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MEETING OF THE OAU SECRETARIAT AND THE
SECRETARIATS OF THE UN SYSTEM



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Conclusions and Recommendations

Information

It was felt that the United Nations and the agencies (particularly UNESCO) should continue their assistance to PANA (Pan African News Agency) in the exchange of information and training. PANA should consider posting permanent correspondents to New York, Geneva and Washington, and the agency should become the functional mechanism for relating information of interest to Africa to Member States and to the international community as a whole.

2. The OAU was invited to make its views known at meetings of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) in an effort to mobilize media outlets in the UN system on questions of interest to Africa; this would also contribute to mobilizing the activities of UN information services on African questions.

3. As a follow-up to the recommendations of the Nairobi meeting, the OAU was invited, by virtue of its observer status at the United Nations, to seek participation as an observer in the work of the Committee on Information.

4. The OAU was invited to make efforts to encourage African correspondents to make their presence felt at the United Nations. For its part the United Nations would extend all possible assistance and co-operation in facilitating their work.

5. The Meeting agreed that the OAU should:

(a) make available to the United Nations and to the specialized agencies information on its activities and all press releases issued by the OAU on a timely basis;

(b) invite heads of missions and delegations and representatives of agencies to press conferences to be organized by the OAU;

(c) welcome the publishing of articles on questions of interest to Africa in journals published by the United Nations and other agencies.

6. It was also agreed that when an OAU radio is established, there should be a regular exchange of programme material with the UN radio service and other members of the UN system producing radio programmes. It was agreed that the UN should have close association and co-operation with the OAU radio.

7. There was a suggestion that the OAU strengthen its information machinery, take the lead in providing publicity for and about Africa, rather than relying on others for its public

relations. The collaboration of the UN system should be regarded as complementary to the OAU information activities on questions relevant to Africa.

Research

8. It was important to co-ordinate research relating to development and science and technology within the UN system and to facilitate OAU access to the results. It was necessary to consider the Lagos Plan of Action as a framework for selecting relevant studies, which should be brought to the attention of the OAU Secretariat. It would be useful to exchange visits, pinpoint the most pertinent studies and agree on lines of research.

9. New research and in particular applied research was needed on agriculture, food, industry, energy, trade, technology, etc. to be undertaken in the light of research already existing and in consultation with the Secretariat of the OAU and of its relevant specialized agencies.

10. Existing research and training institutions required to be strengthened and certain national institutions needed to be reorganized at the subregional and regional levels. African research programmes and research centers (subregional and regional) needed, if they were to be strengthened, to mobilize resources at the international level with the assistance of the UN and the agencies; OAU endorsement of African programmes would also be helpful in efforts to raise funds from voluntary contributions.

Training

11. On the subject of training, the UN and the specialized agencies should continue to orient their training programmes to the needs of African countries and should link them to ongoing studies on important topics and to international negotiations. In this respect, there was need to emphasize the concept of training within manpower development programmes with regard to determined priorities, and the complementarity of training activities within the African region. Training was an important channel for disseminating research findings and might assist delegates and others concerned with international negotiations.

12. UN agencies were asked to make available information about training efforts in the UN system in sufficient time to facilitate nominations.

13. It was agreed that it would be useful for the OAU Secretariat to draw up training priorities in the light of its work so that UN agencies might see where they could best contribute both with regard to training national officials and diplomats and OAU Secretariat officials. In this connexion, the OAU pointed out that a comprehensive study on training at the OAU Headquarters and at the regional offices had just been completed by experts and would be communicated to the UN and to all the agencies as soon as it was published. It was hoped that the UN and the specialized agencies would then be in a position to make concrete offers of assistance in this field.

14. The OAU requested international organizations to consider assisting in training cadres of liberation movements in the various fields, according to their needs. UNESCO confirmed its readiness to help in this connexion, within the strategy already laid out for the development of the manpower potential of the liberation movements. On the question of developing Projects of Assistance to National Liberation Movements, it was felt that the respective agencies' Project Officers should assist the Liberation Movements in the preparation of first draft documents to ensure conformity with the United Nations requirements and meet the needs of the Movements.

