

African Union holds annual meeting

THE African Union of Building Societies and Housing Finance Institutions held its annual meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 16th September, 1988. The outgoing and incoming executive committees met before and after the annual meeting. The annual meeting coincided with the ending of a two week executive management training course, organised by the Zimbabwean building societies in conjunction with the African Union. The meetings were presided over by the African Union president, Victor Likaku, general manager of the New Building Society in Malawi.

Among the guests at the meetings were Mark Boleat, secretary-general of the International Union, Joseph Kingarui, the registrar general of Kenya, Maina Getecha of the Central Bank in Kenya, and Joel Kolker of the Regional Housing and Urban Development Office in Nairobi of the United States Agency for International Development.

Chairman's annual report

In his report to the annual general meeting, Victor Likaku commented on the involvement of the African Union with other international bodies. He had attended the 1987 annual meeting of IUBSSA in Hong Kong, and had taken his place at that meeting as deputy chairman of the Housing Finance Development Committee. Sharon Trail, secretary-general of the Union, had represented the African Union on the Working Group to consider the structure and role of IUBSSA, and had attended a meeting of the Group in Torquay, England.

The secretary-general had maintained contact with the National

Association of Realtors, the United States League of Savings Institutions, the Institute of Financial Education, and the National Council of Savings Institutions in the United States.

In January Mr Likaku had travelled to Lesotho, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Thailand to review housing developments in those countries.

The African Union had been invited to provide a member of the Steering Committee and to be an associate sponsor of the Third International Shelter Conference to be held in Washington in 1990. Walter Mukuria, managing director of the Housing Finance Company of Kenya, had been appointed to represent the Union on this Committee.

Union activities

The Executive Committee of the African Union met three times in the year ending 16th September, 1988; in Gabarone, Botswana; Maseru, Lesotho; and Harare immediately prior to the annual meeting. The offices of the African Union had now been established in Lilongwe, Malawi. The Regional Housing and Urban Development Office (RHUDO) of the United States Agency for International Development in Nairobi continued to provide administrative support, and to meet the salary of the secretary-general, Sharon Trail.

The Union had worked closely with Fred Hansen, who had headed the RHUDO office in Nairobi. Mr Hansen had now left Nairobi to return to Washington as deputy to Peter Kimm. He had been replaced by Mike Lippe, until recently director of the RHUDO in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Steve Giddings had taken over as director in Abidjan.

Membership

The Union now has 30 members from 14 countries. It is hoped to expand membership in the future.

Executive committee

At the annual general meeting Victor Likaku stepped down after three years as chairman of the African Union. Warm tribute was paid to his work as chairman; during his period of office the membership had expanded greatly and embraced more countries.

John Wood, general manager of the Central African Building Society in Harare, Zimbabwe, was elected to succeed Victor Likaku as chairman. Dan Gichuhi, managing director of Home Savings and Mortgages Ltd of Kenya, remains first vice-chairman. Adel Abdel Baki, chairman of the Crédit Foncier Egyptien, of Cairo, was elected second vice-chairman.

The remaining six members of the executive committee elected at the annual meeting were:

- Phopi Nteta, Botswana Building Society
- Walter Mukuria, Housing Finance Company of Kenya
- Keith Evans, Founders Building society, Zimbabwe
- Victor Likaku, New Building Society, Malawi
- Alex Mundia, Zambia National Building Society
- Alex Lichaba, Lesotho Building Finance Corporation

Training

A major function of the African Union is to promote training for building society staff. In a number of smaller African countries in particular there is only one major housing finance

institution, and even in the larger countries there is an urgent need to expand and develop staff training. The African Union had arranged its first training course in Nairobi, in July 1987. This had been conducted by an American trainer. The second training course was held in September 1988 in Harare, Zimbabwe. Three objectives were laid down for the course:

- (a) To increase knowledge and understanding of building societies, so that delegates have a sound base for decision making, and the use of initiative and sensitivity in the ever changing working environment.
- (b) To improve leadership and management skills in the areas of planning and control, finance, personnel, administration and marketing.

- (c) To turn theories into practicalities which can be used effectively in the working environment.

The course was attended by 19 people from seven countries and was led by Ros Boaler, training officer of the Beverley Building Society. She was assisted by staff from the Zimbabwean societies, in particular Willi Ruzvidzo and Keri Innes, and also by Sharon Trail, secretary-general of the African Union.

The course covered:

- (a) The history, role and legal aspects of building societies in Africa.
- (b) Strategic planning.
- (c) Leadership and management.
- (d) Building society legislation and lending.

- (e) Financial management.
- (f) Personnel and training.
- (g) Data processing.
- (h) Marketing.
- (i) Operations security.
- (j) Building society auditing.
- (k) The deregulation of building societies.

The course was generally considered to be very successful, and it has been agreed that future training courses will be held in Zimbabwe.

International links

The African Union has firmly established itself in the international field. Victor Likaku, as chairman of the Union, was a regional vice-president of IUBSSA, and, also, is deputy chairman of the Housing Finance Development Committee. John Wood now becomes a regional vice-president of IUBSSA. ■



Members of the African Union Executive Committee meeting in Harare prior to the annual meeting. From left to right: Phopi Nteta (Botswana); John Wood (incoming chairman, Zimbabwe); Alex Lichaba (Lesotho); Dan Gichuhi (Kenya); Victor Likaku (outgoing chairman, Malawi); Sharon Trail (secretary-general); Mark Boleat (IUBSSA secretary-general); Walter Mukuria (Kenya); Adel Abdel Baki (Egypt); and Keith Evans (Zimbabwe).