

Communauté européenne

Communiqué

BACKGROUND NOTE

THE EC AND THE DEVELOPING WORLD: TOWARDS "LOME 3"

In preparation for the European Community / ACP (African, Carribean, Pacific) Council scheduled in Fiji for 2-4 May, negotiating sessions continue between the EC and its ACP partners on the renewal of the Lomé Convention. Lomé 2, the agreement linking the EC and 64 ACP nations, is due to expire in February 1985 and the two sides have been involved in renegotiation of the terms of the Convention since October 1983.

EC & DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: AN OVERVIEW

Since its earliest days, the Community has operated an independent aid programme for developing countries, designed to complement and parallel the efforts of the Member States in this field. Total EC aid commitments through its various programmes in 1982 were well over 2 billion CAD.

In July 1971, the Community became the first world industrial power to implement the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). As a result, all developing countries export industrial goods to the Community customs free. Duties have been abolished or reduced on more than 300 processed foodstuffs. Quotas are fixed for some products, but the least-developed countries are exempted.

In 1982 a special programme to combat mass hunger was approved by the Council of Ministers. This programme concentrates on increasing the degree of self-sufficiency in food and safeguarding natural resources (eg. reforestation, control of desertification, developing water supplies).

Under its Food Aid programme, the Community sends hundreds of thousands of tonnes of cereals and dairy products to countries which ask for aid in coping with serious food shortages. In 1982, this Community aid was worth more than 765 million CAD at world prices and including transport costs. In the same year the Community gave 95 million CAD in emergency aid to associated and non-associated countries which had suffered natural disasters or other catastrophes.

The European Community takes part in all international negotiations (North/South dialogue) which aim to establish a new balance between rich and poor in the world economic order.

The Lomé Convention, establishing a contractual link between the European Community and 64 ACP countries, is a central element of the Community's overall development policies.

LOME 1 - 1976

The first Lomé Convention signed between the European Community and 46 countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (6 other ACP States joined later) introduced a number of new elements in Community - Third World relations. Lomé 1 replaced two previous Conventions (Yaoundé I, 1963, and Yaoundé II, 1969) between the Community and the 18 countries of the Associated African States and Madagascar (AASM).

The first Lomé Convention recognized the inequalities existing between the signatories (EC, ACP) and between the ACP States themselves. As a consequence, for example, the least-developed ACP States were given special financial aid.

A keystone of the Convention was STABEX (Export receipts stabilization system), a sort of insurance policy against lean years. Stabex, which guarantees the ACP countries minimum earnings from their exports to the EC of various raw materials, was the most original creation of the ACP-EC agreement.

LOME 2 - 1981

The second Lomé Convention came into effect on 1 January 1981 and linked the Community with 64 ACP States. Like its predecessors, Lomé 2: - secured stable cooperation terms for the developing countries; - established a contract which excluded economic or ideological manipulation or discrimination; - set up common institutions such as a joint consultative assembly and a council of ministers advised by a committee of ambassadors; - and extended cooperation to a broad range of issues.

The negotiation of the second Lomé Convention provided an opportunity for the establishment of new instruments of co-operation. One innovation was SYSMIN, the "mining system", a mechanism similar to the Stabex system established by Lomé 1 (see above). Sysmin guarantees a set level of production and exports for a variety of minerals and provides for technical and financial assistance from the Community for the development of new mining and energy resources in the ACP States. (The list of products covered by Stabex was also expanded from 34 to 44, and now covers most of the main agricultural products exported from the ACP to the Community).

REGIONAL COOPERATION also received new impetus under Lomé 2. Joint projects and joint action are seen to be of great importance. Many ACP States realize the extent to which their own development is dependent on the links they forge with their neighbours. The second Lomé Convention doubled the financing provided under Lomé 1 for regional or inter-regional projects.

CO-FINANCING (of large-scale projects, of projects in which the Community's participation could help to attract other providers of funds, of projects that would benefit from a diversification of financing, and of regional projects) became a priority under Lomé 2.

Other new areas of cooperation include WORKERS' RIGHTS and FISHERY AGREEMENTS.

LOME 3: TOWARDS THE FUTURE

In October 1982, the Commission submitted a Memorandum on Community Development Policy recommending a comprehensive review of Community development policy and its achievements. The debate sparked by the Memorandum continues, but it is clear that Lomé 3 negotiations to date reflect certain new orientations of Community development policy.

The emphasis is on self-sufficiency, on development that will be self-supporting through the economies of the ACP countries themselves.

Priority is put on elaboration of a food strategy "to ensure food sufficiency", a critical need in most ACP nations, especially Africa. The Commission urges coordination of efforts in this sector, notably a "local dialogue" between the interested parties, including other aid donors to discuss cooperation.

Another ongoing point of discussion is the inclusion of a clause on human rights in the new Convention.

In its current negotiations for the renewal of the Lomé Convention, the EC is emphasizing the need to establish a "policy dialogue" between the Community and the ACP States to discuss future cooperation objectives and priorities, and to ensure the most efficient use of EC aid.

Other major areas to be negotiated at Fiji include the impact of the enlargement of the Community; the system of generalized preferences and other trade questions; an increase in available financing; revision of Stabex; fisheries; socio-cultural cooperation; and agricultural cooperation.

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