



# **EU-ACP meetings:** The role of organised civil society in development

EESC Special Report 2008



*European Economic and Social Committee*

**MEETING ACP-EU: AN IMPROVED PARTNERSHIP  
FOR A BETTER DEVELOPMENT**



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## **PREFACE**





Three hundred representatives from social and economic interest groups in the ACP countries and the European Union gathered for a meeting at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels on 4, 5 and 6 March 2008. Together with top decision-makers from the ACP/EU Joint Assembly, the European Commission, the ACP/UE Council of Ministers and international socio-occupational organisations, they had a forceful debate on their countries' current situation and potential for development within the framework of current or future cooperation between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific States.

Several important issues were examined over the course of the three-day meeting. There was a focus on: EU/Africa strategy; the application of the Cotonou Agreement and the participatory approach in particular; the role and the importance of human resources and social dialogue were also discussed. The issue of the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations and their future underscored all the debates.

A number of requirements emerged from the discussions.

The Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations should proceed at a pace which is compatible with the ACP countries' capacity, incorporating economic, social and environmental provisions, so that development – which must remain the main objective – is optimised. Non-state actors should be updated and consulted on a regular basis alongside the negotiations, and the conclusions should incorporate institutional provisions to ensure their representatives of organised civil society participate in the monitoring and implementation of the EPAs in line with the agreement which has just been finalised in the Caribbean.

Deepening the participatory approach and the partnership that is intended to promote harmonious development requires improvements to the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, which remains a positive instrument for the sustainable development of the ACP countries. There are still several challenges to overcome however, and these include updating and consulting non-state actors, ensuring EU funding is made available to strengthen the capacities of civil society organisations, and strengthening or setting up networks to ensure that these organisations work together in a more harmonised way.



Development policy should focus on human resources, linking education, training, job creation, conflict prevention and economic development and including necessary international cooperation on migration.

The ACP/EU Follow-up Committee of the European Economic and Social Committee will support and actively promote all of these issues to help the ACP countries adapt to the demands of a changing world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. DANTIN', written over two horizontal lines.

Gérard DANTIN  
President of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee

# **PROGRAMME**



**25th MEETING OF THE ACP-EU ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTEREST GROUPS**

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**Brussels, 4 to 6 March 2008**

**PROGRAMME**

**Tuesday, 4 March**

- |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8 a.m.           | <b>Registration of delegates</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 9 – 10.30 a.m.   | <b>Meeting of the ACP members</b> ( <i>meeting room JDE 62</i> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 10.30 a.m.       | Coffee break                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. | <b>ACP-EU preparatory meetings</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers group (<i>meeting room JDE 62</i>)</li> <li>• Trade Union group (<i>meeting room JDE 70</i>)</li> <li>• Various Interests group (<i>meeting room JDE 51</i>)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1 p.m.           | Break                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 2 p.m.           | <b>Registration of participants</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2.30 – 3.30 p.m. | <b>Inaugural session</b> ( <i>meeting room JDE 62</i> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr Hamro-Drotz</b>, President of the External Relations Section of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)</li> <li>• <b>H.E. Mr Ali Farah Assoweh</b>, President of the ACP Council of Ministers, Minister for Economy, Finances and Planning, National Authorising Officer of the Republic of Djibouti</li> <li>• <b>H.E. Ms Adanja</b>, Head of International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance of the Republic of Slovenia, President-in-Office of the EU Council</li> <li>• <b>Ms Kinnock</b>, Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly</li> </ul> |
| 3.30 – 3.45 p.m. | Break                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

3.45 – 5.15 p.m.

**The EU-Africa Strategy: opportunities and prospects for the future**

*Chair: Mr Hamro-Drotz, President of the External Relations Section of the EESC*

- **Mr Dimitriadis**, President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- **Mr Michel**, EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid
- Discussion

5.15–6.30 p.m.

The participatory approach: towards an Economic and Social Council for Africa

*Chair: Mr Somville, member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee of the EESC*

- **Mr Sanon**, President of the UCESA and of the ESC of Burkina Faso
- **Dr Ikomé**, Deputy Head of the Secretariat of the ECOSOC of the African Union
- Discussion

6.30–8.30 p.m.

Reception offered by the President of the European Economic and Social Committee (*Atrium 6*)

<b>Wednesday, 5 March</b>
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8.30 a.m.

Registration of participants

9 a.m.–12 noon

**Review of the negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and perspectives for the future**

*Chair: Mr Makeka, Executive Director of the Association of Lesotho Employers and member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee of the EESC*

- **Mr Falkenberg**, Deputy Director General, DG Trade, European Commission
- **Mr Riera Figueras**, Director, DG Development, European Commission
- **H.E. Mr Moussa Chehem**, President of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors and Ambassador of the Republic of Djibouti
- Discussion

12 noon–1 p.m.

