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NRD/CRSU/89/6

MISSION REPORT ON TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICES  
TO THE SECRETARIAT OF THE AFRICAN ORGANIZATION  
FOR CARTOGRAPHY AND REMOTE SENSING, ALGIERS

24 JULY TO 1 AUGUST 1989

BY

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### Introduction

In February 1988, the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing, hosted by the government of the Republic of Algeria, emerged from the merger of the African Association of Cartography and the African Remote Sensing Council, two institutions which, prior to that date, were facing serious financial difficulties as a result of non-payment of the annual contribution by a large number of the contracting member states and dwindling moral and political support because of their ineffectiveness to meet the aspirations of the founders. The exercise was in pursuance of the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the ECA Conference of Ministers on the rationalization, harmonization and co-ordination of the activities of the ECA- and OAU- sponsored Regional and Sub-regional institutions.

The joint meeting of Plenipotentiaries of the two institutions considered the draft of the Constitution of the organization and, thereafter, sixteen countries of member states signed it. The Administrative Council of the organization which met at an emergency meeting immediately after drew up programme of activities which was subsequently approved by the February 1988 Conference of Plenipotentiaries as the basis of putting the organization on the right track to fulfil its mission.

In September 1988, the Administrative Council held its second session at its headquarters in Algiers to review the rate of implementation of the decisions of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries and to prepare for the first Extra-ordinary meeting of the Conference which was to take place in the second quarter of 1989. Working documents for that meeting were considered by the Administrative Council and were to be perfected by the Secretary-General a.i. of the organization taking into account all the comments and amendments suggested by the members of the Council. ECA was requested to assist the Secretary-General a.i. to put final touches to the documents before the meetings and, particularly, to assist with the preparation of the triennial programme budget for 1989-1991 and the substantive servicing of the meetings.

Unfortunately, due to prior official engagements at the time the meetings of the Administrative Council and of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries were scheduled to take place, ECA could not be represented. Feedbacks at the end of the meetings from at least three quarters regretted the inevitable absence of the ECA for the usual rich contributions of its representatives at the meetings.

#### Objectives of the mission

Firstly, the ECA secretariat felt obliged to undertake a technical advisory services mission to the secretariat of the organization, more so as it was not represented at the meetings of the organs of the Organization in May 1989 at which far reaching decisions were taken concerning the smooth operations of the new institution, with a view to assisting the newly appointed Secretary-General of the Organization in the implementation of the approved work programme for the remaining part of the biennium 1989-1990;

Secondly, to seek clarification on some of the decisions contained in the reports of the Administrative Council and the Conference of Plenipotentiaries which seemed to have violated the principles and spirit of the merger and the inviolability of the separate corporate existence of the three Regional Centres -CETO, RCSSMRS and RECTAS which were acknowledged in the report of the ad hoc committee of ten-member states which exempted them from being merged with the organization. Thereafter, ECA comments on the reports of the meetings of the two organs of the organization were to be submitted for consideration by the Executive Secretary of the ECA who, in another capacity, is the chairman of the Governing Councils of two of the three Regional Centres (RCSSMRS and RECTAS) mostly adversely affected by some of the decisions taken by the organization; and

Thirdly, the mission was undertaken in accordance with the approved work programme in cartography and remote sensing for the biennium 1988-1989 for the provision of technical advisory services to the multinational institutions established under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Africa. The mission was the first and the only likely advisory service to the organization in 1989 because of the resource situation for travel in 1989 and, therefore, was worthwhile and both reciprocally informative on working relations between ECA and the Organization in diffusing unsustainable misgivings about ECA's presumed unwillingness to co-operate for the success of the organization, and on team work to achieve the goal of the establishment of the intergovernmental organization.

