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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON AFRO-ARAB
CO-OPERATION



CM-1150

MICROFICHE

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON AFRO-ARABCO-OPERATION

In implementation of Resolution CM/Res.781 adopted by the Thirty-fifth Session of the Council of Ministers held in Freetown in June, 1980, resolution which, among others:

URGES the Member States of the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States to show their determination in finding ways and means to further strengthen Afro-Arab Co-operation, particularly through the implementation of the Programme of Action;

AUTHORIZES the Secretary-General to continue consultations with his counter part of the League of Arab States in order to facilitate the resumption of the activities of the Co-ordinating Committee for Afro-Arab Co-operation;

The Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity communicated the contents of the Resolution to all the parties directly concerned or involved and drew attention to those paragraphs whose implementation required the contribution of everyone collectively and individually. Thus, the contents of the Resolution were communicated to the African Development Bank (ADB), the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

The Secretary-General immediately held consultations with his counter part of the League of Arab States so as to fix the date and choose the venue of the Fifth meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee for Afro-Arab Co-operation.

The Fifth meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee for Afro-Arab Co-operation was held in Khartoum, the Sudan, on 13 and 14 March, 1981 under the Co-Chairmanship of His Excellency, Mr. DAOUA DIALLO, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Niger and His Excellency the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

The Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States participated in the meeting as members of the Co-ordinating Committee.

The Specialised Institutions of the OAU, of the Arab League and of the United Nations System, the ADB, the BADEA, the ALECSO and the ECA attended as observers.

II. OFFICIAL OPENING

The meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee was officially opened by H.E. MOHAMED MIRGHANI, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan, representing the President of the Republic of the Sudan.

In the opening address delivered on behalf of the President of the Sudan, the Minister of State particularly stressed the role the Sudan had played and continued to play in its efforts to promote and strengthen Afro-Arab Co-operation. He laid special emphasis on the old ties between African and Arab countries, which he said constituted the natural factors of solidarity among their peoples.

The Representative of President NUMERI stated further that the prospects for Afro-Arab Co-operation were bright and very promising. It was therefore the duty of the Co-ordinating Committee to do everything possible to ensure that Africans and Arabs realised their hopes.

The Minister of State also underscored the need for Africans and Arabs to make joint efforts in their attempt to control the natural and financial resources of the two regions, in the context of the strategy for self-reliant and self-sustained development by the OAU Economic Summit held in Lagos and the Economic Summit of the Arab League held in Amman.

In conclusion, he called on the Committee to reflect on the internal and external factors which weighed heavily on system of Afro-Arab Co-operation as a whole so as to come out with positive conclusion. To this end, he stated that Afro-Arab Co-operation should be a model in the search for the New International Economic Order.

On behalf of the African Group, H.E. Mr. DAOUA DIALLO took the floor and replied to the address of the Representative of President NUMEIRI. He paid tribute to the constant efforts made by President NUMEIRI to promote and strengthen the bonds of co-operation and solidarity between African and Arab countries.

The Chairman of the African Group stressed that Afro-Arab Co-operation was experiencing difficulties as a result of a delicate political situation which should not however affect or shake the faith of the African and Arab peoples. Referring to the ideals and the objectives enshrined in the Charter adopted by the First Afro-Arab Summit Conference held in Cairo, the Chairman of the African Group stated among others that Afro-Arab Co-operation was a necessity which should be considered as part of the overall efforts in the search for the New International Economic Order and which had become an imperative for those two regions of the Third World compelled to strive together for their right to control their immense resources.

The Chairman urged the Co-ordinating Committee to identify specific ways and means of reactivating Afro-Arab Co-operation. In this connection, he paid tribute to the Secretaries-General of the two Organizations and to the President of BADEA for their constant efforts to strengthen that co-operation.

The Chairman of the Arab Group, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates then took the floor and spoke of the bonds of friendship, co-operation and solidarity developed over the centuries between the African and Arab peoples. He made particular reference to the spirit of solidarity shown by both sides in their struggle against colonialism, racism, apartheid and zionism.

It was then the turn of the OAU Secretary-General to make a statement. After paying tribute to President G. El NUMEIRI for his dynamic contribution to the Afro-Arab Co-operation, he stated that the establishment of the Co-ordinating Committee which comprised African and Arab members, marked an important stage in Afro-Arab Co-operation. It was so because it would help identify and formulate practical programmes for the implementation of the Cairo decisions and Programme of Action.

