

THE MANO RIVER DECLARATION

WE, THE PRESIDENTS OF LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE, desiring to establish a firm economic foundation for lasting peace, friendship, freedom and social progress between our countries;

IN PURSUANCE of our determination as already affirmed in the Joint Statements issued on 16th March 1971 and 28th January 1972 to accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural advancement of our two countries;

RECOGNIZING that this can best be accomplished by active collaboration and mutual assistance in matters of common interest in economic, social, technical, scientific and administrative fields;

HAVING RESOLVED to intensify our efforts for closer economic cooperation between our two countries, and having decided to take the necessary steps for the attainment of this objective;

DO HEREBY DECLARE

FIRST, that a Customs Union to be called the MANO RIVER UNION shall be established between Liberia and Sierra Leone;

SECOND, that the aims and objectives of the Union shall be:

1. to expand trade by the elimination of all barriers to mutual trade; by cooperation in the expansion of international trade; by the creation of conditions favourable to an expansion of mutual productive capacity, including the progressive development of a common protective policy and cooperation in the creation of new productive capacity;
2. to secure a fair distribution of the benefits from economic co-operation;

THIRD, that the Union shall be established in two main phases, the first phase of which shall be completed not later than 1st January, 1977, and the second phase of which shall be completed within a reasonable period thereafter, having regard to the administrative and other problems involved;

FOURTH, that the first phase of the establishment of the Union shall include:

1. the liberalization of mutual trade in goods of local origin, through the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to such trade;
2. the harmonization of rates of import duties and other fiscal incentives applicable to goods of local origin, in order to ensure fair trading conditions and a harmonized protective policy for local producers;
3. supporting measures, as may be considered necessary, for developing cooperation in the production of agricultural and manufactured products of local origin.

FIFTH, that goods of local origin shall be understood to mean goods which are wholly or substantially produced in one or the other country;

SIXTH, that a Joint Secretariat of the Union shall be established in Freetown not later than 1st January, 1974. The administrative and financial arrangements for the establishment of the Secretariat, as well as the functions which it will have, shall be the object of direct consultations between the Governments, within the machinery already established for cooperation, and shall be subject to the Governments;

SEVENTH, that in order to achieve the proposed aims and objectives, a Customs Training School shall be established in Monrovia as soon as may be feasible after 1st January, 1974, and that the functions and arrangements for its establishment shall be worked out under similar arrangements as for the Joint Secretariat of the Union.

EIGHTH, that such other arrangements as may be necessary for the furtherance of the proposed joint aims and objectives as may be proposed from time to time by the Joint Ministerial Committee for Liberia/Sierra Leone Economic Cooperation and may, where appropriate be agreed by the Governments in the form of Protocols to this Declaration;

NINTH, that having regard to the great importance of extending economic cooperation within Africa, the Union shall be opened for participation to all States in the Western African Sub-Region which subscribe to the aims and objectives of the Union.

DONE IN MALEMA ON THE THIRD DAY OF October in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three.

FOR THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA:

(Signed) WILLIAM R. TOLBERT, (JNR)

FOR THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE

(Sgd) SIAKA STEVENS