

17

ECW/CM/VII/2

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING
LOME 22ND - 24TH MAY 1980



C O N T E N T S

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY SINCE THE LAST SESSION OF COUNCIL

- Running of the Institutions since the last session of Council
- Issues emanating from the deliberations of technical commissions

GENERAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS OF COMMUNITY SINCE INCEPTION

CONCLUSION

LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY SINCE THE LAST SESSION OF COUNCIL

- Running of the Institutions since the last session of Council
- Issues emanating from the deliberations of technical commissions.

I - RUNNING OF THE INSTITUTIONS SINCE THE LAST SESSION OF
COUNCIL

Since the last session of the Council of Ministers in Dakar in November, 1979 the Executive Secretariat has devoted its attention to the implementation of the Community Priority Programme:

- Trade Liberalisation and Promotion Programme
- Free Movement of Persons
- Transport and Telecommunications
- Regional Industrial Policy Programme.

What follow below are details of progress made in each of the areas of the Priority Programme.

A - TRADE LIBERALISATION AND PROMOTION PROGRAMME

In my Report to the November, 1979 Session of Council indication was given of a number of studies and research programmes which were nearing completion. I am happy to inform Council that the following studies have been completed:

- Import and Export Regimes
- Intra-Community Trade Expansion Potentials with Reference to Food Production, Livestock and Forestry Products
- Joint Promotion Measures on Intra-Community Trade
- Structure of capital ownership of Industrial Enterprises.

The findings and recommendations of these studies have been used in formulating the various policy proposals and programmes which are before Council.

In addition to the above studies, it should be mentioned that the following studies that the Secretariat was mandated to undertake in connection with the Priority Work Programme are at various stages of execution:

- Industrial Policy Framework and Programme
- Non-Convertibility of Currencies of Member States
- Fiscal Cooperation: Internal Indirect Taxation
- Inter-State Road Transit.

1. The Setting up of an Administrative and Procedural Framework

The issues which were outstanding in the area of customs and especially rules of origin have been resolved by the Trade, Customs, Immigration, Monetary and Payments Commission. This has enabled the Commission to finalise the following documents:

- ECOWAS Certificate of Origin
- ECOWAS Movement Certificate
- ECOWAS Customs Declaration Form for Temporary Admission
- ECOWAS Customs Declaration Form for Warehousing
- Rules and Procedures for the Verification and Proof of the Community Origin of Products from Member States.

These documents are submitted to Council now for approval.

The above-mentioned Commission has a series of proposals on the following problems relating to the ECOWAS Rules of Origin:

Article II.2 of the Protocol on Rules of Origin:
Setting levels of national participation.

Article III.4 of the Protocol on Rules of Origin:
Fish and Fish Products.

Article VII of the Protocol on Rules of Origin:
Segregation of Materials

Article VIII of the Protocol on Rules of Origin:
Treatment of Mixtures.

The recommendations of the Commission are being
submitted for Council's approval.

2. Preparation of the Trade Promotion and Liberali- sation Programme

Council may recall that during its last session,
the scheme for the liberalisation of trade in agricultural
products was adopted.

The preparatory work on a scheme for trade libera-
lisation in industrial products was carried out by an Ad
Hoc Committee and its proposals were presented to the
Trade, Customs, Immigration, Monetary and Payments Commis-
sion. Recommendations made at the end of the discussions
by the Commission are placed before Council for approval.

Apart from the above recommendations which cover
customs tariffs, the Commission has adopted a scheme for
the liberalisation of all non-tariff barriers to intra-
Community trade. The scheme on the elimination of these
non-tariff barriers is submitted to Council for approval.

Due to shortage of time, work on the liberalisation
of trade in traditional handicrafts could not be completed.
This remaining aspect of the liberalisation of intra-
Community trade would be attended to and a report presented
at the next session of Council.

