



Organization of African Unity

**BRIEFING BY
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TO AMBASSADORS OF MEMBER STATES IN ADDIS ABABA**

**CONFERENCE ROOM – BUILDING B
OAU HEADQUARTERS**

24 NOVEMBER 2000

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to meet with you this afternoon. I had convened this meeting last Monday, but I received information from some of your missions that there were other engagements on that particular day. Since I was traveling to attend the IGAD Summit in Khartoum, where I came back at noon today, the meeting was rescheduled for this afternoon.

The main objective is to brief you on some of the important developments in the last few weeks, including steps that the General Secretariat has taken. Often, and particularly with political issues, you have received such briefings through the Central Organ. However, since we are approaching the New Year, I thought I would take this opportunity to brief you within the Committee of the whole.

I have been informed by my collaborators that during yesterday's 71st Ordinary session of the Central Organ session an extensive briefing on the latest developments was provided to members of the Central Organ and those who attended on the situation in Cote d'Ivoire, on the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea, on the Comoros, as well as on Burundi. I shall therefore refrain from making remarks on these issues.

I do intend to make a few observations the developments in Guinea Bissau, DRC and Somalia.

The other items that I intend to address include:

- my recent consultations with the leader of the Libyan Jamahariya on the reported incident concerning immigrants from other African countries;
- the budget preparation exercise and the convening of the Advisory Committee;
- progress in the restructuring exercise;
- preparations for the next Council of Ministers, the Extra-Ordinary Summit, the planned Summit on HIV-AIDS and other diseases, and also the Lusaka Summit;
- the IGAD Summit which concluded last night.

Consultations with Brother Ghaddafi

On the 28th October, I traveled to Tripoli, Libya where on the following day I met, first with the Secretary of the General People's Committee for African Unity and Arab Affairs, Dr. Ali Treki, and later I met the Brother Leader of the Jamhariya.

An important issue that dominated our one and a half hour discussion was the reported incidents about the assault on immigrants that happened in Tripoli during the month of September.

Basically, I expressed concern about the incident that affected citizens of a number of neighbouring countries, and as it was reported, some of whom lost their lives and many were compelled to be evacuated. I pointed out that this incident, happening at this time when we are striving to elevate the framework of our cooperation and integration, and bearing in mind the important role that the Libyan Jamhariya is playing had severe negative repercussions.

I made reference to how the issue was being capitalized upon by the western media to disparage our project of creating the African Union. But I also paid tribute to the leaders of the countries whose citizens were affected, particularly Nigeria, Ghana, Niger, who exercised restraint and remained very constructive throughout this incident.

In his response, the Leader indicated that whatever explanation that could be given about the incident, it remained unfortunate and very damaging. He confessed of his personal pain about it and the regrets of his governments. He then went on to explain to me the background to that incident.

He recalled that Libya had declared that it was a country for all Africans. And this attracted thousands of other Africans who came in to try and make a living in the Jamhariya.

Unfortunately, the reality was such that many of these could not be absorbed into the employment sector and they had difficulties surviving. A few of these resorted to criminal activities, in some cases teaming up with local Libyan criminals, such as drug dealers.

In this context of crime, there were incidences of murder and rape that involved these foreigners thus provoking hostility, particularly in three areas of Tripoli. Within such a charged atmosphere a couple of incidents of murder and raping in a certain Tripoli neighbourhood instigated to a riot seeking revenge on what was considered to be a problem caused by foreigners.

The consequence of this confrontation was that some people lost their lives, both foreigners and Libyans. According to the Leader, the number was not the hundreds that were reported in the media. They were less than a handful and all the bodies are preserved in the morgue and the culprits will be tried in an open court.

More than a hundred Libyans are now in custody awaiting trial.

At the same time, arrangements were made to protect foreigners in the affected areas and to evacuate those who wanted to leave Libya.

The Leader pointed out that the situation is now under control and that this was not a general animosity towards foreigners, as it was reported. There are still hundreds of thousands of other Africans living in Libya today and they have not been harassed.

