

WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION

15th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS YAOUNDE, CAMEROON, 14-16 DECEMBER 2016

REPORT OF THE MEETING

1. Opening of the Meeting

After eight years of hibernation, the 15th meeting of the Standing Committee on African Affairs was held from 14 to 16 December 2016 at the Falaise Hotels in Yaoundé, Cameroon, under the Patronage of His Excellency Paul BIYA, President of the Republic of Cameroon and the sponsorship of Mr. BETI ASSOMO Joseph, Minister delegated to the Presidency in charge of Defence.

The opening ceremony took place on 14 December 2016 in the conference room “LA BENOUE” of the aforementioned hotel, chaired by Mr. KOUMPA Issa, State Secretary of Defence in charge of Veterans and Victims of War, in the presence of several Cameroonian Military Authorities, such as the Division General Major Chief of State of the Territorial Army, as well as other superior Officers.

Three speeches were made during the cited ceremony. Those of Col (Retd) Alfred FULLER, Chairman of the SCAA, Mr. Dan-Viggo BERGTUN, President of the WVF, and the State Secretary of Defence in charge of Veterans and Victims of War.

The Chairman of the Standing Committee on African Affairs (SCAA), in his role of Director General of the host Association ONACAM, wished a warm welcome to the participants, and expressed his satisfaction to see the 15th Meeting of the SCAA come together after eight years of inactivity of this continental organisation. He also addressed his thanks to all those involved in the success of this project; notably, His Excellency Paul BIYA, President of the Republic, who authorised the holding of these meetings on Cameroonian territory. Before closing his speech, he invited the participants to observe one minute’s silence in memory of Mr. Mohammed Benjelloun, former Secretary General of the World Veterans Federation (WVF), who passed away a few days prior.

The President of the WVF thanked the host Association for having assembled all participants in the capital city of Cameroon (Yaoundé), as well as for the warm welcome which was given to them. Despite having expressed his disappointment at the low turnout of African countries to this meeting, he was nevertheless content that this meeting was taking place, marking a starting point for the Commission’s activities. To this effect, he congratulated and encouraged the Chairman of the SCAA (Director General of ONACAM), for the efforts that he deployed to help improve this continental organisation, as well as the image of the African Veteran and the respect that he deserves throughout the world, all the while contributing to the application of the objectives of the WVF, which are: the promotion of peace, health and welfare to those who have devoted their lives in a world where respect of human rights and liberties should be a central preoccupation of all leaders. His thanks were finally addressed to the Cameroonian Government for the constant support which it brought to ONACAM in the organisation of the 15th Meeting of the SCAA.

The State Secretary of Defence in charge of Veterans and Victims of War, the last orator, exclaimed his honour of presiding over this opening ceremony of the 15th Meeting of the SCAA; a huge first on Cameroonian soil because, as he said “**this Meeting ends a long wait for the African Veteran**”. Speaking on behalf of the government, he also thanked the participants for the honour of their presence at the meeting in Yaoundé, while wishing them fruitful exchanges in all serenity and in a spirit of conviviality which should preside over this kind of meeting, where the search for solutions to problems in the combatant world, the rights of each human being to peace, dignity, liberty and the fight against all sorts of violations as well as the fight against crimes against humanity, should be at the centre of discussions for Governments in Africa, and worldwide, by bringing forward constructive solutions for the peace, development and welfare of humanity.

After wishing success to the workings, he declared the 15th SCAA open.

Following the colourful ceremony, a photo was taken with the State Secretary, surrounded by the members of the WVF Executive Board and the participants after the cocktails offered by the event.

Following this ceremony, the Chairman of the SCAA opened the 15th Meeting of the SCAA at 1400 in the conference room “La Bénoué”, in the presence of the President of the WVF, the Secretary General and the members of the Executive Board.

Having done this, he presented the 18 points of the agenda.

2 Delegation call

Nine (9) countries confirmed their participation; however, only six (6) responded to the first plenary session, those being: Cameroon, Guinea Conakry, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Sudan. South Africa joined the other participants on 15 December 2016.

The Republic of Congo and Mozambique did not confirm their presence and their absence was unjustified.

