

A. ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY. — Eleventh Session of Assembly of Heads of State and Government. — Previous Meetings of Council of Ministers. — Libyan Expression of Hostility against Ethiopia. — OAU Efforts to settle Disputes between Member-States.

The 11th session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) took place in Addis Ababa on May 27-29, 1973, being preceded by celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the OAU in 1963.

In the absence of King Hassan II of Morocco, the current President of the OAU, the session was presided over by General Yakubu Gowon, the Nigerian Head of State. Notable absentees at the opening of the session included Colonel Kadhafi, the Libyan leader, and President Siyad Barreh of Somalia—though the latter joined the Assembly on May 28 [see below]. President Sadat of Egypt returned to Cairo on May 26 after having had talks with several other African Heads of State, among them General al Nernery of the Sudan.

The Assembly session was also attended by Dr. Kurt Waldheim, the U.N. Secretary-General.

Meetings of OAU Council of Ministers.

The OAU Council of Ministers had previously held two meetings in 1973.

20th Council Meeting.

At the Council's 20th meeting, held in Addis Ababa on Feb. 5-9, the Ministers representing all 41 member-States approved "a new global strategy for Africa".

In the preamble to a declaration of general policy, which was to be considered by the 1973 Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Council noted the "profound changes in international relations" reflected in the "summit meetings between great Powers", the "current initiatives in Europe" and "the will to detente through international co-operation". However, while the Council welcomed the Vietnam peace agreement, it emphasized that the problems of security and development facing the countries of the Third World, and of Africa in particular, remained unsolved.

In its declaration the Council condemned Israel for its "obstinate refusal to evacuate the occupied Arab territories" and called on all African States to strengthen their solidarity with Egypt. The Council further urged concerted efforts towards a readjustment of the "unequal relations" in co-operation with extra-African countries, such as France, and groupings, especially the European Community.

In a confidential document the Council promised aid to Zambia in solving its transport and supply problems resulting from the closure of the border with Rhodesia [see 25197 A].

21st Council Meeting.

The Council's 21st meeting opened in Addis Ababa on May 17.

In his report to the Council, Mr. Nzo Ekangaki, the OAU's secretary-general, dealt *inter alia* with the activities of "liberation movements" and the situation in southern Africa.

Saying that there had been "an intensification in the liberation struggle", Mr. Ekangaki claimed that the situation in Rhodesia had become more serious because the Smith regime was "being supported militarily by South Africa", and "a *de facto* alliance by the Salisbury-Pretoria-Lisbon triangle" had been "formed to maintain the *status quo* in southern Africa". He condemned Britain, France and Spain for their continued presence in African countries—respectively the Seychelles, Djibouti and the Comoro Islands, and the Spanish Sahara.

The Council also considered a request by Somalia for intervention by the OAU in what it claimed was a territorial dispute with Ethiopia.

Notwithstanding the agreements reached in 1967 and 1968 [see 23386 B and 23347 C], a number of border incidents had occurred from the middle of 1972 onwards in the semi-desert Ogaden area, where a U.S. petroleum company was reported to have found traces of oil near the frontiers of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

The Council ended its session early on May 24, when it approved the following decisions:

(a) An African declaration on co-operative development and economic independence, adopted unanimously, based on recommendations by a conference of African Ministers of trade and development in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) on May 10-12.

[This conference had adopted a "solemn declaration on Africa's economic independence and development", which had, however, been accompanied by reservations expressed by most of the French-speaking States associated with the European Community, these being opposed to any provisions which would expressly condemn the granting of "reverse preferences" to their European partners. The strongest opposition to association with the EEC was expressed by Nigeria, and the conference had thus reflected a lack of unanimity on the question of the renewal and enlargement of the Yaounde Convention.]

The declaration approved by the Council also contained a demand for "full participation in the reform of the international monetary system".

(b) A resolution rejecting Somalia's territorial claims against Ethiopia as "contrary to the OAU Charter".

(c) A general political declaration in which all African States undertook to give "effective support" to Egypt and the other Arab countries in order to enable them to recover their territories occupied by Israel.

