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**INFORMATION A LA PRESSE
INFORMAZIONE ALLA STAMPA
MEDEDELING AAN DE PERS**

Brussels, November 4, 1976

**SUMMARY OF MR. CHEYSSON'S STATEMENT AT THE OPENING SESSION
OF THE ARAB BANK FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA (ABEDIA)
ON NOVEMBER 1, 1976, IN KHARTOUM, SUDAN**

After complimenting the Chairman and Members of the Board and paying tribute to the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, Mr. Cheysson proceeds.

Europe is building up. After centuries of war and disputes, the Europeans are on the way to unity; they do not intend to establish a new State but join their efforts in a Community, tomorrow a union. Common policies have thus been decided, bearing on agriculture, steel and coal development, customs union, etc... Where there are such policies, the Executive Commission is the responsible political body under the control of the European Parliament; I am one of its 13 Members and speak in that capacity.

In the making of the Community, the Europeans have decided to devote part of their common efforts to help in the development of the third world.

They do so at world level through a substantial programme of food aid (some 400 million US Dollars per annum) and the most advanced system of customs preferences (opening of the Common Market to the duty-free entry of some 5,000 to 6,000 million US Dollars worth of manufactured products every year).

Europe also takes part in international meetings bearing on development and commodity problems. In the North-South dialogue in Paris, the Nine European States speak with one voice, that of the Community.

The most original aspect of the European policies towards the 77 relates however to two groups of countries which are particularly close to the Europeans in many ways: Arabs and Africans.

Such a policy, is unique in the world. It has specific characters which can be found in no other pattern of relations between industrialized and developing countries.

Development is complex. It cannot be faced with one means of action only. All possible means should be made available simultaneously and jointly.

In the Lomé-Convention, as in the Maghreb and Mashrek agreements, one finds such a conjunction of financial, technical, commercial, industrial facilities.

- Financing means some 1,000 million US Dollars per annum, for the Lomé countries (10 % from the European Investment Bank, a Community Bank structured along the

same lines as the World Bank) and some 160-180 million US Dollars per annum for the Arab countries (50 % from the Bank). Terms are particularly soft : 80 % in grants for the Lomé Countries. Conditions are flexible in order to facilitate use at the lowest levels, in rural areas, by cooperative societies, etc...

- Trade access is a significant aspect : 99,4 % of the exports of the Lomé Countries enjoy a duty-free access to the largest market in the world. Trade promotion is organized systematically to take advantage of the free access.
- Every country has a right to its own pattern of development. Europe wishes to impose no model, to sell no ideology. Proper development should be invented at home, rooted in the very culture of the people. Priorities, use of the tools made available under the European policies are decided upon by the beneficiary countries themselves.
- Such facilities should be permanent, guaranteed, not negotiable, in order to assist in planning. Europe therefore incorporates them in international treaties which are binding after ratification.
- Finally, the Community addresses groups of countries, thus showing the neutral character of its solidarity. How could it be otherwise when they concern countries with different regimes, economic systems, alliances...? Furthermore, part of our financing is earmarked for regional projects as we believe in cooperation between neighbours.

Europe believes in peace, detente and cooperation. If and when there is a local conflict somewhere in the third world, we maintain that foreign powers should abstain from any intervention. The race for armament is shameful when every effort should be devoted to development. Europe, in its diversity, wishes to be a partner in peace, not in war.

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Our principles are such that we are naturally desirous to work in cooperation with the donors who have their roots in the soils which we would like to see more prosperous

Therefore, our great interest is in working with the countries which are now doing so much for the development of the poor. Therefore, our anxiety is to work more closely with Arab funds and bilateral aid, in particular with this remarkable Abedia, the pioneering agency for medium and long term strategy (as stated by Mr. Ayari in Dakar at the Arab-African Conference of April 1976).

Already now, a substantial achievement has been made in this cooperation as decided by the Arab Bank and by your partners in Africa - who have the final say in any case.

On 7 projects concerning 6 African countries, final decisions have been made involving Abedia for 70 million US Dollars, the European Community for 150 million (of which 45 million from the European Investment Bank). Some 16 other projects concerning 10 more countries are under consideration.

In the same 7 projects already decided, it is noteworthy that another 200 million US Dollars are provided by direct Arab bilateral and multilateral aid.

These are not the only cases where we work in conjunction with the latter aid. Other projects are to be financed jointly and/or implemented in a coordinated manner in Somalia, Mauretania and possibly the Sudan.

Your remarkable effort for a systematic Arab-African cooperation thus appears in the same prospective as our own Euro-Arab Dialogue and Community Maghreb and Mashrek agreements and as our African-European Lomé solidarity system.

The triangle based on Arabs, Africans, Europeans has a fundamental role to play in tomorrow's new order, to demonstrate solidarity and interdependence, to promote jointly our national and regional struggle for independence and respect of our cultural identities.

It should also be a powerful means to promote peace, to achieve a real detente in the world, a detente which would not only be the result of a difficult compromise between the two very big ones, but which should be inspired by the common determination of the people in this triangle.

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