3 Presentation and Adoption of Agenda

After study and clarifications of certain points of the agenda, notable **point 5 on the election of the Vice Chairman, of the Rapporteur and of Scrutineers of the meeting, the agenda was unanimously adopted.**

Due to the progressive installation of the Working Group on Women of the SCAA, it was not possible to present this Group as initially planned. This is why it was decided to delay **point 8 of the agenda, relating to the Presentation by the appointed Chair of the Working Group on Women of the SCAA, to point 16 entitled “Future Activities”.**

4 Presentation and Adoption of the Rules of the SCAA

The Rules of the SCAA, being those compiled in “the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committees” (a document previously distributed to the Member Associations), was adopted unanimously.

.../...

5 Election of Vice Chairman, Rapporteurs and Scrutineers

This point was the subject of several discussions; Morocco brought up the absence of the current Vice Chairman, Mr. Tembile Lucky MAGINGXA from South Africa, from which the unanimous decision was made to elect a Vice President of the Session to replace the Chairman of the SCAA in case the latter is absent for whatever reason, while waiting for the arrival of the incumbent Vice Chairman. Thus, Doctor Naim SABIK from Morocco was unanimously elected as Vice Chairman. He was not able to assume this role due to the arrival of Mr. Lucky MAGINGXA, incumbent SCAA Vice Chairman, in the meeting room.

The post of French language Rapporteur was given to Miss NDJENG Paule Marlyse from Cameroon.

The posts of the Scrutineers went to Mrs. Rose Christine BAAKO SUNGBA from South Sudan and to Colonel Mara FADAMA from Guinea Conakry.

6 Adoption of the Report of the 14th Meeting of the SCAA

Due to the long period of inactivity of the SCAA, a reading of the report of the 14th Meeting of the SCAA was requested so as to freshen the memory of the participants of the 15th SCAA, although it had been previously distributed to all delegates. After the reading, pronounced by the Secretary General, the floor was given to anyone who wanted to make an amendment. The comments which came after related to the precision of the facts which came back after 8 years. This entailed a report that was rich in recommendations which would be useful to come back to in order to ensure that they are known for the benefit of the good functioning of the WVF.

To do this, the Moroccan delegation came back to the **Working Group on Recognition, Commemoration and Reconciliation**, which deserved to be reviewed because of its importance to the African Committee.

7 Report of the Chairman of the SCAA

Col (Retd) Alfred Fuller, Chairman of the SCAA, presented his dense and substantiated report. The Chairman of the Working Group on East Africa brought forward several observations, outlining their visit to Addis Abeba, which did not go well because they were not able to meet the heads of Peace and Security of the African Union. Morocco also outlined their activities which were not mentioned in the Chairman's report. Following this point, the Chairman observed that he had not received Morocco's report. Following these observations, the report of the Chairman of the SCAA was adopted unanimously after being amended.

8 Presentation of the Chair of the Working Group on Women of the SCAA

The Chairman of the SCAA handed the stage to Maj. Geirhild SNILDAL-ENGEN, Chair of the Standing Committee on Women after the Secretary General of the WVF wished her a warm welcome to the Organisation (as she was newly elected to the Committee).

Taking to the stage, Maj. Geirhild SNILDAL-ENGEN brought up the assets of women which,

.../...

at this moment, have a place of honour in the decision making centres of the world. She then read a message from the United Nations regarding the nomination of Mrs Amina MOHAMMED (Nigeria) to the position of Vice Secretary General of the United Nations, a prestigious role, which highlights the potential of women.

Following this, the Chairman of the SCAA announced the progressive steps he took to start a Working Group on Women in the SCAA. Regarding this subject, he noted that several requests have been sent to the Member Associations for them to propose a Chair before integrating this Group; however, up until the 15th SCAA, only Cameroon had responded. In the absence of other propositions, the Chairman of the SCAA proposed to the Executive Board the nomination of Mrs. Madeleine LOCKO from Cameroon to head the Group. Nevertheless, he added, other propositions are still being waited on. South Africa and South Sudan each immediately proposed a candidate to take part in the Group. Taking account of the presence of other women at the meeting, he asked that they organise a meeting in the margins of the 15th Meeting of the SCAA, in order to present and present their conclusions at the next plenary session.

Following this, they presented their new Board. At its head, they chose Mrs. Madeleine LOCKO as Coordinator of the Working Group on Women of the SCAA.

During their presentation, the new Coordinator focussed on the work which is done in Cameroon, noting that each region presents specificities that deserve being taken into account. Due to the relatively short time for constructive exchanges, they swapped contact details so that each one could send their contributions to the Coordinator to put in place a communication platform for the presentation and inclusion of their worries.

