

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

GJ-17

The All Africa Trade Fair

March 25, 1972

P.O. Box 4080

Dar es Salaam,

Tanzania

Mr. Richard Nolte,
Institute of Current World Affairs
535 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Nolte:

From February twenty-third until March fifth, Kenya played host to thirty-six member countries of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) and approximately 150,000 visitors at a historical All Africa Trade Fair. The Fair which took years to prepare was the first of its magnitude in all of Africa and the first Trade Fair sponsored by the O.A. U. The Fair was a big responsibility for Kenya and East Africa.

After spending hours describing the events and activities of this festive proceeding to my family upon my return, my eight year old daughter candidly remarked that it sounded just like one of her many school sessions of "show and tell." I tried convincing her that surely she could not compare her classroom activity with the Fair! People had traveled from all parts of Africa in order to participate and had spent millions of pounds in the process of getting ready. (The Fair organizing committee was allocated £184,000 to stage the Fair and as its contribution, being the host country, Kenya donated £123,000.) I also informed her that the activities of the Fair would probably change the economic pattern of many of its participants. After an unsuccessful attempt, however, to define economic pattern and at the same time refute her analogy, I acquiesced. Later, I began to think about what she had said in defense of her cherished program and became more convinced that she was right.



The letter "A",
the official
symbol of the
Fair.

The O.A. U., the organizational patron of the Fair, began its activities in 1963. In its original charter it was mandated that the members of O.A.U., "promote African brotherhood and solidarity, transcending ethnic and national differences so as to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa." The O.A.U. represents the age old pan-African yearnings which had its beginnings in the 19th century. Mainly through influencing public opinion it has attempted to bring about decolonization and an elimination of apartheid. Through direct intervention the O.A.U. has promoted peaceful negotiations between member states over boundary conflicts. To promote African culture, this group sponsored the First All African Cultural Festival in Algiers in August 1969 and the First Workshop on African Folklore, Dance and Music in Somalia in October, 1970. The O.A.U. actively supports a host of Liberation Movements - twelve in all - of which the following are the more popularly known throughout the world:

FRELIMO	- Liberation Front of Mozambique
PAIGC	- African Party for the Independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde
MPLA	- The Peoples Movement for the Liberation of Angola
SWAPO	- The South West Africa Peoples Organization
ZAPO	- The Zimbabwe African National Union

As the name Unity implies, all of the forty-one member states are expected to participate in the activities of the organization. For the All Africa Trade Fair, however, Gambia did not display, but sent a delegation. Gabon could not decide in time to make the necessary preparations. No word was ever received from the Ivory Coast and Equatorial Guinea.

The Fair was officially opened by the host country represented by its President, Jomo Kenyatta, but was presided over by the O.A.U. Chairman, His Excellency Me. Moktar Ould Daddah, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. In a response to an official welcome by President Kenyatta, the Chairman stressed how grateful the organization was to Kenya for making the Fair a reality. It was Kenya who presented the idea of a Fair to the Ninth Session of the Council of Ministers of the O.A.U. in 1967. Unanimously approving the proposal, the Ministerial Committee then forwarded the proposal to the General Secretariat in Addis Ababa for final approval. In 1968, Kenya, Egypt and Nigeria applied to be the host for the Fair which began to gain momentum and to stir interest amongst the membership.

THE FOUR HEADS OF STATE



Mzee Jomo Kenyatta



Emperor Haile Selassie



General Idi Amin



Pres. Moktar O. Daddah

It was decided at the thirteenth Sessional Council of O.A.U. Foreign Ministers, that Kenya would be the place of venue. The first meeting to actually begin planning for the Fair was held in February, 1970, and attended by a nine member committee: Senegal, Nigeria, Cameroun, Zaire, Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, Egypt and Algeria.