The Secretary General of the OAU, then recalled the decisions of the OAU Economic Summit held in Lagos, in April 1980 and the Economic Summit of the Arab League held in Amman. He urged the Co-ordinating Committee to consider how Arab and African countries could overcome under development. The economic strategy adopted in Lagos and in Amman by the OAU and Arab League Summits should form the central themes of the meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee.

He emphasised, that Afro-Arab Co-operation was a noble and gigantic undertaking which constituted a historic challenge to the rest of the World. The African and Arab peoples should therefore organise themselves, develop their economic space, revalorize their cultural heritage, so as to strengthen their bonds of co-operation and solidarity taking into account the complementarity and interdependence of the two regions.

The Secretary-General concluded by hailing the presence of such specialised institutions as the ADB, the BADEA, the ALECSO and the ECA at the meeting. He paid special tribute to the dynamic action of the BADEA in its effort to strengthen the bonds of friendship, solidarity and mutual trust between the African and Arab peoples.

The Secretary General of the League of Arab States also spoke on that occasion and paid tribute to the BADEA for its relentless efforts in the promotion of Afro-Arab Co-operation and for the co-ordination of Arab National Funds intended for assistance to Africa.

He stressed the importance of that meeting which marked a new stage in the harmonious development of African and Arab countries.

The Secretary General gave the historical background of the ever growing solidarity and complementarity which had existed between African and Arab countries. He laid special emphasis on the historic, geographical and cultural factors favouring co-operation between the two regions. He recalled the support given by African peoples to the Arab peoples in their struggle for the liberation of Palestine on the one hand, and the support of the Arab countries to the OAU for the liberation of Namibia and against oppression and apartheid in South Africa on the other.

With regard to economic co-operation, the Secretary General of the Arab League pointed out that in accordance with the decisions adopted by the First Afro-Arab Summit held in Cairo, the Arab countries had given African countries financial assistance exceeding US\$5,000 million. He observed that so far, co-operation between African and Arab countries had been characterised by transfer of funds. He then stressed that co-operation should cover other priority areas such as the revalorisation of human resources, greater self-sufficiency in food production and meet the requirements of the two regions, etc. In this particular case, he emphasised the need to conduct an in-depth study on the problem of food security in the two regions.

The Secretary-General also dealt with the problem of trade between the two regions and expressed the hope that the question would be considered in greater detail. He concluded by stating that the good will existing between both parties could lead to success.

WORKING SESSION

Soon after the opening ceremony, the Co-ordinating Committee adopted the agenda.

The Committee also decided that the meeting be held behind closed doors.

Consideration of agenda item 3: Exchange of views on the political situation which impeded the holding of the joint Afro-Arab meetings and conferences

The item had been included in the agenda in compliance with Resolutions CM/Res.770(XXXIV) and CM/Res.781(XXXV) adopted respectively by the Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth Sessions of the OAU Council of Ministers on the one hand and with the relevant resolutions adopted by the Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States on the other.

The Co-ordinating Committee called upon the Secretaries General of the OAU and of the Arab League to pursue their consultations so as to revive joint activities and meetings in the spirit of the First Afro-Arab Summit held in Cairo.

Agenda item 4:

Statement of the President of BADEA on the Economic and Financial Co-operation with African countries and on the pledges made by Arab countries, in March 1977, in Cairo.

The President of the BADEA, Dr. C.H. Ayari, by way of introduction, made brief comments on the above item. He revealed that the necessary details had been provided in the documents published by the BADEA and placed at the disposal of the Co-ordinating Committee.

The following explanations were then given by the President of the BADEA:

- With regard to the pledges made in Cairo in March 1977, transfer operations were in progress as planned despite the structural impediments which paralysed joint Afro-Arab meetings; Afro-Arab Co-operation was given practical expression in the economic and financial fields, either at bilateral or multilateral level;
- At the regular meetings of the Arab National Funds, Africa was given special consideration. The same consideration would be given to Africa at the meeting on the Co-ordination of Arab National Funds scheduled for June 1981, in Geneva;

- There were concrete examples of transfers made since the Cairo Summit, and since 1973, the total amount of those transfers to Africa exceeded US\$5,000 million. In 1980 alone, transfers amounted to US\$1,200 million;
- More transfers were mainly characterized by extremely favourable terms which likened them to donations.

