

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF

THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

DAKAR, NOVEMBER 20 - 21, 1978

The Fourth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held in Dakar, in the Republic of Senegal from November 20 - 21, 1978. All the Member States were present at the meeting.

2. The Meeting was opened by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal, Mr. Abdou Diouf who welcomed the Ministers to Dakar, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Senegal, Leopold S. Senghor, the Government and People of Senegal. He then went on to emphasise the importance of the Community within the context of the need for integration and co-operation among the African Peoples as a whole, and also the need for harmonisation among Member States in their international economic relations. He also dwelt at length upon the importance of undertaking careful studies before taking steps aimed at integration in order to ensure the successful implementation of the aims of the Treaty of Lagos. To this end, he said that it was important that the right priorities are set in a programme of activities geared to the realisation of the goals of the Community. A copy of the address is attached hereto as Appendix I.

3. Election of Chairman

The Chairmanship of the Council went to Senegal according to the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

The outgoing chairman, Dr. O. Adewoye, Commissioner for Economic Development of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in his parting address thanked the Council for its cooperation

and support during his tenure of office, and requested the Council to extend the same cooperation to his successor Mr. Ousmane Seck the Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs of the Republic of Senegal. Dr. Adewoye also laid particular stress on the need for collective self-reliance in the Community and the need to use indigenous resources (including consultants) as a strategy of social and economic development. His speech is attached hereto as Appendix II.

4. The Gambia and Niger were appointed Rapporteurs for the meeting.

5. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was amended by inserting an item - Report of the 2nd Meeting of ECOWAS Ambassadors as Item 14. The final agenda adopted is as follows:

1. Report of the April 1978 Council Meeting
2. Executive Secretary's presentation of his report
3. Consideration of the Report of the Financial Controller
4. Consideration of Recommendations of the Trade, Customs, Immigration, Money and Payments Commission
5. Consideration of the Recommendations of the Industry, Agriculture and Natural Resources Commission
6. Consideration of the Recommendations of the Committee of West African Central Banks
7. Consideration of the Executive Secretary's Memoranda on conditions of service of statutory appointees and currency units in which to quote salaries.
8. Consideration of the Report of the Finance Experts Committee
9. Presentation by the Executive Secretary of the Report of the Special Appointments Committee.

10. Consideration of the Executive Secretary's Memoranda on: Clarification of matters concerning the permanent Committee on studies and research
 11. Consideration of the Report of the Board of Directors of the Fund.
 12. Statutory appointment: Appointment of the External auditor
 13. Designation of Depository libraries
 14. Report of the 2nd Meeting of ECOWAS Ambassadors Accredited to Lagos
 15. Other matters
 16. Date and Venue of Next Meeting
 17. Adoption of Report and Resolutions
 18. Adjournment
5. Adoption of the Report of the Council of Ministers held in Lagos, April 1978

The Council adopted the report of its April, 1978 meeting. As regards the powers of the Chairmen of the Board of Directors of the Fund and the Council of Ministers, it was decided that during the interval between meetings of the two decision-making organs the chairman should act on behalf of the organ concerned.

7. Executive Secretary's Report

After having heard the Executive Secretary's Report, the Council decided that priority should be given to:

- the Establishment of free trade between Member States
- Study on the free movement of persons and goods
- Conducting similar studies to help the Fund function
- Study on transport and telecommunications.

The Council requested that the report of the Financial Controller be presented so that it could rule effectively on these two reports since they were complementary. In discussing the report concern was expressed on the multiplicity of studies which were being conducted at the Secretariat. It was decided that there was need for establishing an order of priorities in studies to enable ECOWAS make an impact as early as practicable.

8. Consideration of the Financial Controller's Report

The Financial Controller made the point that the Executive Secretary had committed the Community financially vis a vis certain Regional Organisations to a number of studies. At this point, the Council of Ministers debated the modus operandi of the Financial Controller, and sought clarification as to whether it was a priori or ex post facto as far as budgetary control is concerned. This was to solve once and for all the problem of over-expenditure resulting from commitments not authorised by the Council.

The Council finally decided that the approach to the functions of the Financial Controller should be a priori and that an Ad hoc Committee be set up to re-examine the Financial Regulations, including the role and functions of the Financial Controller so as to remove all ambiguities. This Committee would report to the next meeting of the Council.

