

RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE AFRICAN STATES
AND MADAGASCAR
AND THE EEC

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COMMUNITY CHAIRMAN OF THE "OVERSEAS
DEVELOPMENT" GROUP TO THE SYMPOSIUM ON
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Your Royal Highness, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A twofold phenomenon of accelerated development and cohesion lends special topicality to my subject – "The European Economic Community and Africa".

For it is the cohesion of the six countries which in 1957 founded the European Economic Community which gives to this Common Market a position in the world that has been described in some quarters as exceptional. Proof of this can be found in the many requests for association or membership, and especially the British application, and in the recent American proposal which has resulted in the Trade Expansion Act.

This Common Market, then, a newcomer that has been both criticized and praised, has evidently aroused interest far beyond the confines of our six countries. It was therefore no more than logical that in view of its new or expected relations with the European Economic Community, Africa should move into the forefront. If Mr. Khrushchev's criticism were proper evidence, I would draw attention to the interest Soviet Russia is taking in us, marking the importance of the links existing between the Europe of the Six and Africa.

There is indeed no precedent in the history of the world for so many nations attaining sovereignty within so brief a span of time. Only yesterday it was possible, with some over simplification, to say that responsibility for the fate of Africa rested with a few European capitals. Today, the Africans have almost everywhere taken their fate into their own hands.

As recently as 1950 there were only four independent States in Africa: Egypt, Ethiopia, the Union of South Africa and Liberia. In 1962 only a few spots on the map mark the territories which are not yet independent and not expected to reach independence in the near future.

By awakening individual and collective aspirations, political independence immediately aroused the desire for economic independence and a higher standard of living. This is

a further characteristic of Africa to which I should like to draw your attention. Though Africa, no less than any other continent, is caught up in the rivalry between East and West, this has not yet become acutely manifest, in contrast to what has happened in other parts of the world, where ideological, political and military disputes are rife. The confrontation between East and West is still largely confined to economic matters – and this is no doubt proof of African realism – and Africa will judge East and West by their ability to stimulate and sustain its economic development. The contest is being fought in the field of development aid, and it is in this field that victory must be won.

As the European Economic Community wanted to move with the times, it could not afford to ignore these new needs. In a way it anticipated these needs, when, in 1957, it made association an integral part of the Treaty of Rome. Today, after five years of experience and at a time when the association relationship is due for renewal, association, whilst not excluding any other dynamic relationship between Africa and the Common Market, is proving to be one of the most concrete and coherent forms of world aid to the developing countries.

Association between overseas countries and the EEC is, of course, not limited to Africa. It also includes some countries in Oceania and the Antilles. Nevertheless, 98% of the population of the associated countries live in Africa, i.e. in the former territories of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa, the former Belgian Congo, Madagascar and what used to be Italian Somaliland. There can, therefore, be no doubt that in essence association concerns co-operation between Europe and Africa, or rather between that new form of European organization which we call the Common Market and a group of young African States which have approved association.

It is laid down in Part IV of the Treaty of Rome that the "purpose of this association shall be to promote the economic and social development of the countries and territories and to establish close economic relations between them and the Community as a whole". Though, of course, the second point can be logically put on the same level as the first, we must not forget that in the text of the Treaty it comes second.

4 We can rightly conclude that the main principle of association

is to be found not in the establishment of a commercial preference area between the Europe of the Six and the associated countries, but in a general consideration of the means of developing these countries. Commercial co-operation is one of these, financial and technical aid are two more.

Nevertheless, it is indeed one of the purposes of the Treaty of Rome to promote trade between the EEC and the associated African countries. To this end all commercial discrimination between the Six in the African markets is to be ended by a gradual elimination of duties and quotas, and conversely the European markets are to be opened up to the products of the associated countries. Finally, adequate preferential rates are to be granted under the common external tariff for some sensitive products coming from these countries, such as coffee, cocoa, vegetable oils, bananas and hardwoods.

The associated overseas countries are bound to benefit from these arrangements, because the large number of suppliers and their vast resources will bring to bear on the local price level that salutary effect which only open competition produces. Furthermore, free access to an expanding market of 180 million consumers in the European Economic Community will be very beneficial to their exports. It is true that the results obtained so far do not yet enable us to form a clear judgement on the effects of the measures taken under the Treaty provisions. Since they were taken step by step, the changes so far noted in the volume of trade are not necessarily attributable to the technical measures adopted under the association arrangements. If, however, we look at the most recent statistics, we find that trade between the associated African countries and the Member States of the EEC shows a rising trend. I shall revert to this point later on.

