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REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE  
OF GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE IMPACT  
OF WESTERN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC GROUPINGS ON AFRICAN ECONOMIES  
(Addis Ababa, 23-30 January 1961)

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE OF GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES  
ON THE IMPACT OF WESTERN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC GROUPINGS  
ON AFRICAN ECONOMIES

A. Origin of the meeting, attendance and organization of work

1. Under Resolution 7 (II) the Economic Commission for Africa at its second session requested the Executive Secretary to "study and appraise the effects of economic groupings in Europe on industrialization in Africa, intra-African trade and Africa's economic development in general and to recommend measures necessary to offset any prejudicial effects of such economic groupings (and) to convene an ad hoc committee of representatives of members and associated members to examine the above studies prepared by the Executive Secretary on the impact referred to and to report back to the Commission". This request followed consideration of the subject by the Commission at its second as well as its first session and examination of a study on the impact of the European Economic Community on African trade (E/CN.14/29) presented by the Executive Secretary to the second session.
2. The meeting of the ad hoc Committee was convened in Addis Ababa on 23 January 1961 and concluded its deliberations on 30 January.
3. His Excellency Menasse Lemma, Acting Minister of Commerce and Industry of the Imperial Ethiopian Government, opened the meeting. The representatives were also welcomed by Mr. R.K.A. Gardiner, Deputy Executive Secretary of the ECA.
4. Representatives of thirteen member countries participated in the meeting which was also attended by observers from three member countries of the United Nations not members of the Commission. In addition the discussions of the ad hoc Committee were followed by an observer from the IBRD. The list of the participants and of the observers is annexed to this report.
5. A representative from the Commission of the European Economic Community (EEC) was invited to address a closed session of the ad hoc Committee and to reply to questions put to him by some of the participants.
6. At the request of the representatives Mr. R.K.A. Gardiner, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, assumed the Chairmanship of the meeting. The

ad hoc Committee unanimously elected Mr. Atta (Nigeria) as First Vice-Chairman and Mr. Kini (Republic of the Congo (Leopoldville)) as Second Vice-Chairman.

7. A Committee of five representatives was elected to draft the report of the meeting. In addition to the two Vice-Chairmen this Committee included Mr. Sylla (Mali), Mr. Abdoun (Sudan) and Mr. Lassidi (Tunisia).

8. The documentation for the meeting included:

- (a) E/CN.14/72. The impact of Western European Integration on African Trade and Development, which was submitted as the main discussion document and is hereafter referred to as the Report.
- (b) E/CN.14/72 Add.1. Information Paper on Recent Developments Concerning West European Economic Groupings.
- (c) E/CN.14/64. The Significance of Recent Common Market Developments in Latin America, which had been prepared for the third session of the Commission and which was submitted to the ad hoc Committee as an information document.
- (d) E/CN.14/61. Information Paper on the Procedures for Accession to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the Advantages for Less Developed Countries, prepared by the Executive Secretary to the Contracting Parties for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.
- (e) A paper on recent developments concerning the associated countries of the EEC, prepared by the Commission of that body and circulated to the representatives at their request.

9. The ad hoc Committee adopted the following agenda:

- 1. Welcoming addresses
- 2. Election of officers
- 3. Adoption of the agenda
- 4. Explanatory statement of the Secretary of the meeting
- 5. Discussion of the report (E/CN.14/72) and related documents submitted by the Executive Secretary under the following headings:

- (a) The recent developments in Western European integration as they affect Africa

- (b) The effects of the association arrangements under the Treaty of Rome on African overseas trade
- (c) Implications of Western European integration for African industrialization and intra-African trade.

6. Adoption of the Report of the third session.

B. Account of the general debate

- (a) The recent developments in Western European integration as they affect Africa

10. The first part of the general debate was devoted to the discussion of Chapter I of the report supplemented by the information paper (E/CN.14/72 Add.1) and by information provided by the Commission of the European Economic Community. Since the main purpose of the debate was to clarify factual points it was conducted paragraph by paragraph. The major points made during the discussion, including supplementary information, are summarized in the following paragraphs.