Many members of O.A.U. felt that such a Fair as the one being planned would potentially give their organization an opportunity to broaden its image which was said to have become solely preoccupied with political freedom over the past decade. There was a need for an economic upheaval in the form of a uniform and developed intra-African trade. "If Africa is really to come of age, there must be a conscious effort made towards economic freedom", asserted the Chairman during one of his press conferences. He later clarified his statement by saying that economic independence did not imply isolation from the rest of the world, but getting to the point where the continent could be self-reliant and where the more developed members could provide more direct assistance to its lesser developed and dependent brother countries. Botswana was used as an example of what might happen in the future as a result of meetings being sponsored by the Fair. It was declared that many of the exhibiting countries could possibly replace much of Botswana's present trade with South Africa.

The opening of the Trade Fair was by far the most exciting day. Many of the pavilions were still being worked on even after having crews working around the clock for the past 48 hours. After an extensive walk through the park the day before, I was most skeptical that even half of the displays would be ready. Some countries came to the park ill-equipped for the magnitude of the event. Nigeria who had one of the three largest stands at the Fair, had to have a second plane-load of manufactures sent out.

As though by magic, but really with sweat and hard work, the Fair was ready to receive the Heads of State at 10:15 a.m. on the 24th of February. The Heads of State were to give the Fair its first complete scrutiny before making a declaration that the Fair was officially opened to the general public.

At 10:15 a.m. sharp, the official Land-Rover passed through the gates at Jamhuri Park and a hectic day for me and hundreds of Fair officials began.

The O.A.U. allocated approximately 150 press/photo-grapher passes for the Fair. I happened to be one of the fortunate ones to receive credentials. A special card and a

checkered arm band made it legal for me to take pictures of the Heads of State and to enter any part of the park at any time during the twelve days of the Fair. These passes also allowed me to participate in press conferences which were held daily with many prominent people from the continent.

I have often heard of ambulance chasers, but this was my first experience chasing a Land-Rover. The specially-built vehicle carrying Presidents Kenyatta, Haile Selassie, Moktar Ould Daddah, Idi Amin and the Secretary-General of the O.A.U., Diallo Telli, cruised around the park at about 8 miles per hour. Eight miles per hour on foot is a pretty fast pace so I found out - especially when carrying two cameras and a five pound flash unit. After the first three miles most of us who were determined on taking pictures of this officious group through-out the morning, were most grateful for those stands which caught the eye of one of the Presidents. It meant at least a ten minute respite. If it were any consolation to us, the press people, the twenty-five or more Secret Service Personnel who followed the procession were equally pleased with these periodic stops. As these septuagenarian and octogenarian Heads of State would bounce in and out of the Land-Rover the surrounding group would eye each other and break into smiles which seemed to imply the unasked question, where do they get all their energy?

After approximately an hour and a half of touring the grounds, our group settled in a special cordoned off area of the livestock arena where we watched a showing of a large number of beef cattle and goats. Most of our dignitaries having had some experience in farming seemed to be delighted with this part of their program. At certain intervals when one of Kenya's most prized stock would be displayed, Mzee Kenyatta would lean forward to catch the eyes of his guest and smile like a proud father. Several times during the showing young animals would stray away from their mothers and approach their high level audience with an unsuspecting sniff and then retreat back to safety. This simple gesture seemed to please the group immensely. I had a good feeling just standing and watching these V.I.Ps. in a relaxed mood. As the last animal paraded past, the attendant group came alive. The drivers began running for their vehicles, the police began shoving people, the Secret Service men began looking nervous, and the photographers began adjusting their equipment. As for me, I felt my morning had been completed, any more activity with this official party would have been a let down. I would just sit and savor the excitement

and thrills of the morning and begin preparation for the formal events of the afternoon. It is not every day that one can spend a morning with Presidents from four African countries!!

After a leisurely lunch and a briefing session concerning the afternoon's activities, I and one hundred other journalists, T.V. crew members and photographers gathered around the ceremonial dias of the park and along with 30,000 spectators waited for the arrival of President Kenyatta in his official Land-Rover.

