



**ORGANIZATION OF  
AFRICAN UNITY**  
Secretariat  
P. O. Box 3243

منظمة الوحدة الأفريقية  
السكرتاريته  
ص. ب. ٣٢٤٣

**ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE  
AFRICAIN**  
Secretariat  
B. P. 3243

اديس ابابا .°. Addis Ababa

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Twenty-fourth Ordinary Session

Addis Ababa, 14-21 February 1975

CM/645 (XXIV)

REQUEST FOR OBSERVER STATUS FROM  
THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA AFRICANA  
PROJECT SECRETARIAT

-----



CM0645

17p. MICROFICHE

S E C R E T A R I A T  
ENCYCLOPAEDIA AFRICANA PROJECT

Our Ref: EAP/OAU/57

October 2, 1974

The Administrative Secretary-General,  
Organisation of African Unity,  
The O.A.U. Secretariat  
Addis Ababa,  
ETHIOPIA

Dear Sir,

APPLICATION FOR OBSERVER STATUS WITH  
THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

I refer to my letters of 3rd January 1974 and 25th February 1974 on the above subject.

The Standing Committee at its meeting in Accra on July 29 to 30 decided that as a matter of urgency the question of Observer Status for the Encyclopaedia Africana Project should be settled during the current academic year 1974/75.

The Committee noted that since Portugal's colonial policy has changed, the E.A.P. will have to make plans to embrace Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola, and this will involve additional expenditure. The Committee therefore hopes that these factors will be taken into account when taking a decision on an annual subvention for the Project.

Please note that since my letter of 25th February the following officers have been appointed by the Standing Committee of the Editorial Board to the two posts of Vice-Chairman.

His Grace Dr. Ishishiku Tshibangu - Zaire  
Professor Yusuf Hassan - Sudan

The composition of the Standing Committee is therefore as follows:-

Dr. S.O Biobaku, Chairman	- Nigeria
His Grace Dr. Ishishiku Tshibangu, Vice-Chairman	- Zaire
Professor Yusuf Hassan, Vice-Chairman	- Sudan
Professor L.H. Ofosu-Appiah, Director	- Ghana
Dr. Richard Pankhurst	- Ethiopia
Prof. Semakula Kiwanuka	- Uganda
Dr. Abeodu Jones	- Liberia
Professor H. Sawyerr	- Sierra Leone
Professor I.N. Kimambo	- Tanzania
Professor Ibrahim Sakr	- Egypt
Professor M. El Fasi	- Morocco
Professor B.A. Ogot	- Kenya
Mr. Roger Bekoutare	- Togo
Mr. M. Yeta	- Zambia

The Government of Sierra Leone has also contributed to the financing of the Project, while the Ghana Government has increased its annual subvention for the academic year 1974/75 to over £ 120,000 to tide the Project over the period of waiting for the O.A.U. subvention.

The Committee has drawn up a timetable for the publication of three volumes of the Dictionary of African Biography within the next 18 months, and the Agreement with the publishers about future volumes can only be kept if the Observer Status is granted.

I enclose copies of the French edition of the Constitution of the Encyclopaedia Africana Project. The documents referred to in the last paragraph of my letter of 25 February are with your Secretariat.

Yours faithfully,

L.H. OFUSU-APPIAH  
DIRECTOR

Encl.

MEMORANDUM ON THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA AFRICANA PROJECTHistory

The idea of an Encyclopaedia devoted entirely to Africa was discussed and approved by the First International Congress of Africanists in Ghana in 1962. Dr. W.E.D. Du Bois was the Director of the newly established Secretariat, and he addressed the Conference on the Encyclopaedia Africana Project. He died in August 1963 before any real work could be done on the project.

2. From 1963/1966, the project was run by a three-man committee under the chairmanship of Professor W.E. Abraham. The Secretariat had a staff of three Research Officers, an Editorial Secretary and an Administrative Officer and clerical staff. It was financed by the Ghana Academy of Sciences on a budget of £G17,000.

3. The work done during this period consisted of the drawing up of a plan for the Encyclopaedia, which was supposed to run into ten volumes of about a million words per volume. There were to be English, French and Arabic editions. The Secretariat was expected to deal with the English and French editions, whilst Egypt undertook to deal with the Arabic edition.

4. In 1964 a meeting of an All-African Editorial Board was convened in Ghana, and plans of operations were discussed. The 31 participating countries were asked to appoint National Cooperating Committees which would be responsible for choosing the subjects and selecting authors. It was decided to publish a volume of two thousand biographies of dead personalities who, in their lifetime, made a significant contribution to the history of the countries concerned. No decision was taken on the mode of financing the International Secretariat, which was to be in Ghana. No decision was also taken to make the Heads of State and Government of the participating countries aware of the responsibilities involved in approving the project.

