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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Joint Committee

on the possibilities for closer cooperation with
representatives of economic and social groups in
the ACP and EEC countries

Rapporteur: Mrs MATHE



In accordance with Article 19 of the Rules of Procedure, the Joint Committee of the ACP/EEC Consultative Assembly decided, at its meeting on 28 November - 3 December 1977 in Maseru (LESOTHO) to draw up a report on the possibilities for closer cooperation with representatives of economic and social groups in the ACP and EEC countries.

At the same meeting, Mrs MATHE was appointed rapporteur.

The Joint Committee examined this report at its meeting on 29 May - 3 June 1978 in St. George's (GRENADA) and on 25 September 1978 in Luxembourg, and adopted it unanimously with two abstentions at its latter meeting.

Present: Mr Bersani, Joint Chairman; Mr Kasongo Mukundji (Zaire), Joint Chairman; Mrs Mathé (Botswana), rapporteur; Mr Baas, Benin, Mr Bordu, Mr Broeksz, Burundi, Cameroon, Mrs Cassanmagnago Cerretti, Lord Castle, Central African Empire, Comoros, Mr Cunningham, Mr Delmotte, Mr Deschamps, Mr Dewulf, Djibouti, Mr Dondelinger, Ethiopia, Fiji, Mr Fioret, Mr Flämig, Miss Flesch, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Mr Howell, Ivory Coast, Mr Jakobsen, Jamaica, Mr Jung, Kenya, Mr Lagorce, Lesotho, Mr Lezzi, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mr Meintz, Niger, Nigeria, Mr Osborn, Mr Pucci (deputizing for Mr Martinelli), Mr Rivierez (deputizing for Mr de la Malene), Rwanda, Lord St. Oswald, Mr Sandri, Mr Santer, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Mr Spenale, Sudan, Surinam, Swaziland, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Upper Volta, Mr Vergeer, Mrs Walz, Zambia.

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

The ACP-EEC Consultative Assembly meeting from 25 - 29 September 1978 in Luxembourg,

- having heard the statement by the Chairman of the Joint Committee on 8 June 1977,
- having regard - in this connection - to the positive results of the first meeting of 9 June 1977,
- realizing the need to organize meetings between the members of the Joint Committee and representatives of the economic and social groups of the ACP countries and the EEC,

requests the Joint Committee to organize informal meetings with representatives of the economic and social groups in the ACP and EEC States on an ad hoc basis and whenever necessary.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTBACKGROUND

1. Art. 74(6) of the Lomé Convention provides that the Council of Ministers may make all the arrangements that are appropriate for ensuring the maintenance of effective contacts, consultations and cooperation between the Economic and Social Sectors of the Member States and of the ACP States.

Since the coming into force of the Lomé Convention, Council has not been able to consider in depth the nature and scope of such contacts and consultations that were envisaged under the provisions outlined in that Article.

On 3 June 1976, the Consultative Assembly, in accordance with Art. 80(5) of the Lomé Convention, which provides for the setting up of ad hoc Consultative Committees to study such specific activities as it may determine, adopted a resolution (Para. 13) which called upon the Joint Committee to submit proposals concerning the manner in which representatives of the Economic and Social Sectors of the Member States and the ACP States may be consulted. The ACP-EEC Joint Committee considered this matter at its meeting of 1-4 December 1976 in Lomé (TOGO). The Joint Committee decided to propose that it consult the Economic and Social Sectors on the occasion of the next meeting of the Consultative Assembly. The Joint Committee felt that the meeting should be private and open only to a limited number of participants.

2. On 9 June 1977, a meeting was held in Luxembourg between the representatives of the Community and the ACP States. The Community was represented by 16 members of the Economic and Social Sectors. The ACP States were represented by delegates from the Economic and Social Sectors of 8 ACP States (Burundi, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Mali, Rwanda, Surinam, Togo, Zaire) and other ACP Members of the Joint Committee. Also present at this meeting were two representatives of the Centre for Industrial Development. The results were generally positive but it also became clear that there was still a considerable amount of groundwork to be done in order to translate effectively the conclusions of that meeting into a meaningful practical programme of cooperation and consultations. The Consultative Assembly finally adopted a resolution calling for the Joint Committee to continue to examine possible ways of achieving closer cooperation and consultations with representatives of the Economic and Social Sectors.

To fulfil this mandate, the Joint Committee, at its meeting in Maseru (LESOTHO) 28 November - 3 December 1977, appointed a Rapporteur¹ to submit a report on the subject.

¹ Ambassador MATHE of Botswana

THE BASIS FOR CONSULTATIONS

3. The Lomé Convention is a Treaty entered into by some 63 Sovereign States. It has provisions governing the conduct of the affairs covered by this agreement.

The Treaty deals with specific areas of cooperation between the Community of Nine Member States on one part and ACP independent States on the other part.

Before the Treaty came into force, each party to the Agreement a priori consulted with all relevant Sectors of its nation, with the view to seek a mandate to enter into negotiations which were designed to form the foundation of the desired cooperation between the two parties on the basis of complete equality and in the spirit of international solidarity.

Since the Treaty has come into force, the ACP States have experienced a gap developing between the expectations of the ACP States in the implementation of the Convention and the Community's commitment in fulfilling the basic requirements contained in the provisions of the Convention.

Thus the major portion of the time available to the various institutions set up to coordinate the implementation programme, has been taken up to resolve the difficulties which the ACP States have encountered over the last 2½ years of the Convention. The nature of the problems that the ACP States have encountered has affected and continues to affect products and commodities that are cardinal to the success of the economies of the ACP States.