The Report on the Joint Promotion Measures on Intra-
Community Trade calls for specific action in various areas
of trade promotion. To make the liberalisation of trade
within the sub-region achieve the expected effect, the
Secretariat plans to follow up the findings and recommenda-
tions of the above study so that the appropriate promotion
measures might be adopted and implemented as soon as possible.
(See also paragraphs on Industrial and Agricultural Programmes
below).

B - FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS

Preparatory work on the definition of Community citizen is in progress. The findings of the Ad Hoc Committee set up for the study would be presented to a meeting of experts in immigration and law from all Member States in August. It is expected that an agreed definition would be found and presented to Council at the next meeting.

It is almost a year now since the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment was signed by the Authority of Heads of State and Government. It is my painful duty to inform Council that only six (6) Member States are actually implementing the Protocol. I have treated the problems posed by this poor performance in another section of this Report. I shall therefore, not make any further comment now.

C - TRANSPORT AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

1. Transport Programme

The Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Commission has examined the Report on the "Study on the Coordination of Transport and Communications" and has proposed a Transport Development Programme for adoption and implementation.

This Programme is submitted to Council for approval.

It may be recalled that the Secretariat had been requested to study the question of road transit. This study is under way and is being examined in the context of transport legislation. All existing conventions on Inter-State Transit or Transport Legislation are being studied to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the issues involved. It is hoped that an ECOWAS Inter-State Transit Convention would be presented to the next Council meeting for adoption.

Meanwhile, ECOWAS has initiated action in coordinating the transport programmes of all the relevant sub-regional organisations.

2. Telecommunications Programme

The Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Commission studied the recommendations of the ECOWAS Expert Group on the Telecommunications Programme which was adopted in May, 1979. The Commission adopted the following:

- technical options for the implementation of the telecommunications network.
- common tariff rates for telecommunications services in West Africa
- routing plan for telecommunication links
- creation of a Special Fund for the development of the sub-regional telecommunications network.

These proposals are submitted to Council for approval.

D - INDUSTRY

Within the framework of expanding trade among Member States, as a crucial part of the "Trade Liberalisation and Promotion Programme" a general outline of Industrial Policy and Programme was approved by Council in November, 1979. The mandate given to the Secretariat at that meeting to see to the effective formulation of the policies and programmes is being pursued. Contact has been made with the UNDP and UNIDO in this connection. The interest shown by these United Nations Agencies may be gauged by the Project Document drafted to undertake the studies required for the formulation of:

- Legal framework for Community Enterprises
- Master-plans for Priority Industrial Sectors.

The draft Project Document proposes UNDP financial contribution of \$822,000 to the programme and the remaining \$234,000 from ECOWAS. The approval of Council is being sought to enable the Executive Secretary to sign the Project Document.

E - AGRICULTURE

One of the projects approved in connection with the Trade Studies was in the field of "Trade Expansion Potentials with Reference to Food Production, Livestock and Forestry Products". As mentioned above, the report on this part, which included fisheries has been completed and has been examined by the Industry, Agriculture and Natural Resources Commission.

A number of measures has been recommended by the above Commission in the agricultural sector to enhance the expansion of intra-community trade in agricultural products.

F - SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Council would recall that it gave its consent for the establishment of an ECOWAS Bilingual Institute for Management and Public Administration in principle in July 1977. The Secretariat followed the Council's directive given at the time and prepared a detailed outline of that project, comprising the scope of activities of the Institute, its Constitution and its financial implications. The Social and Cultural Affairs Commission and the Committee of Finance Experts have examined and approved the project outline and the budget of the Institute.

The approval of Council is being sought to embark on the execution of the project along the lines proposed in the project document.

