

**Welcome - Round Table Conference on
Institutionalizing Capacity Building in Africa**

by

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June 1991

It was a great pleasure for me to have welcomed about six of you to the Round Table held in Halifax, Canada, in September 1989. It is an even greater privilege for me to be here in Harare to offer more welcoming remarks, and to participate in this next Round Table. On behalf of Dalhousie University and its Lester Pearson Institute, as one of the joint sponsors for this meeting, I do welcome you and look forward to a most productive and interesting 3-day meeting. (Thank CIDA)

At the outset, let me first stress Dalhousie's long-term interests in Africa, in African Studies and in African Development. Our Centre for African Studies is one of the oldest such centres, if not the oldest, in Canada. A significant number of leaders in a range of African countries are Dalhousie graduates. We are presently involved, with CIDA support, in institutional linkage agreements with universities in Zimbabwe (Business Education), in Tanzania (in Nursing), in Gambia (in Education), and in Nigeria (in Women's Studies), and in Ghana (in Community Medicine) and many of our faculty members have academic and research associations with colleagues in many African countries. Dalhousie is delighted to be associated with this second Round Table and to have such productive partnerships with,

hopefully, an increasing number of African sister universities (Kwapong).

The first Round Table, at Dalhousie in 1989, helped bring us to the state of development that provides the basis for these meetings. It is very satisfying to all of us to see the progress that has been made - the ACBF has been established, commitments to funding have been made, the organizational structure is being established including the appointment of Dr. Frimpong-Ansah as Executive Secretary and its activities are about to begin. These are very significant developments and promise well for the future.

At this Round Table we will collectively attempt, as an independent and separate group of individuals, to offer some advice to ACBF as it prepares to undertake its activities. We all hope this will be helpful and productive and that through vigorous and sustained discussion over the next three days, we can contribute very significantly to the entire future programme of ACBF.

For me, personally, two issues are particularly evident from my reading of background material, including the World Bank Report. The first is that Development, whether it be economic or social, and the management of development are issues about which we all have much to learn. Dalhousie is located in Atlantic Canada, economically the most under-developed region of Canada. We in Atlantic Canada need all of the advice and learning experiences

that we can draw on to achieve a satisfactory level of economic development. We can all learn from and benefit from the work that will be done there. ACBF, over the next few years, can increase substantially our understanding of some factors that are central to sustained development. We will all learn from this initiative!

Secondly, I am impressed with the importance of institutions, perhaps notably the university, as a major factor. I do not suggest that the university is the only institution, nor would I down play the need for all universities whether in Canada, Europe, Africa or Asia to be more externally oriented and to be true leaders of change. But the university is vitally important, not just because of its training and educational functions, but because it is one of the very few societal institutions that can provide continuity across periods of turbulence and instability, that can provide the essential critique that any society must have, and that can act as a genuine storehouse and transmitter of knowledge, at very sophisticated levels. The preservation and maintenance of institutions such as the university must be seen, in every country, as an end in itself, not just a necessary means to the end of human resource development, essential though that role is.

I am sure each of you have these and other issues on your mind as we launch into what I hope will be exceedingly fruitful, stimulating and specifically useful discussions. Welcome on behalf of Dalhousie.