

Lome aid to ^H Africa not used in five years ^{16/7} ₄₀

BILLIONS of dollars allocated five years ago by the European Community under the Lome Convention for development programmes in African countries, are still unspent.

According to the latest issue of African Business, only 18 percent of the ECU8,4 billion allocated under Lome III, had been spent by the end of its five-year duration in December 1989.

The magazine said concern over the procedures in implementing the Lome Convention, a trade and aid pact between 68 developing countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, and the EC, was expressed at a symposium in London at the House of Commons.

An EC consultant on its funded African projects, Dr Carol Cosgrove, was quoted as saying that the establishment of the Lome Convention in 1975 had been considered vital for channelling assistance to Africa's development efforts.

However, slow and cumbersome vetting of projects by the EC for disbursement of the money had prevented speedy realisation of its objectives, the magazine said.

"Dr Cosgrove criticised the attitude of the EC towards the ACP for not upholding the equal partnership principle of the convention, but treating the countries as simply recipients of aid," the magazine said.

The magazine also said that the shortcomings of the convention have been blamed on African governments for their indecision in settling on the nature of projects to be financed and their administration.

Dr Cosgrove said Africa had a management problem which required assistance from the EC. A shortage of professionals, caused by so many qualified Africans living overseas, was also cited. — Ziana.