The warm spring-like weather, the colorful traditional costumes, the rhythmic chatter of the many different languages and the spirited music of the Kenyan Police Marching Band added a festive note to this historic occasion. As Kenyatta entered, the crowds cheered and the band began playing a military march--the afternoon celebrations had begun. After one trip around the stadium, the Land-Rover stopped at the ceremonial dias where Mzee Kenyatta disembarked. He then performed the familiar trooping of the guard. Upon his return to the dias, Heads of State and a visiting queen from Lesotho were introduced to the public, after which the Chairman of the O.A.U., President Daddah, delivered a welcome address in French. It was later translated in English. As he finished, the Chairman then called upon Mzee Kenyatta to officially open the Fair. After laboring his way through a prepared speech in the English language, Mzee gave a big sigh of relief and announced that he wanted to repeat himself somewhat, but in a more familiar tongue, Kiswahili. Very shortly the crowd became involved. As if at a revival meeting, the masses began chanting with Mzee. It climaxed at the end of his speech with the entire stadium standing and shouting harambee--harambee--harambee!

The excitement in the arena was kept alive with the arrival of a helicopter bearing a message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kurt Waldheim. The firing of forty-one rockets each bearing a flag of one of the O.A.U. member nations and an aerial display by a number of Kenya's Phantom Fighter Jets, also added zest to a stimulating afternoon. The program ended with a grand parade of hundreds of traditionally-dressed representatives from the participating countries.

Following this jubilant opening, the Fair settled down to accomplish its mission: to promote intra-African trade, to intensify the appropriate trade infra-structure



Trooping of the Guard



A Visit to Mauritania's Stand

The Heads of State in a relaxed mood.



and to develop economic cooperation at all levels. Mzee summed up the objectives of the Fair quite succinctly in his opening speech. "Over a period of twelve days" he said, "this Fair will send out to the world an inspiring message of the brotherhood of Africa. It will also represent in a most practical fashion, the determination of modern Africa to proceed along highways of more rapid development and greater self-reliance through the proper deployment of our own talents and resources. Against a background of social events and cultural entertainment, this Trade Fair will be unique in its assembly of natural and manufactured goods and through its display of commercial potential." Mzee went on further to point out some of the problems which the participants of the Fair must attempt to solve if there is any real hope of succeeding in the endeavors of the O.A.U. for economic independence.

The first problem he raised was that of language. Many business people felt that if there could be a common language, the chances for a better understanding through simple face to face contact would be facilitated. Swahili has been suggested in the past as being a potential lingua franca for Africa, but the opposition, representing a most formidable group, maintain that worldwide commerce has not suffered from a language malady and they did not see the need to adopt a new language. As yet no conclusions have been arrived at in either direction, yes or no.

In addition to language difficulties the President also felt a need for more attention to be focused on the broader aspects of communication, namely, highways, railways, sea routes and air traffic. He spoke briefly about the possibility of a trans-African highway being built which would link Lagos with Mombasa as a project for the near future. He also talked about the all-weather road presently being constructed linking Addis Ababa to Nairobi as an example of a regional solution to a communication problem.

Finally, the President voiced concern over the recurring problems of valuation of currency, exchange control and tariff regulation. He also asserted that the discoveries and discussions of these next few days must be followed up by more active and continuing research.

While products from the O.A.U. member countries were being displayed at Jamhuri Park, a separate group were meeting at City Hall in Nairobi to discuss some of the issues raised by Mzee Kenyatta as well as other problems which became

evident as the meetings advanced. This section, The Symposium on Intra-African Trade, was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. It was held from the 28th of February until the 3rd of March. Although most of its participants consisted of businessmen and Government officials some of its sessions were open to the general public.

