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ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

Meeting of the Intergovernment Group
of Experts on Trade

Addis Ababa, 12-14 March 1987

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

Conference of African Ministers of
Trade-Ninth Session

Addis Ababa, 19-21 March 1987

REPORT OF THE FIRST REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON AFRICAN
STATE TRADING ORGANIZATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. The First Regional Symposium on African State Trading Organizations (STOs) was jointly organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the International Association of State Trading Organizations of Developing Countries (ASTRO) and the Ethiopian Import/Export Corporation (ETIMEX). The Symposium was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 4 to 6 March 1987 and was serviced by experts from ITC, ASTRO, UNCTAD and ECA.

A. Attendance and Organization of work

2. The Symposium was formally opened by Comrade Ketsela Mulat, Vice Minister of Foreign Trade of Socialist Ethiopia. Opening statements were also made by the Executive Director of ASTRO and the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA.

3. The Symposium was attended by representatives of STOs of the following countries: Chad, Comores, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sudan, Zaire and Zimbabwe.

4. The following organizations were represented by observers: Organization of African Unity (OAU), Association of African Trade Promotion Organizations (AATPO), International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/GATT/ITC), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

5. The following officers were elected for the bureau by acclamation:

Chairman	- Comrade Tesfaye Asfaw, General Manager of ETIMEX, Ethiopia
Vice-Chairman	- Mr. Ralison Alphonse, Director General of SINPA, Madagascar
Rapporteur	- Mr. S.K. Hwindingwi, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Zimbabwe

B. Adoption of the Agenda

6. The following agenda was adopted:

1. Opening ceremony.
2. Election of officers.
3. International co-operation between State Trading Organizations: Genesis, Objectives and Programmes of the International Association of State Trading Organizations (ASTRO).
4. State Trading in Africa: Genesis, Development, problems and prospects.

5. Trade promotion policies and mechanisms:

- (a) Import and export operations: their planning and management by State Trading Organizations of Developing Countries;
- (b) New approaches to Trade Promotion: Countertrade, the international situation and African experiences.

6. African State Trading Organizations and International Co-operation at the intra-regional and interregional levels.

7. Any other business.

8. Adoption of report and closure of meeting.

C. Account of proceedings

Opening statements

7. Speaking on behalf of Professor Adebayo Adedeji, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Deputy Executive Secretary, Mr. Tchouta-Moussa, welcomed the participants to Africa Hall. He said that the Symposium, was taking place in a moment which was crucial in the history of Africa. It was a moment where the recent international economic trends were still unfavourable for Africa. Exogenous factors in general and international trade in particular have not helped improve the economic situation in Africa: the raw materials exported by African countries to traditional partners of developed market economies have never been as volatile and less remunerative as now. The role of raw materials in international trade was likely to decrease with the use of advance technologies geared to the decrease of the use of raw materials and their substitution by synthetics.

8. Africa, which is not playing a significant role in trade of manufactured products, will be excluded from the international markets by the revolution of micro-electronics - now changing the face of modern technology. At the same time, the debt burden and the resource leakages due to transnational corporations, are among the major factors, forcing Africa to remain in the vicious circle of under-development in spite of the various policy changes and programmes proposed by international financial institutions as a remedy for developing countries' problems.

9. Africa's future rests in the ability to change the present international division of labour as recommended in the Lagos Plan of Action and reconfirmed by the United Nations Priority Programme for Africa's Economic Recovery. For this purpose a regional distribution of labour should be promoted. This new policy would be an instrument to enhance economic development in general and the expansion of intra-African trade in particular. To reverse the present negative trend of intra-African trade, it was necessary to create new types of distribution net works which would cater for intra-regional trade and trade with other developing countries. Under the present circumstances the new types of trade channels can only be promoted by State intervention and the STOs are the main instruments to this end. The role of STOs had been recognized by the Conference of Mexico on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries (ECDC) and in the 1979 Arusha Declaration.

10. Mr. Tchouta-Moussa concluded by reiterating ECA's willingness to closely work with other organizations such as UNCTAD, ITC and ASTRO in order to provide necessary assistance to African STOs for the improvement of their management and to enhance their role in the development and expansion of intra-African trade and Africa's trade with other developing regions.

