

DECLARATION ON ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (EPAs)
DOC. EX.CL/394 (XII)

The Assembly:

1. **RECALLING** the objectives of the Abuja Treaty and the Constitutive Act of the African Union to accelerate the political and economic integration of Africa;
2. **ALSO RECALLING** the objectives of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement to make EPAs serve as instruments for the promotion of sustainable development, eradication of poverty, and reinforcement of regional integration;
3. **FURTHER RECALLING** AU Summit decisions that EPAs should serve to support African integration and promote unity and cohesion in Africa;
4. **CONCERNED** about the non-ratification of the revised EPAs by some ACP States;
5. **ALSO CONCERNED** about the lack of progress in the EPAs negotiations towards making them to achieve the development objectives of Cotonou Partnership Agreement;
6. **FURTHER CONCERNED** that the process leading to the conclusion of Interim Economic Partnership Agreements did not build on what was negotiated earlier and in particular that political and economic pressures are being exerted by the European Commission on African countries to initial Interim Economic Partnership Agreements;
7. **AWARE** that some countries had to initial Interim EPAs in order to avoid trade disruption and to conclude World Trade Organization (WTO) compatible arrangements by the deadline of 31 December 2007;
8. **FURTHER-CONCERNED** that the European Commission did not put much effort to explore other options to ensure that no Africa Caribbean Pacific country is worse-off;

Hereby,

1. **REITERATES** that EPAs must serve as instruments for the promotion of sustainable development, eradication of poverty and the reinforcement of regional integration in Africa, as agreed in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement;
2. **CALLS** for the review of the interim EPAs, in line with the concerns raised by African Heads of State during the Second Africa-EU Summit;

3. **URGES** the Regional Economic Communities and African Negotiating Groups that have initialed Interim Agreements to ensure that final agreements still to be signed are coherent with their regional integration agenda;
4. **ALSO URGES** the African negotiating groups and the Regional Economic Communities to work closely among themselves and with the AU Commission as well as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) to achieve these objectives;
5. **FURTHER URGES** the Member States that have not already done so, to ratify the Cotonou Partnership Agreement;
6. **CALLS ON** the European Union and its Member States to deepen the EPA negotiating mandate of the European Commission to enable it to effectively address the development objectives of EPAs;
7. **RE-AFFIRMS** the mandate of the AU Commission to coordinate, monitor and harmonize the efforts of the concerned RECs and Member States in the negotiations of EPAs with the European Union;
8. **REQUESTS** the RECs and African Groups negotiating EPAs to facilitate the monitoring and coordinating role of the AU Commission by inviting the latter, to their preparatory meetings and negotiating sessions;
9. **CALLS ON** the European Union to respect the commitment it made in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement that no ACP country should be worse-off after the end of the Cotonou preferences;
10. **URGES** the European Union to provide additional resources beyond European Development Fund and not to link the disbursement of EDF and Aid for Trade resources to the signing of EPAs;
11. **WELCOMES** the proposal of the President of the European Commission for consultations on EPA negotiations between Africa and European Union at the highest political level;
12. **REQUESTS** the African Union Ministers of Trade and Finance to hold at the earliest opportunity a meeting in preparation for these consultations;
13. **ALSO REQUESTS** the African regional negotiating groups, Commissions of the AU, RECs, and the EU to work towards successful holding of the African-EU high level consultations on EPAs;
14. **URGES** the African Union Ministers of Trade and African Negotiators to remain vigilant in the upcoming stages of the EPA negotiations.

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