Having considered the report of the Financial Controller, the Council decided to approve the following studies contained in the report of the Executive Secretary:

1. Study on Trade
 - (a) Import and Export Regimes and potential, with reference to foodstuff, livestock and forestry

products and related measures.

(b) Monetary and Financial obstacles to development of trade and measures applicable to Payments.

(c) Policy options in respect of liberalisation of trade.

2. Study on Transport and Communications

3. Study on the Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Capital.

4. Critical Appraisal of Economic and Social conditions. Attached as appendix III is a resolution introduced by Nigeria and unanimously adopted on the need to establish priorities in the programme of work of the Community.

9. Recommendations of the Trade, Customs, Immigration, Monetary and Payments Commission

The Council directed that the consideration of this study be deferred and that the Commission should meet again and improve the study prior to its submission for consideration. Its recommendations should then be sent to the Member States, at least one month before the next meeting of the Council of Ministers.

On the issue of the Free Movement of Persons, the Council decide that, in accordance with the wishes of the Experts, four Member States: Benin, Cape Verde, Nigeria and Senegal should be asked to appoint experts to assist the Executive Secretariat in preparing a draft Convention on the free movement of persons, goods and capital. This draft should also be sent to Member States at least one month prior to the next meeting of the Council.

America at very considerable expense to design projects, and over contractors usually execute them. It is rare to find projects being designed with the sole purpose of involving our people in the process of development. Consequently, we have succeeded alienating the mass of the people, not often because they are not provided for, but because we have created in their minds the expectation that Government must provide everything for them. Programmes for development should be people-oriented as much as possible because, as I said earlier, it is by doing and by making mistakes that a people can develop.

13. Thirdly, designing development programmes for self-reliance would require of leaders, policy makers and planners imaginative innovative thinking. They would be required to develop as a matter of urgency a profound grasp of the nature and dynamics of the processes of socio-economic change that will lead to accelerated reliant and self-sustaining development. In view of very great intellectual pressures to conform to conventional notions about development, and on account of the foreign aid that might be available for programmes that are designed and executed in the conventional ways, innovative thinking would not be easy. But we have no choice if we want to break away from the peripheral role we are playing in the existing international economic order.

14. How have we fared in ECOWAS in terms of planning for self-reliance within the Community? It is rather too early to judge our performance in this regard; but I must confess I have noticed one rather unhealthy tendency. There is a propensity to rush to Europe and America for consultants particularly in the field of studies. I cannot help recalling the story of the peasant in

accident insurance for its consideration.

13. Consideration of the Report of Financial Experts

The Executive Secretariat's 1979 Budget as proposed by the Committee of Experts was adopted after reducing the sum allocated for Research. A decision on the posts recommended for the Department of Trade and Business Promotion was deferred to January 1980.

The Council then directed the Executive Secretariat to revise the budget for 1979 accordingly. The Revised Budget should be approved by the Chairman on behalf of the Council.

14. Report of the Special Appointments Committee submitted by the Executive Secretary

After the presentation of the dossier on the work of the Special Appointments Committee, it was decided that Council should discuss the Report in closed session due to the importance of the subject.

15. Consideration of the Executive Secretary's Memorandum on the Permanent Research Committee

After some preliminary discussion of the matter, Council decided that the Memorandum presented on Research should be withdrawn as the matter was related to the internal management of the Secretariat

16. Consideration of the Report of the Board of Directors

Council took note of the Report of the Board of Directors.

17. Nomination of the External Auditor

Council recalled that Sierra Leone had been asked to designate an ECOWAS External Auditor. Council noted the appointment of Messrs R.A. Dillsworth as External Auditor and confirmed its earlier decision as well as the budgetary provision of 9600 u.a as payment to be made to the External Auditor.

18. Designation of Depository Libraries for ECOWAS Documents

Council deleted this item from its agenda.

19. Consideration of the Report on the Meeting of the ECOWAS Ambassadors in Lagos

Council took note of the Report on the Ambassadors meeting as presented by the Honourable Dr. Omoniyi Adewoye, the Nigerian Federal Commissioner for Economic Development. It was decided that the Committee of Ambassadors should attend the meetings of the Ministerial Council which are held in Lagos; the Ambassadors should be represented by their Chairman at sessions of the Council which were held outside the ECOWAS Headquarters.

It was equally noted with satisfaction the creation of a Committee of ECOWAS Ambassadors accredited to the European Economic Community and expressed the view that such initiatives should be encouraged.