11. The present status of association of African countries was outlined in the information paper prepared by the Commission of EEC. As of January 1961 all the countries, which have become independent in 1960, have confirmed formally their desire to remain associated with EEC with the exception of Mali, Dehomey, Mauritania and Somalia. The association of the latter countries is maintained de facto. Some of the associated countries have requested the establishment of direct relations with the EEC. These countries are Togo, Niger, Ivory Coast, the Upper Volta, Senegal, Congo (Leopoldville) and Mali.

12. During the meeting the representative of Mali declared that his Government had not yet decided on association with EEC. He expressed his appreciation of the financial assistance provided by the development fund of the EEC, but stated that the implicit continuation of Mali's association does not mean a one-sided orientation of its trade relations.

13. Members of the Committee requested information on the elimination of quantitative restrictions by countries associated with EEC. It was promised by the representative of the Commission of EEC to provide some data on the basis of information provided by associated countries to the EEC administration. It was emphasized by certain delegations that the introduction of quantitative

restrictions by some associated countries on imports from the Six confirms their autonomy in this respect.

14. In response to a question by the representative of Tunisia on the nature of a possible association of Greece and Turkey with the Common Market the representative of the EEC Commission stated that the negotiations with Greece had reached an advanced stage. He stressed, however, that he could not give any specific information as long as the final agreement was not concluded. In the case of Turkey it had so far only been a question of contacts and exploratory discussions.

15. There had also been contacts between EEC and Tunisia on a possible association of that country with the Common Market. These contacts had taken place in June 1959 but had not been resumed.

16. Some of the representatives felt that the report of the Secretariat should have given more information on the arrangements of the EFTA and that a more detailed analysis of the possible impact of the EFTA on African trade, especially with other continents, was desirable. In particular, the representative of the Congo asked for thorough studies of trade relations existing between African countries and the various economic groupings or countries outside Africa, especially the Commonwealth, the USA, the centrally planned economies and other preferential systems.

17. The representative of the United Kingdom stated that the Stockholm Convention provides for association with EFTA of dependent territories through their metropolitan countries. If such a territory becomes independent the application of the Stockholm Convention is subordinated to the request of the new State. So far, however, no request for association of the dependent territories had been made. The Convention also provides for the accession of independent countries, subject to the approval of the EFTA Council.

18. One of the features of the EFTA Convention is that in the absence of a common external tariff member countries are free to determine their own tariff policy whereas in the EEC they are obliged to increase or to

decrease their national tariffs to reach the common external tariff by the end of the transitional period.

19. Some delegates gave more detailed explanations concerning the issue of the extension of the area of effectiveness of existing preferences mentioned in paragraph 53 of the report. It would appear that the EFTA mechanism makes such an extension unavoidable in the case of a number of agricultural raw materials which may be imported into the United Kingdom or Portugal under preferential arrangements and then re-exported duty free in a processed form to other EFTA countries.

20. Much interest was expressed during the meeting in the future common agricultural policy of EEC. The delegate of UAR (Egypte) requested information on the treatment foreseen for some products of great interest to his country's exports, such as onions, rice and other cereals, for which substantial production exists also in some EEC countries. On his side the delegate for Tunisia was interested to know what special tariff protection or pricing arrangements could be given to Tunisian products on the EEC market in the framework of the common agricultural policy if Tunisia becomes associated with the Six.

21. The representative of the EEC Commission was not in a position to give further information on the common agricultural policy beyond what had already been stated in the report and the addendum to the report. He emphasized, however, that important new decisions are likely to be taken in the first three months of 1961. He also stressed that the application of managed marketing arrangements to tropical agricultural products raises very complicated problems. For the moment, ground nuts is the only product for which some proposals are being elaborated; however, even these proposals have not yet been presented by the Commission to the Council and he could not therefore indicate the details of the contemplated arrangements. As far as other tropical products are concerned, the elaboration of managed marketing arrangements is subordinated to the solution to be found to two sets of problems: on the one hand the common agricultural policy and on the other hand the future association of overseas countries with EEC. Since negotiations on the second issue have not yet been initiated and are not likely to be completed before 1962, one cannot expect further

developments in this respect in the near future. He also emphasized that several non-associated African countries entertain very important trade relations with members of EEC. In view of this situation it was most unlikely that eventual managed marketing arrangements would contain elements which could damage seriously the interests of those countries. Even if such proposals were put forward by the Commission they would surely be rejected by the Council. In this context it may be of interest to know that the Commission recently had contacts with a delegation from Nigeria - so is well informed on the position of Nigeria and of other third countries and is prepared to take their points of view into full account in the formulation of any proposals.