9 Presentation of the Regional Working Groups

Africa is divided into four (4) Regional Working Groups; those being;

- The Working Group on Central Africa; this position is being provisionally held by the Chairman of the SCAA who intends to pass this post on to another country in Central Africa;
- The Working Group on Eastern Africa, led by His Excellence Alosio OJETUK from South Sudan;
- The Working Group on Northern Africa was placed under the responsibility of Dr. EL KTIRI from Morocco; however Dr. EL KTIRI believed that due to the high ranking and workload that he has in his country, he prefers this position to be held by another country in the region. Due to the absence of other countries from Northern Africa and the Maghreb, this problem remains and will certainly be solved during the next meetings;
- The Working Group on Southern Africa is led by Mr. Tembile Lucky MAGINGXA from South Africa, alongside his functions as Vice Chairman of the SCAA.

Each Group invested daily in its own way to promote the values advocated by the WVF and in encouraging non-member countries in their respective region to join the Organisation, either by going to the countries or by organising awareness meetings with Defense Attachés of the Embassies represented in their respective countries.

.../...

10 Country Reports

The report from South Africa presented by Mr. Tshidiso Harold PAKIA was unanimously adopted;

The report from Cameroon, presented by Col. (Retd) Alfred FULLER, Chairman of the SCAA, was unanimously adopted;

The report from Morocco, presented by Dr. El Mostafa EL KTIRI, was unanimously adopted;

The report from Senegal, presented by Mr. NGOHRE Sarr, was unanimously adopted;

The report from South Sudan, presented by His Excellence Aloisio Emor OJETUK, was unanimously adopted;

The report from Nigeria, presented by Mr. Micah GAYYA, was unanimously adopted;

11 Peace and Security Division

The Report of the Peace and Security Division was place by Colonel Zdzislaw JAMKA instead of General Stanislaw WOZNIAK from Poland.

He recalled the Peace and Security Summit, organised in Stockholm, as well as the more and more active role the WVF plays in this domain, notably in the promotion of international peace and security. To this effect, the WVF is looking for ways and means of becoming a cornerstone of, and promoter for, International Peace and Security. This is the leitmotiv of this division which is working to be a linchpin in the research and promotion of ways and means to contribute to the promotion of Human Rights, conforming to the Constitution of the United Nations and its various instruments in conflict zones.

He then declared that several activities had been held over the past year, including a meeting on 20 May 2016, where the WVF President, Mr. Dan-Viggo Bergtun, met with Mr. Hervé LADSOUS, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Keeping Operations at the UN Headquarters in New York (USA) to discuss the possibilities of using the skills and experience of Veterans in humanitarian and goodwill missions for the United Nations. Mr. Ladsous declared that a good cooperation between the World Veterans federation and the United Nations would benefit both Organisations. For this to happen, these talks must be pursued.

Fruitful meetings have followed, with others coming up. Next year, the Division will include the United Nations Peace Keepers Day celebration in its working plan, which is celebrated on 29 May every year.

The aforementioned report was adopted unanimously and the WVF President suggested setting up a continental arm for this Division in the SCAA.

Health and Welfare Division

Headed by Mr. Jos WEERTS from Netherlands, the WVF's Health and Welfare Division presented its report to the 15th SCAA. This report was read by the Secretary General.

.../...

According to the report, the Division is working on finding means in the field of psychiatric health in order to improve the lives of veterans after several years of activity under the influence of various constraints which would deserve to be recognised so as to give the best futures for veterans, after combat.

Financial support for the WVF

Mrs. Inge NEDERGAARD, WVF Treasurer General, informed the participants of her report on the financial questions of the WVF. She let the participants know that the WVF's financial situation was not encouraging due to the non-payment of dues from a lot of Member Associations. The contrary would have allowed the WVF to improve its revenue. Facing this situation, it is possible that Member Countries of the WVF are confronted with difficulties in paying their dues. In order to regulate these difficulties, some actions have led to the looking at potential fundraising plans, those being the search for partners with a view to sponsoring the WVF and putting in place a new dues in arrears scale which will be presented at the next General Assembly for its adoption.