4. It has become increasingly clear that there has been a certain amount of lack of understanding among the ranks of some of the Community's representatives of certain industries. There is a growing view in the Community that Europe's economic ills have been brought about by the implementation of the Lomé Convention. Increasingly, ACP spokesmen have had to restate time and again the very obvious. It is recognized that the Social and Economic Sectors play an important role in the economies of each country. It is generally agreed that there is a need to consult all sectors which play a significant role in the economies of the ACP States and the EEC countries. What is not clearly agreed is the manner in which this process is to take place. It has to be accepted that the Social and Economic Sectors of the Community have interests which are different and even in conflict with the interests of the representatives of the Social and Economic Sectors of the ACP States in the implementation of the Lomé Convention.

For example, there is a conflict of interest in respect of the question of the transfer of technology. ACP Governments, together with the representatives of their Social and Economic Sectors, are keen to transform some of their raw materials and produce finished products and goods for internal as well as external consumption. In some cases, this hoped for transformation

has clear implications for those European Industries which have hitherto been engaged in similar activity in Europe. The current problem in the textile industry is a case in point, reflecting the symptoms of severe limitations for the hoped for consultations on the industrial policies of the ACP States in certain sectors, in relation to the policies being pursued by the Community.

CONCLUSION

5. It appears that what has hampered progress in the implementation of the Lomé Convention is the apparent lack of adequate and objective information about the real scope of the Lomé Convention in relation to the declared Development Policy of the Community.

It is exactly this lack of adequate and objective information about the real scope of the Lomé Convention that causes a certain lack of understanding among certain representatives of the Economic and Social Sectors of the Member States and the ACP States.

6. While each ACP State and each EEC State has, of course, its own internal machinery for consulting its Social and Economic Sectors, and each has the sovereign right to determine the details for consulting its own Social and Economic Sector on a continuing basis, it is the general view that a meeting of the two parties i.e. Social and Economic Sectors of the ACP and the EEC States and the Joint Committee of the Consultative Assembly, could be useful. It would naturally be of a different nature. Its purpose would not so much be to inform the EEC and the ACP States about the current ideas of their own representatives of the Economic and Social Sectors but rather to help bring about an understanding of each other's difficulties. And this can be achieved far better by direct meetings between the representatives of the different Social and Economic Sectors and the Joint Committee than by separate meetings held either by the ACP Social and Economic Sectors or by the EEC Social and Economic Sectors.

To illustrate the point, an ACP Government may wish to substitute a locally processed product for one which it has hitherto imported from an EEC firm, as part of a new industrial policy it wishes to pursue. The EEC firm will naturally feel it is being squeezed out of a "traditional" market. The pressure could come from both management and the workers and directed to the EEC Government to intervene in an ACP State, to protect the interests of the operator and his employees to the maximum extent possible. To arrive at some understanding of the new policy of the ACP States, it would be useful that the parties likely to be affected should be given full and accurate details to enable them to adjust to the new situation. In other words, it is not helpful

for operators, trade unions, to disregard the hard realities emanating from current development policies seeking to bring about the very essence of the new international economic order.

Part of the success in this reconstruction of economic and trade relations lies in the recognition by those who have hitherto been favoured by history (and whose income level is far above that of those in developing countries) of the need to make some sacrifice.

7. One potential advantage of such meetings might therefore be to identify the problem areas by providing accurate information and making it available to the representatives of workers and the employers both in the ACP and EEC States. One such problem area that could usefully be discussed is the current economic crisis and its effect on development aid policies of the Community and the Third World.

In the absence of economic growth such as is the case today in most parts of the industrialised world, it might seem, therefore, increasingly difficult to maintain development cooperation at its present level. It is thus also in the interest of the ACP countries that there should be a candid exchange of views behind closed doors between the Joint Committee and workers and employers in which the ACP States would underline the enormous differences between the actual problems of the industrialised world and the situation they have to face themselves. Thus a joint action to improve the international division of labour might be undertaken on the basis of mutual understanding of each others' problems.

8. The results of the meeting of 9 June 1977 were generally positive. A meeting of such a kind, that is a meeting not open to the public, which will not adopt any statements or resolutions, where everybody will be free to speak, and where minutes will not be taken, might be a useful platform for such contacts that could help the social partners of the EEC and the ACP States to understand the Lomé Convention better. Such a meeting would take place between, on the one hand, the ACP and EEC members of the Joint Committee and, on the other hand, representatives of the ACP and EEC social sectors.

Each ACP State and each EEC State is, of course, entirely free to decide whether and how it wants to be represented at this informal meeting.

This should not prevent the Joint Committee from giving serious attention to the possibility of organizing such a practical and informal meeting as outlined above. However, it is important that such a meeting should not have an institutional set-up.

9. Such an informal meeting can only be useful when there is a clearly laid down procedure agreed upon between the ACP and the EEC. Such a meeting should be of an ad hoc nature and be based on a mutually agreed agenda. As the meeting would be, as stated, informal, and as no resolution or statements would be adopted, there would be no voting. It is therefore not necessary to have on each side an equal number of representatives of the Social and Economic Sectors. Any statements or resolutions that the Joint Committee would like to adopt after having organized such a meeting of the ACP and EEC social partners would be submitted to the normal rules of procedure. This means that a motion put to the vote is only adopted if it has obtained a majority of votes both from the ACP representatives and the representatives of the European Parliament.