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LOMÉ CONVENTION

Warmer attitudes

Mozambique and Angola may well be members of the Lomé Convention by 1984 — a prospect which could mean a ten-fold increase in the aid they get from Europe.

Both Marxist countries recently signalled warmer attitudes to Lomé, the European Community's aid and trade agreements with 64 developing African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. EEC Development Commission spokesman in Brussels, Neville Keery, this week told the *FM* that "positive feelers" had been received from both countries. And, according to another EEC source, both have given "firm intentions to participate in the negotiations starting next year for the Lomé 3 convention to be ratified in mid-1984."

Despite many invitations to join, and possibly out of deference to their East German and Russian allies, Angola and Mozambique hitherto jibbed at accepting the Convention's "Berlin clause" recognising West Germany's sovereign right over Berlin. The Federal Republic of Germany makes all its aid contributions via the EEC dependent upon recognition of Berlin as West German territory. All Lomé's African member-states, including leftwing Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, implicitly accept the Berlin clause. Apart from Namibia and

SA (and Mozambique and Angola), all sub-Saharan African countries are Lomé members.

So, obviously, are Angola and Mozambique's partners in the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) which, as a regional project, receives substantial EEC aid. The Lomé moves by the two odd-men-out, so to speak, "indicate that part of the pressure to join must have come from the SADCC," according to SA Institute of International Affairs research director, Peter Vale. He also points out that the development is a success for European diplomacy vis-a-vis other camps.

Mozambique has all along sought to join its political allies in the East Bloc economic community, Comecon. This was in effect rejected when Comecon informed Maputo, which has observer status at Comecon, that it is not yet "fit" to join. And, given Mozambique's serious economic plight, Maputo probably sees the limitations of Comecon membership. It is speculated in Brussels that Moscow gave Mozambique and Angola the Lomé go-ahead, realising that it lacked the means to assist its allies.

Enter West Germany, which signed an economic co-operation agreement with Maputo worth DM10m on September 28. Bilaterally, the Federal Republic of Germany also made food aid available to Mozambique last July, and to Angola. Their implied acceptance of the Berlin clause evidently paved the way to Lomé entry.

Earlier this year, says an EEC source, the Community made written offers of financial assistance to Luanda and Maputo on condition that they undertake to be part of the negotiations leading to Lomé 3. The EEC has a development fund for "non-associated" countries which had about R9m "left over" from its 1981-82 budget. Mozambique has also been getting EEC food on "humanitarian grounds" since 1976 (1978 was an exception). Angola received EEC food in 1977. This year 43 500 tons of EEC wheat has been delivered free to

Mozambique.

If Mozambique does join Lomé, says an EEC man based in southern Africa, it could, as a country in the "least developed category," qualify for assistance worth around 100m European currency units (ecus) over the five-year convention period, depending on final arrangements. Tanzania, for example, receives 30m ecus a year during the current Lomé 2 convention. And Swaziland, with a relatively high GNP, is guaranteed a minimum 17m ecus during the present treaty.

All this is distinct from Lomé members' guaranteed export quotas of products to EEC markets, and guaranteed earnings through the stabilisation of exports (stabex) scheme. Similar arrangements have been developed for members' minerals exports negotiated under the so-called "minex" scheme, which Angola, no less than Europe, may be especially keen to look into.