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au Président de la République

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Le texte ci-joint est un essai sur un sujet difficile, auquel je m'intéressais avant même de venir au Rwanda. Je crois que le facteur culturel est un des éléments déterminants du développement et de son rythme. De plus, la difficulté d'établir un dialogue de culture à culture, c'est-à-dire tenant compte des particularités issues de l'héritage culturel de chacun, est pour beaucoup dans l'incompréhension réciproque que l'on constate souvent dans les rapports entre Européens et Africains. C'est pourquoi élucider les raisons de nos différences devrait améliorer les possibilités de collaboration.

C'est là, naturellement, un domaine où il est difficile d'être objectif, chacun voyant son interlocuteur à travers des lunettes déformantes ou du moins des verres de couleur différente. Je serais honoré et heureux de connaître les observations, voire les contestations, que ce texte appelle de votre part.

Kigali, le 1er juin 1967.

International Coffee Agreement

My dear Mr. President,

Your letter of 9th May concerning the International Coffee Agreement and the talks which will take place about it at the end of August next has received my full attention. I thank you for the interest you personally take in coffee, a product which is of the utmost importance also for Rwanda as it makes 60% of its exports.

You mention that the purpose of the August meeting will be the negotiation of a new Agreement. I wonder whether the time is suitable for such a renegotiation. As you know, Mr. President, it is only with the greatest difficulties that it has been possible to amend the present Agreement and to improve somewhat its mechanisms. Furthermore, the coffee market is just emerging from a distressing low. Finally, we all know that Brazilian producers are not at all satisfied with the results of the present Agreement. Those are the general reasons for which I cannot feel confident that a renegotiation of the Agreement, if at all possible, would be advantageous to African countries. At least, there is quite a sizable risk that the members of the International Coffee Agreement would enter into a long-drawn argument, with disruptive effects on the market.

May I add that there exist reasons peculiar to Rwanda which should induce its Delegation to work for an extension of the present Agreement, if possible with improvements here and there.

As to your suggestion concerning the composition of the Delegation that will represent my country at the conference, I will see to it that the strongest possible team will be sent to London, led by a Minister if circumstances permit.

Yours sincerely,