5. The Chairman appointed for the majority of the National Cooperation Committees were either Ministers of State or very busy men who could not devote much time to the Encyclopaedia. No work could therefore be done by several countries from 1964 to May 1972.

6. The first meeting of the Standing Committee, which is the Governing Body of the Project, met in Accra in December 1965 and decided that work on the articles for the first volume of biographies should be started. The Editorial Board had decided in 1964 to get the Cultural and Educational Commission of the OAU to pass a resolution urging the Assembly of Heads of State and Government to support the project as a worthwhile enterprise in intellectual cooperation. The resolution, sponsored by Nigeria, was passed at the Commission's meeting in Lagos in January 1965 and was brought to the notice of the Heads of State and Government at the OAU meeting at Accra in October 1965.

7. In May 1966, Professor L.H. Ofosu-Appiah, a Ghanaian, was invited to become the Director and assumed duty on 25th August 1966. The Director was sent on a tour of 15 African countries to ask for the cooperation of the countries visited. It was made clear that Ghana alone could not pay for the running of the project, so the participating countries should contribute towards the running of the Secretariat.

8. Though most of the governments expressed interest in the project, only three governments gave a firm assurance of financial aid. These were Dahomey, Nigeria and Tunisia. At the Second International Congress of Africanists in Dakar in December 1967, a second meeting of the Standing Committee was held, and after a frank discussion delegates were strongly urged to get their governments to support the project or it would have to wind up. Dahomey fulfilled its promise by seconding to the Secretariat a Dahomean Editor and granted the Secretariat the sum of £500 sterling. Nigeria also assisted the Secretariat financially. The Government of Ghana decided to give the project an annual subvention of £17,000. The amount was later increased to £ 18,545.00 per annum.

9. The insufficiency of funds made it difficult to engage adequate staff, and the Secretariat has, since 1967, had a Director, an Editorial Secretary, three Research Editors, an Administrative Officer and five Clerical Staff. Since 1968 the Research Officers at post have varied between one and three at any one time because of resignations.

10. The Standing Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. S.O. Biobaku, the Chairman of the Nigerian National Committee and Vice-Chancellor of Lagos University, decided to carry on the work of the Project by publishing a specimen volume of biographies into A Dictionary of African Biography from the articles which some countries had written. The Secretariat worked on those articles and found a publisher for them in 1969. But because of the unrepresentative nature of the articles, which came mainly from English-speaking countries and Ethiopia, the publication has been unduly delayed in the hope that more countries would write articles. This hope has not been fulfilled because of lack of funds to appoint full-time editorial and research staff to work on the project.

11. The following are members of the Standing Committee:

Dr. S.O. Biobaku, Chairman	- Nigeria
Dr. Ishishiku Tshibangu, Vice-Chairman	- Zaire
Prof. Yusuf Hasan, Vice-Chairman	- Sudan
Prof. L.H. Ofosu-Appiah, Director	- Ghana
Dr. Richard Pankhurst	- Ethiopia
Prof. Semakula Niwanuka	- Uganda
Dr. Abeodu Jones	- Liberia
Prof. H. Sawyerr	- Sierra Leone
Prof. I.N. Kimambo	- Tanzania
Professor Ibrahim Sakr	- Egypt
Professor M. El Fasi	- Morocco
Professor B.A. Ogot	- Kenya
Mr. Roger Bekoutare	- Togo
Mr. M. Yeta	- Zambia

12. In 1969, at the suggestion of the Standing Committee, the Encyclopaedia Africana Project was granted observer status with the Association of African Universities, since conditions for affiliation had not been worked out, and the Director attended the second general conference of the Association in Kinshasa in November 1969. There was, however, no time to hold discussions on the Encyclopaedia, but contacts were made in the hope that there would be greater cooperation in the future.

13. Between October and December 1971, Dahomey, Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania agreed to appoint national editors and to establish departments for the Encyclopaedia Africana. The Standing Committee of the Project, at its next meeting, will decide on the location of regional headquarters in Africa and later negotiate with the host governments.

14. Zambia and Tanzania appointed editors for their committees in 1971. But by February 1974 there were editors for Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda, Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone. A Dictionary on African Biography is being prepared. Articles on Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Equatorial Guinea and probably Liberia and Sierra Leone are ready but it is hoped that the grant of observer status with the OAU will enhance the efforts of the Encyclopaedia Africana to increase the interest of contributors, thereby making the publication more representative.

