

SPEECH GIVEN BY SIR CHRISTOPHER SOAMES  
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
RESPONSIBLE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIGNATURE OF A COMMERCIAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY  
AND THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN  
BRUSSELS - TUESDAY 1 JUNE 1976

What a pleasure it is, Mr Minister, to be here today to sign this Agreement, which marks such a decisive step in the development of the European Economic Community's relations with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It gives me particular pleasure to be doing so because it was only three months ago that I had the privilege of paying a visit to your country, during which it was possible to initial this Agreement between us, which has been so long in the making.

I say so long in the making because I think it instructive to look back upon the history of this Agreement, for it illustrates the way in which both of us came to realise the benefits of a closer, more defined relationship, of the sort which this Agreement will certainly offer. It was, I think, in 1963, ten years before the enlargement of the Communities, that the idea of a comprehensive trade agreement was first raised at the initiative of Pakistan. But the idea was not pursued. The Community was still very young, and its external policies, the nature of its relations with the outside world, very embryonic. Then at the time of enlargement came the Joint Declaration of Intent, which marked the Communities' commitment to making a special effort to offer an improved relationship with the countries of South and South East Asia. The Generalised Preference Scheme has, I think, made a real impact in that direction, and we are at the moment busy seeing, as we do each year, where we can improve it. We shall continue to try to improve the terms of what we can offer by way of help with export promotion and, one day perhaps, more direct aid. In a wider context, we think that our tropical products offer at the MTN is a constructive contribution to the great distribution of resources debate which is occupying much of our time and our thoughts.

By 1974 then, the benefits of putting our relations in a framework had become clear to both of us, and the document that we are now signing is the fruit of that mutual decision. It is much more than the comprehensive trade agreement that was originally conceived, way back in 1963. It aims much higher than that, and in doing so is, in its very form, a mark of the more confident, bolder way in which the Community now seeks to establish its links with the world. But it is a framework, and a framework is but an outline, a sketch on a drawing board. It is now up to the Community and your Government, seeking in this task the active support of private industry without which our governmental efforts will bear little fruit, to colour it in - to put in the details, to mark out the areas where cooperation will really mean something, so that the people of your country will be able to see, and benefit from, the tangible results of their new relationship with the Community. That will call for imaginative effort and good will on both sides. I am confident that we shall find it.

Sir, Pakistan has close relationships with all the Member States of the Community. This Agreement is the outward and visible sign of a new dimension in our relationship - one between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the European Economic Community as such - and it is an indication to the world of the importance which we both attach to this development for the future.