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ADDIS ABABA

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REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON THE OAU ACTIVITIES IN EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC,
CULTURAL, HEALTH AND IN RELATED FIELDS



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REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON THE OAU ACTIVITIES IN EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC,
CULTURAL, HEALTH AND IN RELATED FIELDS

March to June, 1971

Introduction:

1. A number of important activities in the areas handled by the Scientific and Cultural Department and which fall in the educational, scientific, cultural, health and related fields, were carried out during the period under discussion, i.e. March to June, 1971. These are: the drawing up of a draft project-plan for the proposed OAU Centre for Earth Sciences, the meeting of Experts on the proposed Equivalence of degrees and diplomas awarded by African and non-African institutions, and the continuation of several of the programmes which had been initiated before, such as the anti-rinderpest campaign, the anti-OBPP campaign and the proposed establishment of regional food reserves in Africa. During the same period, several meetings had to be postponed following problems arising from the last ordinary session of the Council of Ministers in February/March 1971 in Addis Ababa.

Educational matters:

2. The Experts who had been invited by the Administrative Secretary-General to consider possible criteria for the recognition of equivalence of degrees and diplomas awarded by various institutions, held their first meeting from 22nd to 26th March, 1971, in Addis Ababa. Invitations had been sent to Experts from Universities of Cairo in U.A.R., Dakar in Senegal, Ibadan in Nigeria, Lovanium in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Makerere in Uganda. These Universities were considered as being representative of the main educational systems obtaining in Africa. The Experts who actually attended the meeting were Mr. Mac Lorin, Technical Adviser, University of Dakar, Chairman; Mr. B. Onyango, Academic Registrar, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda and Mr. M. Plevoets, the Secretary-General of Lovanium University. After considering the information presented to them by the Secretariat, and drawing on their previous experience, the Experts considered that the following main elements have to be taken into consideration when attempting to establish the equivalence between degrees and diplomas:

- (a) Entry requirements to University studies,
- (b) Duration and conduct of studies,
- (c) Qualifications and adequacy of the teaching staff,
- (d) Contents of subjects taught and depth to which the course work goes, and
- (e) The method of assessment of the acquired knowledge and aptitude.

The Experts then proceeded to discuss possible equivalence between entry requirements and first degrees awarded by some African Universities. In the course of this task, they emphasized that equivalence between qualifications was not the same as equality in value. Also they took into account whether or not given qualifications were used for entry into the next stage of education or for

employment purposes. Finally, they came out with certain proposals on equivalence of some entry qualifications and first degrees awarded by some African Universities, which will be submitted to the Educational, Scientific, Cultural and Health Commission for consideration.

3. It is recalled that it was resolution No. ESCHC/Res.4(I) which was recommended by the first ordinary session of the Educational, Scientific, Cultural and Health Commission which requested the Administrative Secretary-General to study and propose possible criteria for recognizing the equivalence of degrees and diplomas awarded by African and non-African institutions. It was hoped that after establishing such equivalence, Member States would be enabled to absorb rapidly and in the right places, students who have the qualifications dealt with. Also the successful operation of the equivalence of degrees and diplomas, would facilitate the exchange of students and personnel between Member States, thus helping to further inter-African co-operation and to strengthen African unity. The last work of the Experts is only the beginning of a long process which will culminate in the establishment of a list of equivalent degrees and diplomas from African and non-African institutions. After being discussed by the Educational, Scientific, Cultural and Health Commission, the report of the Experts and their recommendations will be forwarded to the Council of Ministers and to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government for approval.

Natural Resources and Nutrition:

4. Progress reports on the OAU programme to establish Centres of Excellence and Regional Food Reserves in Africa, are the subject of two separate short reports. However, in this general report, it is worth mentioning that the Four Experts appointed by the OAU to draw up a project-plan for the proposed OAU Centre on Earth Sciences have completed their work. After visiting several Member States which constituted a representative sample of OAU membership, the Four Experts met in Addis Ababa from 27th April, 1971, to 3rd May, 1971. During that meeting which was the second one for the Experts on this task, they wrote their report covering the visits to various Member States and finally they formulated their proposals for the proposed Centre on Earth Sciences. Their proposals in this connection will be submitted to the Implementation Committee for this programme after which they would be submitted to the Council of Ministers and to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government for approval.

