



MISSION PERMANENTE A BRUXELLES

Avenue Gustave Demey 72 –74
1160 Bruxelles (Belgique)

Tel: (322) 346.97.47/48 Fax: (322) 346.97.28
e-mail: africanunion@skynet.be

Ref.:AU.BRU/GR/068.12

The Permanent Mission of the African Union in Brussels presents its compliments to all the Embassies of Member States of the African Union in Brussels and to the Representations of Regional Economic Communities and has the honor to inform them that the African Union Commission is organizing its annual coordination meeting on the negotiations of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) on 17 and 18 May 2012 in Arusha, Tanzania.

As for the previous meetings and conferences, the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels is invited to participate and make its contribution at the meeting in Arusha. Henceforth, the Mission kindly requests that the names of the Coordinators who will be representing each of the five regions in Arusha, be communicated to it as soon as possible. The African Union will provide an economy class ticket as well as a daily subsistence allowance at the African Union rate to all the Coordinators, for the duration of the meeting. The Draft Agenda and the Aide-memoire of the meeting are, herewith, attached.

The Permanent Mission of the African Union in Brussels avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all the Embassies of Member States of the African Union in Brussels and to the Representations of Regional Economic Communities, the assurances of its highest consideration.

Brussels, 25 April 2012

**TO ALL THE EMBASSIES OF MEMBER STATES OF THE
AFRICAN UNION AND TO THE REPRESENTATIONS OF
REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES IN BRUSSELS**



AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

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

EPA Negotiations Coordination Meeting

17-18 May 2012

Arusha, Tanzania

TI/TD/EPA/DA/01

Original: English

Draft Agenda

Draft Agenda

EPA Negotiations Coordination Meeting

17-18 May 2012

- Agenda Item 1:** Opening Ceremony
- Agenda Item 2:** Adoption of Agenda and Organisation of Work
- Agenda Item 3:** State of play of EPA Negotiations
- Agenda Item 4:** An Analysis of the withdrawal of market access under the EU Market Access Regulation 1528/2007.
- Agenda Item 5:** The potential effects of trade agreements with third parties on Boosting Intra-African Trade and the Proposed Tripartite and Continental Free Trade Areas.
- Agenda Item 6:** Summit Decision on Boosting Intra –African Trade
- Agenda Item 7:** Way forward on EPA negotiations
- Agenda Item 8:** Consideration and Adoption of Report of Meeting
- Agenda item 9:** Closing Ceremony

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

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

EPA Negotiations Coordination Meeting

17-18 May 2012

Arusha, Tanzania

TI/TD/EPA/AM/01

Original: English

Aide-Memoire

A. Background

1. In recent times, the EPA Negotiations has continued at a very slow pace with little or no progress registered during the technical level discussions and negotiating meetings that were held in various regions. From the perspective of respective African negotiating regions, the priority remains the conclusion of EPAs that will support development and enhance regional and continental integration.
2. One of the significant developments in the EPA negotiations in 2012 was the announcement by the European Commission (EC) that countries that signed earlier signed an Interim EPA but have not taken necessary steps to ratify and implement the agreement would no longer benefit from the EPA market access offer starting from 1st January 2014. This move by the EC has been viewed by many as a way of compelling the said countries into ratifying and implementing EPAs. In Africa, countries that stand to be adversely affected by this decision are Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The reasons given for this move by the EC are that the decision is aimed at realigning the ACP-EU trade relations so that they conform to WTO rules while at the same time preserving balance and fairness towards other ACP and Non-ACP developing countries.
3. Major differences between the parties negotiating the EPAs are mainly in the following areas; binding commitments for development support, the definition of the scope of substantially all trade (i.e. the scope of tariff liberalisation), export taxes, most favoured nation principle (MFN), modification of tariffs, removal of community levies, non-execution clause and agricultural safeguards among others. Failing the inability to bridge the gaps at the technical negotiating levels, these issues were subsequently referred to Political leaders for their consideration and to bring their collective wisdom to bear on them. Yet, the differences remain to be resolved.
4. As the continent's attention shifts towards boosting intra African trade through the promotion of inter and intra-regional trade, questions have been raised on the potential effects that trade agreements with third parties like the EPA could have on these efforts. Indeed, in the face of the recent global economic crises, there has arisen an increasing awareness that regional and continental integration offers the best opportunities for economic development and the need therefore, to ensure that commitments in trade agreements with third parties do not undermine regional and continental integration efforts.
5. It is in light of these developments and furthermore, in line with the mandate to coordinate EPA negotiations¹, that the AUC is organizing this EPA Negotiations Coordination Meeting to review and assess the current state of play of the negotiations and suggest ways forward. It will also serve as an avenue to sensitise the RECs and other stakeholders participating in the meeting, on the recent Summit Decisions on boosting intra-African trade, as part of ways to ensure that potential agreements with third parties do not undermine the continental integration efforts.

¹ The AUC was given the mandate to coordinate EPA negotiations by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government in the Maputo Declaration on EPAs of 2003.

B. The main objectives of the workshop are the following;

- i. Create a platform for the EPA Negotiating RECs/Regions in Africa to share notes and experiences as well as exchange information on the EPA negotiations;
- ii. Bring together EPA Negotiators and Technical Advisors, Researchers, and partner international organisations to review new developments in the EPA negotiations;
- iii. Evolve strategies on the way forward on the EPA negotiations
- iv. Sensitise the Recs and other participating stakeholders, on the Decision of the 18th AU Summit held in January 2012, on boosting intra-African trade.

C. Participation

6. The Coordination Meeting will be attended by EPA negotiators and technical advisors from the five negotiating regions in Africa and representatives of the RECs as well as the private sector representatives from each of the five regions. The regional representatives of the negotiating groups in Brussels will attend the coordination meeting. Representatives of collaborating institutions: - UNCTAD, UNECA, UNDP, ACP, ILEAP, ECDPM, TWN, TRALAC, Commonwealth Secretariat and South Centre are also invited to attend the meeting.

D. Documentation and working languages

7. The workshop shall be conducted in English and French languages only. Materials will be provided by the AUC, the speakers and collaborating institutions. Working documents for the workshop will be posted on the AU Website www.africa-union.org.

E. Venue of the meeting

8. The Coordination Meeting will be held on 17-18 May 2012 in Arusha, Tanzania. Specific details on the venue of the meeting will be communicated in due course.

F. Immigration Requirements

9. It is the responsibility of the participant to find out in their home country the visa requirements for their entry to Tanzania. Participants requiring an entry visa should obtain visas from the Tanzanian Consular Missions in their countries before departure. For those without Tanzanian Embassies in their countries of origin (departure), arrangements are being explored for the issuance of visa at the entry point.

G. Workshop Format

10. The two day workshop will be divided into various sessions as detailed in the agenda annexed to this aide memoire. During each session, participants will have the opportunity to exchange views and share experiences.

H. Contact Persons

11. For more information on the organisation of the workshop you are kindly requested to direct all your inquiries to Batanai Chikwene, chikweneb@africa-union.org and Inye Nathan Briggs, inyebriggs@yahoo.co.uk and Tarana Loumabeka, loumabekat@africa-union.org or fax to +251 115 510 467.

AFRICAN UNION UNION AFRICAINE

African Union Common Repository

<http://archives.au.int>

Specialized Technical and representational Agencies

Permanent Mission of the African Union in Brussels

EPA Negotiations Coordination Meeting, 17-18 May 2012, Arusha, Tanzania

<http://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/1952>

Downloaded from African Union Common Repository