

Editorial

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY is at present engaged in negotiating the third Lomé Convention with the 63 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states from the third world. This Journal continues to follow closely the arrangements made under these conventions, with two articles elsewhere in this issue and one in the last. The first two Lomé agreements fell short of what the ACP countries hoped for, and the third is likely to do the same. The partners to the negotiations are far from equal, and the EEC will be able once more to impose its own pattern so that trends and distribution of benefits can hardly be expected to be greatly altered.

Nonetheless, if Lomé is not the "model" of North-South co-operation which is sometimes claimed for it in EEC circles, it has proved its positive value to a large number of small and very poor countries, which include 22 of the 36 recognized least developed countries, many of them bordering on the Sahel. It is certainly more beneficial to them than the Integrated Programme of Commodities or the GSP.

It is clearly right that the negotiations towards the third convention should have the interests of the poorest countries in the forefront, which means that the Community should make available the maximum possible amount of resources, bearing in mind that these represent only one-tenth of the Community ODA. Mr. Kibola in his article envisages the likelihood of a rise of 45–55 per cent over Lomé II, compared with 47 per cent for Lomé II over Lomé I. The ACP states are fully justified in pressing for the higher figure as a minimum.

Within the limit of resources available, however, attempts must be made to improve their use. Some criticism had already been made of Lomé II by Miss Lister in a note in this Journal¹ and both Mr. Kibola and Dr. Faber argue in this issue, from different points of view, that the working of Stabex could be improved. Mr. McQueen's thesis in the previous issue² is more fundamental. The relatively poor performance of ACP exports to the EEC is due to two causes. The first is restraints on market access to the EEC, and is therefore part of a much wider problem. Professor Helleiner's article in this Journal,³ written while the negotiations for Lomé II were in progress unfortunately retains all its relevance, and is added to by the first article of Mr. McQueen.⁴ There are still barriers to the entry into the EEC of beef, leather goods, textiles and particularly sugar. The second cause is the very limited capacity of the ACP countries to export processed primary products and manufactured goods. It is argued that the industrial co-operation provisions of Lomé II have been almost a dead letter. It seems that the limited resources have been spread thinly over every conceivable development objective, yet they have managed to avoid sectors of industrial

¹ 16 *J.W.T.L.* (1982), p. 434.

² "Lomé and Industrial Co-operation", 17 *J.W.T.L.* (1983), p. 524.

³ "Lomé: Market Access and Industrial Co-operation", 13 *J.W.T.L.* (1979), p. 181.

⁴ "Lomé and the Protective Effect of Rules of Origin", 16 *J.W.T.L.* (1982), p. 119.

development where ACP countries have an actual or comparative advantage.

It is a unique feature of the convention, which may now be established on a permanent basis, that its provisions are worked out by negotiations between the EEC and the ACP representatives, and that the operation of the convention is subject to the supervision of the EEC-ACP Council and an Assembly. If the discussions cannot take place on a basis of equality, they are at least carried out in an atmosphere of mutual respect which has so far avoided another North-South confrontation, and both sides are working together for their joint benefit.

The negotiating mandate given to the EEC Commission by the Council is that the new convention will be in line with the first and second conventions and will aim at increasing and consolidating the effectiveness of the co-operation. The objective will be to support the ACP countries' own efforts to achieve self-reliant and self-sustained development, special consideration being given to the least developed countries. Respect for human dignity as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the OAU charter and the European Convention, better living conditions, and due consideration for women will be regarded as part and parcel of any development policy, while special efforts will be aimed at food security, promoting rural development and boosting food production.

These are noble aims, but it would be a mistake to encourage negotiations which go beyond what is politically feasible. In the coming years at least Lomé will not become a major vehicle for the promotion of structural change in developing countries nor a means of markedly changing the attitudes of the governments concerned to international trade. It does, however, seem possible to achieve more for some very poor countries.