22. Referring to the last sentence of paragraph 19 of the report, the Secretariat explained that there appears to be some opposition on the part of some member countries of EEC to the adoption of managed marketing arrangements for tropical products other than groundnuts.

23. The representative of France declared that the treaty leaves open the possibility of applying managed marketing arrangements to tropical products and his country hopes that such arrangements will eventually be adopted by the Community.

24. Questions were also raised about the nature of the tariff-free quotas: are they meant to be eliminated progressively and what would be the period of their application? The representative of France explained that these quotas were introduced to alleviate temporary difficulties in cases where the common external tariff was much higher than national tariffs and its application would lead to an increase in costs. It was impossible to foresee the future policy of the Community in this respect.

25. It was added by the Secretariat that indications on the progressive reduction of duty-free quotas were given in the Treaty documents only for coffee and bananas (page 39 footnote (1) of the Report) although even in these cases they are not quite precise. In the case of "G list" products the EEC Commission was free to determine its policy depending mainly on conditions of supply but it may well be that some of the temporary duty-free quotas will be maintained for an indefinite period.

26. A correction concerning establishment rights (paragraph 20-21) was proposed by the representative of France: Contrary to what was said in the Report, the extension of establishment rights to nationals and societies of the associated countries in the six member countries is also envisaged by the Rome treaty (article 132 paragraph 5).

27. Much interest was expressed by the representatives in the policy of the European Development Fund and in the nature of the projects financed by it. Some representatives emphasized that it was essential to ensure that the projects of the Development Fund would ultimately benefit the local populations<sup>1/</sup>. The representatives of the Member States of EEC and of countries associated with EEC explained that the projects are formulated and submitted by the African governments and therefore it is up to them to pay attention to the objectives of the projects. On the other hand, the tenders are offered to contractors of the six member countries and of the country where the project is to be executed, since there is relatively little or no industry and modern contracting enterprises in the associated countries.

28. As far as the purpose of the projects is concerned, the list of projects shown in the Annex to the information paper submitted by the EEC Commission shows that many are of a directly social character or of benefit to small scale local enterprise, while others may promote large scale modern enterprises.

29. Some representatives, noting that the final decision on the selection of investment projects among those submitted by associated governments lies in the hands of the EEC authorities, felt that the mechanism of the Fund might not provide sufficient guarantees to the associated countries.

(b) The effects of the association arrangements under the Treaty of Rome on African overseas trade.

30. The discussion of this sub-item brought out the general attitudes of African countries towards the expected incidences of EEC and made it possible to supplement the report on a number of specific points.

<sup>1/</sup> This issue was raised by the representative of Tunisia, supported by the representative of Nigeria.



31. It appeared that the general question of the incidence of the external tariff of EEC as compared to the pre-existing national tariffs was of great concern to a number of representatives. Comparisons made on the basis of tariffs actually applied by the Six (as distinct from their legal tariffs) indicated that the common external tariff was higher than the weighted average of the national tariffs for a number of products. The discussion brought out a distinction in the position of tropical products (i.e. those not produced by the Six) and that of temperate zone products (also produced by the Six).

