

Joint Press Release

issued on the occasion of the signing in Port Louis, Mauritius on 12 May 1972 of the Association Agreement concerning the accession of Mauritius to the Convention of Association between the European Economic Community and the African and Malagasy States associated with that Community

The Association Agreement concerning the accession of Mauritius to the Convention of Association between the European Economic Community and the African and Malagasy States associated with that Community was signed in Port Louis on 12 May 1972.

The Plenipotentiaries of the Signatories of the Agreement were as follows:

- for Mauritius : Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam,
Prime Minister
- on behalf of the Member States of the European Economic Community :
- for Belgium : Mr Arnold de COEYER,
Belgian Ambassador in Nairobi
- for the Federal Republic
of Germany : Mr Axel HERBST,
Ambassador

- for the French Republic : Mr Yvon BOURGES, State Secretary,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- for the Italian Republic : Mr Mario PEDINI, State
Secretary, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs
- for the Grand Duchy of
Luxembourg : Mr Gaston THORN, Minister of
Foreign Affairs for the Grand
Duchy of Luxembourg
- for the Kingdom of the
Netherlands : Mr Th. E. WESTERTERP, State
Secretary, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs
- on behalf of the European Economic Community :

Mr Gaston THORN: President in office of the Council of the
European Communities

Mr Jean-François DENIAU: Member of the Commission of the
European Communities

The signing ceremony was held in the Mauritian
Legislative Assembly building, in the presence of members
of the Mauritian Government, Representatives of the Governments
of the Member States of the European Communities, Institutions
and Organs of those Communities, Mr CHEIKH-SIDIA, Planning
and Research Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania,
President in office of the Co-ordinating Council of the
Associated African and Malagasy States, members of the diplomatic
corps accredited to Mauritius, and numerous Mauritian public
figures.

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The Agreement signed today establishes an association between Mauritius and the European Economic Community. It entails the accession of Mauritius to the Convention of Association concluded in July 1969 between the European Economic Community and the Associated African and Malagasy States.

Article 60 of the Yaoundé Convention provides for the possibility of a State whose economic structure and production are comparable with those of the eighteen Associated African and Malagasy States to accede to that Convention. The Association Agreement thus confers upon Mauritius the same rights and makes it subject to the same obligations as the eighteen African and Malagasy States signatories to the Convention.

The purpose of the Association Agreement signed today is to foster co-operation between Mauritius and the European Economic Community, in order to benefit the economic and social development of Mauritius by stepping up trade with the Community and by implementing financial support and technical co-operation.

For the purposes of trade development between the Parties to the Agreement, various measures will be taken. Firstly, imports to Mauritius of products originating in the six Member States of the European Economic Community will benefit from the preferential customs duty, in accordance with a timetable which will extend to 31 December 1974 at the latest.

Secondly, products exported by Mauritius will enter the market of the European Economic Community freely, apart from certain exceptions, notably sugar.

The European Economic Community has fully recognized the importance of sugar production and exports for the economy of Mauritius and its future development. However, between now and 1975 the marketing of Mauritian sugar will continue under the provisions of the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement. With regard to the future, the Treaty of Accession of the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway and Ireland to the European Economic Community contains provisions for an offer addressed to certain independent Commonwealth States for association with the enlarged Community after 1975, the expiry date of the Yaoundé Convention. During the future negotiations the Community will have as its firm purpose the safeguarding of the interests of both the Commonwealth countries and the Associated African and Malagasy States whose economies depend to a considerable extent on commodity exports, particularly of sugar.

As a result of its accession to the Yaoundé Convention, Mauritius will be able to benefit from all the provisions designed to promote the industrialization of the Associated States. For this purpose, commercial and financial measures will be taken to promote the development of Mauritius' production and ensure its better penetration into the markets of the European Economic Community.

With effect from the entry into force of the Association Agreement, Mauritius will derive full benefit from the provisions under Title II of the Yaoundé Convention concerning financial and technical cooperation, which lay down measures designed to foster the economic and social development of the Associated States by additional efforts to those made by these States. To this end the European Development Fund will be supplemented as from the entry into force of the Association Agreement, being increased from 900 to 905 million units of account, approximately equivalent to 905 million US dollars (1971 value).

The greater part of the amount paid into the European Development Fund may be used as non-refundable aids, and a lesser amount as loans on easy terms and contributions to the formation of risk capital.

Moreover, Mauritius will benefit from loans granted for its own resources by the European Investment Bank. These loans may be subject to interest rebates, the rates depending on the nature of the investments. In this connection, particular attention will be given to investments designed to develop tourist facilities in the Associated States.

Financial and technical cooperation projects will take particular account of the desirability of carrying out integrated projects, the development difficulties peculiar to each Associated State and, with regard to Mauritius for example, the distance of the country from industrialized centres, and the desirability of promoting regional cooperation between the Associated States..

In the same order of ideas, there are various measures concerning the right of establishment, services, payments and capital movements designed to foster the development of economic relations between Mauritius and the European Economic Community.

One of the implications of the Association Agreement is that by its accession to the Yaoundé Convention, Mauritius will form part of the Institutions of the Association.

These Institutions are:

- the Association Council, which meets once or twice a year at the level of Ministers of the Member States of the Community and of each Associated State and of members of the Commission of the Community, with the attendance of a representative of the European Investment Bank. An Association Committee, meeting at Ambassador level, is responsible for preparing the meetings of the Association Council.

So that it may participate in the Association Council, Mauritius must, in July 1972, officially sign with the 18 African and Malagasy States the Internal Protocol of the Associated States enabling Mauritius to participate in the Co-ordinating Council of the Associated States which, from the time of Mauritius' accession, will be known as the "Associated African, Malagasy and Mauritian States".

The Institutions of the Association also include:

- a Parliamentary Conference, meeting once a year. It is composed, on a basis of parity, of members of the European Parliament and members delegated by the Parliaments of each Associated State. These meetings are prepared by a Joint Committee meeting at least twice a year. Mauritius has already sent observers to the last meeting of the Conference.
- an Arbitration Court, responsible for settling disputes arising from the interpretation or application of the provisions of the Convention of Association.

The entry into force of the Association Agreement signed today is subject to ratification by the Member States of the Community and Mauritius. The Association Agreement will enter into force on the first day of the month following the date on which the instruments of ratification of the Member States and Mauritius, and the act of notification of the conclusion of the Agreement by the Community have been deposited.

However, to avoid the disadvantages of any delay in the entry into force of the Agreement, transitional measures have been adopted to bring forward participation by Mauritian representatives in the meetings of the Association's Institutions, for the Commission and the European Investment Bank to examine such projects and programmes as Mauritius may propose for financing by the Community.

The Association Agreement is due to expire on the same date as the Yaoundé Convention, 31 January 1975. Eighteen months before this date, i.e. as from 1 August 1973, the Parties to the Agreement will examine whatever provisions may be envisaged for a further period.