Plans are underway to convene a meeting of Ministers of Interior of the neighbouring countries to discuss the issue and seek for ways of redressing the damage.

Finally, on this issue, I would like to underscore the point made by the leader that we should not allow ourselves to be detracted by such unfortunate incidents from our determination to forge a closer unity.

I would like now to turn on very briefly to the **process of preparing the budget and the convening of the Advisory Committee.**

At the beginning of this calendar year, when we started to prepare the forthcoming budget, the General Secretariat was still functioning under the old departmental structure. It was only in September that the new departmental structure was launched and the budget preparation exercise had to be realigned accordingly.

It was discovered only a few weeks ago, that due to the realignment complications, as well as because of staff shortage, we could not finalize the budget and the requisite documents so as to convene the Advisory Committee on the scheduled date of 20 November 2000. The other consideration which led to the postponement of the Advisory Committee is the fact that a number of important meetings were due to take place to coincide with the period in which the Advisory Committee was scheduled to take place. Hence we requested for a postponement to the 11th of December 2000.

We regret and sincerely apologize for what appears to be the failure of some Member States to receive the postponement communication in time.

In order to expedite the process, we have also decided to dispatched the documentation whenever it is ready, instead of waiting until the whole package is finalized.

I am now informed that the preparations are going on smoothly, and the Advisory Committee will convene on 11 December 2000 as scheduled.

Let me now turn on to the Progress of the Restructuring Exercise

It is to be recalled that, in Lomé, I submitted to Council a Progress Report on the Implementation of the Restructuring. In that Report, I informed Council of the results of the evaluation exercise, the counselling services provided to staff and the efforts made to implement paragraph 3 of Council decision CM/461(LXX) on the restructuring of the Scientific and Technical Offices.

Since then, the following activities have been carried out:

Staff Placement and Training

On the 1st September the existing Secretariat staff were placed in the new structure. For a few of them, the new positions were a slight elevation, for many they remained where they were, and they were quite a few who had to occupy positions of a lower level.

On the basis of the experience and feedback so far obtained, we are in the process of correcting some of the shortcomings that have been detected. Meanwhile a training programme is being prepared, and in fact, in the past two weeks staff have been undergoing a training programme on how to use the newly established internal electronic network as well as the available Internet facilities

This placement exercise enabled also the determination of vacant positions within the approved establishment. And it is on the basis of this determination that the notification of vacant positions has been communicated to your respective missions and to the capitals.

We did face a problem in expedited this process, in view of the necessity of conveying the advertisements in all the OAU working languages. The translation capacity in the Secretariat, in the light of the many meetings of this year and the staff shortage, caused a delay in releasing the advertisement in once package.

It was therefore decided to dispatch them in batches, whenever they are ready, and t to adjust the deadlines accordingly. The schedule of dispatch according to my officers was:

8 vacancy announcements (3 Directors of Department and 5 Heads of Division) were forwarded to Member States on 14 September 2000 followed by another set of 28 vacancy announcements on 28 September 2000 and finally another one on 13 November 2000. In each case, Member States were given 45 days to forward applications.

Office Space Allocation

In order to ensure the smooth functioning of the new structure, I have directed that all components of the new departments be regrouped as much as possible in the same building to facilitate their daily interactions.

Consultations about the Scientific and Technical Offices

Following the decision by the 72nd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in July 2000, in Lomé, Togo, that joint missions Member States/Secretariat should visit countries hosting the Scientific and Technical Offices, two missions led by Ambassador of Gabon, Chairman of the Committee of Fifteen, and Ambassador of Mozambique went to Nairobi, Yaoundé, Niamey and Conakry to carry out consultations with the respective authorities of those countries.

It is my understanding that the delegation led by the Ambassador of Gabon was not able to fully carry out the consultations with the Guinea and Niger authorities due to some technical reasons and that the consultations would be completed in December.

The Committee of Fifteen will, thereafter, have to meet to consider the Report of the Joint Mission and make recommendations as appropriate to Council to enable it make a decision on the status of the Scientific and Technical Offices.