Programme of work drawn up by the mission and the Secretary-General of the organization

Although the Administrative Council considered seventeen working papers during its meeting which culminated in its report presented to the Conference of Plenipotentiaries, it was the consensus that considerable time should be devoted to the consideration of issues discussed in the working papers presented on:

- i) Work programme and planned activities for 1989-1990;
- ii) Programme budget for remaining quarters of 1989;
- iii) Perspective view of African cartography and remote sensing in 1989-1991 and future years;
- iv) Implementation of the decisions and resolutions of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries;
- v) Modalities for co-operation between the ECA, OAU and the Organization; and
- vi) Steps to be taken to make the disciplines of cartography and remote sensing contribute to the measures for the accelerated implementation of the Economic Recovery Programmes adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity including the recently adopted "African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustments for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP)".

The Governing Council approved the programme budget for 1988-1989. Out of the budget of US\$666,000, US\$370,000 are expected in the form of contributions from the participating member States. The remaining US\$296,000 are expected from extra-budgetary sources. Most of the negotiations are, however, still in the pipeline. ECA assistance has been requested by the Secretary-General to lend weight to the requests already made.

The author discussed the working documents which the Administrative Council and the Conference of Plenipotentiaries approved in respect of the programme of work and priorities for the remaining quarters of 1989 and for the biennium 1990-1991, paragraph by paragraph, and worked out strategies for the faithful implementation on the assumption that funds will be available to undertake the planned missions, publication of annual bulletins with inputs from the ECA, OAU and the Regional Centres. There are proposals for organizing joint seminars, meetings workshops with the national institutions responsible for cartography and remote sensing as well as with ECA and OAU on international projects such

as the on-going "International Hydro-geological map of Africa which the organization inherited from the African Association of Cartography (being funded by the OAU with assistance from the French Government, the World Bank, BADEA etc.), the computation of ADOS results with a view to improving the national geodetic networks and, eventually, lay on strategies for the establishment of an African geodetic datum.

Noteworthy among the approved activities are: preparation of a directory of African and international training institutions in the fields of cartography and remote sensing; directory of experts in co-operation with the Natural Resources Division (Cartography and Remote Sensing Unit) and PADIS; participation in continental meetings being organized by the ECA and OAU; and support for the specialized centres for any regional or international action to reinforce their training capacities.

With regard to the 1989 budget, there was great dependence upon external sources for funding most of the projects approved for the biennium 1988-1989. It should be placed on record that the host government has continued to pay its annual contributions to the budget of the organization without which the organization could have found it difficult to pay the salaries of the staff and make procurement of materials for whatever it has achieved to produce as outputs. There seemed to have been an assumption that all members of the two former institutions (AAC and ARSC) are taxable by demanding from them contributions to the organization's budget. The Secretary-General agreed with me that it would be proper to levy the participating members and efforts mustered to win more members so that the burden of payment of unaffordable contributions will be minimized.

There was a controversial working paper entitled "Perspective view on African Cartography and remote sensing in 1989-1991 and future years" presented to the Administrative Council and the Conference of Plenipotentiaries by the out-going Secretary-General which, undoubtedly, oversights many policies that had been adopted at levels higher than that of his organization. I took considerable trouble to put the new Secretary-General into the picture particularly on procedures to take concerning the establishment of new Regional Centres, intervention of AOCRS on the already accepted reports of the feasibility study of the ground receiving and processing stations for earth resources satellites. Unfortunately, the Conference of Plenipotentiaries had already approved the composition of a committee to re-examine the needs of member states in the establishment of such stations. Incidentally, ECA is a member of the committee.

In one of the working papers (No.6b), the out-going Secretary-General wrote that in order "to consolidate the objectives of the continental projects an agreement should be signed by ECA and AOCRS

fields". Here, he mentioned eight areas where a so-called Memorandum of Understanding should be signed. Among these are: "definition and implementation of the African programme in remote sensing - its revision and permanent adaptation to specific African environment and to the technological progress"; preparation and fixation of regional conferences and specialized seminars; regular updating of the cartographic inventory project for Africa; and mobilization of funds through UN channels or any other agencies for continental projects.