Be that as it may, commercial co-operation between the associated countries and the EEC is gradually taking shape. However, to present this attempt at co-operation as the formation of a "Eurafrican" customs union would be to set on the Treaty a tendentious interpretation which it will not bear. Paragraph 3 of Article 133 reads as follows: "The (overseas) countries and territories may, however, levy customs duties which correspond to the needs of their development and to the requirements of their industrialization, or which, being of a fiscal nature, have the object of contributing to their budgets". This clause

was inserted in the Treaty in order to dispel the anxiety, which has been frequently expressed, that too close an integration between Africa and Europe might stifle the industrialization of the overseas countries and frustrate their desire to obtain the financial means they need for independent development. Incidentally, that development has in no way suffered in certain countries, such as Senegal, the Ivory Coast or Madagascar, where industrialization had already begun before association. On the contrary, in these countries the turnover of industry has risen by 73% from 1958 to 1961. Moreover, the escape clause of Article 133 has not remained a dead letter. One of the associated countries, Senegal, actually invoked it at a time when its break with Mali gave rise to fear serious difficulties for Senegalese industry, whose traditional outlets had been in the neighbouring country.

Mr. Khrushchev's recently renewed charge that any association between industrialized and developing countries must necessarily perpetuate the pattern of trade which characterized the colonial era, namely, the exchange of basic products against manufactured goods, is therefore categorically refuted both by the provisions of the Treaty and by the facts. The ability of the associated countries to become industrialized is not merely maintained but in fact increased. Under the Treaty of Rome these countries are fully independent in customs matters since the only obligation imposed upon them so far as the elimination of duties and quotas is concerned is that they must not discriminate amongst Member States. Because the associated countries put into practice among themselves those measures of customs and quota dismantling which they apply in their relations with the Member States, the conditions for the establishment of a true African economic unit are fulfilled. Finally, when it is remembered that the associated countries which together make up a free trade area do not — apart from the exception to which I have referred — apply a common external tariff vis-à-vis third countries, you will appreciate that it is easy to repudiate the allegation at times made against association that it means the balkanization or division of Africa.

Financial aid is the second pillar upon which association rests. In the eyes of many of the associates this has so far been the most concrete aspect of the matter. Though the developing countries show considerable reserve in their attitude to

the "charity" they receive from the capitalist world, it is undeniable that in the last resort they will judge by the amount of public funds either given them outright or offered on exceptionally favourable terms whether the industrialized countries are sincere in their desire to help them in their development. Under association arrangements in accordance with the Treaty of Rome, that desire has been clearly manifested by the establishment of the European Development Fund, endowed with a total of 581 million dollars, of which more than nine-tenths are earmarked for Africa.

I should like to say a few words about the European Development Fund, whose work is complementary to that of the Member States. Up to now the Fund has made only free grants. Experience has shown that in most cases this is the only possible method, but it has proved too rigid for certain operations. Later on I shall explain the much more flexible arrangements envisaged under the new association agreement. Moreover, funds can only be released for projects submitted by the governments of the recipient countries, because these governments retain full freedom of action in planning their own development. The projects may be of a social nature (such as hospitals, schools, technical research institutes or vocational training establishments), or of an economic nature and linked with practical productive schemes. Approval of the projects is in most cases followed by calls for tender which are open to firms in the six Member States and in the associated countries.

After a cautious start, during which time the machinery was set up and the necessary regulations made, the Development Fund began to move more quickly. By 1 October 1962, it had approved 277 projects involving the expenditure of more than 360 million units of account; 152 of these projects were of a social nature and accounted for 140 million dollars. They were mainly concerned with education, vocational training, public health, water supplies, town planning and so on. The remaining 125 projects amounting to 220 million dollars were economic in character and were largely concerned with transport and communications, farming and stock-breeding and various surveys.

I will not weary you with a lot of figures to show what the European Development Fund has done, but I will just say that by 1 October 1962 the following had been built or

were under construction, thanks to grants from the Fund: 303 hospitals, extension blocks and bush dispensaries, totaling more than 9000 beds, 47 maternity homes, primary and secondary schools to a total of 2742 classes, 20 colleges or teacher training establishments, 165 vocational training institutions, 2720 km. of tarmac roads including works, 3461 km. of dirt roads and tracks and 2955 wells drilled or springs tapped.