11. The Executive Director of ASTRO, Dr. Ziga Vodusek, expressed his gratitude to the people and Government of Socialist Ethiopia for the warm hospitality accorded to them since arriving in Addis Ababa. He also expressed his high appreciation to the organizers of the Symposium. He recalled that the creation of ASTRO was the result of the expression of the need by developing countries to expand trade and other forms of economic co-operation among them. He stressed that the role of STOs as instruments of national economic development and of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries manifested itself at high level meetings of developing countries. This need becomes even more acute in the present conditions of the world economic crisis, whose burdens fall heavily on the shoulders of most developing countries and in particular in African countries on one side, and of the known limitations and constraints in the global trade situation with regard to the needs and possibilities of trade expansion of developing countries on the other.

12. It came as a logical development that representatives of STOs of developing countries at the first International Symposium of STOs in Ljubljana in 1982, exploring avenues of increasing trade among them, decided to establish an organization of their own to promote trade co-operation among them and South-South trade to enhance the management capabilities of STOs and introduction of modern technique in their operations. These efforts of STOs, aided and supported by four international organizations: UNDP, UNCTAD, ITC and ICPE brought about the establishment of ASTRO at the First Assembly of member STOs in October 1984. The Assembly adopted a forward looking programme of work of ASTRO which was designed to assist STOs to identify new possibilities for trade and trade complementarities among developing countries, to enhance direct contacts among STOs for that purpose and to promote their potential capabilities in enhancing trade.

13. He emphasized that the programme outlined also an action plan to widen the membership base of ASTRO, the establishment of regional bureaux of ASTRO, and the holding of regional meetings of STOs to foster co-operation among STOs of the region and in general as well as to promote ASTRO's objectives among the STOs of the regions to foster initiatives and new ideas based on the needs of STOs in the region with a view to contributing to the orientation and work of ASTRO as a whole. This Symposium of African STOs is invited to consider and develop on these functions of ASTRO. It is for this purpose, he said, that ASTRO will be presenting at the Symposium information on its organizational development, its programme and results achieved so far. He considered the participation of STOs in ASTRO as the most important element in the further development of ASTRO and its work, for the benefit of developing countries and their STOs. ASTRO also needs the active interest of the Governments of their invitation to STOs to join ASTRO. Furthermore, the continuation of support to ASTRO by the sponsoring international agencies: UNDP, UNCTAD, ITC and ICPE, is of essential importance to the development of ASTRO at this stage of its maturing.

14. Dr. Vodusek concluded his statement by indicating that today, the number of STOs members of this organization has reached 37 from 27 countries. According to a recent UNCTAD/ITC listing out of 450 STOs available in developing countries 200 of them existed in Africa. There exist possibilities of increasing the number of African STOs members of ASTRO. He therefore invited African STOs that had not yet done so to join ASTRO and take part in its activities, in the formulation of its programme orientation and its implementation. He also cordially invited the African Heads of STOs attending the Symposium to attend the Second Assembly of ASTRO which will be held in Tunis from 12 to 13 June this year.

15. Comrade Ketsela Mulat, Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade of Socialist Ethiopia, in formally opening the Symposium, welcomed all participants to Ethiopia. He recalled that although ETIMEX was one of the most distinguished STOs and founding members of ASTRO this was the first event which ASTRO was conducting in Ethiopia. He warmly welcomed ASTRO to Ethiopia and hoped that it would continue with the contacts that had been established. He stated that the Government of Socialist Ethiopia and in particular his Ministry considered the Symposium as one more step in the fulfillment of the necessary groundwork for the advancement of economic co-operation among developing countries.

16. In dealing with international aspects, Comrade Ketsela Mulat highlighted that after exerting their efforts for the establishment of a more just and equitable New International Economic Order which did not materialize, developing countries have now opted to strengthen economic co-operation among themselves as a means of enhancing their economic development. In fact, he said that this concept of economic co-operation among developing countries (ECDC) had now grown to such an extent as to have a department at UNCTAD and to hold a special place in the group of 77 and the non-aligned movement. In all the areas of the third world there now existed important subregional and regional organizations advancing economic co-operation between the developing countries of those regions. He recalled that the role and potential co-operative arrangements were more emphasized when the Lagos Plan of Action called for a closer economic integration among African nations. The Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA) was one example of such co-operation efforts.

17. Comrade Ketsela stressed the need to implement the programmes of co-operation, especially when it came down to contacts between corresponding economic organizations operating in different countries. This, he stated, required their willingness to readily accept to do business among themselves. This was an important factor particularly in the case of STOs as they were the main instruments for achieving State policy aims in the area of trade.