The substantive Secretary-General and the author of this paper spent considerable time on the issues raised in the areas of co-operation mentioned above and expressed great surprise that AOCRS seemed to have lost faith, for no justifiable grounds, in the expenditure of resources and energy to see the ECA-sponsored centres succeed in the missions for which they were established. It was impressed upon him that the idea itself was not only ill-conceived but also unwarranted and should be put on the racks. I would like to mention that the conspicuous absence of the ECA at the first important meeting of the AOCRS after its creation might have given that erroneous impression of ECA's lack of interest in the success of the organization. One observation which the author was able to make was the unfortunate situation in which ECA has always found itself in not being able to allocate funds to its sponsored institutions, especially the AOCRS. The OAU is currently funding a project on the preparation of an International Hydrogeological Map for Africa and AOCRS believes that ECA should similarly sponsor a project which will make it survive. There is evidence that the organization cleaves more to the OAU than ECA, the founding father. This situation will be corrected when AOCRS makes up its mind to work in closer co-operation with its progenitor, the ECA.

The most controversial resolution adopted by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries was that in connection with the "Progressive integration of specialized centres and their management organs into the structures of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing". ECA comments on the resolution form an annex to this mission report.

## Conclusion

It is the view of the author of this report that ECA should, as far as the resources can/will allow, participate in the future meetings of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing to avoid misrepresentation of the type that this mission tried very hard to diffuse. AOCRS believes in ECA's maximum co-operation to achieve its objectives as one of the sponsored institutions under its auspices.

Comments on the reports of the following  
organs of the African Organization for  
Cartography and Remote Sensing:

(a) Third Session of the Administrative Council

(b) First Extra-ordinary meeting of the  
Conference of Plenipotentiaries

Introduction

In pursuance of ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 550(XX) adopted on the co-ordination, harmonization and/or merger of the activities of the ECA- and OAU- sponsored institutions, including the possible dissolution of some of those institutions, the African Association of Cartography and the African Remote Sensing Council were merged into a new institution with the name African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing on 18 February 1988. At that joint meeting of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the two institutions which was held at the ECA Headquarters in Addis Ababa, 16 member states signed the Constitution of the Organization.

It will be recalled that the ECA drew the attention of the Conference to a lot of imperfections in the original draft which was what the member states agreed to recognize as the Constitution of the organization. ECA submitted a report on the implementation of recommendations of the Kinshasa joint meeting of Plenipotentiaries, held in Kinshasa, the Republic of Zaire in March 1987 in which the concerns of the Regional Centres at Nairobi and Ile-Ife on the infringement of articles 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 of the Constitution on their legitimate existence as the property of the member states that established them were brought to the notice of the Conference. The comments of the ECA Senior Legal Officer on the initialled draft which was finally signed were similarly brought to the attention of the Conference. Paragraphs 11 - 14 of the copy of the attached report (E/ECA/NRD/CART/117) refer.

Observations on the proceedings of the meetings  
of the two organs

(a) Attendance

Regional representatives from three of the five sub-regions attended the meeting of Administrative Council. RECTAS represented you, and H.E., the Ambassador of Cameroon in Algiers represented CRTO at the level of the Administrative Council. OAU, ECA, RCSSMRS and Ethiopia were not represented.

Twentyfour countries were represented at the Extra-ordinary meeting of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries. Out of these, Sudan was the only member state from RCSSMRS whilst Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal (member states of RECTAS) were also represented. The others were either member states of CRTO or observers. The attendance was obviously lopsided as only Egypt, Sudan and Ghana were Anglophone countries who attended.

(b) Proceedings of the meetings

The Administrative Council considered seventeen (17) working papers, one in respect of each substantive agenda item. At the end of their meeting, a draft resolution on "Progressive integration of Specialized Centres and their Management Organs into the structure of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing" was recommended for approval and adoption by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries.