Security Services

In order to make the OAU Security Services relevant to the requirements of the new structure, a Consultancy Group has been identified to assess the services with a view to proposing the improvements required in terms of training of the security staff in order to upgrade their skills and competence.

Finally, on the aspect of restructuring, it is 18 months since the formal launching of the restructuring exercise in June last year. During this period a

number of tasks have been accomplished. However, there is still some major tasks that have to be finalized. These include: improving the systems and methods of work, improving the communication systems, modernizing the administrative technology, recruiting new staff, and nurturing a new working culture.

The Transition Team that I had set up to implement the restructuring is expected to complete its assignment at the end of December 2000. However, restructuring is a continuous process in any organization. Therefore, in order to continue with finalizing the pending tasks and also to ensure a sustained process of redynamizing the Organization, I have decided to revitalize the Team by reconstituting it into a slightly smaller structure with a mandate to sustain the Organization Change.

While some of the present members will remain, new ones will be added with a mandate to incorporate the necessary expertise whenever it is required.

Instead of being a Transition Team, this new outfit will be a Change Management Team.

The other issue I would like to brief you on relates to **the Council of Ministers and the 5th Extra-Ordinary Summit**

Member States will recall that, as a rule, and unless a Member State offers to host the Session, all the February Sessions of Council which are devoted mainly but not exclusively to budgetary matters, are held at the OAU Headquarters, in Addis Ababa. It is in this context that at the end of the 72nd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Lome-TOGO, in July 2000, it was "decided to host the next (73rd) Ordinary Session of Council in Addis Ababa at a date to be fixed after consultation". Document CM/ RPT (LXXII) Para. 209.

It may also be recalled that while adopting the Sirte Declaration, on 9 September 1999, the Fourth Extra-Ordinary Summit requested Member States to work towards finalizing the process of ratification, where appropriate, by December 2000, in order for African Union's Constitutive Act to be solemnly adopted in the year 2001, at an Extra-Ordinary Summit to be convened in Tripoli -Libya. In keeping with the above mentioned decision, the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has confirmed, in its Note Verbale of 9 November 2000, that the Extra-Ordinary Summit will be held from 2-3 March 2001, in Sirte.

Furthermore, Member States may wish to note that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has extended an invitation to host the 73rd Ordinary Session of Council also in Sirte - Libya. This arrangement will, of course, facilitate the work of Council and reduce the inconvenience and logistical problem of

holding the two events at two separate locations (Addis and Sirte) within a period of less than 10 days.

In the light of the above developments, the General Secretariat has taken or is in the process of taking the following, steps in the preparations for these two important meetings:

- a) By its Note Verbale sent to all Member States on 3 November 2000, the General Secretariat proposed that the 73rd Session of Council be convened in Tripoli- Libya, before the 5th Extra-Ordinary Session of the AHG (2-3 March, 2000).
- b) In the same note, and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure to the Council of Ministers, Member States are requested to convey their reactions to the Libyan invitation by 30 November 2000, so that the Secretariat can make the appropriate arrangements. Member States may wish to note that the few Member State which responded so far, namely: Algeria, Nigeria, South-Africa and Seychelles have reacted positively accepting the invitation.

With regard to the actual and material preparations for the Meetings, the Secretariat is focusing on:

- a) The dates which are envisaged as follows:
 - Committee of Ambassadors and other Plenipotentiaries: 23-25 February 2001;
 - 73rd Session of Council : 25 - 27 February, 200;
 - Extended Session of CM: 28 February, 2001. (to prepare Summit);
 - 5th Extra- Ordinary Session of the AHG: 2 -3 March, 2001.
- b) The Draft Agenda.

“For the Session of Council, the General Secretariat will prepare the Draft in keeping with the standing decision of Council CM/ Dec. 396/ LXVII adopted in February 1998 directing to devote the February Sessions to Budgetary and Economic Matters”.

There would therefore be no separate reports on political issues. However, Member States who wish to address the developments can do so within the context of the Introductory Note of the Secretary-General.