32. As far as tropical products were concerned, fears were expressed by a number of representatives of non-associated countries. These fears were provoked in the first place by the tariff preferences applying not only to the products quoted in the report (coffee, cocoa, etc.), but also to a number of other less important products which may still have great significance for individual countries, such as cloves in the case of Zanzibar. Several delegations and, in particular, that of Nigeria were more concerned by the effects of possible managed marketing arrangements than by tariff preferences since they felt that such arrangements could also apply to products at present entering duty-free in the EEC market. Finally, several representatives felt that EEC was bound to have an effect on production. On the one hand, the EEC preferences would lead, all other things being equal, to a more rapid increase of production in the associated than in the non-associated countries. On the other hand, the price effects of preferential EEC tariffs on exports of the non-associated countries might induce them to restrict production of the primary products affected, with a consequential reduction in their demand for imports. It was brought out in the course of the discussion that although this development was possible, the generally more rapid growth of the economies of the EEC and EFTA as a result of the new preferential arrangements, would lead to an increase in total demand for primary products from associated and non-associated countries.

33. The representatives of associated countries mentioned the advantages which can be obtained from EEC arrangements. Tariff preferences would enable associated countries to continue to count on an assured and rapidly expanding market. It was also hoped that the EEC would eventually elaborate appropriate arrangements providing for stable prices of primary commodities. The representative of the Congo (Leopoldville) expressed the view that the opportunities offered by the Common Market arrangements were of vital importance to his country in view of the present structure of the Congolese economy.

34. Fears were also expressed concerning the application of the common agricultural policies to temperate zone products. The representative of the Union of South Africa felt that there was a danger that these policies may prove to be unduly protectionist. Moreover, the representative of the United Arab Republic stated that the protection provided for temperate zone agricultural products, reduced significantly the export prospects of certain crops. This applies particularly to rice, the production of which was bound to increase rapidly after the completion of the high Assuan dam which will remove the only obstacle to an increase, namely the lack of water. The outlook was particularly alarming since, on some of the EEC markets, the main competitors of the United Arab Republic in respect of these products were EEC countries (Italy for rice, Netherlands for onions). The Tunisian representative felt that his country could only get associated with EEC if special treatment was provided for all its products, and especially its agricultural exports.

35. It was indicated by several representatives that the distinction between temperate zone and tropical agricultural products does not correspond to a strict division of African countries into producers of these two types of products. The Ethiopian delegate was concerned about the treatment given in the EEC market to Ethiopian exports of beans, lentils, hides and skins. The Nigerian delegate was also interested in tariffs and managed marketing arrangements which could affect certain oil seeds and nuts as well as hides and skins

exported by his country. These examples show that the common agricultural policy may prove to be an obstacle to the diversification of agricultural exports even in the case of some tropical countries.

36. Frequent reference was made in the discussion to other preferential systems involving the participation of African countries and more particularly to the Commonwealth preferences. It was pointed out by the representative of France that some of the tariffs established by EEC were directly inspired by the Commonwealth preferences. This was the case particularly for vegetable oil and tropical woods. He also indicated that the present tariff negotiations of GATT offered the Commonwealth the opportunity to negotiate concessions on these preferential tariffs in exchange for similar concessions by the EEC countries. Commonwealth member countries felt that it would be very difficult in these cases to exchange equivalent concessions. Moreover, they noted that whereas the Commonwealth preferences had been accepted when the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was concluded, the EEC preferences have yet to be proved to the Contracting Parties to be compatible with Art. XXIV of GATT. The representative of France stated that the fundamental issue was an economic one. Such exchanges of concessions if they met with the wishes of the countries concerned, would help to reduce discrimination.

37. In appreciating preferential arrangements delegates raised the question of reciprocity. The Nigerian Delegate explained that in the British Commonwealth preferential system several African countries, including Nigeria, received substantial preferences without reciprocating. The French delegate pointed out that the EEC preferential system is not based on full reciprocity since it permits the establishment of non-discriminatory tariff protection by the associated countries and does not exclude quantitative restrictions on their side.

38. It was generally recognized that it is not yet possible to demonstrate any significant damage made to the trade of African countries either by EEC or by EFTA. It was recalled by delegates that GATT has devoted much discussion to the issue whether compensatory action due under GATT rules should be taken in case of potential damage or only if actual damage is demonstrated by third countries. The United Kingdom

representative stated that his country would consider, in consultation with other members of the EFTA, any complaints or representations made by third countries, either now or as they develop their economies, about the possible effects of EFTA. The representative of the EEC Commission made a similar statement indicating that EEC declared itself willing, in a recent meeting of GATT, to consider all appropriate measures, should the exports from a third country suffer concrete damage or be threatened with imminent damage. Under this declaration third countries which are members of GATT, such as Nigeria, would have ample possibility to protect themselves against adverse effects of EEC arrangements.