To give you an overall picture of the way in which the Treaty provisions have been put into effect, I can say that — taking into account the projects still under scrutiny, and allowing for adequate cash reserves to cover excess spending on any particular project — the funds provided by the Member States for the period from 1958 to 1962 will be probably fully committed by 31 December 1962.

I have spoken first of the liberalization of trade and the supply of financial aid because these are the two aspects of relations between the EEC and the associated African countries on which the Treaty is most explicit. But the Community of its own accord adopted a third form of co-operation — commonly referred to as technical assistance because the EEC authorities and the governments of the associated countries mutually felt the need for it.

The Community soon found it advisable to provide technical assistance for the African countries as a kind of "pre-investment", partly within the scope of the European Development Fund and partly in the context of the Community's general policy: most of this has taken the form of planning and of regional development surveys or general surveys of natural resources. The Commission has also had recourse to research and planning offices for the preparation of certain projects or advance studies for their execution. It has organized co-operation between European research institutes in the study of certain technical problems which may be of great importance in development aid, such as soil consolidation in road building or reforestation and soil conservation experiments.

Incidentally, technical assistance of this kind has sometimes produced very remarkable inter-African co-operation. For instance, a plan to eliminate rinderpest from the Chad basin has been launched. The area concerned is roughly a

circle with a radius of some 500 or 600 km and its centre in Lake Chad. It comprises parts of four African states, three of them French-speaking and associated with the Community (Cameroun, Niger and Chad) and one English-speaking member of the Commonwealth (Nigeria). Similar ventures have already been undertaken or will follow; they will enable the Community to promote schemes going beyond the boundaries of one country and outside the geographical scope of the association, without infringing the financial provisions of the Treaty.

But another essential aspect of technical assistance is the matter of training. Like most other countries, Africa has a small élite of highly trained people at the top and a large, totally unskilled, labour force. The vacuum is in the intermediate grades: there is a shortage of agricultural advisers, without whom no progress is possible in that field, there is a lack of foremen and skilled workers, without whom no factories can be run, there are too few statisticians and administrators, without whom no economic administration can function. The former Prime Minister of Tanganyika, Mr. Julius Nyerere is reported to have said that in Africa it was not a question of "my kingdom for a horse", but "my office for twenty good shorthand-typists".

But though technical assistance has a great inclination to produce highly qualified experts, it does not yet give enough attention to producing shorthand-typists.

In 1959 a programme of scholarships was introduced to train statisticians and is financed out of the ordinary budget of the EEC Commission. At the beginning of the academic year in October 1960 this programme was considerably expanded and now ranges over a number of economic, agricultural and technical subjects. The scholarship-holders from Africa and Madagascar are allocated to universities and colleges in the six Member States. The programme for 1961/62 comprises 358 scholarships.

In addition, trainee arrangements have been made, mainly to help civil servants of the African countries. It is the purpose of these arrangements to familiarize the trainees with European problems and the work of the EEC, without keeping them too long away from the tasks awaiting them in their own countries. These traineeships are served in the

various departments of the Commission and are supplemented by colloquia which have been taking place for the past two years. The essence of these is mutual information and free discussion of European and African problems. All this intellectual co-operation is devised in the first place for young people, students, trade unions and co-operative movement leaders. They frequently include study trips in the Member States.

These then are the tangible ways in which the Common Market has come upon the African scene: an expanding market offering certain advantages to the products of the associated countries, financial aid totalling more than one hundred million dollars per year over a period of five years, and a constantly widening scope for technical co-operation. I beg your indulgence for having dwelt so long on what we have been doing these last five years, but since you had asked me to explain to you the relationship between the EEC and Africa, I felt I could not do better than put the facts before you.

Now we must turn to the question of what was the general feeling in Africa, what were the conditions there when the EEC appeared on the scene, and what were the reactions.

One can well imagine that the way the association agreement would work was fully appreciated by those concerned, and that after some hesitation the governments of the associated countries in Africa gave their approval. But what of the non-associated countries? Their opinions differ widely. Some favour the policy of the Community in this matter, others vehemently condemn it. The majority have deferred judgement until results are known – although certain outside circles have not been slow to foment hostility. On the whole, it is probably true to say that the anxieties to which the Common Market gave rise in the minds of non-associated Africans have by now for the most part been dispelled.

