

February 1961

## STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS FOUNDATION

### PROGRAM AND PLANS

The AIRLIFT AFRICA program of the African American Students Foundation is a cooperative effort between private American individuals and African leaders from the non-self-governing territories of East and Central Africa. Opportunities for higher education in this area have been far more limited than in West Africa; yet, as recent events in the Congo have demonstrated, it is imperative that, as these countries move toward independence, they develop not only an intellectual elite, but massive administrative and professional groups. These countries are Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Zanzibar. Directors of the Foundation include: the Honorable Tom Mboya of Kenya; Mr. Kenneth Kaunda, President of the United National Independence Party of Northern Rhodesia; and Mr. Joshua Nkomo, President of the National Democratic Party of Southern Rhodesia.

456 students from East and Central Africa have been Airlifted to schools and colleges in the United States and Canada by this Foundation since 1956. The purpose of the Airlift and therefore, of the Foundation is to provide a vehicle through which larger numbers of qualified students can achieve further educational opportunities in this country. Its purpose is to supplement the existing programs of student exchange until such time as these programs are able to meet the needs of this area as well as other non-independent countries on a larger basis.

The functions of this Foundation are:

1. To initiate and to stimulate broader educational processes in Africa by arranging for scholarship opportunities and transportation for students.
2. To supply the transportation from East Africa to college for those students who have applied for and been accepted to institutions in this country with scholarship assistance.
3. To provide a period of orientation prior to the students attending school which has as its goals the following: a) to discuss with the student the American educational system; b) to discuss American social and cultural patterns; and c) to introduce the students to as many families as possible with whom they might have a continuing contact while in this country.

4. To service students with counseling, emergency financial assistance, an employment clinic, and an information service regarding the availability of further scholarship opportunities especially for transfer students. It also maintains contact with the administration of the schools concerned and provides a continuing hospitality program for students vacation periods.

5. To initiate programs which will meet the needs of the students and stimulate American interest in them, including cooperating with several national social work oriented organizations to find families in the communities where the students are located who will "adopt" the student during his stay in this country. The purpose of this is to provide the link between the classroom and the nation so that the student might be introduced to American home life and find warm and understanding friends.

We are eager to stimulate scholarship opportunities in such controversial areas as Angola, Mozambique and for refugees from South and Southwest Africa, where because of restrictions, sufficient scholarship opportunities are not available.

We believe that educational opportunities in these areas should be extended to trade school programs, technical, agricultural, and all other forms of training which will permit Africans to acquire necessary skills and rise to responsible positions.

#### Future Plans

The African American Students Foundation wishes to establish clearly the fact that it has no desire to perpetuate itself. Just as soon as more powerful public and private interests in this country accelerate their programs, the Foundation feels it will have fulfilled its role. However, we have been asked by the East African leaders to continue our Airlift Program because they recognize that this is the sole program at the moment which is designed to meet their mass needs.

Even with the present acceleration of programs, they still do not meet the educational requirements of areas in transition. Many students are going to Eastern countries simply because existing programs are not sufficient to include them. The U. S. Consulate in Nairobi has stated that more than 50 students have accepted scholarships in the last six months at Eastern universities.

On January 9, 1961, the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa (PAFMECA) issued the following resolution on

education.

"This conference of PAFMECA has considered the whole question of the need for more educational facilities and fully appreciated the work done already through various voluntary, self-help programmes including the recent student airlifts.

"The conference emphasizes the need for all leaders to continue and increase the initiative for such self-help programmes and to advise the people to learn to work with more energy to supplement any scholarship help which may be made available by various overseas contacts and aim at being able eventually to help themselves.

"The conference agreed that subsequent student airlifts and other such programmes with other countries are necessary especially in the wake of preparation for independence and agreed that all PAFMECA leaders cooperate fully in these matters.

"The conference recognizes fully the policy of non-alignment to which Africa is committed and in this context PAFMECA is not committed to seeking educational facilities from only one country or groups of countries."

They cannot be quoted directly, but we have been advised that the United States Information Office in Nairobi strongly favors another Airlift. Until such time as there are sufficient educational institutions in these areas to meet the needs of developing nations further Airlifts will be necessary. The ability of the Foundation to commit itself to further Airlifts is limited because our support is derived from private contributions. We feel that any future efforts must be a reflection of combined public and private support.

We shall continue to service the needs of African students in this country for which we have responsibility. We shall continue to assist African leadership in expanding opportunities for their students to come to the United States. We shall encourage the support of Federal and private monies to finance these programs. We shall also encourage a greater contribution by the student and his government towards these programs recognizing, however, the obvious limitations of such support.

We shall call upon President Kennedy to implement his proposal of September 21, 1960 which called for a conference of African leaders and American organizations concerned with African affairs.

This conference should discuss, in part, the educational needs of each nation and establish realistic goals to meet those needs which will both satisfy responsible African leadership as well as meet basic standards established by African-American educators. If the result of this conference is satisfactory to African leadership and leads to combined governmental and private efforts for accelerated student exchange programs, we will be prepared to apply all of our present resources through existing programs and terminate our operation.

We heartily endorse the establishment of an Inter-Agency Council for African Educational Affairs as long as the goals of that Council reflect the needs and aspirations of the combined thinking of African leaders and American educators.

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