Each of the 41 member states of the O.A.U. was asked to send two or more participants who were in a position to speak in behalf of the country they represented --this meant executives at the senior level. The Symposium had mapped out for itself a very impressive program. Plenary sessions were interspersed with small group workshops. In keeping with the needs of the Trade Fair, the topics of the Symposium were as follows: Association of African Trade Promotion Organizations, Promoting Your Products in African Markets, Developing Intra-African Trade of Selective Products, How to Find Your African Markets, Facilitating the Transportation of Goods Entering Intra-African Trade, The Generalized System of Preferences, Export Credit Insurance and Monetary Issues, Trade Exchanges Based on Country Reports, a Motivation and Training to Increase Exports. Although I was unable to attend the small group sessions, I found the plenary meetings lively and relevant. A final report will be submitted at the next ministerial meeting listing the recommendations from this group. Some of the more popular suggestions which came from this body almost immediately included: the need for technical assistance from U.N. agencies on a sub-regional basis and, more active involvement and cooperation on the part of the political machinery in each country. It was also concluded that so long as the goods produced in the region are not competitive in price and quality with products imported from outside countries, all other export promotional measures will be of only marginal value. The need to plan for standardization of products and the need to improve production in relation to manpower/hours received strong support from the group. It was a consensus that most African buyers underestimate the quality of locally made products in favor of brand names coming into the country from outside sources. The group then cited many of the products coming from various African countries which could now compete in world-wide markets.

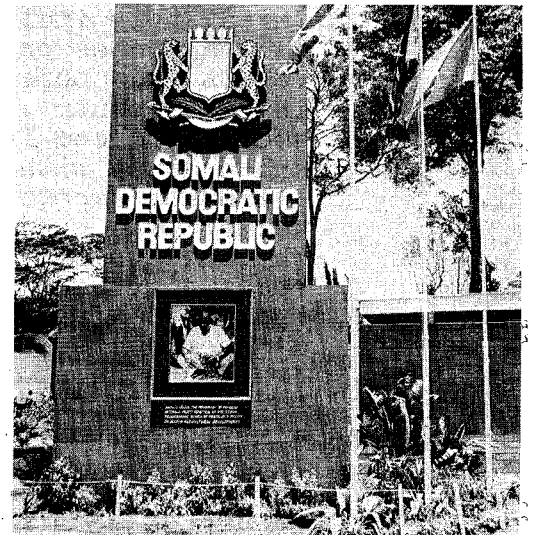
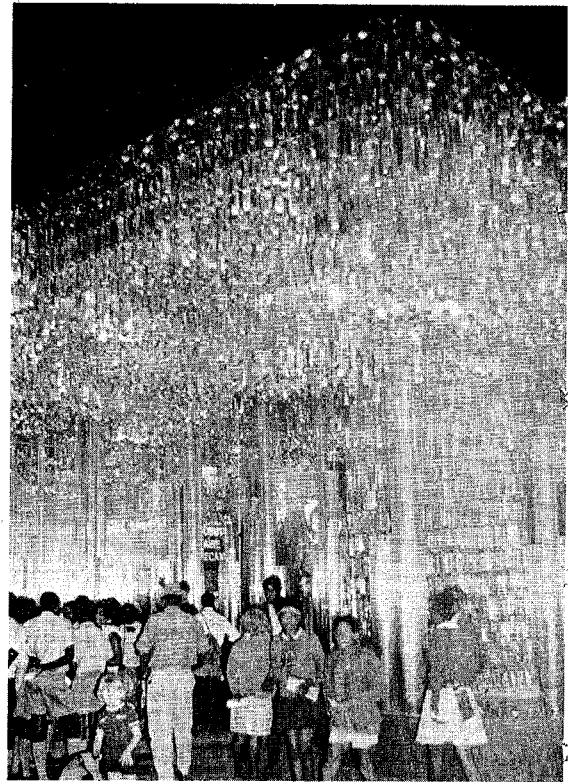
The Symposium drew up a brief economic and geographic resume of each member country of the O.A.U. and listed some of its main export products. Curious as to how much duplication there might be around the continent, I decided to chart some of the main commodities of 32 countries (see chart).

As the chart is viewed in full, it appears that duplication presents a serious problem. If the chart, however, is analyzed on a regional basis, the problem does not appear to be as pronounced. The Symposium, nevertheless attempting



Above: The day before

Right: The Zaire Stand



to prevent in future the possibility of serious duplication , felt it important to create a Regional Trade Center. They concluded that such a representative body could be responsible for the maximum exploitation of the major product of each country and also serve as a central information center for foreign investors who are seeking new sources of goods. They added that the Center might also serve as a listening post for a country that wanted to explore and develop scarce products for the market.