II - ISSUES EMANATING FROM DELIBERATIONS OF TECHNICAL COMMISSIONS

A ISSUES EMANATING FROM THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE TRADE, CUSTOMS, IMMIGRATION, MONETARY AND PAYMENTS COMMISSION

1. TRADE LIBERALISATION AND PROMOTION PROGRAMME

Industrial Products: A scheme for the liberalisation of trade in industrial products was presented to the Trade, Customs, Immigration, Monetary and Payments Commission at its Cotonou meeting. The scheme envisages that all industrial products would enjoy total exemption from all tariffs by the 28 May, 1989 in all Member States. All Member States are required to begin reducing tariffs as from 28 May, 1981 on all products. However, the pace of tariff reduction will vary according to the priority given to an industrial product and the country into which the product is being imported. The higher the priority accorded a product and the more industrialised the country, the faster the tariff elimination would be effected.

The Trade, Customs, Immigration, Monetary and Payments Commission has endorsed the proposed scheme which is now being put before Council for consideration.

Non-Tariff Barriers: A proposal on the elimination of non-tariff barriers to intra-community trade was presented to the Commission for its consideration. The proposal, which was endorsed by the Commission, stipulates that non-tariff barriers ought to be eliminated ahead of the tariff elimination programme if the latter exercise is to be effective. For this reason, it was decided that elimination of all types of non-tariff barriers should begin on 28th May 1981 and should be completed by all Member States within four years. The rate of elimination was left to the discretion of each Member State. Council is invited to consider and approve this proposal.

It should be recalled that Council approved the proposal presented in November 1979 for the complete elimination of all tariff and non-tariff barriers to intra-Community trade in unprocessed products as from 28th May, 1981. If the scheme being proposed in respect of industrial products is adopted, only traditional handicrafts would be left for which a trade liberalisation scheme is yet to be devised. It is expected that a scheme for traditional handicrafts would have been found by the next session of Council.

The Trade Promotion part of the above programme which was endorsed by Council in November, 1979 is receiving attention. The work involved should have advanced sufficiently by the time of the next session of Council to enable us make a draft proposal available for your consideration.

2. RULES OF ORIGIN

Level of National Participation (Article II.2 of the Protocol on the definition of the concept of originating products): The report of the ad hoc Committee set up to study this issue was put before the Commission. After discussing the factors involved, the Commission decided that the following levels of national participation in the equity capital of enterprises producing originating goods must be attained by the corresponding dates:

20% as from 28 May, 1981

35% as from 28 May, 1983; and

51% as from 28 May, 1989.

The above proposals are submitted to Council for consideration.

Fish and Fish Products (Article III.4 of the Protocol on originating Products): The Commission examined the report of the ad hoc Committee of Maritime Law and Fisheries Experts which considered the problems posed by vessels used in fishing. The agreement was reached to recommend to Council the amendment of the above Article of the Protocol by the addition of a new paragraph on chartered vessels. This

addition reflects the existing situation in the Fishery industry of the sub-region where, among other things, lack of capital occasions the chartering of foreign boats.

Council is invited to approve the inclusion of chartered vessels, in the fleet permitted to be used for fishing, under the stipulated conditions.

Segregation of Materials (Article VII of the Protocol on Originating Products): The ad hoc Committee on Rules of Origin proposed an accounting system to be used by enterprises whose products come under the provisions of Article VII of the Protocol. The accounting system proposed would make it possible to determine the proportions of originating and non-originating materials used in the production process, even if the materials are stocked together. This way, the Community would be able to determine the contribution made by the originating material to the production of the finished goods and whether that contribution attains the level needed to make the whole product qualify as originating.

The Commission approved the suggested accounting system which is now put before Council for consideration.

Treatment of Mixtures (Article VIII of the Protocol on Rules of Origin): The Commission endorsed the proposal made by the ad hoc Committee on the Rules of Origin that products coming under Article VIII should be treated on a case by case basis. Member States would be expected to apply for the application of the provisions of Article VIII and this would be studied on its own merits. If the application proves to be valid, the Council of Ministers would stipulate the conditions that should be fulfilled by the enterprise of the Member State concerned.

The Council of Ministers is invited to approve this proposal.