The President of the BADEA expressed the desire that African countries be informed that, in future, projects submitted for financing should fall within the priority areas identified by the Lagos Plan of Action. He emphasised that Afro-Arab Co-operation should not only be in financial co-operation and should cover other areas, because it was intended to be a multi-dimensional co-operation.

As regards assistance to Zimbabwe, the President of the BADEA recalled his consultations with the Secretary General of the OAU soon after the Tunis meeting. He informed the Co-ordinating Committee of the participation of the majority of the managers of the Arab National Funds in the meeting on the reconstruction of Zimbabwe scheduled for 23 March 1981 in Salisbury.

The ADB and the ECA stressed the importance and the need for co-operation between the African and Arab countries.

After considering all the remaining agenda items, the Co-ordinating Committee adopted the following decisions and recommendations:

a) Organisation of a Joint Conference of Representatives of African and Arab Private Sectors.

The two Secretariats would hold consultations on:

- the evaluation of the cost and financing of the Conference;
- the number of participants (especially representatives from National Chambers of Commerce in Africa and in the Arab World);
- Duration and date of the Conference.

Should funds be available, the OAU could assume the material organisation of the Conference.

b) Study Project for the Promotion of Afro-Arab Trade

The Committee was informed that neither, the two Secretariats nor the BADEA nor the ECA could finance such a project. It could only be entrusted to consultants.

However, BADEA promised to give careful consideration to the problem of financing.

c) Establishment Project of an Afro-Arab Cultural Fund and Cultural Research Centre

The Coordinating Committee was convinced that culture was the basis of real and genuine development and could only strengthen solidarity and co-operation between the two communities.

The Co-ordinating Committee requested the ALESCO to make an in-depth study on, and submit concrete proposals for the implementation of the project as soon as possible.

- d) Exchange of views on ways and means of implementing the Lagos Plan of Action and the decisions of the Amman Economic Summit.

The Co-ordinating Committee strongly recommended that Afro-Arab Co-operation be conceived in future on the light of the Lagos Plan of Action. He called on all African and Arab Specialised Institutions to give preference to the priority areas recommended in the Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act: food and agriculture, transport and communication, industry and energy.

In this specific area, the Co-ordinating Committee decided on the following actions:

- Organisation of a joint Afro-Arab Seminar on the Lagos Plan of Action and the Amman strategy grouping African and Arab experts and thinkers in economic, social and cultural fields so as to consider economic and development problems in the light of the Lagos Plan of Action and Amman decisions.
- Organisation of an Afro-Arab Conference of donors for the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action at multilateral level.

The BADEA had been asked to study the modalities and procedures for the organisation of such a Conference.

The Co-ordinating Committee emphasised the importance of an Afro-Arab multidimensional co-operation which would cover all the aspects and sectors of development. All possible attempts should be made to bring together the African and the Arab peoples for a better awareness of their common destiny.

e) Meetings' of Afro-Arab Specialised Institutions of similar or complementary nature

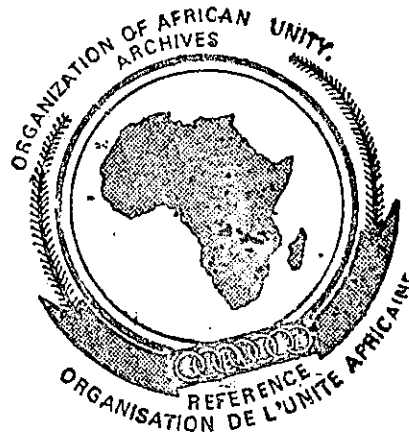
The Co-ordinating Committee was of the opinion that such meetings could remedy the short-comings observed in the Working Parties. These would be sectoral meetings at which concrete co-operation programmes and projects would be worked out. These would first be submitted to the Co-ordinating Committee and then to the Standing Commission.

f) Draft Co-operation Agreement between the OAU and the League of Arab States -

The Co-ordinating Committee decided that the two drafts of the proposed agreement prepared by the two Secretariats be blended for a more detailed study on a later date by the Legal Departments of OAU and the Arab League.

Date and venue of the next meeting

The Co-ordinating Committee decided that the next meeting be held in November, 1981. The two Co-Chairman and the Secretaries General of OAU and the Arab League would hold consultations on the venue of the meeting.



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