(d) A unanimous rejection of Libya's proposal to transfer the OAU's head office from Addis Ababa to Cairo.

The Council had earlier refused to adopt a report by Mr. Ekangaki on alleged maladministration by leaders of the OAU's Liberation Committee in Dar-es-Salaam, and the report was referred back to the Liberation Committee for consideration at its next meeting in Mogadishu in July 1973.

OAU Anniversary Celebrations.

During the celebrations to mark the OAU's tenth anniversary, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held several public sessions.

The Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia declared on May 24 that it was "urgent to achieve a durable settlement in the Middle East" and that, to this end, it was essential that Israel should withdraw "from all territories occupied after the Six-Day War of June 1967" and that all U.N. resolutions, and in particular the Security Council's resolution 242 [see 25029 A], should be fully implemented.

The Emperor also called for the establishment, within the next decade, of pan-African institutions including: a university; an aviation company; a road development authority; a shipping company; a telecommunications union; and an information agency. To promote the "present struggle of the liberation movements", he proposed (a) increased credits to them by the OAU; (b) the setting-up of a system for compensating African countries which might suffer economic losses as a result of "the struggle against colonialism"; and (c) the creation of a mutual defence system for the benefit of African countries which, by their geographical situation, might be threatened by or fall victim to "colonial aggression". Advocating that the peaceful settlement of disputes should be made obligatory by law, the Emperor called for the establishment of "a permanent African peace-keeping force", which would intervene at the request of a member-country, on the orders of the OAU Council of Ministers and under rules approved by the OAU.

Mr. Ekangaki expressed criticism of the United Nations' attitude towards South Africa, saying in particular: "We are appalled at the U.N. paralysis *vis-à-vis* the problem of Namibia. Instead of listening to the voice of Africa, the U.N. temporizes and asks for a dialogue with Mr. Vorster [the South African Prime Minister]."

A public session of the Assembly on May 26 was marked by heated exchanges between representatives of Arab member-States and of Ethiopia.

Colonel Kadhafi, the Libyan leader, had late in April appealed to all OAU member-States to break off diplomatic relations with Israel, failing which he would not attend the OAU Assembly session. He had, in particular, attacked Ethiopia for maintaining relations with Israel and added that, if she continued to do so, he would demand that the OAU head-office should be transferred from Addis Ababa to Cairo.

The only African country to break off diplomatic relations with Israel after Colonel Kadhafi's appeal was Burundi, which did so on May 16 because of "Israeli aggression".

Mr. Abou Zaid Dorda, the Libyan Minister of Information, said on May 26: "Colonialism could do nothing against Africa if it did not have lackeys amongst us... Ethiopia is the ally of the Israelis and the Americans [in view of U.S. military bases in Ethiopia]; she has occupied Eritrea [see 24507 A]...". He reiterated the Libyan demand for the removal of the OAU's head office from Addis Ababa.

Dr. Minassie Haile, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister, said in reply that "the previous speaker" could teach Africa nothing, as Libya was "financing subversion in Africa and sheltering rebels and secessionists", and that he had shown disrespect to the African Heads of State who had come to Addis Ababa despite Colonel Kadhafi.

Mr. Mohammed Masmoudi, the Tunisian Foreign Minister, paid tribute to the Emperor Haile Selassie and remarked that the Libyan attacks had caused only an "embarrassed silence". In regard to the Middle East he advocated moderation, as the people of Israel would themselves one day understand the "horror" inflicted on the "Palestinian people".

President Boumediene of Algeria gave general support to the Libyan demand for severance of all relations with Israel, saying that the problems of southern Africa and of "Zionist imperialism" were "organically connected". He was embarrassed at Ethiopia's attitude which admitted "the presence of Israel, an ally of the fascist regimes", and said that "the least" all OAU member-States could do was to "suspend" diplomatic relations with Israel until all occupied territories were evacuated.

President Sadat of Egypt claimed that the Middle East conflict constituted "aggression against the whole of Africa" and that