- c) With regard to the Agenda of the Extra- Ordinary Summit, proposals will bear in mind not only the directives contained in the SIRTE Declaration, but also the latest developments regarding **The Signing and Ratification** process of the Constitutive Act of the Union . In this regard, Member States may wish to note that, so far, 32 Member States have signed the document, the latest being Mozambique, and 4 have ratified it. In this respect, you would recall that President Chissano came to Headquarters, on his way back home, to sign the Constitutive Act. I should also mention that during the African Development Forum to be held in December in Addis Ababa, the President of Rwanda is expected to personally come and sign the Constitutive Act. Up to now, four countries have ratified the Constitutive Act. It is expected that more signatures and ratifications will be received before February, 2001.

In the meantime, a meeting of African Parliamentarians and experts was held in Pretoria from 7-10 November. At this meeting the draft Protocol on the establishment of the Pan-African Parliament was considered and approved. This document will be submitted to the next session of Council for consideration and onward transmission to the Extra Ordinary Summit.

37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government

I would like also to take this opportunity to inform you that at the invitation of the Government of Zambia, an evaluation mission led by the Assistant Secretary General responsible for Communication and Conferences, Ambassador Daniel Antonio, will be leaving tomorrow 25 November, for Lusaka Zambia as part of the preparations for the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. As usual, I will keep you informed on the progress of the preparations.

You may also recall that at the Lome Summit, Heads of State and Government agreed to hold an **African Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other related infectious diseases** sometimes in 2001. The Assembly also accepted the offer by the Federal Republic of Nigeria to host the Summit.

I received communication from President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria informing me of the preparations that are underway in Nigeria and also indicating the dates of 24 to 27 April 2001 for holding this Summit. The plan is to have two days for technical discussions by experts and another two days for the Summit proper.

President Obasanjo informed that he was seeking the concurrence of the Current Chairman, after which he will send letters of invitations to his brothers Heads of State and Government.

The Secretariat will be working closely with the Government of Nigeria in preparing for this Summit.

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

I now wish to brief you on some political developments on the Continent. In doing so, I am not unmindful of the fact that the Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs had briefed the Central Organ on some of these issues, yesterday at the meeting of the Central Organ. I was encouraged by the nature of the debate that took place during that Session. We at the General Secretariat will be looking into further ways in which the Organization can make meaningful contributions to the efforts to resolve some of the outstanding problems that are of concern to our Member States.

a. The situation in Guinea-Bissau

We have been following closely the unfortunate developments in Guinea-Bissau, which arose, as a result of the unilateral action of General Ansumane Mane to declare himself as the new Chief of Staff of the Army as well as nullify the promotion of thirty Officers by President Kumba Yalla, who had earlier exercised his legitimate constitutional powers.

We have received reports that at the bottom of this crisis lies the refusal by General Ansumane Mane to work within the confines of the new democratic dispensation in that country, particularly the refusal of the General and his supporters to drop their claims to play a continuing role in the politics of the country. Indeed, the General was once reported to have declared that he and his group were "monitoring and supervising" the new democracy in Guinea-Bissau. It should also be recalled that after President Yalla's election in January 2000, he had nominated Colonel Verissimo as the Minister of Defense in his new Government. At the time, General Mane was reported to be opposed to the appointment. It is therefore not surprising that last week when the President again decided to appoint the same Colonel, the General decided to act by sacking the new army Chief of Staff and declare himself as the new man in charge of the army.

It should be recalled that before the crises of 1998 and 1999, General Asumane Mane was the army Chief of Staff until his dismissal by President Vieira, whom he later overthrew in a military coup d'état in May 1999. Given the consequences of that action which resulted in a bloody conflict in Guinea-Bissau, the recent actions of General Asumane Mane and the implications for

the consolidation of the fragile democracy in that country should not be taken lightly. We have received media reports of a confrontation between forces loyal to the democratically elected government and the supporters of General Ansumane Mane. Even though we have not been able to obtain up-to-date information on what is going on in the country, the picture which emerges is that of a deadlock and the refusal by General Mane to heed my appeal and those of others for him to enter into dialogue with the Government of President Yalla.

