



**ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN WEST AFRICA
AND THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Final

**Extraordinary Meeting of West African Ministers, members of the Ministerial
Monitoring Committee on the EPA Negotiations**

Ouagadougou, 17 December 2007

DÉCLARATION

WEST AFRICAN MINISTERS, MEMBERS OF THE MINISTERIAL MONITORING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN WEST AFRICA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION;

MEETING IN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION ON 17 DECEMBER 2007 IN OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO TO ASSESS THE STATUS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN WEST AFRICA (WA) AND THE EUROPEAN UNION WITH A VIEW TO CONCLUDING AN ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (EPA) TO COMPLEMENT THE COTONOU AGREEMENT SIGNED ON 23 JUNE 2000;

REFERING TO THEIR DECLARATION OF 5 OCTOBER 2007 IN WHICH THEY CALLED ON, INTER ALIA, THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO SUBMIT A REQUEST TO WTO TO EXTEND THE 2001 WAIVER;

OBSERVING THAT LITTLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE WEST AFRICAN REGION AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO FACILITATE THE SIGNING OF A COMPREHENSIVE EPA BY 31 DECEMBER 2007 ;

OBSERVING FURTHER THAT TWO NON-LDCs IN THE REGION HAVE INITIALLED INTERIM AGREEMENTS WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN ORDER TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS OF THEIR TRADE WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION AFTER 31 DECEMBER 2007;

DEPLORING THAT THE PRESSURE BEING EXERTED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION IS CAPABLE OF MORTGAGING THE ACHIEVEMENTS MADE BY THE REGION IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SINGLE TRADE REGIME IN ANTICIPATION OF THE EPA;

TAKING NOTE OF THE DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF UEMOA ON THE AGREEMENT INITIALED BY COTE D'IVOIRE;

OBSERVING THAT THE COUNTRIES THAT INITIALLED THESE INTERIM AGREEMENTS EXPRESSED THE DESIRE TO INCORPORATE THE SAID AGREEMENTS IN THE REGIONAL EPA NEGOTIATIONS PROCESS;

TAKE NOTE OF THE INTERIM AGREEMENTS INITIALED BY TWO COUNTRIES OF THE REGION;

URGE THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED TO ENSURE THAT THE FINAL AGREEMENTS TO BE SIGNED ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE COMMITMENTS THAT THEY MADE UNDER THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS;

FURTHER INVITE THE ECOWAS AND UEMOA COMMISSIONS TO ASSIST AND SUPPORT THE TWO COUNTRIES THAT INITIALLED THESE AGREEMENTS AND, AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, TO HARMONISE THE SAID AGREEMENTS IN ORDER TO AVOID THE APPLICATION OF DISPARATE TREATMENTS;

REAFFIRM THE PRINCIPLE OF A REGIONAL AGREEMENT COVERING ALL THE COUNTRIES OF WEST AFRICA;

RÉAFFIRM FINALLY THEIR RESOLVE TO CONCLUDE A COMPREHENSIVE EPA AS THE ONLY WAY BY WHICH THIS NEW PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK CAN BE MADE A REAL INSTRUMENT FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT;

AGREE THAT BOTH PARTIES (WA AND EU) SHOULD PREPARE A NEW ROADMAP FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CONDUCT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ;

REQUEST THE CHIEF NEGOTIATORS TO PURSUE THEIR EFFORTS WITH A VIEW TO ACCELERATING THE CONCLUSION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND SIGNATURE OF A COMPREHENSIVE, FAIR, BALANCED AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL EPA THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES OF THE COUNTRIES AND POPULATIONS OF WEST AFRICA;

URGE THE ECOWAS AND UEMOA COMMISSIONS TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ACCELERATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL THE ACTIVITIES NECESSARY FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS IN LINE WITH THE SCHEDULE ADOPTED BY THIS EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE MMC;

REAFFIRM THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE REGION'S SOLIDARITY IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS AND A DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED EPA, TO THIS END, THEY WELCOME THE PROPOSAL MADE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO HOLD A MEETING WITH THE HEADS OF STATE OF THE REGION;

DEPLORE THE PRESSURE BEING EXERTED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON THE COUNTRIES OF THE WEST AFRICA REGION, ESPECIALLY THE NON-LDCs, WHICH IS CAPABLE OF SPLITTING THE REGION AND JEOPARDISING THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS;

TAKE NOTE OF THE CLASSIFICATION OF CAPE VERDE AS A NON-LDC WITH EFFECT FROM 1st JANUARY 2008 AND THE FACT THAT THIS COUNTRY SHALL, NEVERTHELESS CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE EVERYTHING-BUT-ARMS (EBA) INITIATIVE FOR A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF THREE YEARS;

EXPRESS THEIR SINCERE GRATITUDE TO HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. BLAISE COMPAORE, PRESIDENT OF FASO, TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF BURKINA FASO FOR THE VERY WARM WELCOME AND HOSPITALITY EXTENDED TO THEM AND FOR THE FACILITIES MADE AVAILABLE TO THEM THAT ENSURED THE SUCCESS OF THEIR MEETING.

DONE AT OUAGADOUGOU, THIS 17TH DAY OF
DECEMBER 2007

THE MINISTERIAL MONITORING COMMITTEE