Personnel

15. There were certain conclusions to be drawn from the presentation regarding African representation in the United Nations. First, the contribution factor in establishing desirable ranges and the claim from certain quarters to control personnel on the grounds that they paid a major share of the budget both worked against African interests. Africa's nationals, therefore, were less in number and lower in seniority than they might expect.

16. On personnel questions, the OAU proposed that it should be ensured that quotas and ranges are established not only for countries and regions but also at the policy-making levels from P.5 to D.2 so as to ensure an equitable representation for the different regions represented in the United Nations.

17. It was mentioned that there had been occasions where African Governments had expressed reluctance to accept African experts and in this context African Governments were urged to accept African experts where these were proposed. Were situations to arise where other regions would not accept Africans as experts or heads of mission, African countries might decide to refuse to accept experts from those regions. It was of paramount importance that African experts and heads of missions be protected from barrassment by other staff, where such cases arose.

18. Were African countries to provide associate experts this would enhance their opportunities for access to UN organizations.

19. In order to meet the objections of some African Governments to release their nationals to serve in the UN system secretariats for reason of the brain-drain, the OAU Secretariat should help convince African Governments to join the UNDP "Token Programme", an abbreviation of "Transfer of know-how through Expatriate Nationals of Developing Countries". Through such a programme, UN experts could go back to serve in their own country for a short period of about three to six months under the UN umbrella.

Refugee situation

20. The OAU suggested that an inter-agency meeting should be held within the UN system as soon as possible as a follow up to the successful convening of the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA), to co-ordinate the

input of various agencies and to re-examine their roles, policies and programmes in favour of refugees in Africa. The OAU also indicated the intention to organize a workshop in the near future with all the non-governmental bodies and voluntary agencies which play an important role in refugee assistance programmes in Africa to maximize the efforts on behalf of refugees in Africa.

21. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees announced that arrangements were underway for the holding of a meeting in Geneva in May this year of NGOs from all over the world, active in the refugees field; the High Commissioner undertook to transmit the request of the OAU to participate in this meeting. The High Commissioner also agreed - in addition to his Office's ongoing and practical consultations with UN agencies concerned - to consider the possibility of holding an annual meeting of all agencies involved in refugee work if this was found useful with a view to maximizing their efforts on behalf of refugees in Africa.

22. It was agreed that, while an inter-agency meeting on refugees was advisable in the near future to consider co-ordinating the inputs of the various agencies, follow-up consultations on ICARA by the three co-sponsors was a pre-requisite for the pertinent utilization of the funds contributed to refugee assistance. It was, therefore, recommended that tri-partite (UN-OAU-UNHCR) consultations at all appropriate levels be resumed and maintained.

Assistance to liberation movements

23. While appreciation was expressed for the role played by the various agencies in assisting the liberation movements, it was felt that more could be done, particularly in light of the fact that some agencies would appear to depend on UNDP for their

financing. In particular, invitations to attend meetings and conferences organized by the agencies should always be accompanied by tickets and the necessary per diem to enable representatives of the liberation movements to participate. Advance information by the UN system on the schedule of meetings should be submitted to the OAU Liberation Committee at the beginning of each year and OAU should be requested to indicate, within the budgetary allocations available, the priority meetings to be supported to enable representatives of the national liberation movements to participate.

24. Where assistance in kind was extended to the liberation movements, it was imperative that provision be made to enable such assistance to reach its destination rather than leaving this responsibility to the respective Frontline States. It was also important that the authorities concerned be alerted well in advance before the arrival of such assistance, to enable them to make the necessary arrangements for its clearance.

Other measures

25. It was pointed out that sound financial management was necessary as a means for countries to take full advantage of the structural changes required to implement the Lagos Plan of Action.

26. Pragmatic policies were necessary to rectify the terms of trade between urban and rural sectors in favour of the latter as an important basis for increasing agricultural output.

27. Existing restrictions impeding greater intra-regional trade should be reduced or removed.

28. Given the persistent adverse external factors affecting the African economy, priority should be accorded to the early adoption of corrective measures.

29. Since the IMF had extended the time of adjustment to three years, and members could now draw on fund resources at least four times the size of their quota, it seemed prudent to make greater use of IMF than in the past.

Next meeting

30. It was agreed that the next meeting of the Secretariat of the OAU and the Secretariats of the UN system should take place one week ahead of the spring meeting of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in 1982.



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