One of the most pressing questions debated in the meeting revolved around the punctual and reliable delivery of goods. It was agreed that a few firms who did not honor time schedules and fulfillment of contractual agreements gave a bad name to the commercial reputation of the country. Again, citing the Regional Center as a possible solution, the group suggested that such an organization might maintain a classified register of exporters and be given authority to penalize organizations which failed to meet their obligations. As an alternative to this measure, the Center might also put pressure on delinquent firms by simply removing the name of such companies from its listing of bona fide and reliable establishments.

One of the final topics and one which brought about much exchange amongst the group, centered around the need to restructure the organization of imports and exports so that more Africans may be involved. It was felt by the group that expatriates dominated this sector of the business world. Many delegates recommended an on-going training program for Africans at all levels so that at any given time an expatriate could be replaced.

Both aspects of the Fair, the displays and the Symposium, captured the interest of thousands of people from all over the world. The more visual and entertaining segments of the Fair, however, attracted the most attention. Emperor Haile Selassie, thoroughly impressed by what he saw, made it possible for 32 high-level businessmen from Ethiopia to visit the Fair upon his return home. Similarly, General Amin upon his return to Uganda, organized a plane-load of farmers (290) from all districts and sent them to Nairobi to see the agricultural exhibit. These farmers arrived three days after his official visit. Special showings of cattle and produce were arranged for them upon their arrival. The farmers were further treated by arriving a day before Uganda's National Day.

The Fair officials assigned each country a National Day in which their displays and traditional dances are highlighted both in their pavilion and in the main arena. Many countries took this opportunity to serve their traditional dishes and to have a public dance. Unfortunately for the masses, because of limited space at the pavilions and perhaps because of limited budgets, attendance was by invitation only.

It would be difficult to judge the pavilions as to who had the best exhibit. Aesthetically, the Zaire stand was the most attractive. They used a huge display of copper shaped in a variety of forms as a basic design. After walking through a somewhat darkened entrance of their pavilion, one entered a large room decorated with an array of ribbon-like copper strips suspended from the ceiling. This brilliant copper, set off by special lighting, made the arrangement most stimulating. From this room a maze of hallways showing blown-up photographs of the process of copper mining led to the final station. Here, they presented food products and household articles which were made in Zaire.

The Ethiopians' basic building design and its presentation of manufactured goods was most appealing. The beautiful Ethiopian women and their handsome men who danced almost continuously for 12 days also added much interest to their stand. The dancing became contagious. On one particular occasion Mama Kenyatta, the wife of the President of Kenya, joined the dancers in several of their more rhythmic movements. Before long, the Mayor of Nairobi, Miss Margaret Kenyatta also began participating. During the National Day, I counted at least five ambassadors, including the American Ambassador, up and moving to the pulsating beat of the Ethiopian National Band. As a treat, following this invigorating work out, the active participants and their observers were treated by their hosts to Injera and Wot, the national dish.

The O.A.U. Liberation Committee pavilion drew much praise from its visitors. It was simple in design, but carried a poignant message. A photographic display and a movie depicted the ongoing struggle for freedom on the part of the peoples of Mozambique, South Africa and Guinea Bissau. Captured weapons and odd pieces of equipment used by the guerillas were also shown. The pavilion's guides were well informed on the current status of the struggle--most of them had just returned from the battle front. The use of dancers to portray the plight of the Liberation Movement was well received by its viewers. Several Heads of State praised Mr. O. Adesola, an Assistant Executive Secretary of the O.A.U. for this fine display.



Left: Mama Kenyatta &
the Ethiopian
Dancers

Right: Malawian Traditional
Dancers



Below, lft & Rt: Nigerian
Traditional Dancers
& Folksingers



As for new products at the Fair which captured the interest of the people, the national drinks of Uganda, Waragi, and that of Tanzania, Konyagi, were the most popular. Their popularity resulted from not only its taste which was compared to popular brands of gin and vodka, but also in that its price is well below that of the imported spirits. Soon after the opening of the Fair, each country had depleted its stock and had to send for a larger consignment than before from home.