What then were the objections most frequently raised in international and especially in inter-African discussions on association? Or, to put the question in more general terms: what are the doubts and reservations with which certain circles in Africa today look upon this Common Market in Europe? I think they can be placed under three main heads:

in the first place, it is alleged that the EEC is systematically impeding the industrialization of the associated countries; secondly, it is said that it will tend to divide Africa into two blocs; and thirdly, it will cause diversion of trade at the expense of outside countries.

I think I have already disposed of the first two criticisms in telling you about the customs arrangements of the Association Convention: the Treaty of Rome explicitly authorizes Governments of associated States to protect their infant industries; and outside their free-trade relations with the Common Market, these countries retain full freedom of action with regard to tariffs and trade. So they can conclude, particularly among themselves, any arrangements they think may be conducive to the formation of large African economic units. The EEC does not oppose such groupings; on the contrary, it encourages them by itself giving an example.

As for the third criticism, I need only say that the experience of the initial years of applying the Treaty has shown that there has been no diversion of trade to the detriment of non-member countries. In the case of Africa, the EEC's imports from the associated States went up from \$877 million in 1957 to \$940 million in 1961, i.e. 7.5%, but at the same time imports from non-associated countries rose from \$1831 million to \$2126 million, or 15%. So it seems, to use GATT terminology, that in Africa the Common Market has shown itself to be not "trade-diverting" but "trade-creating".

This explains a change of mood now appearing in African circles: not only is discussion on the drawbacks of EEC from the African standpoint far less acrimonious, but the idea is even gaining ground that the European Common Market might be a dynamic force, the catalyst of an expansion in which everyone might share. As for the question whether many African countries other than those associated at present are now ready to accept association or whether they would prefer co-operation in some other form, "that", as Kipling would say, "is another story". I shall come back to this point later.

For the moment I need only say that the obstacles in the way of association have been fading away in the last four years, while the positive considerations in favour of a renewed association do not seem to me to have receded — quite the contrary.

In the early days, as we know, the association with the Common Market of certain African countries for which Belgium, France and Italy had special responsibilities appeared to be a corollary, not to say a *sine qua non*, of the Treaty of Rome. There we have a factual situation we must not lose sight of even if it is slowly changing. The ties still binding many associated countries to some of the member countries remain very real: you can deplore them or welcome them, as you will, but there is no denying their existence.

Most of the motives, therefore, that led these countries to associate themselves with the Community still hold good, whether they be historical, geographical, commercial or cultural. We may even say that the political motives in the wider sense have assumed greater importance, since it is probable that if the EEC member countries had decided not to maintain their special relations with Africa a vacuum would have been created that other powers would have tried to fill with perhaps less experience and less disinterest.

However, it must be admitted that these motives no longer have the same relative value in 1962 as in 1956 and 1957, for what counts most of all today are the topical considerations justifying the association of Africa with Europe. They may perhaps seem less realistic than the earlier reasons because they are less obviously based on self-interest; but I think that, in a world bewildered by the quickening pace of events, the future prospects weigh more than memories of the past.

The first reason is one of international ethics: it is a fact, which may be explained in very different ways but which cannot be disputed, that nowadays the industrialized countries are under a moral obligation to grant, with or without ulterior motives, more and more assistance to the developing countries. All countries have been impelled to offer assistance, on either a multilateral or a bilateral basis, and it seems that one can make one's presence felt on the international scene much more by launching a worthwhile programme of development aid than by opening an embassy.

Bilateral and multilateral aid have been growing ever more important over the last fifteen years: they each have their advantages and disadvantages, which have been much

discussed. This is why the idea has been steadily gaining acceptance in recent years that, between the programmes of individual States and those of world organizations, a very useful role could be played by intermediate groupings. How many times have I heard people urging that Europe should take part in aid to underdeveloped countries! The principle has always been virtually admitted, but to put it into practice two conditions had first to be satisfied: that a real Europe should be able to do so, and that the underdeveloped countries should wish it. What is really new in our time is that these two conditions have now been fulfilled in association with the Common Market.

What I believe to be the second crucial reason behind EEC policy towards the African associated countries is that the EEC has the practical means of pursuing it: commercial means because a common commercial policy is gradually taking shape; financial means because a Development Fund has been set up; technical means because the Community has specialized administrative machinery at its disposal; and finally because it has a system — that of association. For in my opinion association is neither a mere extension of a customs area nor an agreement on economic or political dependence; it is above all a method of approaching the problem of underdevelopment that consists in establishing for a certain period a framework of relations solid enough to enable the various difficulties confronting the development of a given country to be dealt with systematically and comprehensively.