3. HARMONISED CUSTOMS DOCUMENTS

The Commission examined and approved the following customs documents which the ad hoc Committee on Rules of Origin had proposed for adoption by the Community:

- ECOWAS Certificate of Origin
- ECOWAS Movement Certificate
- ECOWAS Customs Declaration Form for Temporary Admission
- ECOWAS Customs Declaration Form for Warehousing; and
- Rules and Procedures for the Verification and Proof of the Community Origin of Products from Member States.

Council is invited to consider the above-named Customs documents for adoption by the Community and implementation on January 1st, 1981.

4. PROCEDURES FOR COMPENSATION OF LOSS OF REVENUE

The ad hoc Committee on Compensation made a number of proposals in its report with regard to:

- Definitions and Procedures
 - Budget for Compensation;
 - Contribution to the Budget for Compensation;
 - Payment of Compensation;
 - Modalities and Frequency of Payment of Compensation;
- and - Entry into force of the Procedures.

The Committee identifies the products whose importation would cause a loss of revenue (originating industrial products). The report goes on to state that the loss suffered is the difference in receipts between what revenue would have been collected if the rates ruling on 28 May 1979 (most favoured nation rates or general rates, whichever is applicable) and the ECOWAS preferential rates that are actually applied in accordance with the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Programme.

The budget for compensation would be the total loss suffered by all the sixteen Member States. Member States would contribute to the budget for compensation on the basis of their

individual shares of intra-Community trade in industrial products; such contributions would have to be made before the end of the first month of the financial year. There would be no payment of compensation for loss of revenue arising from re-exported products. Advance payments estimated to be equal to a quarter of the total amount due to the Member State might be made. Conditions are given for the submission of claims. All rights to compensation cease five years after the financial year in which the loss was incurred. A system of re-distribution is incorporated to assist the less industrialised Member States. Contributions and payments are to be made in convertible currency.

The Commission endorsed the proposals and recommended its approval by Council.

The Secretariat proposes that the procedures enter into effect from 28 May 1981 when the trade liberalisation starts.

B - ISSUES EMANATING FROM THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY COMMISSION

1. COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PROGRAMME

As part of the Short-Term Priority Programme of the Community, Council approved the "Study on the Coordination of Transport and Communications". The Report on this study was presented to a meeting of the Directors of Transport and then to the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Commission. The Commission approved a Community Transport Programme which covers the following areas:

- The development and modernization of Transport infrastructures;
- Making land-locked or isolated countries accessible as rapidly as possible;
- Harmonisation of Transport Legislations of Member States;

- Adoption of standard equipment for Transport networks;
- Encouragement and establishment of African Industries to produce transport equipment;
- Establishment of Training Centres in Transportation.

The Transport Programme will be executed in two phases: Short-term and Long-term action programmes. The objective of the whole programme is to establish a modern efficient regional network consisting of all the various modes of transport. It incorporates the Trans-West African Highway.

Much of the development of our sub-region will depend on the existence of a fast and reliable means of transport and communication. Council is, therefore, invited to consider and adopt the Community Transport Programme placed before it.

2. TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

At the last session of Council, approval was given to the Secretariat to study and make proposals on the following aspects of the Telecommunications Programme:

- an efficient routing plan;
- principle of adopting a uniform tariff;
- principle of creating a special fund.

Work has continued on these preliminary assignments. The Commission has studied the various proposals presented by the Secretariat and made recommendations to Council on the following subjects:

- Technical options for the implementation of the telecommunications network;
- Preliminary proposals on Tariff rates;
- Seminar on Statistical Data;
- Creation of Statistical Data Services;
- Establishment of a Special Fund for telecommunications;
- Provisional Community Tax for the Special Fund for telecommunications;
- Routing plan for telecommunications links.

The report of the Commission on Telecommunications matters is placed before Council for consideration.

C - ISSUES EMANATING FROM THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE INDUSTRY,
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

AGRICULTURE

After the completion of the Study on "Trade Expansion Potentials with Reference to Food Production, Livestock and Forestry Products", its findings were analysed and an Action Programme was formulated. This Action Programme was considered by the Industry, Agriculture and Natural Resources Commission.

