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STATEMENT BY SAYED M. ABDEL MAGID AHMED, HEAD OF THE SUDAN  
DELEGATION AT THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Mr. Chairman, honourable delegates,

May I, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of the Sudan, and my delegation, express our sincere congratulations on your election to your illustrious office, and avail myself of this opportunity to pledge the full co-operation of my delegation. May I also express our deep appreciation to the Government of Kenya for their hospitality. On behalf of my Government and my delegation I welcome with pleasure the delegations from Malawi and Zambia who attained full membership, and look forward to the day when we can welcome the delegations from those African countries which are at present struggling to regain their freedom. I am confident that my fellow delegates will strive to make this session a fruitful one, and will spare no effort to surmount any difficulties which may hinder our progress towards our declared goals of African solidarity and prosperity. Our developing countries will have to marshall their vast resources, be they human or material, and put them into effective use, to achieve a higher standard of living for the African masses. We are all, no doubt, aware of our weaknesses as individual countries. The challenges that confront us make it imperative on all the African countries to pool together their resources, be it on a regional or on a continental basis.

Mr. Chairman, fellow delegates,

My delegation has studied with great interest the documents, placed by the Commission before this assembly. We have found them very comprehensive and revealing as to the activities of the Commission in the various fields during the past year. I shall try to comment on some aspects which my delegation consider important from our point of view.

Mr Chairman,

My delegation believes that the economies of the African countries will undergo many structural changes, on account of the gaining of political independence by these countries, and their determination to raise their standard of living. Such changes can be better effected through co-ordinated economic development. We believe that a machinery of co-operation between the African countries must be created to enable them develop their industrial research and technological training, co-ordinate their economic planning, and help finance their development plans. The harmonization and co-ordination of the development of the African countries will become increasingly effective through the Economic Commission for Africa and its standing committees, the Economic and Social Commission of the OAU, the African Development Bank, and the various agencies and other units of the United Nations operating in this continent. We are all well aware of the importance of the role played by the ECA and the Economic and Social Commission of the OAU. It remains for us to stress the important role we expect the African Development Bank will play in the years to come.

We consider the establishment of the African Development Bank an integral and inseparable aspect of the process of the economic development of Africa. In this respect we would like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to congratulate the Ivory Coast delegation for the designation of their capital as the site and headquarters of the African Development Bank. Moreover, the choice of a Sudanese national for the presidency of the Bank is, no doubt, a special honour bestowed on my

country and a vote of confidence in the trust that the African countries saw fit to place on Sayed Mamoun Beheiry. Our Government has often expressed its readiness to help the Bank in whatever manner such help is required. We believe that the Bank will be instrumental in channeling development capital to the African economy. Such development capital will be forthcoming from foreign governmental sources, international institutions, and the various world money markets. We all know how shy foreign capital tends to be, especially in the circumstances, both political and economic, prevailing at present in the emerging African countries. The African Development Bank can help such capital find the security it seeks before it can play its role in the development of the African countries. The Bank will also be in a position to help finance schemes of an inter-regional nature involving more than one country, thus enabling them to secure the advantages of projects which cannot, otherwise, be carried out by the individual countries.

Mr. Chairman,

There is strong reason to believe that the natural resources of Africa are abundant enough to make the continent economically viable. We all agree, however, that as long as these resources remain unexploited, African development will continue to stagnate, and the continent as a whole will be dependent on the developed countries. The very fact that whatever development existing nowadays in Africa has largely been carried out by outsiders, should be a challenge to us Africans. The emancipation and Africanization of Africa's economy from such domination must become an objective if we are at all keen to achieve our economic independence. The setting up of the African Development Bank is a constructive step in that direction.

Mr. Chairman,

The development possibilities in Africa are hindered by the shortage of investment capital, and lack of technical know-how. In this respect technical assistance from developed countries, foreign grants and loans would have a substantial influence on development in Africa. Foreign aid has to be preceded by determination of development strategy, careful evaluation of projects and careful study, to avoid investment unsuited to countries in their early stages of development, and wasteful duplication; and here comes the importance of co-operation with the ECA which is in a position to act as a planning and co-ordination agency.

In the analysis of the economic future of Africa due reference is to be given to the significance of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations described the conference in the following manner: "A world economic conference such as that just held at Geneva can not be judged solely by the immediate, concrete measures that emerged therefrom. It has a much vaster significance, and its results must be viewed in a historical perspective."

A casual look at the main aspects of the conference would prove that it represents a landmark in the trend towards international economic co-operation. The need for great changes in the commercial policies of the industrial countries was recognized, and the direction which such changes may follow was broadly determined. The conference called for the emergence of an international machinery to accelerate economic development. Most important among the consequences of the conference was the spontaneous emergence of forms of common action and collective mutual understanding among the developing countries.

The method of solution by common agreement was adopted by the developing countries; individual problems and different interests were set aside, and attention was concentrated on common problems. By this attitude the developing countries made the developed nations understand their argument that the principle of commercial reciprocity should be modified and preferential treatment given to developing countries. This is only a brief reference to the main features of success attributed to UNCTAD. We hope that the measure of understanding accorded by the developing countries at the conference will gain strength in the forthcoming conferences and more tangible solutions will be achieved as a result of that.

Mr. Chairman,

An interesting reference in one of the documents distributed has been made to the problem of agricultural production. The document has stated that "The main task of the ECA is to deal with agricultural policy and planning with particular emphasis on the transition from subsistence to market agriculture." The place of agriculture in the development of developing countries is indisputable. The agricultural sector plays a predominant role in the economy of African countries, both as a source of national income and as a major earner of foreign exchange. But despite the importance of agriculture we find that not all the cultivable land is utilized; for example, in the Sudan, we utilize only about seven million acres out of 100,000,000 acres of cultivable land, and this has, of course, its repercussions on the balance between the increase in agricultural production and population growth. However, our development plan devotes a large sum to investment in agriculture in the hope that this will raise the annual output. The example of my country as a country dependent on agriculture, is true of most African countries. So, the call for a continuation of studies and surveys by the ECA and the specialized agencies, the examination of plans and measures to promote agricultural development, are highly justified and appreciated. We hope that in these studies the ECA will give due consideration to co-ordination of development plans on a regional basis, should such co-ordination prove

essential to the successful execution of these plans. We believe that the resulting economic integration will help to draw the countries of the continent closer together, open up wider marketing facilities for their products, and eliminate any harmful competition between the individual African countries by applying as much as possible the theory of comparative costs, and make fuller use and better utilization of international loans and grants.

Mr. Chairman,

With this note I should like to conclude my statement as I see my ten minutes dead-line is approaching. I re-iterate the expression of gratitude to you, Sir, and to the Government of Kenya, as well as our hope for fruitful and positive deliberations.

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