The third reason, and not the least, for the EEC's presence in Africa is that a certain number of African countries want it and that they want it in the form in which the Common Market is capable of providing it. Here again, I think it is pointless to discuss the deeper motivation of this attitude: it is the business of nobody but those directly concerned. What is certain is that in messages sent direct to the European Economic Community and at all the conferences we have recently had together at parliamentary and governmental level, the African countries at present associated with the Community have formally and categorically expressed their desire that association be continued.

The European Economic Community is therefore conscious of its duty to assist developing countries; it believes that

through the system of association it can make this aid particularly effective; and it knows that certain African countries have formally expressed their wish to benefit from it. These are the true facts that now determine the Common Market's attitude to Africa; and in such a situation how could it stand aside?

Let us now turn to the prospects opening up for co-operation between Europe and Africa. These may be viewed from three different angles: the renewal of the Association Convention, negotiations with the United Kingdom, and the special and general problems arising in the context of the common commercial policy.

Negotiations are in progress for the renewal of the Association Convention. The delicate matters involved have been tackled with all earnestness, and the ministerial meetings in December 1961 and April, July and October 1962 have already produced concrete results, the principal of which I shall briefly mention.

As for trading arrangements, the essence of the system I described to you some minutes ago will be retained, but its application will be speeded up, made more flexible and adapted to the needs of international trade. On 1 January 1963 customs duties on imports of certain tropical products from the associated States are to be abolished and replaced by the common external tariff, but this tariff will be reduced by a certain percentage and both the Community and the associated States (and not only the latter) will be left free to invoke escape clauses where there is any serious disturbance to their economies.

But the chief original feature of the present draft association convention is that the Community has agreed to embark upon a policy to increase the competitiveness of the associated States, to extend the range of their production and to give them greater opportunities for exploiting their natural resources. The problem of commodity prices in particular is very delicate and very important. France has certainly taken up the problem, but the Community also felt impelled to do so. The Community is prepared to make the associated States grants in aid of production and diversification — probably totalling about \$230 million — the object being to adapt and rationalize existing production, to encourage new crops wherever possible

and, in general, to promote industrialization – particularly in the form of local processing of agricultural products.

The Community is also prepared to make short and medium-term loans from the Development Fund to the stabilization funds in order to help the latter in their operations to ensure a stable income for producers despite price fluctuations in tropical products.

The trading system – and this, I repeat, is something quite new – therefore is closely affected by the financial and technical co-operation I want to tell you about now. The purpose of this co-operation is to develop and diversify the economies of the associated States and improve their standards of living by supporting their own efforts in these directions. The financial assistance now arranged totals about 800 million units of account, made up of 690 million in subsidies and 110 million in loans. I should add that of these 800 million units of account, 730 are intended for independent States and 70 for dependent territories. Assistance from the future Development Fund, apart from diversification and the regulation of prices I mentioned earlier, will be in two forms: economic and social investment and general technical co-operation.

In the investment field, projects to be financed will include the extension of economic and social infrastructure, public-utility projects, productive schemes of normal financial profitability, and finally technical assistance in connection with these investments. This technical assistance is at the same time complementary to investments and a prerequisite for their full effectiveness; we believe it to be indispensable before, during and after investment. It is an answer to a need and has to take various forms such as planning, special and regional development studies, technical and economic studies needed in preparing investment projects, assistance in preparing files and specifications and in getting the work done, etc. General technical co-operation will extend and supplement the technical assistance connected with investments; finance will be provided for general studies on the development capacity of associated States' economies and for vocational and managerial training schemes. In these activities an important part will be played by visiting experts and by scholarships and traineeships.

This general technical co-operation will be financed either from the EDF or from the EEC budget. Investment projects can be financed, depending on their type and on circumstances, either by grants-in-aid, by loans on special terms, by ordinary loans from the European Investment Bank with interest rebate, if necessary, or by a combination of these methods.

Though our chief concern at the moment is the first Association Convention, we must not forget that the future relations of the EEC and Africa will also be affected by the negotiations with the United Kingdom.

However, I should like to remind you that the EEC's interest in the non-associated African States does not date from the opening of these negotiations. In fact, the statistics show that the EEC has almost as much trade with the non-associated countries in Africa as with the associated States. And in particular it seems that although France trades with the associated African countries much more than with the non-associated countries, the converse is true of the other five members of the EEC. In 1960 we find that, in trade between non-associated countries and the EEC less France, imports totalled 65.1% and exports 87.7%. This difference is a basic feature of relations between the EEC and African countries. I was also struck by the fact that in the same year the sterling area (including the Union of South Africa, it is true) accounted for 24.7% of EEC imports from Africa and 17.8% of exports. The Netherlands, in particular, plays a not inconsiderable part in this trade.