18. In concluding his statement, Comrade Ketsela, emphasized that the holding of this First Regional Symposium on African STOs, was one more step in the right direction in the history of African economic co-operation, which would form a bridge to connect these organizations with one another, to promote contacts and awareness among them as well as to establish any up-to-date and reliable trading information as well as trade links. To that end, there was no doubt that this unity of purpose among the STOs in the sphere of trade and finance would greatly maximize intra-African trade transactions which in turn would help to attain the ideal of economic independence.

International co-operation between State Trading Organizations: Genesis, objectives and programme of the International Association of State Trading Organizations of Developing Countries (ASTRO) (agenda item 3)

19. The representative of ASTRO stated that during the two years since the formation of the new organization, ASTRO membership increased from 17 to 37 representing 15 and 27 countries respectively. This being encouraging, he said that more are in the process of joining and ASTRO is pleased to take advantage of all possible forums particularly meetings of STOs such as this one - the First Regional Symposium on African State Trading Organizations. Continuing his remarks on membership, he pointed out that Least Developed Countries can opt for local currency facility in membership fee payment, a specific support that has been made available by UNDP.

20. It was also highlighted that ASTRO has been implementing within its statutory framework and approved programme of activities which currently embrace regional meetings, trade information, training, consultancy and research. The regional meetings were planned to examine critically important issues affecting ASTRO in respective regions with a view to mainly exploring possibilities for co-operation amongst STOs of the region concerned. The First Regional Meeting was held in 1985 in Malta for the Mediterranean region and the Asian and Latin American STOs meetings were held in Kuala Lumpur and Caracas respectively, in early 1986.

21. One of ASTRO's functions, as mandated by the First Assembly, is to make available to its members information on business opportunities. Following the recommendations of the Belgrade International Conference on Countertrade, ASTRO has built itself as a focal point on countertrade information for the developing countries. Its comprehensive Reference Service on Countertrade currently covers 138 countries' rules, regulations and procedures with up-dates facility.

22. Periodic buyers and sellers meetings of some of the important products or commodities relevant to STOs is another significant ASTRO activity which will help STOs to be informed on the market conditions and to where possible conclude business deals. ASTRO designs, develops and directs on-the-job-training programmes for skills and techniques development as well as general management programmes for senior STO executives.

State Trading in Africa: Genesis, development, problems and prospects (agenda item 4)

23. Under this item, a representative of ECA secretariat introduced document E/ECA/TRADE/55 «State Trading Organizations: The African Experience». He said that the intervention of the State in the business sector in Africa and the establishment of State Trading Organizations are historical necessities. African STOs are a means of making up for the lack of an indigenous accumulation of capital and ensuring control over the economy. They play an important role in the agricultural sector where they market major export commodities of many African countries. They import in some countries a considerable portion of food items, consumer goods, development and investment goods to their countries. In view of the strategic importance of STOs in the economies of African countries and in protecting national sovereignty, the current crisis affecting STOs and the criterion

of financial profitability should be very carefully and cautiously analysed. STOs should be protected from the current neo-liberal movement of liquidation which might result in handing over the economies of African countries to trans-national corporations. Their objectives should be better redefined and their structures improved to bring about genuine autonomy in management from the supervisory ministries. The efficiency of STOs as mechanisms for managing the trade of African countries depends on whether adequate resources are made available to them.

24. In the discussion that followed, it was agreed that African STOs should strive to create new types of marketing channels and active forms of co-operation liable to develop intra-regional trade and co-operation with the developing countries of Asia and Latin America. Co-operation among African STOs might help to strengthen the bargaining power of African countries and help to develop intra-African trade which is crucial to economic integration and the development of Africa.

Trade promotion policies and mechanisms

- (a) Import and export operations their planning and management by State Trading Organizations of Developing Countries
(agenda item 5(a))

25. Initiating discussions on the subject - the representative of ITC stated that STOs play a dominant role in the foreign trade of many African developing countries. The role of STOs in import trade was particularly important as it constitutes almost 70 per cent of their cumulative turnover. Several of their STOs have exclusive or competitive responsibilities for import of food items, consumer goods, investment and development goods, raw materials needed for local industries etc. By improving their import operations and techniques, STOs can maximize in the use of their scarce foreign exchange resources.

26. While listing some of the internal constraints which STOs face in their import operations, it was suggested that these can be resolved by improving procedures and practices of procurement and materials management building required skills, expertise and knowledge of the STOs executives. The adverse impact of some of the external constraints can similarly be minimised by establishing healthy conventions and working relationships with controlling ministries and suppliers abroad.