12 Adoption of Recommendations

Twelve (12) draft recommendations were presented, these being three (3) from Cameroon, eight (8) from Morocco and one (1) from the Republic of Congo. All of them were submitted for examination to the Executive Board who validated them. The drafts from Cameroon and Morocco that treated the same subject, "Peace and Security in Africa", were merged into one single draft recommendation. Thus, the number of drafts was taken to eleven (11). They were all presented to the 15th Meeting of the SCAA. Only ten (10) were adopted, those being the drafts from Cameroon and Morocco. The draft from Congo was pulled, simply because the delegation was not present at the 15th Meeting of the SCAA.

13 Follow ups given to the Recommendations Adopted by the 14th Meeting of the SCAA

As for the above mentioned point, the Secretariat of the WVF sent correspondence to Member Associations in order to take into account the follow ups given to the adopted recommendations, only Cameroon and Morocco had reacted and submitted recommendations to the necessary hierarchy which would be taken into account locally, the same is the case for South Sudan. To this effect, the 15th SCAA instructed the follow up to these recommendations.

14 Follow ups given to the Recommendations Adopted by the 28th General Assembly

South Sudan let it be known that they were sent to their government. This was in fact the case for most African countries at the General Assembly.

15 Vice Chairman of the SCAA

The problem related to the position of the Vice Chairman of the SCAA was evoked. To do this, the Chairman of the SCAA mentioned that this was a question which had been solved during the 28th General Assembly during the meeting of the SCAA held in the margins of the

.../...

General Assembly, it did not seem to be the opportune moment to go back on the decision if the SCAA wanted to appear credible and give the decisions made the force and weight they deserve. Furthermore, if this decision was adopted during the Meeting, it was to respect a certain linguistic equilibrium. The Presidency of the SCAA being assured by a Francophone country, it was logical that the position of Vice Chairman of the SCAA should go to an Anglophone country. This ended with the choice of Mr. Lucky TEMBILE MAGINGXA to occupy the position of Vice Chairman of the SCAA. After these explanations, the Chairman of the SCAA asked participants for their approval of this choice, which was given unanimously.

Mr. Lucky took to the stage to thank his colleagues and assure them that all of his support and expertise would go towards the progress of the SCAA.

His election was welcomed by the present delegates as well as the members of the WVF Executive Board.

16 Future Activities

The Working Group on Women of the SCAA met as mentioned before. It was put into place and presented its action plan under the supervision of Maj. Geirhild SNIDAL ENGEN and in the presence of all women at the Meeting. Mrs. LOCKO Madeleine, elected Coordinator of the Group, took to the stage with her colleagues, and presented a communication platform for the Working Group on Women, bringing up the specific problems that they have in their respective regions. Other more concrete propositions could follow during the following meetings.

The Women presentation was unanimously approved.

18 Closing of the Meeting

The work was completed with a closing gala offered for the occasion, chaired by the Secretary of State for Defense, in charge of Veterans and War Victims under the guidance of the Music of the Cameroonian Veterans and an orchestra which brought to life the participants' dancing talents.

During the evening, the President of the WVF awarded the WVF Silver Medallions respectively to His Excellency Mr. KOUMPA Issa, Secretary of State for Defense, Veterans Affairs and War Victims, and to Colonel (Retd) Alfred FULLER, President of the SCAA and Director General of ONACAM. Later, the SCAA Chairman presented the WVF Bronze Medallion to Battalion Chief Daniel MBASSI and the WVF Placards to the Commissions' Chair people of the Local Organizing Committee. In addition, the Executive Board of the WVF awarded the Gold Medal of the WVF to his Excellency BETI ASSOMO Joseph, Minister Delegate for the Presidency in charge of Defense, and a Bronze one to Captain Joseph TCHOUATAT, Head of the Military Secretariat of the Cameroonian Ministry of Defense. The Colonel (Retd) Alfred FULLER will hand them over to them in a timely manner.

In the margins of the plenary sessions that ran alongside the 15th CPAA, the participants took part in a memorial ceremony presided over by Mr. KOUMPA Issa, Secretary of State for Defense, in charge of Veterans Affairs and War Victims at the "Cinquantenaire Monument,

.../...

where the latter laid a wreath of flowers in memory of the valiant soldiers of the world who had fallen in the field of honor for the noble cause of peace.

Alongside the work, delegates at the 15th CPAA had the opportunity to visit the "National Museum" and in the evening attended the screening of the first War feature film directed by Cameroonian filmmaker Thierry NTAMACK. Through this visit and projection, they were able to appreciate the rich artistic and cultural heritage of Cameroon.