The Programme covers Food Crops, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry Products. The following items were approved by the Commission:

Food Crops:

- creation of an Information Service;
- cooperation in Crop and Forest Research;
- Programme of multiplication, production and distribution of seed;
- analysis of potential for increase in agricultural production.

Livestock:

- Coordination of studies on the livestock industry within the sub-region;
- Breeding stations for developing selected breeding-stocks;
- Improvement of animal health;
- Improvement of meat hygiene.

Fisheries:

- Establishment of sub-regional fishery centre;
- Creation of a Community system of surveillance of territorial waters;
- Establishment of a sub-commission on fisheries.

Forestry:- Establishment of a consultative committee on the development of forest and wild-life resources.

It should be pointed out that activities envisaged above are intended to enhance the expansion of the short-term trade potential in agricultural products as well as lay the foundation for a longer term programme in the agricultural sector.

The report of the Commission is submitted to Council for approval.

D - ISSUES EMANATING FROM THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION 11

The Social and Cultural Affairs Commission met for the first time to consider the document prepared by the Secretariat on the proposed ECOWAS Regional Institute for Management and Public Administration. Council would recall that approval was given in principle in July 1977 for the establishment of this Institute. The Commission examined the detailed information on the project that the Secretariat was requested in 1977 to furnish.

Council is invited to consider the document as endorsed by the Commission.

GENERAL REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF THE COMMUNITY SINCE ITS
INCEPTION

II. GENERAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS OF THE COMMUNITY SINCE ITS INCEPTION

The main aim of the various institutions of the Community has thus far, been to make ECOWAS operational. To this end action has been taken to establish an effective administrative machinery, improve and complement the basic documents of the Community to make them implementable, gather background information and (on the basis of this information) formulate fundamental regional policies and programmes.

Since these initial activities have been almost completed and we are in the process of shifting to the next phase of Community building, it is deemed necessary to record what the achievements of the first phase have been.

A - INSTALLATION AND OPERATION OF THE COMMUNITY ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY

The administrative machinery of the Community is taken in this context to mean not only the Executive Secretariat and the ECOWAS Fund Offices but the other institutions as well. The Treaty lacked the necessary details to launch the institutions of the Community and conscious effort has had to be made to draw up Rules of Procedures and other enabling clauses and institute the periodic and orderly meeting of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers, the Board of Directors of the Fund, the four technical and specialised Commissions and the Committee of Governors of Central Banks of West Africa.

All the four technical commissions established under Article 4 of the Treaty have become operational.

The Executive organs of the Community - the Executive Secretariat and the ECOWAS Fund Office - had to have all their necessary basic documents prepared (organisational charts, job profiles of the officials, operational rules: Staff Regulations, Conditions of Service, Financial Regulations and other administrative procedures), to make them operational at their respective locations.

B - IMPROVEMENT OF BASIC TEXTS OF THE COMMUNITY

One outstanding characteristic of the ECOWAS Treaty and Protocols is that the provisions are couched in general terms. It has been necessary to work out the details to make the basic documents implementable.

The outcome of all this has been the amendment or modification of some important articles, among which may be mentioned:

1. Extension of the provisions of Article 13 of the Treaty - to make the Consolidation of Tariff Barriers be applicable to non-tariff barriers.
2. Modification of Article 27 of the Treaty - to provide for a Protocol on Freedom of Movement, Right of Residence and Establishment and re-definition of "Community citizen".
3. Modification of Article I of the Protocol on Rules of Origin - the notion of "Value Added".
4. Modification of Article II.1(c) of the Protocol on Rules of Origin - replacement of "FOB price" by the concept of "ex-factory cost price before tax".
5. Additional Protocol to Article II.2 of the Protocol on Rules of Origin fixing the desirable levels of capital participation in enterprises.
6. Modification of Article III.4 of Protocol on Rules of Origin - providing for the use of chartered ships in fishing.
7. Additional Protocol to Article VII of the Protocol on Rules of Origin - determining the accounting system to be adopted in lieu of physical segregation of materials.