SECRETARIAT  
ENCYCLOPAEDIA AFRICANA

P. O. Box 2797, Accra, Ghana--Tel. 77651--Cables: ENAFSEC, Accra

Your Ref:

THE SECRETARIAT

Our Ref:

Director: PROF. L. H. OFOSU-APPIAH

CONSTITUTION OF THE  
ENCYCLOPAEDIA AFRICANA PROJECT

ARTICLE I

NAME

The Name of the Organisation shall be the Encyclopaedia Africana Project.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSES

- (a) To compile an Encyclopaedia Africana devoted mainly to Africa and people of African descent.
- (b) To establish centres in African Universities and research organisations for the purpose of compiling the Encyclopaedia Africana.
- (c) To promote co-operation among African scholars and Africanists of international standing in the compilation of the Encyclopaedia Africana.
- (d) To arrange for the publication, distribution and sale of the Encyclopaedia Africana.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The Encyclopaedia Africana Project is an Inter-African Project and is open to all independent African states. It is a semi-autonomous organ of the Educational and Cultural Commission of the OAU.

Section 2. Special arrangements will be made for scholars from South Africa, Portuguese Territories in Africa, Rhodesia and other non-self-governing countries in Africa to participate in the compilation of the Encyclopaedia Africana.

ARTICLE IV

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERSHIP

All member states of the Encyclopaedia Africana shall enjoy the same rights and privileges and have the same duties.

ARTICLE V

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Section 1. An annual subvention shall be granted by the Organisation of African Unity which shall be the principal source of finance for the Encyclopaedia Africana Project.

Section 2. Each member state shall be responsible for the financial expenses of its National Co-operating Committee.

Section 3. The cost of the International Secretariat and its Regional Offices shall be borne by the Organisation of African Unity and the host country.

Section 4. Under conditions approved by the Standing Committee of the Editorial Board subventions, grants and donations may be accepted from African and non-African organisations for purposes consistent with the aims of the Encyclopaedia Africana Project.

ARTICLE VI

ORGANS AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE PROJECT

Section 1. The Encyclopaedia Africana Project shall have the following principal organs:

1. The Editorial Board
2. The Standing Committee of the Editorial Board
3. The Secretariat
4. National Co-operating Committees.



Section 2. The Principal Officers of the Project shall be:

1. The Honorary Chairman, and
2. The Director who shall be the Chief Executive of the Project.

ARTICLE VII

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Section 1. The Editorial Board shall be the supreme authority of the Project. It shall:

- (a) Determine the general policies of the Project.
- (b) Receive reports of the approved budget and programmes of the Project.
- (c) Elect the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Members of the Standing Committee.
- (d) Approve the appointment of the Director of the Project made by the Standing Committee.
- (e) Direct the Standing Committee to undertake such tasks as are compatible with the aims and objectives of the Project.
- (f) Coopt special members for specific duties consistent with the aims of the Project.

Section 2. Membership

The Editorial Board shall consist of:

- (a) One representative from each member state of the Organisation of African Unity.
- (b) Representatives of non-self-governing African states and scholars of African descent.
- (c) The Director and Heads of the Regional Offices of the Secretariat who shall be ex-officio members.
- (d) A representative of the Educational and Cultural Commission of the Organisation of African Unity.

Section 3. Observers

International Organisations may be admitted as observers.

Section 4. Honorary Chairman and Vice-Chairmen

- (a) The Editorial Board shall elect an Honorary Chairman who shall be the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Board.
- (b) There shall be two Honorary Vice-Chairmen elected by the Editorial Board and they shall be the Vice-Chairmen of the Standing Committee of the Board.

Section 5.

- (a) The Editorial Board shall meet at least once every two years at a time and place appointed by the Standing Committee.
- (b) The Editorial Board shall be convened in extraordinary session on the written request of two-thirds of its members addressed to the Secretariat or following a decision of the Standing Committee taken by a simple majority.

Section 6.

- (a) All decisions of the Editorial Board shall be taken by a simple majority of members present and voting.
- (b) The method of voting shall be determined by each particular meeting.

Section 7.

- (a) The Chairman of the Project shall be elected by the Editorial Board by a simple majority of members present and voting and shall hold office for 2 years, and shall be eligible for reelection. Nobody shall be elected Chairman for more than two consecutive terms.
- (b) Only members of the Board present and representing their various countries shall be eligible for election as Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, provided that a member from a non-self-governing African state is not eligible for election as Chairman.
- (c) The Chairman represents the Board on every occasion.

- (d) The Chairman accepts subventions and donations to the Project after approval by the Standing Committee.

ARTICLE VIII

THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Standing Committee shall consist of the Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen, eleven members elected by the Editorial Board, and the Director of the Project. Special care should be taken to see that all Regions are represented. Members of the Committee shall hold office for a period of three (3) years, and shall be eligible for reelection. They may not, however, serve for more than two consecutive terms.

- Section 2. (a) The Standing Committee shall be the executive body of the Project and shall be responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the Editorial Board.
- (b) It shall direct and control the activities of the Secretariat and its Regional Offices in collaboration with the Director.

ARTICLE VIII

- (c) It shall appoint the Senior Members of the Secretariat.

Section 3. The Standing Committee shall consist of the Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen, eleven members elected by the Editorial Board, and the Director of the Project. Special care should be taken to see that all Regions are represented. Members of the Committee shall hold office for a period of three (3) years, and shall be eligible for reelection. They may not, however, serve for more than two consecutive terms.

Section 4. (a) The Standing Committee shall meet in ordinary session at least once a year on a date and at a place determined by it.

- (b) It may be convened in extraordinary session by the Chairman at the request of two-thirds of its membership.

Section 2.

- (c) It may establish sub-committees or working groups and may accept non-members to such meetings.

- (b) It shall direct and control the activities of the Secretariat and its Regional Offices in collaboration with the Director.

ARTICLE VIII

- (c) It shall appoint the Senior Members of the Secretariat.

- (d) The quorum for a valid meeting shall be one-third of the membership.

## ARTICLE IX

### THE SECRETARIAT

Section 1. The Secretariat shall be the Permanent Executive Organ of the Project and in that capacity shall fulfil all tasks assigned to it by the Standing Committee.

Section 2. The Secretariat of the Project shall be under the supervision of the Standing Committee and under the day-to-day administrative direction of the Director. It shall:

- (a) Establish a team of research workers for the compilation of the Encyclopaedia Africana.
- (b) Invite articles from outstanding scholars and arrange for their editing and publication.
- (c) Receive articles written and edited by scholars for National Secretariats, and arrange for the supervision of the work of National Secretariats by the Regional Offices of the Secretariat.
- (d) Undertake such other tasks as are compatible with the aims of the Project.
- (e) Arrange with the Educational and Cultural Commission of the Organisation of African Unity for the secondment of scholars to work on the Project.

Section 3. The Director shall:

- (a) Make proposals to the Standing Committee for the appointment of the Senior Staff of the Secretariat and its Regional Offices, and recruit technical and secretarial staff to the appropriate posts.

- (b) ~~Exercise disciplinary powers over the~~ Secretariat's staff in accordance with such regulations as the Standing Committee may make from time to time.
- (c) Present annually to the Standing Committee a working programme and a report on the preceding year's work.
- (d) Submit annually a detailed draft budget to the Standing Committee and provide it with the duly certified accounts for the preceding year.
- (e) Present the annual budget to the Organisation of African Unity and provide it with the annual report of the Project and with duly certified accounts of the preceding year.

## ARTICLE X

### THE NATIONAL CO-OPERATING COMMITTEE

#### Section 1.

- (a) Each participating country shall appoint a National Co-operating Committee which shall consist of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and such members as the country may determine.
- (b) Each National Co-operating Committee shall establish a National Secretariat, and shall appoint editorial staff who shall work in co-operation with the Secretariat established under this Constitution.
- (c) The Chairmen of National Co-operating Committees shall be members of the Editorial Board.
- (d) National Co-operating Committees shall deal directly with their governments in all matters affecting the Encyclopaedia Africana Project. They shall report annually to the Secretariat on the progress of their work.

#### Section 2.

##### Expenses of National Co-operating Committees

- (a) The expenses of National Co-operating Committees and their National Secretariats shall be borne by Governments of the participating countries.

- (b) Where a Committee is established for a non-self-governing country, the expenses shall be a charge on a fund earmarked for such committees in the OAU. subvention.

ARTICLE XI

AMENDMENTS, REVISIONS, REGULATIONS

Section 1. This Constitution may be amended by two-thirds vote of the members of the Board present and voting at any regular meeting of the Board.

Section 2. Proposals for the amendment or revision of this Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the Director not less than four months before the opening date of the Editorial Board meeting at which they are to be considered and copies shall be sent to all members by registered mail not less than three months before such opening date. An amendment or revision of this Constitution shall state the date of its coming into effect.

Section 3. Regulations which are complementary to this Constitution but do not alter it may be adopted by the Standing Committee and shall come into force immediately. Such regulations shall be submitted to the next Editorial Board meeting for ratification.

**AFRICAN UNION UNION AFRICAINE**

**African Union Common Repository**

**<http://archives.au.int>**

---

Organs

Council of Ministers & Executive Council Collection

---

1975-02

# Request for Observer Status from the Encyclopedia African Project Secretariat

Organization of African Unity

Organization of African Unity

---

<https://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/9383>

*Downloaded from African Union Common Repository*