5. In the nutrition field, some Member States involved in the proposed pilot scheme in Eastern Africa for the OAU programme to establish regional food reserves have already submitted their applications to the UNDP requesting for the necessary funds to pay for the feasibility study of that pilot scheme. The Secretariat has contacted the UNDP requesting a rapid processing of these applications. Also the Secretariat has written to the FAO requesting them to assemble the Team of Experts which is to carry out the required feasibility study. As indicated above, brief separate progress reports have been prepared on the programme to establish Centres of Excellence and on the programme to establish Regional Food Reserves in Africa to which attention is invited.

Health, Nutrition and Sanitation:

6. The Director of the OAU Health Bureau made visits to several countries in order to acquaint himself with the state of national services in the fields of health, nutrition and sanitation. Also during the visits, the Director held discussions with the officials from the countries concerned on these matters. It is known that in order to effectively carry out planning and co-ordination of the health, nutrition and sanitation services of Member States, an accurate picture has to be obtained of the current level of services offered by Member States in these fields. These visits have therefore been used to obtain a clear picture of the needs and plans of Member States concerned as well as services they offer in the fields of health, nutrition and sanitation.

7. During the last meeting of the Association of Medical Schools in Africa which was held in Cairo, U.A.R., from 24th to 30th April, 1971, the OAU was represented by the Senior Health Specialist from the Health Bureau. The Medical Schools play an important role in the training of professional and paramedical personnel for Member States; and also in furthering research in the relevant fields. The Secretariat should therefore be familiar with the latest thinking obtaining in these Medical Schools to enable it to plan better in the training and research aspects. Also where possible, the Secretariat uses these opportunities to inform representatives from the Medical Schools, of the OAU activities and decisions in the fields concerned.

All-African Cultural Festival:

8. During the second meeting of the African Cultural Council which was held in Mogadiscio, Somalia, from 19th to 20th October, 1970, the sections to be staged at, and the rules to apply during, the Second All-African Cultural Festival were decided upon. These have now been forwarded to all Member States in document SC/CULT/20. The invitation from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to stage the Second All-African Cultural Festival in Kinshasa during 1972 has been accepted. It is now up to Member States to begin preparing their participants and cultural exhibits for that important cultural event which is to be staged sometime in 1972. The actual dates for the Second All-African Cultural Festival in Kinshasa in 1972 will be fixed in consultation with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Member States are urged to prepare adequately for that Festival so as to repeat or exceed the success that was achieved during the First All-African Cultural Festival in Algiers.

Next Meetings:

9. Due to the difficulties that arose during the postponed 16th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers, several meetings of a representative nature were postponed. The Second Ordinary Session of the Educational, Scientific, Cultural and Health Commission which had been fixed for sometime in May 1971, has been postponed to the second half of 1971. The actual dates will be announced as soon as consultations are completed with the host Government, i.e. United Arab Republic. That session will be held in Cairo as previously advised.

10. The Health Advisory Panel on Viral, Bacterial and Parasitic Diseases was postponed from April 1971 to 19th - 23rd July, 1971. Also the second Health Advisory Panel on Health Education, Nutrition, Maternal & Child Health, Family Planning and Environmental Health, was postponed from April to 1971, to 26th - 30th July, 1971. The two health panels are to be held in Addis Ababa as previously notified to Member States. The Scientific Council for Africa was also postponed from 19th to 22nd April, 1971, to dates to be announced later. The Scientific Council for Africa will hold its meeting in Nigeria as previously notified to those concerned. In all of these cases, notes or letters advising the postponement of the meeting concerned, were forwarded to Member States and to the individuals concerned immediately after the end of the postponed 16th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers.

11. As has been established, the report of the Scientific and Cultural Department covering the activities controlled by the OAU Office in Lagos appear in an attachment to this General Report. Attention is invited to that report as well as to separate reports covering other programmes handed by the Scientific and Cultural Department of the OAU Secretariat.

ADDIS ABABA
May 1971.

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