

CONFERENCE ON  
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC  
CO-OPERATION

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EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

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SPEECH BY

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Chairmen,  
Ministers,  
the Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Delegates,

Just over a year ago, President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing launched the idea that a dialogue between developing countries and industrialized countries was necessary. It is a characteristic of new ideas that a certain time has to elapse before they obtain recognition as the path to follow. At the moment when this dialogue is getting under way -- thanks also to the efforts of all concerned --, I should like to pay special tribute, on behalf of the European Economic Community, to the initiative of the President of the French Republic.

Allow me also to offer the Chairmen our most sincere congratulations on having been elected to preside over the Conference. You, Gentlemen, can count on the full co-operation of the Community in accomplishing the difficult and complex task awaiting you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Three key ideas -- interdependence, shared responsibility and concertation -- should, in the Community's view, form a permanent backcloth to our discussions.

First, interdependence. Recent developments in international economic relations have demonstrated more clearly than ever how much the prosperity of everyone depends on that of each of us. The industrialized countries and the developing countries therefore have a common interest in the re-establishment of an expanding and prosperous world economy. This is a pre-requisite -- although by no means sufficient alone -- for the economic progress of the developing countries. Conversely, the development of the developing countries is necessary for the progress and growth of the industrialized countries.

It is a natural consequence of this common interest that from now on the management of the world economy is the joint responsibility of all. We are ready to share with the developing countries the responsibility for building the future of the world economy together.

Interdependence and shared responsibility necessarily imply dialogue and consultation in the quest for solutions. On the basis of the concepts of the individual parties, it will be necessary to arrive at a common appreciation of the problems and a better understanding of mutual interests so as to achieve solutions that correspond to the general interest. This means that these solutions must incorporate a balanced view of the diversity of the situations and problems of each country, that any costs that they involve must be shared equitably by all those having the requisite resources and, finally, that such solutions must be considered by all as mutually satisfactory. This method is the only one which will ultimately make it possible to build on solid and durable foundations and to achieve relations of co-operation, in accordance with the interests of all involved.

What goals does the Community set itself for the dialogue?

As I have already indicated, overcoming the international crisis is a necessary but by no means sufficient goal. It is not a matter of returning to a previous situation, which everyone now agrees in recognizing as outmoded. The Community confirms today its resolve to contribute to the attainment of real progress through a better balanced and more equitable structure of international economic relations that will strengthen the position of the developing countries. We intend to share the fruits of increased economic growth with a view to improving the relative economic position of those countries. In this respect, we believe that special attention will have to be devoted to the position of the most underprivileged of the developing countries, many of which are faced with genuine problems of survival. A solution to their difficulties cannot wait and is the responsibility of us all.

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Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The problems awaiting us are immense and complex.

We shall be concerned with establishing the groundwork for a move towards a solution of vital world problems. We consider that energy is a key sector for the future of the world economy. It will in particular be important to improve relations between producers and consumers and to facilitate adequate and uninterrupted supplies on stable terms and at prices equitable for both producers and consumers. In the sphere of raw materials, an overall approach will be necessary in order to find a more appropriate response than in the past to such problems as increasing outlets and stabilizing supplies, market imbalances and the instability of export earnings. The problems of development will call for the implementation of a whole series of arrangements geared to the diversity of the conditions obtaining. It will, in conclusion, be necessary to discuss financial questions, including those monetary aspects which arise in the course of the dialogue.

The Community is ready to begin discussions in all the fields covered by the dialogue and to deal with the different topics on an equal footing. This it will do in the spirit of openness that it has always adopted and with the desire to contribute constructively to the work as a whole. I should like to take this opportunity of reminding you that the Community maintains with many countries, and in particular with a large number of those represented here, special relations based on equality and co-operation which often result in the adoption of new and original solutions.

The Community is represented in this dialogue by a single delegation which will speak with a single voice through the Presidency of the Council and the Presidency of the Commission - its usual spokesmen - who may be joined by certain of my colleagues who will thus give us the benefit of their particular experience in certain fields. In this connection, I should like the Chairmen shortly to call upon Mr CALLAGHAN and Mr MART to address the Conference.

For months now, the Community Institutions have been engaged in detailed work on all the subjects which concern us. At the 7th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, we tabled proposals covering a balanced range of subjects which seemed to us to correspond to the major preoccupations of the developing countries. In the present Dialogue we shall base our action on these proposals and we shall draw upon the final Resolution adopted by the General Assembly.

Our approach will be progressive and realistic. Our thinking has developed since the Special Session, and the Community will provide you in a few moments with indications of some of our views as we set out upon this Dialogue.

The political, economic and, indeed, psychological importance of the current ministerial Conference is clear to all. Progress towards a more just and equitable economic order will be one of the major events of this decade. The time has now come - and no further delay is possible - to achieve a real breakthrough in the search for tangible solutions to the problems facing us.

The substantive work, however, will begin with the Commissions only. Today we have to take the decisions needed to enable such work to be undertaken under the most favourable conditions. In this connection, the Community feels that the recommendations submitted by the preparatory meeting are balanced and sensible. It would like these recommendations to be accepted as they stand. We also feel that the general statements made in the course of our discussions - which statements will give us a better understanding of one another's viewpoints - will serve as a valuable inspiration for the proceedings of the Commissions.

Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over and above the economic and technical problems, the issues at stake involve absolutely fundamental values. Increasing social progress fairly shared amongst everyone means more justice and equity within our societies and in the relationships between our peoples. The profound meaning of our labours must ultimately be sought in the contribution which they make to a freer and more harmonious flowering of the human personality and to understanding and peace between our peoples.

All of us who have been invited to take part in this present Conference thus bear a heavy burden of responsibility. We must not disappoint the hopes placed in our dialogue by the entire international community and particularly by the most underprivileged peoples.

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