Clearly, the potential for further violence and even wide spread armed exchanges continues to be a matter of grave concern to us. Given the General's antecedents, one cannot rule out the temptation for him to attempt to take over the Government by force of arms and unconstitutionally for only a few hours after declaring himself to be the new army Chief of Staff, he is also reported to have declared himself as the Commander in Chief of Guinea-Bissau and appointed the former Head of the Navy, as the new army Chief of Staff under him.

It is obvious that under whatever pretext we may be witnessing the early attempts at an unconstitutional change of Government. If this impression is confirmed, such an action would be an affront on the entire continent, which only a few months ago, in Lomé, Togo adopted the Declaration on Unconstitutional changes of Governments in Africa, which reflected the determination of the continent's leaders to put an end to this phenomenon. The General Secretariat will continue to monitor developments in Guinea-Bissau, as well as continue with ongoing consultations with ECOWAS to see what needs to be done to avoid further and unnecessary bloodshed in Guinea-Bissau.

I should like to end my briefing on Guinea-Bissau by expressing my serious concern that the action of General Ansumane Mane and the attendant consequences of those actions will impact negatively on the efforts that we have been making to try to persuade the wider international community and especially the donor community to contribute in concrete terms to the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Guinea-Bissau. Even before this latest crisis, there was some kind of reluctance in the international community arising from uncertainties over the loyalty of the former Junta to the new Government of President Yalla. Now the situation is bound to be even more complicated.

b. Continuing tension of the border between Sierra Leone-Guinea and Liberia

I wish also to express my concerns over the problems that have been reported along the border between Liberia and Guinea in particular, but also the tension along the Liberia-Guinea-Sierra Leone border. I am particularly concerned over the escalation of hostilities and the threats that are posed by

these hostilities to the peace, security and stability of these three countries in particular and the region as a whole. Coming in the wake of the conflict in Sierra Leone and the previous conflict in Liberia, which had taken a lot of toll on human lives and infrastructure.

Since the outbreak of the ongoing tension along the Liberia-Guinea border, I have engaged in consultations with some leaders of the region with a view to exploring what we could collectively do to end the confrontation and allegations of incursions into the two countries and the reported actions of dissident groups operating in the region. I have also issued several appeals directly to the Governments concerned urging restraints in their response to the ongoing problems. Beyond these efforts, I plan to personally visit the Mano River Basin countries in the very near future to discuss with the leadership and other stake-holders in the region on what more could be done to end the current hostilities.

While we have been exploring what the OAU, as an Organization could do to resolve to problem, we were also conscious of the need to avoid duplication in the role of external actors who are working to help the concerned countries to resolve their differences peacefully. It was within this context that we had encouraged the leadership of ECOWAS which had been seized with the matter, to continue with the initiative that was launched by the leaders of ECOWAS to intervene and assist in resolving the border problem.

In the interim, I was informed through a letter dated 8th November 2000, and addressed to me by Mr. Lansana Kouyate, the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, of the decision by ECOWAS, to deploy an Observer Force at the land and coastal borders of Guinea and Liberia, following the deterioration of the security situation that obtains between the two countries. In that letter, the Executive Secretary requested for US\$400,000 and equipment from the OAU in support of the deployment. Three days after receiving the ECOWAS request, on the 11th November to be specific I made available the amount of US\$300,000 from the OAU Peace Fund, contributed by OAU Member States to ECOWAS on behalf of the OAU and as a reflection of the solidarity between the rest of the continent and the three countries to help them resolve the ongoing problem.

I should like to underscore as I did to the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, the fact that we at the OAU have always seen our role in terms of working with all our Member States to create conditions for peace, stability and development to thrive on the continent. It was in that context that a conscious decision was taken to work in complimentarity with regional organizations i.e. where the organization with a comparative advantage for dealing with the particular crisis situation, is allowed to take the lead, supported by the continental organization and others. However, it is also a reality that there are instances and there will be more in the future, where the OAU will have no other option

than to be in the forefront of such initiatives, in the absence of any organized action by a regional organization. In those instances, we as the OAU will continue to fulfill our obligation which is that of a continental organization catering to the needs of all its Member States.

In conclusion, I wish to point out that one of the unreported and sometimes unacknowledged actions by the OAU has been in the area of mobilizing resources and support for regional initiatives. During my recent visit to Sweden, for example, I launched a very strong appeal to the Swedish Government and the European Union to extend concrete assistance to ECOWAS to deal with different situations in West Africa, and to other regional initiatives which I cannot go into details during this briefing. Suffice it to say that the General Secretariat remains well disposed to work with regional organizations and to assist in whatever ways that are possible within the limits of its resources, to facilitate the achievement of common objectives.

c. The situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Since the Lomé Summit, the situation in the DRC has continued to deteriorate rapidly. On the one hand, the cease-fire is not respected as fighting has resumed on different fronts, thus delaying the deployment of MONUC. The Lusaka Agreement is increasingly contested by the DRC government and some other stake-holders. The Inter-Congolese dialogue has not started because of, among other factors, the position of the DRC on the facilitator. Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation is increasingly worsening inside the DRC as well as causing serious concerns in the neighboring countries particularly in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) and in the Central African Republic.

In the meantime, the Joint Military Commission which was established to oversee the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement, pending the deployment of MONUC, continues to face serious difficulties in the execution of its mandate because of the actions of the parties in violating the cease-fire in the DRC. Additionally, the Commission has almost been paralysed by lack of funds and the reluctance of the donors to support its work, largely as a result of the perception that the parties are not committed to the implementation of the Agreement that they signed.

I should like to inform you that given all the problems confronting the JMC, and in line with normal peacekeeping/military traditions the Neutral Investigators which were deployed within the DRC are being rotated. However, because of lack of funds, the Investigators who were earlier this month withdrawn from the DRC are not being replaced immediately. It is my hope that the situation will change for the better so that the new Investigators who are now standing by can be deployed. In the interim, I have been undertaking consultations with the leaders of the region and I have personally written to

the Chairman of the political Committee to impress upon him the urgent need to convene a meeting of the parties to discuss the crisis in the JMC.

It is also important to bring you up-to-date on some of the initiatives that have taken place in recent times involving several leaders of the continent. These include:

- The request by President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo made by the Millennium Summit, to be associated with the DRC peace process because of the impact of the fighting in the DRC and his country;
- The Maputo Summit of 16 October 2000; which brought together the leaders of the DRC, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi under the Chairmanship of the President of South Africa. One of the major decisions of that Summit was an Agreement by the Parties on the disengagement plan of 15 Kms;
- The Kinshasa Summit of 27 October 2000 involving the Presidents of Gabon, Angola, the Republic of Congo, the DRC, as well as representatives of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and Central African Republic. The Summit called, in the words of the Communique, for the withdrawal of the aggressors from the DRC and the deployment of Neutral Forces along the common border between the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. They also called for the revision of the Lusaka Agreement which they still consider as a basis for resolving the conflict in the DRC.
- The Tripoli Summit of 7-8 November 2000, which brought together the Presidents of Zimbabwe, Uganda, Mali, Rwanda, Libya and the Representatives of Angola, DRC, Namibia and South Africa. The Summit proposed the deployment of a Neutral African Peacekeeping Force to secure the borders of Uganda and Rwanda. The third force will be mandated also to assess the size and magnitude of the Interahamwe and other armed groups in the DRC in order to disarm, disband and resettle them. Upon the fulfillment of these steps, Rwanda and Uganda should withdraw the forces from the DRC and that all other foreign forces shall also be withdrawn.

After the Tripoli Summit, the Government of Libya has requested the OAU to liaise with the UN for the implementation of these measures.

While in Khartoum for the IGAD Summit, I had occasion to discuss separately with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of South Africa and Egypt, as well as the Minister for African Unity Affairs of Libya. Consultations are still going on, first on the position of the Government of DRC, second on the preparedness of the countries mentioned to contribute troops, and third on the position of the UN.

d. On the situation in Somalia

1. Ambassadors would recall that when the Central Organ met in its 70th Session on the 2nd October, 2000, Somalia was one of the issues which it considered. In that session, the Central Organ, while paying tribute to President Guelleh and the Government and people of Djibouti, for their efforts and sacrifices to promote peace in Somalia, which efforts and sacrifices they had made on behalf of IGAD and Africa, expressed support for the new Somali institutions which had emerged from the Arta Conference, and in particular for the newly-elected President of Somalia, Mr. Abdiqasim Salad Hassan.
2. The Central Organ also considered that the time had come for Somalia to take its rightful place within the OAU and recommended to the Council of Ministers to take an appropriate decision in this respect.
3. In implementation of that decision of the Central Organ to make a recommendation to the Council of Ministers, the General Secretariat wrote to all Ministries of Foreign/External Affairs of Member States on 8 November, 2000 recalling that inherent in the Recommendation of the Central Organ was the recognition of the need to fulfill a procedural requirement - that since the Council of Ministers was the Policy Organ of the Organization that had taken the Decision to declare the Somali seat in the OAU vacant, Council should be the Organ to revoke its earlier Decision.
4. The General Secretariat reminded Member States, further, of the fact that during that meeting of the Central Organ, the consensus which emerged was that in following the specified procedure, and in order to facilitate speedy action on the matter, all Member States of the Organization should be requested to inform the General Secretariat of their respective positions, in writing, on whether Council should allow the Government of the newly-elected President of Somalia, Mr. Abdiqasim Salad Hassan, to occupy the Somalia seat at the OAU.
5. The Secretariat had hoped that once favourable responses were received from member State, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of Council, by the end of November - the date which it specified to Member States - it could take the appropriate measures required, even before the next Session of Council.
6. The Ambassadors may wish to note, however, that with the end of November fast approaching, the Secretariat has received only one response, that of the Republic of South Africa - through its Embassy in Addis Ababa - dated 16 November, 2000, and to the effect that it "is in favour of the OAU Council of Ministers allowing the Government of the newly-elected President of Somalia to occupy the Somalia seat at the OAU.

7. As I informed the Central Organ during its Session in October, Somalia's membership of a number of international and regional organizations, including the UN and the League of Arab States, is no longer an issue, given by the new Somali President's visit to their respective headquarters in New York and Cairo in September. Since then – indeed only a few days ago – President Abdiqasim Salad Hassan, has also attended the IGAD Summit, in Khartoum, from where I returned only this morning.

BRIEF WHAT TRANSPIRED IN KHARTOUM

8. I would, therefore, appeal to all Member States to treat with urgency, the request made by the Secretariat in its Note Verbale of 8 November, to send their views in writing by the end of November.
9. In the meantime, and in line with the decision of the Central Organ, the OAU needs to continue to encourage the new Somali President to build on the outcome of the Arta Conference, by opening the door to those Somali factions and leaders who did not participate in the Conference or rejected its outcome, through a policy of dialogue, tolerance and accommodation.
10. The OAU also needs to reiterate its call to those Somali factions which did not participate in the Arta Conference and have rejected its outcome to join the process in order to make it an all-inclusive one.

g. On the situation in Sierra Leone

1. The OAU, ECOWAS and the international community at large, are currently confronted with an impasse in the peace process in Sierra Leone. This impasse has come about as a result of the non-implementation of the Lome Peace Agreement of 7th July, 2000, of which the OAU is a Moral Guarantor and in whose negotiation at Lome last year the OAU actively participated.
2. As always, and, indeed, ever since the advent of the OAU's involvement in initial efforts to start the peace process in Sierra Leone from scratch, in February 1995, the approach of the OAU has been to work closely with other key actors in the international community, namely ECOWAS and the United Nations. That, therefore, remains the approach of the OAU with regard to the challenge to help kick start the Lome Peace Agreement, whose implementation has been in jeopardy since the unfortunate events of May 1, 2000 in which the RUF took the extremely ill-advised step of violating the Peace Agreement by taking hostage, hundreds of UN Peace-Keeping troops in Sierra Leone.

3. It should be recalled that in the wake of that crisis and, indeed, at the height of it when Freetown, the capital, appeared to be on the verge of an attack by the RUF rebels, I sent an official from the Secretariat to Freetown who established contacts with those concerned, including in particular the Government of Sierra Leone and UNAMSIL whose personnel had been abducted, as well as representatives of the RUF, in a bid to lend the assistance of the OAU to on-going efforts to release the hostages. It would be recalled that the majority of the hostages were eventually released but not without serious damage having been done to the peace process.
4. In the light of, the incalculable damage done to the peace process by the actions of the RUF, which damage calls for the OAU to deploy renewed efforts as part of its contribution to the resuscitation of the peace process, I appointed a Special Envoy to Sierra Leone, in the person of Ambassador Kingsley Mamabola, South Africa's Ambassador to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the OAU.
5. Indeed, in the light of my concerns about the stalled peace process, I undertook a working visit to Sierra Leone, last August, accompanied by my Special Envoy and the Ambassador of Sierra Leone to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to OAU, Mr. Fode Darbor. On my way to Freetown, Sierra Leone, I stopped in Ghana where I had discussions with the Vice-President, Professor Atta-Mills, the Deputy Foreign Minister and Senior Government Officials. Our discussions focussed primarily on the situation in Sierra Leone.
6. During my visit to Sierra Leone, I met twice with President Kabbah as well as with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, Dr Sama Banya, the Deputy Defence Minister, the Deputy Representative of the UN Secretary General, and senior UNAMSIL Officials. I also visited the Amputee Camp in Murray Town, the camp for displaced persons at Grafton and the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Camp at Lungi. I also visited a number of UNAMSIL military establishments at Hastings.
7. In addition, I presented, on behalf of the OAU, two cheques of US\$100.000 each, to assist in the alleviation of the grievous plight of amputees and to support the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme. I also presented a cheque for US\$50,000, following a request by ECOWAS for assistance to activate the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, the body created under the Lome Agreement to oversee the implementation of that Agreement,

8. Since then, the Special Envoy has recently undertaken a series of consultations with leaders of the West African region, in a bid to build on the momentum generated by my own visit, and to solicit the views of neighbouring states and key actors in the region, on how to reactivate the peace process. In that context, he paid a visit to Nigeria and Liberia in September and followed that up with a visit to Mali and Guinea in November. While in Nigeria, he met the Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, the National Security Adviser, the Acting Chief of Defence Staff and senior officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence.
9. In Liberia, the Special Envoy met President Charles Taylor, the Defence Minister, the Acting Foreign Minister and the Information Minister.
10. While in Mali, the Special Envoy met the Foreign Minister, Mr. Modibo Sidibe, the Special Envoy of the ECOWAS Chairman on Sierra Leone and senior Government officials.
11. In Guinea, he had discussions with the Minister of Defence and senior military and officials of that Ministry.
12. On 10 November, 2000, a ceasefire agreement was signed in Abuja between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF. I believe the Secretariat has already circulated copies of that Agreement to Embassies in Addis Ababa. It provides for the cessation of hostilities, and commits the parties to refrain from any activity that could violate the ceasefire. It also gives UNAMSIL the role of supervising and monitoring the peace process and investigating and reporting on violations. UNAMSIL is also to be free to deploy to all areas in the country, including diamond producing areas currently under the RUF's control. Further the authority of the Government of Sierra Leone is to be restored all over the territory. The RUF also made a commitment to return all weapons and ammunition it has taken in the past and to actively recommence the DDR Programme. The parties agreed to undertake a review of the implementation of the agreement, thirty days after its entry into force.
13. The Special Envoy is scheduled to travel to Nigeria, next week, in order to have consultations with ECOWAS on the peace process in Sierra Leone. It is expected that the consultations will focus on the prospects and problems of the Ceasefire Agreement as well as on the role that the OAU could be playing in the revival of the peace process. It is expected also, that the meeting will consider such issues as the impending trial of Foday Sankoh and its venue, divisions within the ranks of the RUF, the implications of the impending end of the Constitutional term of President Kabbah in February 2000, the DDR Programme, the relevance

or not of power-sharing in the context of a revitalised Lome Agreement
and the humanitarian situation.