

AFRICAN UNION
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**CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF TRADE
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**ADDIS ABABA MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON ECONOMIC
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS NEGOTIATIONS**

ADDIS ABABA MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS NEGOTIATIONS

We, Ministers responsible for Trade of Member States of the African Union, meeting in the Third Extraordinary Session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 16th January 2007:

Recalling the objectives contained in the Georgetown Agreement and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement,

Re-affirming positions contained in the Declarations of Mauritius, Cairo, and Nairobi on Economic Partnership Agreements Negotiations,

Recalling the Decision on Economic Partnership Agreements of the ACP Council of Ministers held in Khartoum Sudan in December 2006,

Having regard to the Outcome of the African Union Summit held in Banjul, The Gambia, in July 2006 which, *inter alia*, addressed the issues of harmonisation of Africa's RECs, including overlapping membership and the incongruence between the EPA negotiating configurations and regional integration groupings,

Having regard to the reports on EPA negotiations at the regional level, which in general indicate lack of sufficient progress in all aspects of the negotiations and in particular the delay by the European Commission to respond to certain issues submitted by the African negotiators related, *inter alia*, to the development dimension, market access and regional integration as well as the EC's demand for the inclusion of new generation issues,

Concerned that at this advanced stage of the negotiations, Africa's priorities have not been positively and adequately addressed by the European Commission,

Taking into account the reports of the ECA and the four African regions on the Comprehensive Review of EPAs under Article 37.4 of the Cotonou Agreement,

Whereas the EPAs should result in promotion of the Economic development of all African States,

Considering the Conclusions on operationalisation of Aid for Trade adopted by the General Affairs and External Relations Council of the European Union on 16 October 2006,

Considering the need to ensure that EPAs take into account African countries' concerns such as the cost of adjustment and building of the supply capacities, market access, including flexibilities related to product coverage, transitional period as well as financing of trade-related infrastructure,

Underscoring that regional integration is a priority for Africa in accordance with the legal instruments and programmes for the establishment of the Regional Economic Communities and progressively the African Economic Community, and in accordance with the Constitutive Act of the African Union

Reiterating that the African regions will be allowed to pursue their regional integration processes at a pace that is commensurate with their political, economical and social capacities,

Noting that the level of preparedness to conclude Economic Partnership Agreements is inadequate in Africa due to among other reasons the lack of completion of country-specific impact assessment studies,

1. **We therefore call upon** the European Commission in the spirit of partnership to show flexibility and to positively and adequately respond to key concerns of Africa,
2. **We further call upon** the European Community and its Member States to genuinely provide additional resources in accordance with the commitment, paying attention to the development and financing needs of Africa in building competitiveness and addressing supply side and infrastructure constraints,
3. Fully aware of the potential huge adjustment costs that Economic Partnership Agreements would entail during implementation and in this regard, as the questions of how to adjust still persist, clear measures need to be defined that will help our countries address the challenges of adjustment. **We therefore re-iterate** the call for a broad EPA adjustment facility, in addition to the EDF, as an appropriate instrument that should cover social development, economic reforms, private sector development, and institutional development,
4. Having regard to the preliminary results of the Comprehensive Review, **we urge** all parties to take stock of the negotiations and explore all alternatives to ensure that there is no disruption of mutual trade, including whether to extend the period of negotiations ,
5. **We direct** our negotiators in each of the regions to ensure that they coordinate the negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements including at the technical level. In this regard, the AU coordination of the negotiations should be strengthened. The negotiating groups should involve the Commission of the African Union in their events and negotiations,
6. **We direct** our negotiators to ensure that the review fully addresses and makes recommendations on all outstanding issues in the negotiations; and that the four negotiating groups of Africa coordinate their activities in

this regard and produce a consolidated report with the assistance of the Commission of the African Union in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa,

7. Cognisant that Article XXIV of the GATT 1994, as currently interpreted by the EU, is unsuitable for pro-development Economic Partnership Agreements, **we recall** the proposal by the ACP group at the WTO and urge WTO members to fully take this proposal into account.

Done in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, this 16th day of January in 2007