

RESOLUTION
ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLE OF OAU IN THE
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FIELDS

The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, meeting in its Fifteenth Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 24 to 31 August 1970,

Referring to the programme of priorities contained in paragraph C of the attached memorandum on the responsibilities and role of OAU in the economic and social fields;

1. DECIDES to constitute a group of eight experts responsible for studying, in co-operation with the General Secretariats of OAU, ECA and ADB, and in consultation with any other international organization concerned with economic and social problems, practical methods for the rapid execution of this programme of priorities;
2. REQUESTS the General Secretariat of OAU to report to the next session on the practical implementation of this Resolution.

MEMORANDUM ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND
ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY IN
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FIELDS

1. The Organization of African Unity was founded at a time when the United Nations, torn between the still little-known exigencies of the specific development of the African continent and the predominant interests of the industrial powers, but nevertheless accepting for the industrial powers, but nevertheless accepting for the

first time the collective responsibility of its members in the struggle against poverty, had already launched its First Development Decade.

2. Nothing perhaps presented more difficulty than outlining unambiguously and assuming with optimum effectiveness, the particular form and role that the Organization of African Unity should play in this action by the United Nations family to eliminate hunger, disease and ignorance from the world in general and from Africa in particular.
3. At the same time, however, nothing was then as clear, as specific and as firm as the determination of the founders of OAU to use the new Organization immediately, as a working framework to “harness the natural and human resources of our continent for the total advancement of our peoples in spheres of human endeavour”. Hence :
 - the vital importance among the aims of the Addis Ababa Charter of co-ordinating and intensifying the co-operation and efforts of Member States “to achieve a better life for the people of Africa”;
 - the special emphasis placed on machinery to promote the rapid co-ordination and harmonization, within the structures of OAU, of the general policies of Member States in the economic, social, transport and communications fields;
 - the affirmation too, by the Heads of State and Government of OAU, of their determination to make this Organization the policy-making body and the driving and controlling force behind every undertaking aimed at the economic and social development of the continent;
 - and, finally, the establishment of the Economic, Social, Transport and Communications Commission and an Economic and Social Affairs Department within the General Secretariat.

4. At a time when the United Nations having noted the weaknesses and failures of the First Development Decade, is launching its Second Development Decade, the Organization of African Unity has, more than ever, an urgent duty to reaffirm the commitments and determination of its leaders to make OAU the forerunner in the social progress. What is more, OAU has a duty, after seven years of experience and research in the economic field, to consolidate its structures, rationalize its working methods and increase its means of action, in order to influence, more effectively than in the past, the economic and social development of the continent and, more particularly, co-operation between its member States, to achieve economic and social progress.

5. To this end, the OAU Member States have resolved to adopt the present memorandum, for the purpose of spelling out and reaffirming the commitments and responsibilities of OAU in the complex work of research and creation, upon which depends the accelerated development of the African peoples. Through the same instrument, Member States propose to record their agreements on working methods and on the means of action which must be adopted by the Organization of African Unity, if it is to play its full part with distinction in the economic and social fields in Africa and in the success of the Second United Nations Development Decade.

A. Commitments and responsibilities of the Organization of African Unity in the economic and social fields.

1. The OAU Member States reaffirm their determination to co-ordinate and harmonize, within the Organization, their national and regional development policies, so as to promote the rapid and progressive integration of economies and markets, and the pooling of material and human resources on the entire continent.
2. OAU Member States undertake to study developments in all problems relating to economic and social co-operation on the continent, so as to enable the Organization to lay down ways and means of taking joint action and of

intervention which will gradually break down the barriers of all kinds that today curb or impede the progress of general economic development and inter-African co-operation. In this perspective, the policy-making bodies of OAU appreciate their obligation to analyze periodically, all the experiments in co-ordinated development undertaken at all levels between African States, with the aims of using the outcome and lessons of these experiments to common advantage.

3. The OAU Member States undertake to give effect to major joint decisions taken and concerted stands adopted with the Organization of African Unity, not only in the conception and execution of their national or regional economic planning schemes but also in economic diplomacy.
4. The Organization of African Unity recognizes the importance and appreciates the value of foreign contributions in general and of contributions by the various organizations and agencies of the United Nations family in particular, which augment the concerted efforts of the Member Governments and its peoples in their struggle to achieve enhanced economic and social well-being. The Organization of African Unity undertakes to increase its co-operation with all international organizations. Nevertheless, the Organization of African Unity reaffirms its determination and reserves its right to promote, rationalize and control, in accordance with the legitimate interests of its peoples the activities and programmes of all these organizations in Africa.

B. Working methods and means of action

- a. Within the framework of the international organization of an economic and social character, and more especially at major meetings of the specialized agencies of the United Nations family African delegates, with the assistance of the OAU General Secretariat will constitute themselves into "African Groups" so as to consult each other and to take common African stands on the form, aims and methods of programmes executed by these institutions for the benefit of Africa.

2. With the aim of ensuring effectively the constant joint defence of African interests within the executive boards or governing bodies of the major international organizations, OAU Member States will endeavour to entrust their representation in these bodies to those Member States which have the human and material resources to make this representation genuine, permanent and effective.

3. The Council of Ministers should provide the OAU General Secretariat with all the necessary means to increase its possibilities for studying economic and social programmes for the continent, as well as the requisite facilities for strengthening its activities in the administrative co-ordination of work performed by the “African Groups” within international organizations of an economic and social character.

C. Economic and social priorities of the Organization of African Unity

To discharge its commitments and responsibilities, in accordance with its working methods and its means of action, OAU shall give priority to putting into effect the following programmes, without this list being considered exhaustive:

1. Intensification of regional co-operation with a view to defining and carrying out projects of concern to the markets of several countries.

2. Mobilizing of domestic financial resources in order to establish African funds in the service of development.

3. Acceleration of the process of industrial development on the continent, with particular emphasis on multi-national projects.

4. Increased inter-African trade through improved knowledge of the economic resources and production of each country.

5. Harmonization and co-ordination of legislation and customs procedures.
6. Intensification of monetary co-operation and institution of payments agreements between African States.
7. Promoting the construction of an all-African road network.
8. Co-operation between African air transport companies with a view to increasing trade and promoting tourism.
9. Provision of an All-African telecommunications system (Addis Ababa Plan).
10. Joint utilization of higher educational systems and systems for the training of supervisory staff in the field of economic and social development.
11. Harmonization of social and labour legislation.
12. Institution of a system of inter-African Technical Assistance (Exchanges of trained staff and manpower).
13. Assistance to African non-governmental organizations to help them achieve unity and to associate them with OAU's work.