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MAIN CONCLUSIONS
OF THE
AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC (ACP)
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
SPECIAL SESSION

(Montego Bay, 7-10 July 1980)

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Foreword

The conclusions set forward here need to be supplemented by the final texts of the ACP resolutions when eventually they become available. Although a Drafting Group operated throughout the period of the Conference, adjustments to the texts continued to be made right throughout the night of the last day of the Conference. Accordingly, the ACP Secretariat was entrusted the task of, in due course, circulating fair copies of the resolutions.

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Trade

It was generally agreed that the promotion and expansion of trade is an important aspect of the programme of collective self-reliance. In an effort to achieve this objective the Council identified four major areas for priority action:

(i) Council mandated the Committee of Ambassadors to give priority attention to the establishment of an ACP trade information system.

(ii) The Council, concerned about the deteriorating world food situation and the financial technological constraints faced by developing countries in their efforts to increase food production mandated the Committee of Ambassadors and the ACP Secretariat to:

(a) undertake studies to identify the import food needs of individual ACP States and to advise on specific action which could be taken to exploit the opportunities within ACP States for the production of and trade in specific food commodities;

(b) undertake a comprehensive examination of energy requirements of ACP States with a view towards finding common approaches towards the solution of energy problems.

(iii) The Council of Ministers called upon the ACP States to undertake appropriate measures to liberalise trade among themselves, and to contribute effectively towards the creation of preferential trade arrangements on a bilateral or multilateral basis among developing countries.

(iv) With the view to promoting trade exchanges between the ACP States by initiating direct contacts between ACP importers and exporters, the Council called upon the ACP States and their respective regional integration institutions to assist in the development and strengthening of regional unions of Chambers of Commerce. Council also endorsed in principle the proposal for the establishment of a Federation of ACP Chambers of Commerce.

Finance

There was not consensus on the immediate establishment of the ACP Trade and Investment Bank. The Council adopted the position that the matter should be referred back to national capitals for proper study, and that it would be further considered at the ACP level at a later date.

Transport

In the field of transport and communication, the Council:

(i) Urged that ACP Member States should ratify the UN Convention to the Code of Conduct of Liner Conferences at the earliest opportunity.

(ii) Urged that ACP States adopt a short-term programme of activities in the field of maritime transport which would include: the establishment of national and regional shippers councils; the co-ordination within each region of the activities of national shipping lines; the harmonisation of maritime laws; and the facilitation of transit to the sea for landlocked and semi-landlocked countries.

(iii) Directed the Committee of Ambassadors and the ACP Secretariat to convene a meeting of the organisations responsible for air transport matters in the ACP States, with a view to examining the possibilities for the establishment of more direct air links between ACP Member States.

Role of Regional and International Organisations

The Council noted that the proposed activities identified for inter-ACP co-operation fell generally within the areas of concern of many ACP regional institutions and international organisations, and that closer co-operation between the ACP Group and these organisations would be mutually beneficial. The regional organisations and international agencies were therefore invited to give technical assistance and support towards the development of closer intra-ACP ties and in the implementation of the specific projects and programmes which emanated from this Special Session.

MONTEGO BAY PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE SUVA DECLARATION AND THE PROGRAMME
OF ACTION FOR INTRA-ACP CO-OPERATION

The Council of Ministers of the ACP Group Meeting at its Special Session on Intra-ACP Co-operation at Rose Hall, Montego Bay, Jamaica from 7-10 July 1980.

RECALLING the Georgetown Agreement of 1975, establishing the ACP Group; the Suva Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the ACP Council of Ministers at its Thirteenth Session held in Suva, Fiji in 1977; the recommendations of the Bangui Conference on ACP Co-operation in Transport and Communications; and the Nairobi Conference on the development and promotion of ACP trade;

MINDFUL of the important role of intra-ACP co-operation in advancing the social and economic development of ACP countries;

RECOGNISING that practical action to implement intra-ACP co-operation requires political commitment among ACP countries;

STRESSING THE NEED to establish procedures and mechanisms which can ensure effective implementation of intra-ACP co-operation including, inter alia, trade exchanges; food production and trade; a trade information system; technical assistance from regional and international organisations; co-operation in the field of energy, the strengthening of the ACP Secretariat; the establishment of an ACP Bank for trade and investment; Chambers of Commerce; the implementation of the recommendation of the Bangui Charter on Maritime Transport; the ratification of the UN Convention on a Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences; co-operation in the field of postal services and telecommunication, air and surface transport and the harmonisation of traffic procedures;

DECLARES that the decisions reached at this session of the Council constitute a coherent programme for the implementation of intra-ACP co-operation;

FURTHER DECLARES that implementation should be carried out as speedily as possible;

DECIDES that the individual elements of this programme of implementation will be the subject of review at the meeting of the Council of Ministers following the specified date of completion of each element and that the entire programme will be reviewed and evaluated at a Special Session of the Council of Ministers, the date of which will be recommended by the Committee of Ambassadors in consultation with the ACP Secretariat.