27. It was stressed that planning of imports particularly estimation of demand, product and procurement strategies and domestic pricing and distribution systems have to be evolved in advance so that both the cost of procurement and local handling cost of imports can be brought down. The performance evaluation of imports by STOs should be made on the basis of average cost of imports paid by the STOs, with the average market ruling prices for products similar to those secured by STOs with identical quantities and delivery schedules. STOs should develop profit centre concept for import management of key items so that proper control and monitoring of imports could become easier. African STOs should develop meaningful and beneficial commercial co-operation among them in import management to improve their bargaining and negotiating position and also to avail opportunities to promote intra-African trade.

28. In respect of exports, the important role STOs can play in promotion of traditional and non-traditional items was emphasized. It was mentioned that in most African countries export production of non-traditional items is organized in small and medium enterprises. STOs by pursuing a promotional and development approach can assist such units in export marketing by providing a package of services aimed at improving product specifications, design, packaging, quality control and make their products competitive in international markets. With the advent of large multinationals and giant supermarket chains in developed markets, STOs can provide them with one-point shopping and contracting facilities by accepting overall procurement, shipping and marketing functions.

29. In respect of traditional products, cooperation among African STOs will help them in improving their bargaining power vis-à-vis overseas buyers and securing favourable trade terms for their traditional exports.

30. It was also mentioned that with their wide business contacts, STOs can organize imports and exports under countertrade mechanisms. Thus they can build two-way trade with many developed, socialist and developing countries including intra-African trade.

(b) New approaches to Trade Promotion: Countertrade, the international situation and African experiences

31. Under this item representative of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development presented a document - «Countertrade Policies and Practices by selected African and Latin American Countries» (UNCTAD/ST/ECDC/32). He said that countertrade is not a new phenomenon. What is new is its dramatically increasing volume, the growing number of countries that require or conduct and a nascent policy evaluation of countertrade with a cost/benefit analysis, when the mechanism is systematically used as foreign trade policy tool. The representative of UNCTAD/ASTRO outlined various services and technical advisory assistance which are being extended by them to the STOs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

32. Based on the discussions held in the various working sessions, the Symposium concluded that :

(a) The State Trading Organizations (STOs) in general, and African countries in particular have a significant and constructive role to play in the economic and trade development process of their respective countries. This has been fully recognised by Group-77, NAM and other foras of developing countries. The Lagos Plan of Action has specifically emphasized the important role STOs can play in trade promotion and expansion in the context of African economic development;

(b) Most of the STOs in developing countries of Africa were set-up following their independence either to take over their existing foreign-owned trading operations or to provide state owned institutional mechanism to enhance commodity trade, procure from abroad and distribute essential goods and equipment in accordance with their national development plans. Of the 454 STOs listed in the UNCTAD/TTC Handbook, around 200 STOs are in African developing countries. Many more STOs existing in Africa have yet to be listed. African STOs have a dominant role in internal and international import procurement, export management and domestic and internal distribution of trade;

(c) The structure, functions, goals, objectives and relationship of STOs with the supervisory ministries are in an evolutionary stage. The organizational rigidities and conflicting goals have resulted in bureaucratic interventions and have adversely affected STO's performance;

(d) The varying performance of African STOs in past has been due to greater focus on «public» dimension oriented to service than on the «trading» dimension concerning commercial objectives and viability. This needs to be resolved by provision of clear «Terms of Reference» between the supervisory ministries and STOs, redefinition of objectives and goals and the functional linkages and relationships between the two. The STOs should thereafter be given operational autonomy within well defined parameters of responsibility and accountability;

(e) STOs, particularly in Africa, are essential and existing institutional mechanisms for trade promotion and development of indigenous enterprenuerial groups. Improving their functional efficiency and effectiveness will significantly enhance trade development and contribute towards trade cooperation among developing countries in general and African countries in particular;

(f) In the wake of unfavourable international trading environment and the growing concern of the respective countries in Africa to generate surplus financial funds or minimise financial outflows by STOs, the governments are devoting greater attention on financial efficiency and viability of STOs without jeopardising their socio-economic objectives. This calls for innovative approaches for performance improvements, evaluation and monitoring of STOs in Africa;

(g) In order to strengthen and streamline the management and operational capabilities of STOs, greater attention should be paid to planning processes, problems of interlinkages, human resources development, organisational structure, operational systems and services;

