

**Briefing Notes for the Secretary General on the Progress of the  
Restructuring Exercise  
17 May, 2000**

1. On the 29<sup>th</sup> November 1999, I had directed the Director of the Transition Team to brief the Committee of Ambassadors on the progress of the restructuring exercise since the Algiers Session of Council.
  
2. I have been informed that at that session, the briefing covered two main items:
  - the Council Decision CM/Dec.461 (LXX) on the Scientific and Technical Offices;
  
  - and, the launching of restructuring for the Headquarters, New York, Lagos, Banjul, Cairo, Brussels, and the Geneva offices;
  
3. You were informed, with regard to the Scientific and Technical Offices, that, the Ad hoc Committee, in its previous composition, had requested the Secretariat to prepare a 'Working Document' that would facilitate the in depth consultations with Member States, as per the Council Decision;
  
4. As for the rest of the General Secretariat, you were informed about the information and consultation sessions that were undertaken within the Secretariat, the Action Plan, the launching of the Early Voluntary Departure process, and the appointment of the consultant firm of Hay Management to conduct the Staff Assessment exercise that was to commence its work at the end of November.

- 2
5. I had endeavoured in my report to Council in March to provide a full update of the exercise and you had an opportunity to discuss it at the Committee of Ambassadors, and it was deliberated upon at Council;
  6. This morning, I wish to address briefly two main aspects of the exercise – the issue of Scientific and Technical Offices, and the progress made so far in restructuring the rest of the General Secretariat;
  7. As I pointed out earlier, your Committee had requested the Secretariat to prepare a Working Document that would facilitate its deliberations on the S&T offices following Council Decision on this matter.
  8. At the same time, at the earlier meetings between the Secretariat and the Bureau of this Committee as well as with the full Committee it was correctly emphasized that these offices are essentially Continental facilities and therefore a consideration about their ultimate destiny has to give primary importance to that factor, while also taking into account the specific views of the host countries;
  9. It was also generally agreed that the Committee itself, together with the representatives of the Member States constitute key components of the consultation process.
  10. The Secretariat were able to produce a draft of the requested working document by October 1999 and availed it to the Committee for further refinement and guidance in order to be in a position to report to Council during the March Session;

11. Unfortunately, for some organizational reasons, the Committee was not able to meet and in the end it was deemed appropriate to defer its submission to Council during the March session; up to that point, the Secretariat was operating on the assumption that before the meeting documents could be sent to all member States. It should be seen and, when necessary, reviewed by the Committee itself which requested the document in the first place.
12. When the newly composed Committee was able to meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May, it was decided to circulate the document and get the input of Member States before the deliberations of the Committee;
13. I am informed that – this was done, and in your deliberations yesterday, a decision has been made to fix a deadline of June 3 for receiving inputs from our Capitals;
14. It is quite obvious that we have not been able to make good progress on this component of the restructuring exercise. It is now 10 months since Algiers, and we have not been able to make significant headway on this important matter;
15. The delay has definitely affected the efficient functioning of these offices and the moral of their staff. Equally critical, the delay has somewhat impeded the overall restructuring exercise because the whole exercise is supposed to be implemented in an integrated manner so as to ensure proper linkages in the changes.
16. It is unfortunate that because of the delay, up to now, we have not been able to address the substance of the status of these offices, and we have less than two months before Summit.

17. I wish therefore to reiterate the decision reached yesterday, that every effort should be deployed to get the views of our Capitals, and for the Secretariat to undertake the consultations with ECOWAS and the University of Niamey, so that in the next meeting of your Committee a firm decision is made on this matter, that we will be able to transmit to Council in July.
18. Let me now turn on to the progress made in restructuring the rest of the General Secretariat;
19. As I reported to Council in March, by 31 December 1999, a total of 140 Staff had applied for early voluntary departure. Out of these,
20. In the interest of the Organization, particularly in ensuring that it does not suffer with the departure of competent and well performing personnel in some key areas, I appealed to a number of staff to reconsider their decision of leaving the Secretariat.
21. I did not succeed in a majority of cases and I had no basis of denying them this right without their consent. Only one individual finally agreed to reconsider his departure;
22. As you were informed earlier, the consultant firm of Hay Management conducted a staff assessment from 29 November to 15 December 1999. A total of 270 staff of different categories were evaluated.

23. The firm was asked to identify staff that directly fit with the requirements of the new structure, those who may need improvement and/or redeployment; and those who completely do not fit;
24. They submitted their final results on 27<sup>th</sup> February which generally highlighted a number of features concerning the Secretariat staff;
25. These features include a number of staff being deficient in skills, capacities, and some weaknesses in competence elements. The consultants also pointed out some deficiencies in the system of human resource management;
26. I convened meetings with the all the Assistant Secretaries General between 14 and 24 March 2000, and we went through the results of each individual staff member;
27. At the end of our deliberations we reached the conclusion that most of the staff members had deficiencies which could be rectified once they are pointed out, proper systems are put in place, and increased commitment by concerned staff. Nevertheless, there were a few cases that had to be separated;
28. In this respect, it was finally decided to provide letters giving one year to 63 staff members so as to enable them to improve themselves. These will be re-evaluated at the end of the one year;
29. It was also decided to terminate the services of 9 staff members. These have been given three months notice;

30. The assessment results and the decisions taken entail that immediate steps have to be taken to put in place the necessary structures to assist the staff members who have been given one year to improve themselves;
31. In order to ensure that this critical stage of the restructuring is properly understood by all staff, I took the initiative of addressing all the staff about the assessment exercise on 24<sup>th</sup> March and later, when the results were released, on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2000.
32. Arrangements have also been put in place for staff to see their individual results if they so wish;
33. After completing this stage of the restructuring exercise, the next step include: placement of staff in the new structure; putting in place new departments, divisions, units and offices; and filling of vacant and new posts following their publication to all Member States;
34. I should also point out at this juncture that in the course of implementing the restructuring plan as recommended by your Committee and approved by Council, it has been discovered that there are a few aspects that need to be reviewed so as to ensure that the ultimate aim of creating an efficient, dynamic, and responsive Organization is attained;
35. This mostly relate to the approved staff complement in some job functions. However, the Secretariat is in the process of preparing a special paper to be submitted to your Committee soon;
36. I would like to conclude by expressing my sincere appreciation for the support I am receiving from Your Excellencies, members of the General

Secretariat, as well as from our Partners, in executing this task that is very important for our Continental Organization.