The Conference of Plenipotentiaries considered the report of the Administrative Council and other items on the agenda for its meeting and, at the end of its three-day meeting, adopted its report which contained the following salient decisions:

i) Mr. Mohammed Boualga, an Algerian national and former Secretary-General of the African Association of Cartography, was 'elected' by secret vote of an absolute majority as the substantive Secretary-General of the AOCCRS;

ii) Adoption of documents on: conditions of admission of associate members of the organization; operating chart; scale of contribution by member states; staff rules and regulations and financial rules of the organization; approval of the work programme for 1989-1990.

iii) The Conference approved the creation of scientific commissions to assist the Organization in its technical activities relating to the development of various disciplines in cartography and remote sensing;

iv) The Conference approved the establishment of two more "Regional Centres" for the Northern and Central sub-regions to replace the Kinshasa and Cairo Centres which are still functioning as national centres.

Comments on the reports with particular emphasis on issues of concern to ECA and maybe to OAU

The main issue of concern is on the 'progressive integration of the specialized centres and their Management Organs into the structure of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing'. In the operative clauses of the adopted resolution on



this subject (copy attached for reference), the Conference urged all member states of the Regional Centres to harmonize their legal documents (Agreement establishing the Centres) to conform to the imperfect Constitution of the AOCRS. OAU and ECA were requested to assist with the establishment of the two new institutions for the Northern and Central sub-regions. The Secretary-General of AOCRS was to convey the contents of the resolution to all member states and the Chairmen of the Governing Councils and Management Committee of the Regional Centres for immediate implementation.

My comments on the two issues raised in the resolution which definitely conflict with adopted resolutions of the ECA Conference of Ministers on the co-ordination, rationalization and harmonization of the activities of the ECA- and OAU- sponsored institutions and of the decisions of the Governing Councils of RCSSMRS and RECTAS are as follows:

Apart from the fact that the Executive Secretary of the ECA is the chairman of the Governing Council of RCSSMRS and of RECTAS which had already lodged protests against certain articles of the constitution of the AOCRS which, if implemented in their present forms, will adversely affect the smooth operations of the centres, ECA, on its part, will not be acting constitutionally (from point of view of faithful implementation of the resolutions of the Conference of Ministers and the unresolved protests by the Governing Councils of the Centres) if it attempts to implement the delusive resolution.

When I was in Algiers on mission to the Headquarters of the AOCRS, this was one of the issues I discussed with the Secretary-General of the Organization who informed me that the Conference of Plenipotentiaries that met in Addis Ababa at the time the merger was effected would appear to have ignored the protests of the Centres and, therefore, he was under obligation to convey the contents of the resolution to those who were addressed in it. In the circumstance, therefore, I would suggest that we await a formal letter from him and, if it is considered worthwhile writing the governments of the member states of RCSSMRS and RECTAS to come to the next meeting of their Governing Councils with the views and comments of their governments on the resolution, then we can do so. The matter will have to be tabled among the agenda items for the meetings.

On the establishment of two additional Regional Centres for the Northern and Central sub-regions of the organization's setup, I reliably learnt from the Secretary-General at the time of my visit that a meeting of the member states in the Northern sub-region had been fixed for sometimes in October 1989 to discuss modalities for the establishment of the centre. I advised him, however, to observe the protocol of getting Egypt, the host

its views on possible re-location of the Remote Sensing Centre for the Northern sub-region. So also in the case of the Kinshasa Centre. As a matter of fact, the two centres have been operating nationally and it does not seem that any of the neighbouring countries want to participate in them on a regional basis. I would like to suggest that we also wait for the outcome of the meeting in Tunis on the establishment of a centre for the Northern sub-region. The relevant resolutions on the requirements which should be met before creating new centres are quite clear on the conditions to be fulfilled. At this stage, I would suggest that we reserve our breath until we know the outcome of the meeting(s).

There are three other issues on which I would like to pass some comments. These are: amendments to the constitution of the AOCRS; creation of specialized scientific commissions and the programme budget for 1990-1991.