On the 28th of February, fifty-three blind youngsters from one of the schools for the blind were brought to the show grounds as guests of the Fair. They were brought to "see" the animals. Every student was allowed to touch each animal as long as he wished and as long as the animal cooperated. The children were introduced to cows, sheep, pigs, a pair of enormous boran bulls, rabbits and chickens. This was indeed one of those heart warming and happy occasions. There were, however, other situations which did not have a happy ending.

The day before the Fair was to open, an upcountry farmer who had heard about the Fair over the radio appeared at the front gate with a small truck load of produce. He reported that since he had had such an overwhelming success with the crops from his shamba this year, he thought he would like to display them to the many people at the Fair. He also said that he would be ready to sell them if someone wished to buy. Their payment would help to recoup some of the money he had spent to get his produce delivered. Much to his dismay, he was informed that because of not applying within a specific time period and because he had not paid the proper fees, he would not be allowed to bring his produce on the grounds. After pleading for just a little spot in a corner, he was again denied the privilege. As a consolation, he was invited to participate in the annual Nairobi Show which is a somewhat smaller version of the All Africa Trade Fair. The show takes place each September.

At this early stage, it is difficult if not impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of the Trade Fair. If, however, the small break-throughs are any indication of the eventual outcome, the Fair will have been a big success. We learned at press conferences that Malagasy Republic had established a formal agreement to purchase hand crafts from Kenya. They would also begin to buy bags, salt, groundnuts and rice from Uganda. Kenya was negotiating to buy copper from Zaire and Zambia. Kenya also developed an interest in



Abv: Kenya Women &
hidden mtoto



Somali Lady



Rt: A Libation Ritual by the
Ghanaians



The Beautiful Ethiopians



buying sugar and special tractors from Swaziland. Nigeria, rather than continue the costly process of securing butter from Australia and New Zealand, would look to Kenya for possible shipments. Madagascar, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritania and many other countries found new markets. A final survey going into item by item transactions will be issued at the next ministerial meeting. The report will use the current figure of 5.8 percent as its reference point. This percentage represents the current level of exports moving within the African continent as compared to total exports to the rest of the world.

Anticipating that the Fair has been a marked success, plans are already underway for the Second All Africa Trade Fair. "The Fair", concluded one of its economic advisers, "is one of the most efficient and cheapest shortcuts to the knowledge of a market and of the consumer evaluation of the product displayed." Several countries are making an early bid to be the next host. The Fair is scheduled again for 1976.

Sincerely,


George Jones

Received in New York on April 17, 1972.

COMMODITY CHART

	Cotton	Fishing	Gold	Diamonds	Rice	Coffee	Cocoa	Timber	Rubber	Copper	Iron	Livestock	Uranium	Aluminum	Petroleum	Groundnuts	Sugar	Maize	Wheat	Phosphates	Textiles	Manufactures
Botswana				X						X		X										
Burundi	X					X																
Cameroons	X					X	X	X						X								X
Congo Peoples Republic								X							X		X					
Chad	X	X										X				X						
Dahomey	X	X																				
Egyptian Arab Republic	X														X		X					
Ethiopia	X					X						X					X					X
Gabon								X					X		X							
Gambia																X						
Ghana			X	X			X	X						X								X
Ivory Coast		X			X	X	X	X														X
Kenya						X						X					X	X				X
Lesotho				X								X										
Liberia				X					X		X											
Libya															X							
Madagascar					X	X											X					
Malawi	X															X						
Mali	X	X			X							X				X						
Mauritania		X								X	X											
Mauritius																	X					
Morocco		X																	X	X		
Niger												X	X			X						
Nigeria	X						X		X						X	X						X
Rwanda						X																
Senegal		X														X				X		X
Sierra Leone				X	X						X											
Somalia												X					X					
Sudan	X															X	X				X	

[illegible]