

## **Notes and Reflections**

### **EUROPE/AFRICA COOPERATION**

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When we refer to cooperation in economics and sociology, we consider a form of collaboration between individuals or organizations with a view to attaining common objectives in accordance with agreed procedures or methods. Cooperation may also be a form of collaboration between states that seek to achieve particular results in close partnership, and thus minimizing the costs, efforts and resources that each would need to use.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century and as part of the relations between colonial powers and their colonies, cooperation mechanisms were developed that involved African states and the European Community. The aim was, in the first place, to maintain traditional relationships between the former and the latter while fulfilling the obligations that were implicit in order to be a member of this organization.

For many African countries, cooperation was the means and possibly the only way to solve many of their problems, be them of an economic, social or cultural nature, or any other type.

However, cooperation with the African continent did not come about merely in the context of the EEC. At the turn of the 1950s, there were attempts to put in place a project involving Portugal, Britain, Belgium, France, Rhodesia and South Africa.

A conference was held in London on 7 and 8 September 1949 with the purpose of setting up a Committee for Technical Cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Ministry for the Colonies appointed Frigate Captain M. M. Sarmiento Rodrigues, a professor at *Escola Superior Colonial* (Colonial Higher School), to represent Portugal. "On 2 September I was made aware of my appointment as representative of the Ministry for the Colonies to be present at a conference due to take place in London on 7 and 8 September at the invitation of the British government to create an intergovernmental committee to coordinate the technical cooperation between the countries listed below: France, Portugal, Britain, Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa" (Minutes of CCTA, Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Its constitution, dated from 1950, aimed to give it legal and political capacity in the international order by means of a



Convention that was to be subject to discussion in the several sessions held in subsequent years.

Several sessions took place with the purpose of conferring the organisation the necessary mechanisms for its operation, the distinct member states acting as hosts. Accordingly, the 8<sup>th</sup> session of the "Committee for Technical Cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa (CCTA) was held in Lisbon, starting on 25 June 1953, with the participation, in addition to Portuguese delegates, of representatives from Belgium, France, Britain, Southern Rhodesia, and the Union of South Africa. The session is expected to be of the utmost importance" (Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, floor 2, Bookcase 17, Bundle 25).

The agreement that created the CCTA was signed on 18 January 1954, and on 24 December 1945, the CCTA was ratified in London by the following countries: South Africa, Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and Britain. On Portugal's part, the agreement was approved, for ratification purposes, by resolution of the National Assembly of 23 April 1954 and promulgated by the President of the Republic on 1 May 1954 (Government Gazette, Series I, of 1 May 1954).

The functioning of CCTA was set on a legal framework shaped throughout several sessions, and the following was agreed:

Article I stated that the creation of a "Committed for Technical Cooperation in Africa south of the Sahara (hereinafter called «Committee »), was to be assisted by the Scientific Council of Africa south of the Sahara, under whose auspices the following organisations would operate: the Inter-African Bureau for Epizootic Diseases, the Inter-African Bureau for Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis, the Inter-African Bureau for Soils and Rural Economy, the Inter-African Labour Institute, and the Inter-African Pedological Service, in addition to any other cooperation bodies in Africa south of the Sahara that the Committee may designate."

The Committee was formed by the signatory governments or «Member Governments». Each government could appoint a delegate and the number of alternate representatives and advisers it deemed necessary to represent it (Article II).

The Committee had no executive powers and did not take any decisions by majority vote. Its "Recommendations" should be adopted by unanimity by all member governments.

Given the increasing activity of this body and in accordance with a "Recommendation" approved at the 5th session in Cape Town, in January 1952, CCTA was provided with a permanent secretariat. The General Secretariat was headed by a Secretary General assisted by a Deputy Secretary, and the expenses incurred by the Secretariat were divided in variable proportions among the member governments.

In order to maintain a connection with the Secretariat, each Member Government appointed an agent who normally ensured the continuance of links between the government and the secretariat (Article III).

The territorial jurisdiction of the Committee extended to all regions in mainland Africa and islands under the responsibility of Member Governments located to the south of a line which, starting at the Atlantic Ocean, extended along parallel 20º north to the north-eastern border of French Equatorial Africa and from there followed the northeast



and east borders of French Equatorial Africa, the northeast border of Belgium Congo, the northern borders of Uganda and Kenya territories and the eastern boundary of Kenya to the Indian Ocean.

Among the activities promoted by CCTA, several intra-African conferences were organised which, in turn, recommended the creation of common technical information "Bureaus".

Four "Bureaus" were set up:

- Inter-African Bureau for Epizootic Diseases (IBED);
- Inter-African Bureau for Soils (BIS);
- Permanent Inter-African Bureau for Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis (BPITT)
- Inter-African Labour Institute (ILI).

By proposal of the Portuguese government, an "Inter-African Statistics Bureau" was subsequently set up, in addition to extending the activities of the BPITT to other tropical diseases, in line with another Portuguese proposal to have it replaced by a Sanitary Bureau in order to encompass all the diseases affecting African populations.

Member states contributed to CCTS's operating costs according to their financial capacities. Given the chronic financial difficulties of the Portuguese State, there was always a concern that our involvement was in accordance with our capacities or that it fell within the parameters set by the government in Lisbon.

This cooperation model would have significantly benefitted sub-Saharan Africa if the course of history had not altered the relations between European colonial powers and their African colonies, which were dictated by the independence movement that started in 1957, when the Gold Coast British colony became the independent nation of Ghana.

The independent fever that swept across the African continent in the 1960s put an end to colonialism in Africa, with the Portuguese colonies surviving for just little over a decade, up to 25 April 1974. In May 1961, the Republic of South Africa was founded, establishing the exclusion of all non-whites from any involvement in political life, and imposing *apartheid* and the subsequent political isolation of the country on the international arena.

As referred to earlier, Europe/Africa cooperation was subsequently resumed, giving rise to a cooperation policy due to the Yaoundé and Lomé Conventions. This policy later involved the Caribbean and Pacific ACP countries. However, it is a different form of cooperation. We can therefore ask ourselves about the meaning CCTA could have had in sub-Saharan Africa.

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