The decision of the Conference on the agenda item on 'amendments to the constitution' was nothing more than aligning or harmonizing the contents of certain articles in Arabic, English and Portuguese with the so-called authentic French version. In this regard, it constituted a committee made up of the Secretary-General of the AOCRS, OAU, ECA and representatives from Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Senegal and Tunisia to undertake this assignment. I would have thought that representatives of the Regional Centres ought to have been involved and that the scope of the assignment should be expanded to include proposals on improvements to the offending articles of the constitution which are likely to affect adversely the smooth operations of the centres. Such a comprehensive exercise would have to await the comments of the governments which established the two centres (RCSSMRS and RECTAS). In the case of CRTO, I have my doubts if implementation of the AOCRS resolution would not have been completed before other views are known.

The creation of specialized scientific commissions is in line with practices of other international organizations and societies which have been established to extend the scientific horizon of their callings/disciplines. This is where the Regional Centres will prove useful in the furtherance of the work of the organization. They would function better than envisaged by AOCRS if they are not under any fetters.

Even though the approved programme budget for 1990-1991 looks somehow ambitious considering the current staff strength and the realizable regular budget from the contributions from the member states, all programmed activities are relevant to cartography and remote sensing. A regular budget for US\$370,000 and US\$296,000 from extra-budgetary sources were approved by the Conference. In respect of the latter, most of the negotiations are still in the pipeline. The regular budget had been distributed among the 33 member states

of the defunct AAC and ARSC on the assumption (erroneous, I would want to believe) that the dissolution of the two institutions had nothing to do with automatic membership of the new organization. I did remind the Secretary-General of the loose interpretation of the familiar phrase - "no taxation without representation". He seemed to agree with me that notices of assessment will be sent to the signatory members of the organization.

### Conclusion

It is my considered view that the viability of the new organization and the effectiveness with which it performs the coordinating role of the cartographic and remote sensing activities of its member states, functioning more or less as a philanthropic organization, will depend to a great extent on the co-operation it enjoys from the ECA and the OAU. It should not try to cut the umbilical cord as it derives its root from the merger of two former ECA-sponsored institutions - African Association of Cartography and the African Remote Sensing Council.

RESOLUTION N°1

PROGRESSIVE INTEGRATION OF SPECIALIZED CENTERS  
AND THEIR MANAGEMENT ORGANS INTO THE STRUCTURES OF  
THE AFRICAN ORGANIZATION FOR CARTOGRAPHY AND REMOTE SENSING

CONFERENCE OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES OF THE AOCRS MEETING IN ITS FIRST EXTRAORDINARY  
SESSION IN ALGIERS FROM 22 TO 24 MAY 1989,

- Considering the necessity to develop the African continent through the regional exploitation of its natural resources in accordance with the Lagos Plan of Action and the Priority Programme for the Economic Recovery of Africa;
- Conscious of the prime importance of cartography and remote sensing in the apprehension, inventory and exploitation of its resources;
- Convinced of the soundness and relevance of resolution 555 (XX) of the Conference of Ministers of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa having contributed to the merger of the AAC and the ARSC and the creation of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing (Addis-Ababa, February 1988);
- Anxious about the imperative necessity of the smooth and gradual coordination of the orientation and programs of existing African specialized centers by the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing (AOCRS);
- Having noted a diversity in the documents governing <sup>XX</sup>directory organs of its specialized centers, differences constituting an obstacle to the effective harmonization needed in the field of cartography and remote sensing by the creation of the AOCRS; *might*

1. Requests that member States of these centers use all possible means for the harmonization of their legal documents with those of the AOCRS in a spirit of rationalization;
2. Requests the assistance of OAU and ECA for the implementation of the new institutions;
3. Entrusts the Secretary General of the AOCRS to bring to the knowledge of all the States as well as Chairmen of management Committees and Administrative Councils, the present resolution for its quick implementation by these authorities and to inform the next ordinary session of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing.