fund	AMANI AFRICA Trust Fund	Addis Ababa		
8	AU/RECs Consultative Meeting & Harmonization Workshop on ASF Organization Chat	TBD	October	GTZ	GTZ	Addis Ababa	PSD PSOD	
9	4th Annual ASF Training Implementation Workshop	TBD	November	Government of Canada	Government of Canada	Harare Zimbabwe	PSD PSOD	
10	AMANI Africa Lessons Learnt Conference	TBD	December	AMANI AFRICA Trust Fund	AMANI AFRICA Trust Fund	TBD	PSD PSOD	

10. In the ensuing debate, many delegations while commending the representative of the Commission for a presentation well articulated, deplored the very low level of implementation during the first quarter and wondered why Departments could not access budget codes after the budget has been approved. They also deplored the non-compliance by Departments with the relevant decisions of the Executive Council. They said that it was high time sanctions were taken against Departments that organized meetings outside the approved Calendar of Meetings and that mere criticism was not enough. Furthermore, they complained about the unorthodox way Departments deal directly with Member States without passing through their Embassies, as well as the failure by the Commission to inform Embassies on time about the change of venue or cancellation of meetings.

11. One representative cited an instance where his country's delegation flew out of the capital and arrived at the venue of a scheduled meeting only to be told that the venue had been changed. The same delegation emphasized the need for the Commission to have ownership of the programmes of meetings which should reflect the interest of the Commission.

12. Another delegation observed that it was inappropriate to send invitation letters to Ministries for meetings, with the name of the Minister indicated in the letter, as Ministers were not permanently assigned to specific Ministries and could be redeployed any time.

13. A third delegation emphasized the need to limit the number of meetings held outside the AUC Headquarters and the staff attending such meetings. This, he said, would reduce cost, especially at a time when the Organization was facing financial problems. To drive home his point, he cited the case of a recent meeting held in Brussels which gave the impression that the entire staff of the AUC had moved en masse to attend the said meeting.

14. All the delegations which later took the floor concurred with the earlier speakers. They underscored the importance of the meetings of the Sub-committee and demanded that henceforth, the Finance Department should always be represented at the meetings of the Bureau or of the Sub-committee to shed light on any financial related questions that participants might raise. They also wanted to know what happened to monies voted for meetings that did not hold or were cancelled. They emphasized the fact that all Departments whose meetings were being considered should be present during Sub-Committee meetings to answer questions and give explanations if and when necessary, adding that who financed what meeting was not so much the point, but rather which meetings were cleared by the Sub-Committee. They also stressed the need for the Commission to coordinate with ECA so that meetings with the same subject and participants would be held together or back-to-back.

15. As regards the new proposed meetings that were tabled before the Sub-Committee, the unanimous view was that all such meetings should first be considered by the Bureau of the Sub-Committee before submitting them to the Sub-committee.

16. At the end of very fruitful and frank deliberations, the Sub-Committee came up with the following recommendations:

- a) A way should be devised for making budget allocations readily available upon the approval of the Budget;
- b) Departments should avoid scheduling meetings in the first quarter of the year for which availability of funds is not certain;
- c) Departments should as much as possible liaise with Embassies and the CSD and refrain from dealing directly with host countries or sending invitation letters to Ministries with the name of the Minister;
- d) Change of venue or cancellation of meetings should be communicated well in advance to Member States via their Embassies;

- e) There is a need for the Commission to have ownership of the programmes of meetings. Meetings being held should reflect the interest of the Commission;
 - f) Departments should strictly comply with the letter and spirit of the relevant provisions of the Decisions taken by the Executive Council, especially EX.CL/Dec. 419 (XVI), EX.CL/Dec. 458 (XVI) and EX.CL/Dec. 522 (XVI).
17. All the agenda items having been exhausted, the meeting rose at 12:50 PM

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Report of the sub-committee on conferences and programmes

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