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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

Eighth ECA/OAU Joint Meeting  
on Trade and Development

Geneva, 9 - 17 August 1973

STATEMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY MR. WENIKE BRIGGS,  
COMMISSIONER OF TRADE OF THE FEDERAL MILITARY  
GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA AND SPOKESMAN OF THE  
AFRICAN GROUP

1. On behalf of the member states of the Organization of African Unity, I would like to thank the President of the Council of the European Economic Community for inviting us to this preliminary conference to prepare the ground for the future relationship between Africa and the EEC.
2. The current Chairman of OAU, General Yakubu Gowon has written to you, Mr. President, to inform you of the decision of African States to accept your invitation and to respond to your proposals through a spokesman on behalf of the African States present at this meeting. This is the task which I think, with the kind permission of my colleagues, I shall now proceed to perform. We agree with you, Mr. President, that this is indeed a historical occasion as it demonstrates to the world that it is possible for developed and developing countries to meet on the basis of equality to discuss matters which are of mutual interest to both sides. We have followed with keen interest your clear and precise statements on behalf of the European Economic Community and have taken note of the declarations of the Community with regard to our future relationship.
3. Before defining and stating Africa's position, on the different problems touched upon in your address, I deem it essential to recall the historical background and the evolution of the problems of co-operation, aid and development from the point of view of Africa.

4. Our common destinies have made it imperative for Africa to combine efforts and resources in the pursuit of our economic and political emancipation. It is a historical fact that Africa has had different experiences in its evolution to nationhood. However, experience has shown that the only salvation available to Africa's total emancipation from a state of economic under-development lies in its unity of efforts and common approach to the solution of its problems.

5. The consolidation and the achievements of the OAU today are a testimony of our firm resolve to secure the unity of Africa, which is indispensable to our development. African governments are therefore committed to strengthening their unity in all fields.

6. As regards international economic co-operation, the African Governments have always made it a matter of duty to adopt common positions in major international conferences, especially in all meetings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The failure of the third UN Conference on Trade and Development which met in Santiago, triggered off a process which, by the adoption of the OAU Declaration on UNCTAD III in Rabat in June 1972 gave rise to the African Declaration on Co-operation, Development and Economic Independence, which is a definition of the basic principles for the collective and individual actions of African States in the field of co-operation and development. This Declaration marks a turning point in the activities of African States within the Organization of African Unity, and demonstrated the deep and far-reaching changes that have occurred in Africa during the last ten years. The results of the last African ministerial Conference in Lagos constitute the beginning of the implementation of the commitments embodied in the Economic Declaration for Africa and go to show how great a confidence they have in an international co-operation based on the equitable distribution of its resulting benefits to all the partners involved.

7. Our presence here today, is once more the affirmation of this profound conviction. On behalf of the African States represented here, I should like to express the hope that this meeting would open new vistas, and usher in a new era of co-operation between Africa and the European Economic Community on account of our strong economic trade and cultural relations. We are convinced that this co-operation which would take the form of a rational organization of inter-dependence will be profitable to all our peoples.

8. We, just as you, acknowledge the historic scope of this Conference, and would like to hope that it marks the beginning of a new form of economic co-operation between Africa and EEC. It is also the beginning of a new relationship between developing and developed countries of the world. For African States, the historic character of this Brussels Conference lies specifically in the fact that this is

the first time ever that African States, rallied under the banner of the OAU have come to the European Economic Community to talk about the future relations between them and the Community in fields that are vital to our peoples and our respective governments. The fact is that nurtured by experience, we have decided to revise the premises, and the methods, on which we have based our development, and our co-operation with others and to adapt them to take into account the present trend of history and the circumstances and realities of our peoples and states. For the African States, therefore, the question is that of negotiating a new relationship with the EEC on the basis of a number of principles jointly accepted by all African countries.

9. The African States are calling into question the present pattern of international economic, commercial and financial relations between developing and developed countries. We believe that the present structure of international trade and finance has not been conducive to our economic development. We therefore believe that time has come for the EEC to adopt special measures that will contribute to the development of our countries.

