

PREFACE

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is particularly pleased to publish Dr. Victor Umbricht's account of his successful mediation efforts that led to the settlement of the dispute among members of the East African Community after the collapse of that Community in 1977. In keeping with its mandate to promote peace and security, UNITAR published in 1977 a major reference book on *Dispute Settlements through the United Nations*. Dr. Umbricht's book, a very interesting case study, is an important and welcome addition to existing literature on dispute settlement. As the author rightfully pointed out in his Introduction, the absence of comprehensive descriptions of previous mediation efforts convinced him that "narrating his own involvement in the reality of a mediation exercise might provide governments, international institutions, and practitioners and scholars of international law with some advice, however insignificant, related to a settlement process. (...) The book thus aims to achieve a better understanding of mediation techniques and to indicate ways and means for building bridges between theory and practice, in short to serve to some extent as a source of experience for the solution of specific problems in a Mediation". This fully justifies the support given by UNITAR to Dr. Umbricht's book.

From mid-1971 to the end of 1982, I happened to be the Assistant Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), heading the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa and I was involved in assisting Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in their co-operation within the East African Community. When the Community could not survive, I was in close touch with Dr. Umbricht concerning his mediation mission. Knowing the difficulties he went through, I must say that he deserves to be commended for his skills and patience, without which the mediation would not have been so successful.

When in January 1983 I became Executive Director of UNITAR, Dr. Umbricht was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute and I encouraged him to write about his mediation experiences.

Dr. Umbricht passed away in 1988. Fortunately, he was able to see his manuscript completed. Although he did not live long enough to see it in print,

he knew that his book was in the process of being published. We who were cognizant of his work and his talents are confident that his book will always inspire all those who will be involved in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

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and Executive Director of UNITAR