(c) Implications of Western European integration for African industrialization and intra-African trade

39. It was generally felt that the present structure of intra-African trade, characterized by the limited scope of exchanges established between countries which have no common borders, can be explained by two main factors. On the one hand, a great number of African countries have a similar production pattern at the present time, and on the other hand the Continent has inherited from the past deep political and economic divisions.

40. It was also agreed by delegations which intervened in the discussion that the aim of the foreign trade policy of African countries should aim at increased economic cooperation within the Continent. It was also recognized that changes in this direction would take a considerable amount of time.

41. The difficulties in changing rapidly the inherited trade structures was no reason however for delaying the analysis of problems raised by and prospects offered to intra-African trade. Various delegations indicated that such an investigation should in the first place cover the present intra-African trade flows. In the second place, a clear picture should be obtained on such institutional features as customs systems and foreign trade regulations. Finally, it would be essential to establish an inventory of commodities produced by African countries for which outlets could be found elsewhere in the continent.

42. It was felt by several representatives that there was an obvious link between intra-African trade and industrialization. Industrial ventures, promoted through regional co-operation, could permit import substitution on a regional scale.

43. It was against this background that the impact of Western European Economic Groupings on the prospects of industrialization in Africa was discussed. Many delegations felt that the over-all effect of both of these groupings may be unfavourable. However, it was noted that such effects did not apply to exports of manufactures by the associated countries to the EEC markets, to which they had duty-free access.

44. It was stated that some favourable effects could also be expected since the increase in the national income of EEC and EFTA countries induced by integration would result in higher export earnings of African countries. It could not be assumed that the results of such European groupings would necessarily, by themselves, narrow the gap between the levels of development reached by Western Europe and by Africa.

45. It was also pointed out that the practical working of Western European arrangements may have specific effects on African industrialization. The representative of France showed how the abolition of drawbacks under the Stockholm Convention was expected to induce EFTA countries to shift from imports of semi-processed goods to imports of crude materials thus hampering processing activities in primary producing countries. Processing of primary products on the other hand, would be encouraged in several cases in the associated countries by the EEC arrangements. This applied to such important products as aluminium which enjoys a 10% preference.

46. At the same time it was expected that increased competition in the markets of countries associated with EEC may hamper the development of industries for import substitution. It was noted, however, that the associated countries were free under the provisions of the Rome Treaty to introduce protective tariffs and that they were not explicitly prevented from applying the quantitative restrictions.

47. The representative of Nigeria indicated that, if the EEC arrangements would result in a persistently unfavourable trend in the prices paid for Nigerian primary products, Nigeria would be compelled to concentrate on industrialization for import substitution at the

expense of expanding production of primary goods for exports. It was recalled that the report indicated that an opposite situation may occur in the associated countries which might be tempted to concentrate on export crops and neglect industrialization.

48. The industrialization of associated countries might be facilitated through the Development Fund. In this connexion the representative of Tunisia expressed the desire that the Secretariat should devote more attention to the problem of capital transfers between Western Europe and African countries. When approaching the EEC in view of a possible association, Tunisia was informed by the Community that it could not benefit from financial assistance in the narrow sense as provided for in the Rome Treaty documents and that only ad hoc arrangements could be relied upon. The representative of the EEC Commission pointed out that the Council of Ministers had recently created a group for co-ordinating policies in the field of credit insurance, guarantees and financial credits.

49. In spite of difference of opinion expressed regarding the impact of western European groupings on the economy to African countries no opposition was raised against the principle economic integration in western Europe. Some delegations observed that there might be some advantage in establishing good relations with the various existing west European trade groupings.

50. It was felt however by several African representatives that steps towards regional co-operation in Africa should be given a high priority. They also felt that the existing preferential arrangements may perpetuate the present economic relations between Africa and Europe. Finally, fears were expressed that EEC, in conjunction with other preferential areas, may lead to a division of Africa.

