

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



Final

UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone : 011-551 7700 Fax : 011-551 7844
website : www.africa-union.org

**AU CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF TRADE AND OF FINANCE
1 – 3 APRIL 2008
ADDIS-ABABA (ETHIOPIA)**

AU/EXP/CAMTF/Decl. (I)

ADDIS ABABA DECLARATION ON EPA NEGOTIATIONS

ADDIS ABABA DECLARATION ON EPAs

WE, Ministers responsible for Trade and for Finance in Member States of the African Union, meeting jointly in Addis Ababa on 3 April 2008, on the instruction of the Heads of State and Government of the Union

RECALLING the objectives of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement to make EPAs serve as instruments for the promotion of sustainable development, eradication of poverty, gradual integration into the world economy, and reinforcement of regional integration;

REAFFIRMING our positions and concerns as contained in previous Declarations, namely, the Mauritius Declaration (2003), Cairo Declaration (2005), Nairobi Declaration (2006) and Addis Ababa Declaration (2007). Also **Reaffirming the** endorsement of these positions by the Executive Council in its Banjul (2006) and Accra (2007) Decisions, and by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in the Addis Ababa Declaration on EPAs of January 2007;

NOTING that 18 countries in Africa have initialled the Interim Economic Partnership Agreements and have undertaken commitments to continue with the negotiations with a view to concluding comprehensive and full EPAs;

FURTHER NOTING that these Interim Agreements were initialled in order to avoid trade disruption that could result from failure to conclude World Trade Organization (WTO) compatible arrangements by the deadline of 31 December 2007;

ALSO TAKING into consideration the circumstances that prompted some countries to initial and others not to initial the Interim EPAs and recognising their sovereign decisions to do so;

CONCERNED about the impact of the interim Economic Partnership Agreements on Africa's regional integration initiatives, given that some countries initialled individual Interim Agreements;

ALSO CONCERNED that the EC has subjected non-signatory countries of interim EPAs to a less favourable trade regime under the GSP including EBA thereby reducing their competitiveness in the EU market;

REITERATING THAT African EPA groups remain committed to conclude full development oriented EPAs;

GUIDED BY the Declaration of the Assembly of The African Union on Economic Partnership Agreements of January 2008 which directed the AU Ministers for Trade and for Finance to prepare for high level engagement with the European Union on EPAs;

Hereby declare the following,

1. **CALL UPON** the AU Commission in collaboration with UNECA and RECs to urgently develop a model/template of a full EPA to serve as a guide for EPA negotiating groups, as need arises
2. **URGE** the African Union to encourage the negotiating groups to use the proposed template as a guide for harmonising the texts of the comprehensive and full EPAs with respect to areas of common interest to ensure coherence and consistency with Africa's agenda on regional integration.
3. **CALL FOR** the establishment of a coordination and harmonisation institutional framework comprising the RECs, AUC, ECA and the negotiators, and which should meet periodically to take stock of the negotiations and give advice.
4. **URGE** the respective Regional Economic Communities (REC's) and the EPA negotiating groups to incorporate each and every member of the respective group is adequately represented in all negotiations at all stages.
5. **RECOGNISE THAT** there are contentious issues in the interim agreements (such as the definition of substantially all trade, transitional periods, export taxes, free circulation of goods, national treatment, bilateral safeguards, infant industry, non-execution clause, MFN clause) and call on them to review and re-negotiate these within the context of a comprehensive and full EPA to ensure an all inclusive comprehensive EPA that would safeguard development and regional integration efforts.
6. **NOTE THAT** some countries having initialled the interim agreement may consider signing, ratification, and that the ratification process where appropriate should relate to the full EPAs taking due account of the national rules and procedures. However, the commitments in the interim agreement should not constitute an obligation or serve as a benchmark for the non-signatory members of the same negotiating group towards the conclusion of a complete, full and final EPA.
7. **CALL ON** the European Union to respect the commitment it made in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement that no ACP country should be made worse off after the end of the Cotonou preferences.
8. **URGE** the European Union to provide adequate and predictable additional resources beyond European Development Fund to meet adjustment costs, to support supply side capacity and build infrastructure, regulatory capacity, competitiveness and national and regional interconnectivity.
9. **FURTHER URGE** the European Union not to link the disbursement of EDF and Aid for Trade resources to the initialling/signing of EPAs.
10. **CALL UPON** the negotiators to ensure that the development dimension is comprehensively addressed in all sectors of the full EPA.

11. **ALSO URGE** the negotiators to ensure that EPAs will take into consideration the coherence between trade and development dimensions as well as take adequate account of the different levels of development between African and European countries and provide for appropriate asymmetry in obligations.
12. **CALL ON** the EU to cooperate with the African Group at the WTO to ensure development-friendly rules including the flexibility in the interpretation of Article XXIV of GATT 1994.
13. **REITERATE** the need for an urgent meeting at the highest political level between the leadership of Africa and of European Union as a follow-up of decisions and recommendations of the Africa-EU Summit of December 2007 with a view to aligning the objectives of the EU-Africa Lisbon Strategy on EPAs by resolving contentious issues of the EPAs that could adversely affect their partnership.
14. **STRESS** that the entry into EPAs should not preclude Africa from taking full advantage of South-South Cooperation
15. **CALL** for the active participation and support of all stakeholders in particular Ministers, Parliamentarians in the EPA negotiation process and for the greater mobilisation of Non State Actors, and EU Member States in support of Africa's position on EPAs.
16. **CALL UPON** the African and EU parties to establish effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the full EPAs to take account of the impact of EPAS on African economies and ensure that the objectives of EPAs as agreed in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement are realised.
17. **URGE** the Africa Union Member States to ensure that unity, cohesion and solidarity are maintained and strengthened in the EPA negotiations.

Done at Addis Ababa, 3 April 2008.