

European Community

News Release

LOME II SIGNED TODAY

Today, in the Togolese capital Lomé, the new convention between the European Community and 57 African, Caribbean and Pacific nations was signed. EC Commissioner for Development, Claude Cheysson, represented the European Commission at the signing of the convention. The following are excerpts of Mr. Cheysson's speech at Lomé:

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"Four and a half years have passed already, and here we are again in Lomé - with the same countries, in some cases the same people, and the same wonderful Togolese welcome - for the signing of a convention.

"Is Lomé II simply a rerun of Lomé I? By no means.

"In February 1975 we decided, all of us, to embark on a major experiment. Some of you had already been associated with the Community on a narrower basis, others had had dealings with us, not all equally satisfactory. And some of you had considerable misgivings as to the scope, the duration and the significance of the whole exercise.

"Four years later the same players have gathered on the field and have decided, upon consideration, that the try should be converted - to borrow an expression from my 'chef de cabinet', a rugby enthusiast. Not one stayed away from the negotiating table. But this time everyone had the benefit of past experience and could judge the various elements of our cooperation from the practical results. In full knowledge of the facts, each side has decided to reaffirm the principles which made and make our Lomé convention a unique instrument, the first ever of its kind, in relations between developing and industrialized countries...

"The experience of the past four years has shown us what was fundamental, while at the same time making us aware of inadequacies and omissions.

"What is important is our working together. The cement that binds our relations is hardening. And this it must continue to do, since although it is natural that we should be divided and in opposition in the course of the negotiations, we must join forces and pool our goodwill when it comes to implementing the convention.

"The experience of working together - solidarity - emerges most strongly when we have to deal together with the problems of the poorest - who are rightly given priority in Lomé - and when we have to provide immediate aid for those suddenly stricken by drought, floods, war or epidemics...



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"I have already said that Lomé I had its shortcomings. While in the rural sector there are grounds for pride at what can be achieved thanks to your determination to give priority to the development of agriculture, I must admit that the ambitious statements on industrialization which we made in 1975 have not been followed up by the desired results. Therefore, this time we shall go to the root of the problem, stepping up enormously the sums available for industrialization by calling for private sector investment in the sectors where you think fit, particularly mining and energy...

"The goal of our joint action is to serve man. Such action exists only for him and through him. Man, no matter where he may be, is entitled to respect for his dignity and his person, he is entitled to life and to hope. This principle was put forcefully into words in July by the African Heads of State in Monrovia and again in August by the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in Lusaka, when they emphasized the importance that the peoples of Africa have always attached to respect for man's dignity and his fundamental rights, and stressed that human rights cannot be reduced to civil and political rights only, but also include economic, social and cultural rights. The undertaking thus solemnly given by the highest authorities of all the ACP countries parallels that given by the Europeans, both as regards their own countries and in their relations with every other country in the world, with no exception. Perhaps this should have been stated in our convention. It is even more important that it should be stated so clearly and formally, by you in your own countries and among yourselves, and by us in Europe and among ourselves, and now here by all of us together...

"The development to which we hope to contribute in the ACP countries must be rooted in the reality of your societies. It must form an inseparable part of cooperation between neighbours... We in Europe are aware, more so than anywhere else, that our future depends in part on our relations with the Third World, we are also aware that it would be hypocrisy or blindness on our part if we claimed to foster your industrial and agricultural development without making room for your exports to our markets. The Lomé convention must be systematically related to your and our concerns and ambitions in other areas.

"Lastly, we are aware that the experience already gained and that we are celebrating today will have no real meaning unless the world order changes. And I must confess my anxiety, for a constantly widening gap is opening up between the style and content of the Lomé policy - imperfect though they may be as yet - and the climate, the progress (if one may so put it) of negotiations at world level. We hoped, through our shared experience, to try out new methods together, to provide stimuli - in a word, to act as a leaven in the search for a new and a fairer economic order. If a new order does not come into being, there is a serious danger that the leaven itself will perish. Let us therefore prove together the worth and effectiveness of the solidarity that binds the signatories of Lomé II and is the outward sign of their interdependence. Let us work together in helping to build an international order - which is so vital an endeavour. Let us forge the links of the armour that is to clothe our solidarity."