8. Additional Protocol to Article VIII of the Protocol on Rules of Origin - determining conditions for accepting mixtures as originating products.
9. Extension of the provisions of the Protocol on Re-exportation to cover originating goods re-exported within the Community.

C - ASSEMBLING OF BASIC INFORMATION

It is obvious that apart from the known problem of national administrations not having in the past taken account of the existence of the other countries of the sub-region in national planning, those international and external organisations that were in a position to do so had not viewed West Africa as a single unit. The Community was, therefore, born into a situation where very little useful information existed on the area it covered. It was imperative then to begin an exercise of information and data gathering in the immediate areas of interest to the Community.

A series of studies were embarked upon with the approval of the Council. These studies were carried out in the following fields: trade, customs, immigration, monetary issues, fiscal matters, industry, agriculture, transport, telecommunications and a critical appraisal of economic conditions of the sub-region. Almost all of these preliminary studies have been completed and their findings helped in the definition of the short-term Priority Work Programme of the Community.

D - PRIORITY WORK PROGRAMME

In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty and also as a reflection of the recommendations emanating from the above studies, a Community Short-Term Priority Work Programme was defined and covered the areas mentioned above.

The efforts of the Community have consequently been directed towards the implementation of the Priority Programme. The aim was to formulate basic policies in these areas, adopt common procedures where necessary and agree on Community Programmes. In this regard, the following accomplishments of the Community may be enumerated:

- Declaration of the Customs Consolidation Period
- Adoption of ECOWAS Customs and Statistical Nomenclature
- Adoption of ECOWAS Common Statistical Definitions and Standards
- ECOWAS Customs Declaration Forms
- ECOWAS Certificate of Origin
- ECOWAS Movement Certificate
- Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment
- Protocol on Non-Agression
- Adoption of a Community Telecommunications Programme.

Apart from the above issues to which definitive solutions have been found and firm decisions taken, the following are the other areas on which work is in progress:

- Trade Liberalisation and Promotion Programme
- Proposed Community Compensation Procedures
- ECOWAS Industrial Policy and Programme
- Proposed Community Transport Programme
- Proposed ECOWAS Bilingual Institute of Management and Public Administration

It is expected that decisions would have been made on the above before the end of this year, except for the ECOWAS Industrial Policy and Programmes which is expected to be presented in May, 1981.

Thus, it may be said that the main orientations have now been defined to enable the Community move to the next phase of its life - the implementation of these policy measures and programmes.

E - RELATIONS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

One of the cardinal philosophies of the Founding Fathers of ECOWAS was collective self-reliance. So far, we have strived to reflect this principle in our actions. This does not necessarily mean that we have opted for autarchy. We have had to develop, therefore, working relations with the outside world.

The need has been amply demonstrated to cooperate with all the inter-governmental organisations operating within the sub-region to which any number of our Member States belong. Invariably, their aims are to foster cooperation and development and pursue policies and programmes that if not coordinated, would lead to duplication, unnecessary competition among these organisations and dissipation of the meagre resources of the sub-region.

It has also been found necessary to cooperate with international organisations which run programmes in the sub-region. The aim is to encourage larger allocations of financial and technical resources by these organisations to our sub-region as well as influence the orientation of their programmes in order to make them contribute more to the development of the sub-region.

The relationships established with these sub-regional and international organisations shall be maintained and improved upon.

It is important to point out that ECOWAS has reached a point in its development where it is imperative that its relationships with sister Organisations similar in terms of aims and approach have to be clarified. In this connection, special reference needs to be made to CEAO and Mano River Union. I would like to bring to the attention of Council, a request made by the two Organisations for a derogation from Article 20 of

the ECOWAS Treaty. It should be noted that these two sister sub-regional organisations are in the process of implementing trade liberalisation programmes among their Member States. Article 20 of the ECOWAS Treaty requires that "Member States shall accord to one another in relation to trade between them the most favoured nation treatment"

The request of these two sub-regional organisations for derogation would allow their Member States to keep among themselves the preferential treatment afforded by their respective liberalisation programmes.