20. Other Matters

No matters were raised under this item of the agenda.

21. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The Chairman proposed that the next session of Council should precede the forthcoming Summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government and should be held in May 1979 in Dakar, the Republic of Senegal.

This proposal was accepted by acclamation.

22. The Council of Ministers expressed its deepest satisfaction and gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Senegal for the warm and

fraternal welcome extended to them. Council has been particularly touched by the readiness with which the host country made available the excellent facilities which have contributed tremendously to the success of the meeting. The motion of thanks was moved by the representative of Togo.

THE COUNCIL

Appendix I

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

DAKAR 20 - 21 NOVEMBER 1978

OPENING SPEECH DELIVERED BY:

Honourable ABDOU DIOUF
Prime Minister of Senegal

Honourable Ministers,
Mr. Executive Secretary,
Honourable Delegates,

The Head of State, the Government, and the people of Senegal are pleased to welcome you to Dakar for the meeting of your Council.

On their behalf, I extend to you a warm welcome. Senegal attaches special importance to the cause which summons you here today; here I refer to cooperation and economic integration in Africa and its sub-regions.

Indeed, "regional co-operation which is an indispensable tool for achieving regional integration, can create the Unity and reinforcement of the African front in its external relations and consequently, give this front the power to affect positively, international decisions relating to the development of the continent.

This, eminent delegates, is the exact meaning of the African Declaration on cooperation, development and economic independence adopted by our Heads of States in May 1973.

It expresses the obvious need for our States, and the firm will of our leaders to work together in order to assure our development efforts of maximum efficiency both in our internal and external ventures.

The International climate, far from enhancing the efficiency of efforts at development of our potentialities and in the long run poses a threat to the prosperity of our nations and, it should be recognised, to international stability and world peace.

We must identify this and deplore it; the present international economic order is not satisfactory for poor nations and the new order, which they so much call for, does not seem imminent due to the spirit of incomprehension and egotism.

...?/.

Since the coming into force of the Treaty, our organisation has been evolving, and thanks to its sessions held in Dakar, it seems to me that we have reached a decisive turning point where the results of the deliberations of the Special Appointments Committee has finally put, at the disposition of the Community, the personnel it needs to conduct the task it has assumed.

Allow me to comment here that this is an important stage, and without attempting to redefine the goals we have already stated, suggest to you the establishment of a programme of action, concentrating on certain important aspects in the economic integration process.

You will have some important studies to examine. This is in order, because one must think well before acting.

Economic integration cannot be improvised. Those that have been created in haste have failed miserably. The most successful "common markets" are those that have been established in stages.

In my opinion, our first stage must be the liberalisation of trade and the free movement of goods and capital. Our study programme should therefore be organised in stages.

Here, we call on the lucidity of our Executive Secretariat, because we must take the necessary steps to undertake clinical and reliable studies to avoid liberalisation in chaos.

To conduct these studies, we must first of all, in collaboration with the personnel we have appointed, count on our own selves, that is to say, on our own experts.

We must also establish a strong link with the Universities and Research Centres because the Dakar Conference on economic ~~interpretation~~ has indicated to us that to achieve success in an economic Community, the cooperation of experts in the social sciences is necessary.

In this respect, as I have already stated, it is necessary to choose the studies carefully, taking into consideration their order in the hierarchy of the objectives established by the Treaty. It is only that we can undertake the projects and actions which the studies identified as workable within a short period of time and in line with the provisions of the Treaty or Protocols.

The need to economise on the limited means of our States and to avoid the dispersion of expertise should lead us to suspend studies whose results cannot be utilised by the Community within a reasonably short period of time.

In other words, a programme of action, in my opinion should concentrate on the different phases of the application of the provisions of the Treaty. If this scheme is not adhered to, the activities of the Community risk to be disorderly and the results, disappointing.

The programme I would like to outline for you is based on these principles stated above.

Without attempting to be too didactic, and concentrating on the very important provisions of the Treaty and Protocols, we could maintain the following as three important phases:

- the period of consolidation of tariffs
- the period referred to as that of free trade, a period of elimination of tariffs between Member States
- the period of Customs Union which goes with the establishment of a common external tariff.

At each of these stages studies should be conducted in line with established priorities.

During the first phase, priority should be given to:

- the rules of origin
- customs and statistical nomenclatures.