(h) STOs also need to undertake an in-depth analysis and diagnosis of their product-market strategies, advisability of entering into special trading arrangements, identifying the commonality of commercial and business interests for inter-STO trade cooperation regionally and interregionally;

(i) For development of inter and intra-African trade, STOs were recognised as appropriate and potential mechanisms. Pooling of their experiences and developing linkages would enhance trade cooperation and development;

(j) In setting up of new STOs, some of the African countries had the benefit of advisory services from international organizations as well as gained from the experiences of other African STOs. Inter STOs' cooperation will further help in sharpening and streamlining trading operation of younger STOs;

(k) ASTRO, an organization, established, financed and managed by STOs and supported under various fora of developing countries is a business oriented institution to support inter STO cooperation and development. The services provided by ASTRO comprises of inter STO trade information, countertrade contact and information, training, buyer-seller meetings, consultancy and advisory services. African STOs recognised the important role of ASTRO and agreed to extend support by joining ASTRO's membership and availing their services in enhancing trade cooperation and development.

The Symposium further recommended the following:

(a) To African governments

33. The Lagos Plan of Action calls for the establishment and strengthening of African State Trading Organizations and their co-ordination at the subregional and regional levels with a view to harmonizing their policies and procedures and promoting joint trade operations.

34. In the light of this recommendations, the Symposium noted that under the present circumstances marked by the lack of indigenous accumulation of capital and entrepreneurial capability, state intervention in the trade sector through STOs was inevitable to ensure the development of self-reliant African economies. In most cases a move towards privatization would act as a retrograde step in the acceleration of economic development. It will also result in transferring of national interests in the hands of foreign firms and transnational corporations. STOs should therefore be strengthened and reactivated to play their rightful role in the streamlining of imports and the promotion of exports and regional co-operation for the development of intra-African Trade.

35. Objectives of STOs needed to be redefined and clarified to further streamline the roles, responsibilities and objectives of STOs to enhance the management and functional efficiency of African STOs. This would help them to adequately meet the emerging international trade challenges. The African governments should endeavour to see that socio-economic and management objectives of STOs are compatible and are geared to efficiency.

36. The relationship between governments' supervisory institutions (i.e. Ministries bureaus, cabinets etc.) and STOs should be reviewed and further streamlined. The realm of government intervention should be defined in a more systematic and structured way through monitoring mechanisms such as inter-alia, performance budgeting system, contract plans etc. which would enhance management autonomy of STOs necessary for efficient business operations. Day-to-day trading operations and management of STOs should be left to managers.
37. African governments should promote the establishment of new trading networks through their STOs for the development of intra-African trade and trade with other developing countries. For this purpose, African STOs should specifically be designated and involved in the implementation of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements (i.e. inter alia counter-trade deals, etc.).
38. African governments should encourage their STOs to look for diversified sources of supply and export markets with a view to strengthening their bargaining position and further reduce costs of imports and enhance the efficiency of export marketing.
39. National Trade Promotion Centres and management consultancy institutions wherever they exist should cater for the information and training needs of STOs with a view to enhancing their management capability and operational efficiency.
40. African governments should allocate resources and more specially UNDP country IPF resources for human resources and skills development of STOs executives. They should also fully support activities of regional and inter-regional agencies, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the International Association of State Trading Organizations, the International Trade Centre (ITC-UNCTAD/GATT) and UNCTAD in favour of African STOs and urge UNDP and bilateral donors to favourably consider funding of such activities.
41. At the national level, whenever feasible, African governments should assign a leading role to their STOs in imports management with a view to ensuring bulk buying and securing economies of scale. They should also urge their STOs to seek and conclude agreements with other African STOs for the pooling of imports or exports through flexible ad hoc arrangements or jointly established trading mechanisms.
42. In allocating foreign currency budgets to their trade sector, African governments should give priority to STOs. They should also urge their STOs to use subregional and regional clearing and payments arrangements with a view to reducing the over-dependence of their operations on the use of scarce free foreign exchange resources.
43. African governments should support the establishment of a regional Conference on State Trading in Africa which would be held on a biennial basis at different venues under the auspices of ECA and OAU and ASTRO in accordance with the recommendation of the Lagos Plan of Action. This Conference will help co-ordinate African STOs participation in ASTRO and will enhance direct contacts and business deals between STOs of African countries as also STOs in other regions.

(b) To managements of African STOs

44. Managers of African STOs should clearly outline to governments functional relationships and "resource mix" needed by their organizations so that they could efficiently operate. They should see to it that such functional relationship, «resource mix» as well as their terms of reference are included in systematic monitoring mechanisms such as contract-plan or performance-budgeting documents etc. which they might finalize with the relevant supervisory government organizations.