10. In pursuance of these objectives, African Heads of State and Government at the Tenth Ordinary Session of their Summit Conference in Addis Ababa in May 1973, decided that the African States will negotiate with the EEC on the basis of the following principles which are of fundamental importance to them:

- (a) The principle of non-reciprocity in trade and tariff concessions given by EEC;
- (b) The extension, on a non-discriminatory basis, toward third countries, of the provisions on right of establishment;
- (c) The revision of the rules of origin must be formulated so as to facilitate the industrial integration of African countries and, in particular, they must grant the status of original products to all goods which had been produced in one or several of the African countries (and, in particular they must grant the status of original products to all goods which had been produced in one or several of the African countries (whether or not they are members of African groupings) or which have been processed in accordance with mutually accepted criteria, irrespective of whether or not they enjoy preferential relations with EEC.
- (d) A revision of the provisions on the movement of payments and capital to take account of the objective of monetary independence in African countries, and the need for monetary co-operation among African countries;

- (e) The dissociation of EEC financial and technical aid from any particular form of relationship with EEC;
- (f) Free and assured access to EEC markets for all African products including processed and semi-processed agricultural products, whether or not they are subject to the common agricultural policy of EEC;
- (g) The guaranteeing to African countries of stable, equitable and remunerative prices in EEC markets for their main products in order to allow them to increase their export earnings;
- (h) Any form of agreement made with EEC should not in any manner adversely affect intra-African co-operation.

11. The African States believe that the future relations with the EEC, that would result from the forthcoming negotiations should facilitate the implementation of economic measures that are essential to our development, such as economic diversification, the stimulation of our exports, the maximisation of our export earnings, the improvement of our economic and social structures and the stimulation of intra-African economic co-operation and integration.

12. With regard to aid, the African States have noted with concern the diminution of its net benefit. It is therefore our hope that the new arrangement will enable the African States to draw a larger volume of financial assistance to a level commensurate with their needs, while retaining the advantages being enjoyed by some of our Member States and placing the others on the same footing. We would also like to see African States participating actively in the management and administration of the European Development Fund.

13. The African States represented here would like to negotiate jointly with the EEC. While taking note of the models elaborated in the declaration of the President of the European Economic Community, the African States here present having taken into account their particular needs, have decided to negotiate with the EEC a global agreement in the economic, technical and financial fields, incorporating the fundamental principles adopted by the African Heads of State and Government during their last summit in Addis Ababa.

14. It is further the view of African states that it is possible to have a legal framework to accommodate their wishes within existing international obligations.

15. The African states are convinced that justification for preferential treatment for Africa lies in the international obligations of the developed countries to the developing countries in general, and in particular, taking account of the fact that

Africa is the least developed continent in the developing world due to the fact that 16 out of the 25 recognized least-developed countries are in Africa. The agreement to be concluded between the EEC and the Member States of the OAU should therefore not require reciprocal treatment. This is because of the differences in the level of development attained by African countries and members of the EEC.

16. One of the obstacles to economic development in Africa is the lack of adequate technology. An arrangement between African states and the technologically advanced countries of the Community should therefore place special emphasis on the transfer of technology to African states on easy and acceptable terms.

17. With regard to the question of establishment of export earnings we note with interest the proposals of the EEC but we not only wish to ensure that this will be linked to the deterioration of the terms of trade of African countries in a way that will not add to their debt burden, but also that the values of their exports will be maximized.

18. As to institutional aspects, we also believe that, it is the type of agreement negotiated that would determine the institutional set-up.

19. To conclude, the African states believe that they require time to prepare themselves for the imminent negotiations. In this respect, we may perhaps, by common accord, postpone the date for the opening of negotiations to a date not later than the middle of October.

20. We feel very strongly that the actual negotiations should be inaugurated at ministerial level. While we believe that it would be proper that the negotiations themselves be carried out at expert and plenipotentiary levels, there should be a provision in the procedure for negotiations, whereby Ministers from both sides would meet to resolve important issues.

21. I should like to assure you on behalf of my colleagues that it is our wish to begin early negotiations, but I am sure the Community will appreciate the importance of adequate preparations and organisation that are necessary as dictated by the last decision adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of Africa.