To be able to observe the proper inter-relationship between the different aspects of this programme and for the necessary monitoring of the programme, the report on "Studies and Research" which was presented to the fourth session of the Board of Directors should be fully utilised.

I feel, then, that the Permanent Committee on Studies and Research, instituted by Decision n° A/DEC/6/4/1978 of the Authority of Heads of State and Government on 22 April, 1978 has done a good job that merits careful study.

The programme referred to seems to me to concentrate too much on the integration of markets. For a more complete and balanced programme-needed for the goals it is expected to achieve, it would be necessary to give due attention to production issues.

This is why, parallel with these studies, we ought also to occupy ourselves with the coordination and harmonisation of policies in the field of industrial location.

We should also ensure that, in the policy measures to be proposed as a result of the study of our economies an emphasis is given to the establishment of regional industrial projects as well as complementary production units. For it is felt that, in declaring industry as one of the priority to encourage industrial complementarity and curb wasteful competitiveness.

My statement cannot end without urging for an open-door policy. ECOWAS must be open to and work with existing regional and sub-regional institutions. Apart from the fact that this should be purely enriching experience, it should be pointed out that the mechanisms of economic development are very similar and the collaboration being proposed would enhance coordination and eliminate implementation difficulties we might have encountered otherwise.

Ministers, Honourable delegates, your task is difficult and in some instances can appear unrewarding. It is admitted, however, that it is not easy to forge for a Community as complex and original as ours the instruments needed for the effective realisation of its initial goals.

As I have already stated, we need to be patient and cautious without failing to be bold; and above all, we need faith and a sense of responsibility for the task which history has imposed on us.

The difficult nature of the venture should not make us recoil from it. Our only guide should be our sense of solidarity; for, as President Leopold Sedar Senghor has so aptly put it: "divided, we suffer more acutely, the heavy weight resulting from unequal bilateral relations"

Wishing that the success in your deliberations fashion for the Community another decisive step in our attempts at achieving the Unity which we are all clamouring for, I declare open the 4th Session of the Council of Ministers of ECOWAS.

Thank you.

APPENDIX 11

ADDRESS OF DR. OMONIYI ADEWOYE, NIGERIA'S
FEDERAL COMMISSIONER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOP-
MENT AND CHAIRMAN, ECOWAS COUNCIL OF MINIS-
TERS TO THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN DAKAR, SENEGAL 21 - 22 NOVEMBER 1978

Your Excellencies,
Hon. Ministers and Colleagues,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

THE BEAUTY OF SELF - RELIANCE

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this meeting of the Council of Ministers, the first we are holding outside the headquarters of our organisation, ECOWAS. May I take this opportunity to thank our revered Head of State, President Leopold Senghor, the People and Government of the Republic of Senegal, for hosting the meeting and for the generosity of heart and warmth of affection which they have shown all of us since our arrival.

2. This meeting of the Council is unique in another respect. It is witnessing a change of baton at the leadership of the Council. Soon after this address, my friend and colleague, Mr. Ousmane Seck, this country's Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, will start directing the affairs of this Council. I am resisting the temptation to give you an account of my stewardship as the Chairman of the Council. It would be pretentious on my part as an individual to do so; for all that we have achieved has been a result of our combined efforts, the result of joyous cooperation. Together, we have succeeded in laying a solid foundation for the gigantic superstructure that ECOWAS is destined to be. We have built those institutions capable of sustaining

its steady growth. One cannot pretend that we have resolved all problems of structure within the organisation; situations that we do not envisage now would arise, demanding their own peculiar solutions. But with the kind of good will that we have demonstrated in the past, I am convinced that we would meet any challenges that they would pose. For the future in general I would want to plead with you that you extend to any successor in office the same kind of hearty cooperation which I did enjoy.

3. I believe we are now entering a new phase in our endeavour at economic cooperation. If, in the past, we have devoted our attention to the building of a proper structure within ECOWAS, now is the time to begin the actual work of development. The task is onerous, encompassing a wide range of activities: negotiations, studies and research, short-term and long-term planning, coordination and harmonization of national planning strategies into a coherent, community-oriented master plan, hard work and sweat, particularly on the part of our officials. I believe that in the flurry of activities that we would be engaging in, we need an orientation, a philosophy of action. It is for this reason that I have chosen in this my valedictory address to focus on what I believe is an appropriate orientation: self-reliance. It was in the 1960s that the great American artiste, James Brown, popularized a theme which echoed round the world: "I am Black and Proud". If I had the talents of a musician, and I were disposed to strike the same cord of Black Consciousness, I would want to sing to the world a related theme, of great significance today in the management of our economic affairs: "I'm self-reliant 'cause I'm proud".