51. Representatives of associated countries recognized that associations definitely entailed some advantages, but that a present and possibly future association does not mean lack of readiness to explore and promote African co-operation. The representative of Mali indicated that his country had not yet confirmed its association with

EEC precisely because his government wished to see how such an association could be reconciled with inter-African co-operation. The representative of Congo (Leopoldville) maintained that it was necessary to improve the economic and social basis of the African economies before launching any big schemes of co-operation. This would be particularly important in the fields of transport and the training of personnel.

52. The Committee sought information on the attitude of the EEC towards various forms of African co-operation. The Secretariat put at the disposal of delegates some information on the attitude of various officials of the EEC Commission on this subject but the Committee proposed that the ECA Secretariat should approach EEC formally for an official statement of its position, both concerning the legal aspects of the problem and broader policy implications. The reply was to be circulated to members and associate members of ECA.

C. Conclusions and recommendations

53. The Committee commended the Report presented by the Secretariat of the Commission. General approval was expressed of its contents including the conclusions and recommendations put forward in it, without thereby accepting all the specific proposals and arguments it contains.

54. As regards specific recommendations in the Report, the Committee felt that, in view of the absence of delegations from many countries in West Africa which would be affected, the proposal put forward in paragraph 167 of the Report for a special trade conference for West Africa should be brought to the special notice of the third session of the Commission.

55. It was recognized that the EEC was still in the process of evolution and that important policy decisions remained to be taken, in particular, in regard to managed marketing, stabilization of the export earnings of associated countries, and the implementation of a common agricultural policy, which might have significant implications for African trade and development. It was proposed, therefore, that the Secretariat should keep the developments under constant review with a view to submitting studies and reports to members and associate members of the Commission. In order to facilitate the work, African Governments should

communicate to the Secretariat, at its request, details of their experiences of the impact of EEC arrangements. Moreover, close working relationships should be established between the secretariats of ECA and EEC.

56. It was also suggested that the Secretariat should study the impact of other preferential systems linking countries in Africa with non-African countries, particularly of Commonwealth preferential tariffs and of the preferential arrangements subsisting between Portugal and Spain and their territories in Africa. Moreover, the Secretariat should, in future, provide more detailed information on and analysis of the EFTA arrangements and their possible impact on African countries and studies should be made of trade between the African region and other parts of the world.

57. First priority should be accorded to studies of the problems and prospects of intra-African trade. These studies should be conducted initially on a sub-regional basis without losing sight of the problems of trade within the Continent as a whole. They should not be limited to problems of production, trade and payments (including the possibilities of import substitution on a regional or sub-regional basis) but should also pay attention to problems of transport and communications and to the need for training of Africans in foreign trade promotion, customs administration and related fields.

58. It was proposed that African members and associate members of the ECA could make collective representations without prejudice to any diplomatic representations which individual countries may decide to make through the Commission to EEC, EFTA and individual European countries on preferential and other trade arrangements which had caused or might cause damage to their exports. The subjects of such representations may also be discussed under the auspices of GATT or at a special meeting of all interested parties to be organized by the Commission. It was felt that this approach may offer a possibility of reducing or eliminating the danger of extending to Africa the division of western Europe into competing trade groupings. The proposed contacts and consultations could ultimately result in the elimination by western European countries



and trade groupings of all discriminatory practices in respect of their imports from African countries.

59. It was realized that work in connexion with African trade should be a continuing activity and that all the studies and activities mentioned above could not be undertaken at the same time. It was suggested therefore that the Executive Secretary should be given the discretion to determine the order of priorities in the light of the resources at his disposal and of the observations made during the meeting of the Committee.

60. It was suggested that the Secretariat should prepare for consideration by the third session of the Commission a paper on the possible establishment of a trade committee in accordance with rule 19 of the Commission's terms of reference.

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Ad hoc Committee of Government Representatives on the  
Impact of European Economic Groupings on African countries.

(Addis Ababa, 23-27 January 1961)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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