

EMBARGO : 19 JANUARY, 5.00 p.m.

ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT HON ROY JENKINS
PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
AT THE OPENING OF THE
INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR
Khartoum, Thursday 19 January 1978

"It is the political purpose of the Community which enables it to make its contribution, usually by economic means to underpinning world political and economic stability. In this process the dialogue between the well-endowed industrialised nations of the northern hemisphere and the nations of the third world is of growing importance and priority. It is a dialogue that can take place at two levels. From time to time it needs the impulse of major and dramatic acts of statesmanship."

But these have always to be followed through determinedly, often doggedly, by detailed negotiation and compromise.

1977 was the year of the North/South dialogue, the Conference on International Economic Co-operation. I should like to emphasise that one should not belittle the results of this Conference. The conclusions reached in the dialogue are in many ways genuinely positive.

I am not saying that no problems remain. There are indeed many, and we will experience further difficult moments as work progresses in the United Nations. The suspension of the Common Fund negotiations exemplifies this. But the

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political act of the Conference must be effectively followed through in our mutual interest, if our words are not to sound hollow, and their practical impact to be negligible. We therefore hope that the negotiating conference will be able to resume on a useful basis. We believe that a solution should and will be found. We, for our part, are prepared to make the necessary effort, both in terms of imagination and of adjustment of our interest. But progress must be made soon. The momentum must not be lost. 1978 must be a year of decisions, not of waiting.

It was in these terms that two weeks ago I had discussions with the President of the United States in Brussels.

The way the European Commission envisages the future dialogue between North and South is a good example of the need to readjust the balance of the relationship of those involved. One often hears reference to the young nations of the Third World, but we should not allow such misleading historical phrases to let us forget that most of the countries we talk about in that sense harbour very ancient peoples whose history and traditions go far back in time. This is true of Africa : it is true of Sudan. We must not allow the combination of a colonial history on the one hand, and the economic benefits of technological and scientific changes on the other, to falsify our relations by the appearance of inequality. The reality is one of greater reciprocity. In establishing more realistic contemporary economic relations regional co-operation is a major element. This co-operation is already rooted in history, albeit recent history.

recent history. One of the best examples of such co-operation is the Lomé Convention. You are well aware in Sudan of this original and innovative contractual arrangement which binds together very nearly all the Black African countries with the European Community in a wide spectrum of development objectives. It is an arrangement which links Europe not only with Africa, but beyond, to the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Perhaps the most hopeful aspect of the Lomé Convention is that it is but one step in a series of changing and evolving agreements. It is not a set theology. These have not only mirrored the increasing awareness of the European Community of the needs of the less developed, but have pointed the way for others. Indeed this awareness has so evolved that we are no longer thinking unilaterally in terms of the needs of developing countries. The Lomé Convention has taught us to think in terms of the mutuality of needs and interest.

We are now more firmly convinced than ever that developmental policies can no longer be applied in a vacuum. We live in a world where a just international division of labour and economic resources and effort is necessary. It is now beginning to be recognised that there is a real interdependence between the economies of the industrialised West and the less developed countries, producers in the main of primary products.

The stability of world trade is delicately poised. The problems of inflation and unemployment in many of the industrialised countries, not least in Europe, limit their room for manoeuvre in creating any sustained stimulus towards economic growth. In these circumstances the impulse that can be given by developing countries can, in my view, play a significant part in tilting the balance in the right direction.

This is the backdrop to the prospects for the renegotiation of the Lomé Convention. Preparations are beginning on both sides for the resumption of negotiations in the autumn of this year, with the possibility of an opening Ministerial session in July. In this context the joint approach on the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, growing out of unity between them, is of critical importance. This the Community fully recognises and accepts.

At the same time the Community itself approaches the negotiations despite the economic difficulties in Europe with a determination to consolidate and develop the achievements of the first Lomé Convention.

The virtues of the Lome Convention are, on the one hand, its contractual character, mindful of the personality and the independence of our partners, and on the other hand, its pragmatic approach, linking assistance to specific projects. The second Convention will be drawn up on the foundation established by the first, adding the experience gained in the last years. But we should be prepared not only to consolidate, but also to develop the model we have successfully established. New areas for co-operation could be explored in association with the Convention, although they might have to be covered by specific arrangements. Let me mention briefly six areas for cooperation which I believe are of high priority.

I believe also that in the developing countries more medium-sized industries should be developed which would enable more processing and transformation on the spot of natural resources. Why not, for instance, have more refrigeration and canning industries on the shores of Africa, where the fish catches are so abundant?

A greater effort to develop agriculture and to increase food resources should be made. The farming projects in the Sudan which aim at doubling the cereal output in less than ten years and other similar targets for commodities are a

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good example of what can be done. You can play a major role in achieving a greater food self-sufficiency in Africa.

Much can be done also in the field of communications and transport. How many problems would be cancelled out by improving road and rail links, developing port facilities and airlines? Congestion in ports, and the struggle for outlets for the many land-locked countries in Africa are challenges to be overcome. I believe that more intense regional co-operation, which could take the form of an overall five-year programme for the improvement of communications in Africa, should be seriously developed.

Energy is also an area of great importance, as well as being a topical concern all over the world. In the years to come I am fully convinced that we should give greater attention to the potential of solar energy. The European Development Fund has already had some success in this sector. We have been using water pumps operated by solar energy for over a year now in Mali.

There is another important and related problem. As in so many areas of Africa, Sudan is faced with the problems of drought and desert encroachment. This persistent attack on the lives and welfare of whole nations is of the very gravest international concern. Certainly we must champion the increased exploitation of agricultural and energy resources but we must also be mindful of the way we proceed. I believe

that all the countries ^{faced with} to ~~admit~~ this problem have a right to expect our support, ~~in the increasing struggle~~. Already we have made a contribution. We undertake to continue

the 1977 Conference on desertification has been a useful contribution under standing in tackling this problem.

In defining priorities for development policies I should like to mention, finally, education and vocational training. The needs of this continent are pressing; good will and academic skill exist, sometimes more fully than is recognised, but what is urgently needed is the necessary physical and administrative support. I am glad that the European Development Fund was able to help to build the new JUBA university, which President Nimeri inaugurated in October last.

I have mentioned a series of priority areas for co-operation. These we shall follow through in the renegotiation of the new convention. This will be open not only to the present ACP states, but also to all newly-independent countries in Africa who would wish to join and are accepted by the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. Newly-independent Angola and Mozambique are welcome: as indeed are Namibia and Zimbabwe once independent.

The prospect of these negotiations is challenging and exciting. The role of Sudan as Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, and therefore a key interlocutor of the Community, is crucial. I know that the statesmanship

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and the imagination which characterise the action of the Government of Sudan will be put to full use in this enterprise.

My belief therefore is that we have a chance this year - in following up the North/South dialogue, and particularly in the renegotiation of the Lome Convention - to advance the constructive relationship between our peoples. In our mutual interest we search not just for improvements in living standards but for a better balance in the world economy. If we can take a further step in this direction we shall, at the same time, underpin better prospects for peace and for the enlargement of individual freedom. If, at the beginning of 1978, we can here, from Khartoum, see the objectives with clarity, and follow them with determination, we will create an atmosphere of confidence and trust that will serve us well when the time for decisions draws near.