4. Honourable Ministers, the call for self-reliance in and among developing countries, is not new. Almost all our leaders on the continent have, at one time or the other, emphasized the need for it in the development programmes for their countries. Such concepts as 'Negritude', 'authenticity', 'indigenization', connote some degree of self-assertion, and, when transposed into the economic sphere, a determination to be self-reliant. Need I remind you that ECOWAS was conceived of as an engine of collective self-reliance? The speeches by the Founding Fathers at the birth of the organisation reflect concern for development through self-reliance; so does the Treaty if one can read deeper meanings into its legal verbiage.

5. But are there any indications that we mean 'self-reliance' seriously, both as a Community and as individual nations? Do we act as if we know what 'self-reliance' means? If an outsider says "Africa, out of her past history of humiliation and degradation, is determined to tread the path of self-reliance; let me see what they are doing now", will that visitor find actions, mental attitudes, and development programmes consistent with our rhetoric? You and I know that we cannot be too confident about what the visitor would discover. By and large, our economies are still largely neo-colonial, manipulated ab extra by people who have only the least marginal interest in our welfare. We embrace their agents, the multinational corporations, in the wrong belief that they will 'develop' our lands through transfer of technology. How little we realize that since their predominant motivation is profit, the technology they would import into a developing country will be too advanced for the populace to relate to in any meaningful way.

6. In general the strategies for development which we have adopted to date bring to mind the African fable concerning the tortoise. Highly desirous of flying like various birds, the tortoise once hit upon an idea which he thought would make him reach for the sky. Observing that the capacity of birds to fly is closely related to their being covered with feathers, he went about looking for feathers which various birds had preened off, and had them carefully and ingeniously pasted to his body. Then came the day when he would fly. We are told that he did fly, and was at first proud of his achievement. But as he flew higher and higher, the paste holding the feathers began to melt. First one feather, then another, then a few more and more began to fall off. By the time the tortoise realised what was happening, he had begun the fateful drop to the ground. And what a drop that was! The shell of the tortoise was shattered and although attempts were made to mend it, it was never again the same beautiful body that he had.

7. Honourable Ministers, the moral of the fable is obvious. In our striving to develop our countries, and our Community, unless our strategies are consonant with the realities of our social situation, we would have succeeded in accumulating seemingly impressive structures, and registering a flurry of seemingly growth-inducing activities, but not development. For true development like the flying of a bird, springs from within. You cannot fly on borrowed wings.

8. It is worthwhile to elaborate a little on the concept of development. Development means the development of people. Roads, buildings, increases in agricultural production, while they may be

evidences of growth, are not development; they can be tools of development. In my view, development is essentially a human process. It is a process of moving the whole social system of a community upward, of mobilizing the whole society to engage in the task of self-improvement, so that each member of the society is enabled to fulfill himself, and the whole society is thus capable of coping with its problems and changing circumstances within the limitations of its resources. The key to development, Cairncross has rightly emphasized, "lies in men's minds".

9. From the foregoing, I want to submit that self-reliance is not merely a planning strategy, but a moral and spiritual necessity. For the individual as well as for nations, life has meaning and purpose. And in order to fulfill our purpose in the cosmic order of things, we are morally bound to be ourselves. We cannot be stagnant and be ourselves. We can only be ourselves by developing ourselves, employing our God-given talents to cope with our problems and our changing circumstances. Only by what he does can man develop himself - by the decisions he makes; by increasing his understanding of things through familiarization and experimentation; by his full participation in the life of his community; and, I daresay, by the mistakes he makes. The path of self-reliance is the path of true development. And in that lies its beauty.

10. Self-reliance as a philosophy of action in the economic sphere is not the same thing as autarky or self-sufficiency. All of us are, of necessity, involved in the world economy, and we shall continue to be involved. But it is imperative that we know what we want from our international economic relations. We should renounce conventions or agreements which would tend to ke

us on the periphery of the industrialised countries, by perpetuating our hitherto traditional role of suppliers of raw materials. In our international economic relations, we should seek those processes and methods of production which we can adapt (not adopt) to our social conditions. We should use our international economic relations as mechanisms for securing ownership or user rights of those components of development and economic growth processes (as we envisaged and planned them) which are not available within borders.