These few remarks show how important the negotiations with Great Britain are for the Commonwealth in Africa. Besides, Mr. Heath, the leader of the British delegation, set out the problem at the Paris meeting on 10 October 1961 and mentioned a number of possible solutions: association, agreements like those concluded for Franco-Moroccan trade and for trade between Surinam and Benelux, and commodity agreements.

At any rate there would have to be modifications to the economic and political content of association. As the English-speaking countries are large producers of cocoa, tropical woods, bananas and coffee, the supply situation will be very much changed. It may be that the very existence of these

English-speaking African countries, whether or not they are associated, will call into question the common external tariff because Britain will ask for exceptions. Possibly interim solutions will be sought: the common external tariff might gradually be extended to these countries when the second Association Convention has been working long enough and commodity markets are simultaneously being regulated on a world-wide scale.

Clearly, however, the relations of the EEC with the English-speaking countries of Africa can only be settled with the governments of these countries themselves. Misunderstandings will have to be cleared up and distrust overcome by more contacts and more knowledge of how the association will work out.

It is true that on the one hand special problems may arise from the common agricultural policy. North Africa is more particularly concerned here because of the preferential arrangements granted to France. Some day the EEC will surely have to formulate a Mediterranean policy.

On the other hand there are certain general problems of the world-wide campaign to advance the underdeveloped countries which affect the Africans in the same way as other developing countries. I think it is widely known that the Commission has taken steps in international circles to promote price stabilization and has supported efforts to reach international agreement. An agreement on coffee has recently been signed. Quotas have been granted to the principal producers, particularly the Ivory Coast and Uganda. This agreement, which is to last for five years, will not come into force until twenty importing countries and twenty exporting countries accounting for 80% of world trade have ratified it. I think I may say that if this agreement was reached, it was largely due to the conciliatory spirit of the EEC countries, because agreement was on the verge of failure over the customs duties imposed on coffee from South America. The EEC countries agreed to propose a scheme for reducing their customs tariffs in the next eighteen months.

As I come to the end of this talk on the relations of the EEC with Africa, you will doubtless have noticed that it has

all been rather one-sided; I have had a good deal more to say about the associated African countries than the others. This one-sidedness is explained by the facts.

I know some member countries have important economic relations with non-associated countries in Africa. In passing I have quoted examples in the field of trade: I could find others in the location of investments. The Commission is aware of this situation and is trying to arrive at an overall view of African problems by every means at its disposal, in particular by inviting numerous trainees from non-associated countries and by taking part in the work of international organizations such as ECA and CCTA.

The fact remains, however, that the best way for the EEC to demonstrate its good will towards Africa, as towards other developing countries, is to show what it can do wherever it has responsibilities, that is to say within the Association. We cannot be here, there and everywhere.

This is why the Community welcomes current attempts at inter-African groupings, because it sees in them a strengthening of the associated countries, particularly within the Afro-Malagasy Union, which from its inception in September 1961 affirmed its desire to maintain relations with the EEC and approved the opening of negotiations between Britain and the Common Market because it saw them as the beginning of the end of rivalry between the Six and the Seven in Africa. We are also following very closely the efforts of the Afro-Malagasy Organization for Economic Co-operation, which has recently celebrated its first anniversary, and we hope that the very flexibility of this organization will make it one of the points of contact between African States, whether they are members of the Casablanca group or of the Brazzaville or Monrovia groups, whether they are French-speaking or English-speaking.

Moreover, Article 238 of the Treaty provides that the Community may conclude agreements creating other associations embodying reciprocal rights and obligations, joint action and appropriate procedures; thus the door is left open for those interested in association, and this will be particularly important if Britain joins the Common Market. But though we believe that the door to association must be left open, though we show

by the terms of the new convention that it is flexible and adaptable, though we value it because it is a concrete, effective and welcome manifestation of assistance to the underdeveloped countries, we are nevertheless still ready to envisage other solutions that might supplement it in a wider framework, because underdevelopment is a world-wide problem.

The Community and its member countries must keep their eyes firmly fixed on this aim of solidarity and co-operation, discarding any too rigid or interested concept of aid, so as to help in a constructive way these countries which are all fighting the same battle against hunger, poverty, despair and chaos.