

EC-ESA EPA Trade Ministerial Meeting
3 March 2008, Lusaka (Zambia)
Joint Conclusions

1. Ministers from the Eastern and Southern Africa Region (ESA) and the European Commissioner for Trade met in Lusaka on 3rd March 2008. The ESA delegation was led by Honourable Felix Mutati, Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry of Zambia, and included Ministers from countries in the region. The EC delegation was led by the European Commissioner for Trade, Peter Mandelson.
2. The main objectives of the meeting were for the Parties to:
 - a. take stock of the process and outcome of work undertaken since the last meeting in November 2007;
 - b. address implementation issues arising from the Interim Agreement;
 - c. agree on next steps leading to the signature and ratification of the Interim Agreement,
 - d. Coordinate their action regarding notification to the WTO.
 - e. Identify issues of concern to the ESA Group in the implementation of the Interim Agreement to be resolved.
 - f. Agree on the way forward for 2008 in view of concluding a comprehensive EPA.
3. The Parties noted the current state of play on the EPA negotiations. While observing that challenges remain for regional integration and development, the Parties agreed that the Interim EPA, initialled at the end of 2007, is a step towards a comprehensive EPA which will replace the Interim agreement. Provisions in the Interim Agreement establish a trade framework compatible with WTO rules and cooperation provisions aimed at fostering sustained growth and promoting regional integration while addressing effectively EPA development needs and adjustment costs.
4. With regard to rules of origin, ESA countries highlighted that they were facing some trade disruption due to automatic derogation on tuna and new provisions on cumulation. In this regard, the Parties agreed to take necessary measures to solve these problems expeditiously.
5. The Parties recalled that the Interim EPA remains open to ESA countries willing to join on those flexible conditions agreed in November 2007.

6. On the way forward, the Parties reaffirmed their commitments fully to address in the context of the negotiations of the full EPA issues of concern to ESA in the Interim Agreement with a view to reach a mutually acceptable solution to these issues; and all outstanding issues foreseen in the *rendez-vous* clause towards the full EPA as outlined in the joint road map.
7. The Parties agreed to continue the negotiations on development cooperation and to work on enhancing provisions already included in the Interim Agreement. The EC will encourage the mobilisation of additional resources from EU member states and other partners in addition to the provision of EDF funds to meet the specific development needs for EPA implementation and adjustment costs.
8. The Parties agree that the negotiations of a full EPA should encourage the convergence of all regional economic communities on the continent and not undermine the cohesion, unity and economic integration of the ESA region.
9. The Parties adopted a roadmap establishing a concrete schedule of meetings in view of reaching, at the end of 2008, an agreement on a comprehensive EPA which will deliver the full development potential in the ESA region.