The Council of Ministers is called upon to consider this request of CEA0 and Mano River Union.

Symposium on ECOWAS

The steady progress being made by our Community is giving effect to a few manifestations. One of such developments is the growing interest the United States of America is showing in the Community. Apart from the normal offer of assistance through USAID, the US Government proposes to organise, through its Department of State, a week-long symposium on ECOWAS in Washington from 7 to 16 June, 1980.

The Symposium is to inform the American public about the objectives and programmes of ECOWAS and the opportunities and new openings that the Community offers entrepreneurs in West Africa. Participants would include industrialists, commercial operators, legislators, lawyers, academicians as well as government officials. It is obvious that this Symposium would give ECOWAS the opportunity to be introduced to a wider international audience.

Contribution of the UN Organisation

I would like to bring to the attention of Council the continued interest of the United Nations Organisations and its Specialised Agencies. The following Agencies have so far made

appreciable contributions to the ECOWAS Priority Programme: UNDP, ECA, UNCTAD, UNIDO, ITC. There are indications that assistance could be obtained from GATT and IMF in the implementation of our current priority programme.

Relations with the EEC

Council would recall that the European Economic Community (EEC) sponsored the customs and statistical nomenclatures harmonisation project. I would like to inform Council that following the directive received to identify sources of finance - when the Community Telecommunications Programme was adopted - the EEC was among the potential donors contacted. The EEC is in principle prepared to contribute to the implementation of the Programme to the tune of about \$50 million.

C O N C L U S I O N

C O N C L U S I O N

I would like to end my presentation by drawing the Council's attention to some problems facing the Community as well as prospects for the near future. It would be necessary to give these issues some thought; if not, the progress forecast for the future would be adversely affected by the worsening of these problems. I would like to stress in particular the problems which are of an internal nature.

The first problem I would like to touch upon relates to the functioning of the Community. There are at least three areas that need to be improved to enable the Community operate more smoothly

DECISION AND IMPLEMENTATION MACHINERY

At the Community level: All decisions arrived at have to be unanimous. While this fosters a spirit of solidarity, it requires a long process of patient negotiations and compromise. While we agree that it is desirable to retain the principle of unanimity, we feel it is very necessary to re-consider the requirement of all Community decisions to be ratified by Member States.

At the National level : An efficient and operational machinery needs to be set up to assure the competent handling of ECOWAS matters. The slowness of ratification and implementation of decisions may be attributed to the weak internal implementation arrangements.

With the assumption of duty by the permanent professional staff of the Institutions, it should be possible to cut down on the need for the executing arms of the Community to present matters to the other Institutions of the Community. This was necessary at the earlier period because the technical commissions were needed to supplement the efforts of the skeletal staff that existed; At the present stage to which we have evolved, this procedure is becoming an impediment.

Attitude towards Community Obligations : It is sad to note once more that all Member States are not promptly discharging their financial obligations towards the Community. Now that the Institutions are all poised to operate at full steam, serious disruptions of Community programme would be encountered if the past high rate of default in contributions should continue. Significant improvements in the financial performance of Member States need therefore to be registered.

Interference in the running of the Institutions: Although all Member States solemnly affirmed their commitment to the principle of neutrality of officials of the Institutions of the Community when the "Staff Regulations" were adopted, there have been instances where some officials have been in such direct communication with Member States as to jeopardise their loyalty to the Community. If the Institutions of the Community are to enjoy the trust of all Member States and to seek the interest of ECOWAS with undivided attention; this breach of the Staff Regulations must cease; but efforts at sanctioning officials would be ineffective or might be misconstrued if all Member States do not cooperate with us.

I am confident that if due attention is paid to these problems, we can look forward to the next stage in the development of our Community with great confidence.

I thank you.



NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY