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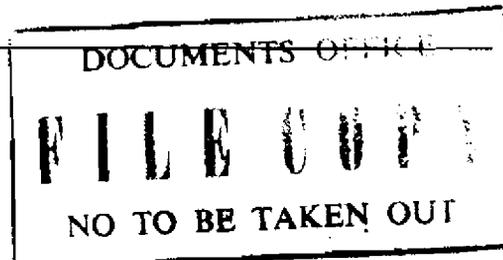
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GENERAL STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM AT THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Chairman,

May I first offer you, on behalf of my Delegation, our sincere congratulations on your election to be Chairman of this seventh session of the Economic Commission for Africa.

In your other capacity as Minister representing the host Government at this session may I also add my thanks and appreciation for the splendid welcome we have enjoyed in your capital. It is a stimulating experience to meet so many African delegations in this modern city of Nairobi.

This is the first time I have been privileged to represent my country on the Commission. May I say therefore how impressed I have already been with the spirit of drive and enthusiasm which I have encountered here, and if I may say so, with the firm and practical note which you struck in your opening address. I need hardly say that my Delegation will play its full part, as always, in the technical work of this session.

As members of the Commonwealth we are particularly pleased to be here, at the first appearance at the Commission as full members, of two fellow Commonwealth countries, Malawi and Zambia. We are also very glad to see the new united delegation of Tanzania and I should like to repeat the congratulations and good wishes expressed by the British Prime Minister at the time of the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Finally, although no representative is present at this meeting, it will be a source of pleasure to us all that during this session Gambia will become independent and will present a further addition to the list of full members. We are indeed a dwindling band of associate members sitting on the cross bench. But you know as well as I do, Mr. Chairman, that although we strive for growth in economic matters the opposite is true when it comes to the associate membership of our dependent territories.

I should like next to introduce myself to you as a representative of the ~~new~~ British Ministry of Overseas Development. The creation of this new Ministry under a senior Cabinet Minister was one of the first acts of the new British Government which took office last October. It is evidence of the high priority which my Government attaches to the question of co-operation in matters of economic development in this and other continents. It also marks an important step forward in the evolution of British policy. This new Ministry is now responsible for the planning and administration of the whole British effort in the field of development assistance, both bilaterally and multilaterally. It will review the terms and conditions on which our capital and technical aid is allocated, and in the process it will be responsible for our contributions to the development programmes of the United Nations. As a result of this new centralization of effort we shall be able to plan our efforts more efficiently and thereby increase the effectiveness and the impact of our aid. We shall also be able to co-ordinate our work more closely with that of the other aid-giving countries as well as with recipients. The problems of development can only be solved if we all work together in this way.

During 1964 my country has increased its aid and softened its terms. Nearly one half of all our bilateral aid now goes to African States and it is, I think, fair to say that we are making a not in considerable contribution to the development plans of the countries of Africa. But the extent and effectiveness of our assistance must clearly depend upon our own economic health, and for this reason the work of the new Ministry of Overseas Development must be synchronized with the economic development plans of my Government as a whole.

We are aiming for an expansion and strengthening of the domestic resources, both human and material, on which our capacity to give aid to others depends. Meanwhile, in spite of our current balance of payments difficulties we have succeeded in keeping up and indeed increasing the value and volume of our aid and technical assistance. Only yesterday for instance we announced a 17½ per cent increase in our voluntary contributions to the United Nations technical assistance programmes.

Turning to the past year's work of the Commission, may I first congratulate the Executive Secretary on his most lucid description of the progress which has been made. I should like also to endorse what the outgoing Chairman has said about the devotion which the Secretariat members, both African and non-African, have shown in carrying out their manifold tasks. The Commission is now making notable advances in the fields of communications, industry and natural resources, social studies, public administration and training generally, and towards closer and freer trading relations between the nations of Africa. It is particularly encouraging to note the efforts being made to bring customs tariff procedures into harmony and to improve statistical services. We have been following also with deep interest the joint work of the Commission with the FAO. My Government is already providing substantial technical resources in this field and we are anxious to collaborate further.

We welcome the progress made in launching the African Development Bank and of the work being done by the new Institute of Planning and Development in Dakar. My Government announced at last year's Trade and Development Conference at Geneva that we would provide capital assistance to the Bank, in addition to the technical assistance already promised. We now stand ready to discuss with the Bank the most appropriate means of providing this assistance and we look forward to seeing Mr. Beheiry in London before long. We shall also continue to contribute to the work of the Dakar Institute.

There has been increasing emphasis on regional and sub-regional co-operation in statements and reports to the Commission and I was interested in the Executive Secretary's report of the three industrial missions which completed their work last year. Projects such as the development of the Senegal, Niger and Chad river basins demand a high degree of multinational co-operation and for this reason the organs of the United Nations are well placed to provide assistance. We have noted with particular interest the request to the Special Fund to help establish an industrial centre for the Maghreb countries. This follows a recent new departure by the Special Fund in a project to establish high-level industrial advisory services in Tanzania. We very much hope that by this and other means the United Nations will contribute more to assisting member countries in the **difficult** but crucial task of promoting more rapid industrialization in Africa.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I want to refer to the United Nations Trade and Development Conference on which we have a report which is, in our view, remarkable for its conciseness and lucidity in summarizing, from the standpoint of Africa, the complex issues involved. I would like to congratulate Mr. Gardiner on this document.

Some disappointment has been expressed at the outcome of the Conference. But we should not belittle its achievement for it was surely the most significant single event in the development of the economic work of the United Nations since its foundation.

The less developed countries demonstrated, in an unprecedented manner within the group of 75, their common stake in the problems of accelerating economic growth. At the same time a fresh impetus was given to all nations, both more and less developed, in their search for solutions to those problems.

The British Delegation took a leading part in that search, as befitted the representatives of a nation with perhaps the biggest stake in ensuring a steady expansion of world trade.

We supported the important Resolution on the 1 per cent target flow of financial resources to the developing world, and in particular we put forward, together with the Swedish Delegation, a new proposal on supplementary financing. The crux of this proposal lies in the extent to which it recognizes that a decline in export earnings can disrupt development programmes and suggests how additional resources might be provided to mitigate the effects. We look forward to examining the follow-up studies on which the IBRD are at present engaged.

We were disappointed that it was not possible to reach a greater measure of agreement on preferential arrangements for the manufactured products of developing countries. But this will be pursued in the expert group on preferences which is to meet in New York in May.

The most intractable problems turned out to be those in the field which is of the utmost importance to the work of this Commission, namely primary commodities. We do not believe in the facile solutions to these problems which have been put forward from time to time. But we hope to achieve more success as we tackle the individual commodities one by one.

The most immediate and visible outcome of the Geneva Conference was, however, agreement on continuing machinery. It is a source of satisfaction that the one major new item of business which the current General Assembly of the United Nations has been able to transact is the establishment of the Trade and Development Board. The way is now clear for the Board to meet for the first time in the near future.

No one can foresee how rapidly or effectively the UNCTAD and its subordinate bodies as well as the GATT and other international organizations concerned, in close co-operation with the existing machinery of the United Nations, will be able to make progress. Certainly problems will not be solved merely by adopting resolutions. But, given a willingness on all sides to work for acceptable and feasible arrangements, the future is encouraging.

We in Britain will do our utmost to facilitate such arrangements. We earnestly hope that, building on the present foundations, we shall be able to make major advances in international economic co-operation. And we trust that in this process we shall find new sources of strength for the United Nations family of organizations, as which as much depends if mankind is to develop in peace and freedom.