11. To devise a strategy for self-reliance in economic development in respect of each of our countries, and the Community as a whole is, obviously, the job for our planners. But I would want to underline three points, all of them, flowing from my earlier statement. First, since development means development of people, a strategy for self-reliance must focus on the society as a whole and seek to reorientate it. Tastes and consumption patterns, strongly conditioned and influenced by earlier value preferences, European-oriented and alien, would have to change. One of our respected leaders has put the point succinctly :

It must be clear that [self-reliance] involves for our countries the deliberate rejection of Western standards of consumption - both for individuals and for the society. Instead we have to establish, and to implement, economic goals more appropriate for our present and our expected level of national wealth-production.

12. In establishing and implementing such economic goals - this is my second point - the masses of our people must be involved. For too long, there has been undue emphasis on intensive projects as if we believed that those projects constitute development. The so-called experts are brought in from Europe

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America at very considerable expense to design projects, and over contractors usually execute them. It is rare to find projects being designed with the sole purpose of involving our people in the process of development. Consequently, we have succeeded alienating the mass of the people, not often because they are not provided for, but because we have created in their minds the expectation that Government must provide everything for them. Programmes for development should be people-oriented as much as possible because, as I said earlier, it is by doing and by making mistakes that a people can develop.

13. Thirdly, designing development programmes for self-reliance would require of leaders, policy makers and planners imaginative innovative thinking. They would be required to develop as a matter of urgency a profound grasp of the nature and dynamics of the processes of socio-economic change that will lead to accelerated reliant and self-sustaining development. In view of very great intellectual pressures to conform to conventional notions about development, and on account of the foreign aid that might be offered for programmes that are designed and executed in the conventional ways, innovative thinking would not be easy. But we have no choice if we want to break away from the peripheral role we are playing in the existing international economic order.

14. How have we fared in ECOWAS in terms of planning for self-reliance within the Community? It is rather too early to judge our performance in this regard; but I must confess I have noticed one rather unhealthy tendency. There is a propensity to rush to Europe and America for consultants particularly in the field of studies. I cannot help recalling the story of the peasant in

the Arabian fable who was convinced he would make a fortune if only he could find a piece of diamond. He went round the world, incredible as it may sound, on foot in search of diamond. Just as he was about to give up, he was lucky to meet a fortune teller. The poor peasant was told that the key to the desire his heart was that he should plant a number of trees in his backyard. In the context of desert Arabia, this requirement entails a lot of digging. But as the peasant dug the ground, he discovered one piece of diamond after another. As events turned out, his whole garden was acres of diamonds!

15. The moral is clear, Honourable Ministers. In our own backyard, within West Africa, we have acres of diamonds in the form of experts and innovative thinkers if only we can exercise necessary patience to look hard for them. After all, what are foreign consultants but men, with their own biases and prejudices, and their own outlook moulded by their respective European and American background?

16. I believe it is also time ECOWAS embarked upon a program that would accelerate our technological development in the Community. When we talk of technology, our minds invariably turn on 'transfer' it from Europe as if anyone voluntarily transfers the kind of technology that would suit the peculiar circumstances of another. Technology is nothing more than the application of the human mind to the problems of particular areas and circumstances. ECOWAS can help us turn where we should turn - inwards, within West Africa within our own backyards. A first step would be for the Secretariat to prepare with our full cooperation a thorough inventory of the technology infrastructures (however rudimentary) that exist in

member countries. We would be amazed how much technology is already developed in particular fields. In the process of our sharing the knowledge of what now exists through a well-planned programme of exchange of students and experts to study in one another's institutions, we would, I am convinced, improve upon what we have. This is one sure way of developing our own technology instead of looking for the transfer of an unsuitable substitute from outside to which we cannot relate precisely because it does not spring from our genius.

17. Honourable Ministers and Colleagues, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to express my sincere appreciation to all of you for your cooperation which I enjoyed during my term of office as Chairman. It has been an exciting and rewarding experience, because ECOWAS itself is exciting and worthwhile. It is my fervent hope that we would grow from strength to strength. The path to regional economic cooperation is not always smooth; but, but whatever the future would bring, please, let us be determined to keep the flag flying. I thank you.

O. ADEWOYE,
15th November, 1978.