45. Within the delegated authorities, managers of African STO's should endeavour to act as per basic requirements of business operations. They should try whenever possible to avoid relinquishing their operational decision-making responsibilities to government supervisory institutions.

46. African STO's should establish planning and programming cells in their structures which would cater for research undertaking corporate planning and provide vital information to their management.

47. African STO's should establish a human resources development plan with a view to enhancing their management and operational capabilities and ensuring continuity of accumulated experiences.

48. African STO's should develop mechanisms for direct contacts between them for the exchange of information and experiences and for joint operations in imports and exports.

49. African STO's which have not yet done so should join ASTRO as active members, and consider establishing regular regional conferences to enhance their relations and consolidate their positions on the international market.

50. African STO's should envisage joint training events and exchange of staff for on-the-job-training.

(c) To international organizations and specialized institutions

51. The regional as well as international organizations and specialised institutions such as UNECA, UNCTAD, ICPE, ITC and ASTRO should provide in-depth technical advisory assistance to African STOs so that they can significantly contribute to the economic development of their countries. It is further suggested that taking note of the large size of the region and various diversities, the assistance should have national, subregional and regional focus under an integrated programme of consultancy, advisory assistance and training activities as African STOs need a large force of trained and skilled manpower in foreign trade to manage STOs effectively and efficiently.

52. UNDP is urged to assist and support the above agencies and organisations in providing resources and in the planning and implementation of technical assistance programmes and activities. The ECA, OAU, ICPE, ASTRO and ITC should cooperate in convening and organizing regional conferences of African STO's and advising the relevant African authorities on the results of such conferences.

53. ASTRO, ITC, UNCTAD and ECA are urged to plan and facilitate inter-regional cooperation between African STO's and STO's of other developing countries for business contacts and deals, on-the-job-training and exchange of staff.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The participants place on record their high appreciation to UNECA, ASTRO, ITC and ETIMEX for having organised the timely Symposium of African STOs. They also expressed their gratitude to the Vice Minister for Foreign Trade, Comrade Ketsela Mulat, for delivering the inaugural address, Mr. Tchouta-Moussa, the Deputy Executive Secretary for setting the pace of discussions at the Symposium and Dr. Ziga Vodusek for highlightning the need for cooperation among STOs in the context of current trading environment. The participants expressed their grateful thanks to the Chairman of the Symposium for conducting proceedings in business-like manner and to the ETIMEX for providing excellent facilities and hospitality. They also expressed their appreciation for the services provided by the Secretariat of UNECA particularly to the International Trade & Finance Division under the leadership of Dr. B.W. Mutharika and to the interpreters.

The meeting also expressed their deep gratitude to the Government and people of Socialist Ethiopia for the warm welcome and hospitality offered to participants to this Symposium. This hospitality enabled the discussions to be conducted in a cordial atmosphere and led to the adoption of concrete proposals for the future development of African STOs.

CLOSING OF THE SYMPOSIUM

At the closing ceremony, Dr. Ziga Vodusek, Executive Director of ASTRO, reiterated his invitation to participants to attend the General Assembly of ASTRO to be held in Tunisia in June 1987. The Chairman of the Symposium, Comrade Tesfaye Asfaw, expressed his profound gratitude to the organizing institutions and to the participants for their active participation at the Symposium. He also thank the UNECA secretariat for the facilities placed at the disposal of the Symposium.

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<u>S</u>	<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Title</u>
1.	E/ECA/TRADE/55 Add.1	Annotated Provisional Agenda
2.	E/ECA/TRADE/55 Add.2	Provisional Agenda
3.		Aide-mémoire
4.	E/ECA/TRADE/55	State Trading Organization: The African Experience
5.	E/ECA/TRADE/WP/ASTRO/4	ASTRO Trade Information and Marketing Intelligence System
6.		Co-operation Among State Trading Organizations of Developing countries
7.		Compensated Trade: Experiences of some African countries
8.		International Marketing Planning and State Trading Organizations
9.		The role of State Trading Organizations (STOs) in import planning and import management based on the experience of Ethiopian Import-Export Corporation (ETIMEX)
10.		Planning and Management of imports by STOs
11.		Planning and Management of Exports by STOs
12.	UNCTAD/ST/ECDC/32	Countertrade Policies and Practices by Selected African and Latin American countries.