**What role for non-state actors in the negotiations and in the implementation of the EPAs?**

*Chair: Ms Florio, member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee of the EESC*

- **Mr Dantin**, President of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee and Vice-President of the Employees Group of the EESC
- **Mr Meyer**, President of the Suriname Trade and Industry Association and former member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee of the EESC
- **Mr Lewis**, General Secretary of the Caribbean Congress of Labour
- **Mr Kiriro**, President of East Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) and member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee of the EESC

1 p.m.

Break

2.30–4 p.m.

**What role for non-state actors in the negotiations and in the implementation of the EPA? *session continued***

- Discussion

4–4.15 p.m.

Break

4.15–6.30 p.m.

**Human Resources for development**

*Chair: Mr Adu-Amankwah, Secretary General of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) - Africa and member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee of the EESC*

- **Mr Akouete**, General Secretary of the Democratic Organisation of African Workers' Trade Union and of the Confederation of Workers of Togo, member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee of the EESC
- **Ms King**, member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee and President of the Social Affairs Section of the EESC
- Discussion

6.30–8 p.m.

**Meeting of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee** (meeting room JDE 61)

<b>Thursday, 6 March</b>
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9–11.30 a.m.

**An improved partnership for a better development**

*Chair: Mr Jahier*, member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee and Vice-President of the Various Interests Group of the EESC

- **Mr López Peña**, Acting Head of Unit, DG Development, European Commission
- **Mr Dantin**, President of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee and Vice-President of the Employees Group of the EESC
- Discussion

11.30–11.45 a.m.

Coffee break

11.45 a.m.–1 p.m.

**Information session on access to EU financing for non-state actors**

*Chair: Ms Persson*, member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee of the EESC

- **Mr Bouratsis**, Acting Director, EuropeAid, European Commission
- **Ms Dellicour**, Head of Unit, EuropeAid, European Commission
- Discussion

1 p.m.

Break

2.30–3.30 p.m.

**Closing session and adoption of the final declaration**

*Chair: Mr Jeetun*, Secretary General of the PanAfrican Employers' Confederation and Director of the Mauritius Employers' Federation, member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee of the EESC

- **Mr Dantin**, President of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee and Vice-President of the Employees Group of the EESC

## **INAUGURAL SESSION**





**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**SPEECH**

**by**

**Mr Filip Hamro-Drotz  
President of the External Relations Section  
of the European Economic and Social Committee**

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**4 March 2008**

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Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Colleagues:

On behalf of Mr Dimitriadis, President of the European Economic and Social Committee, it is with great pleasure that I would like to welcome all of you to the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups, which we have also named "An Improved Partnership for a Better Development". I would like to particularly welcome the esteemed speakers who are sitting at the podium here with me: His Excellency Mr Ali Farah Assoweh, President of the ACP Council of Ministers, Her Excellency Ms Adanja, representing the Presidency in Office of the EU Council and Ms Kinnock, who is of course the co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. But equally importantly, I wish to warmly welcome the ACP delegates who have travelled long and far to come to Brussels for this conference. I hope that by the time you leave in three days, you will feel enriched, motivated and full of ideas! Finally, I would like to welcome the representatives of the ACP and European Economic and Social Councils, the diplomatic corps, the European and International Institutions and last but not least, the very numerous observers who have registered for this event.

As the title of this conference indicates, the European Economic and Social Committee has been involved in ACP-EU relations for several decades. However, our role in this partnership was formalised by the inclusion in the Cotonou Agreement of Protocol number 1. This mandates the European Economic and Social Committee to organise consultations and meetings with representatives of ACP economic and social interest groups. And that is precisely why we are all here today.

So in explaining the objective of this conference, I will also be able to explain to you the role of the European Economic and Social Committee in today's ACP-EU relations. This is because all of our activities are complementary. And when I say "all" of our activities, I am referring to the general ACP conferences that we organise in Brussels every three years, to the annual regional seminars and ad hoc hearings organised in ACP countries, to our participation in the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and in the ACP-EC Council of Ministers, to our cooperation with Economic and Social Councils in African Countries, to name but a few of our activities.

Indeed the aim of these EESC activities is threefold: firstly to *inform* ACP economic and social interest groups on recent policy and trade developments. Secondly, to provide a *forum* where you can *meet* and *discuss* directly with EU and ACP negotiators and policy makers, so that they hear your views on the various issues and hopefully feed these views into their analysis. Thirdly, to enable you to learn from best practices and to network at the regional and international level. However, *our role*, that is the role of the EESC, continues all year round as we seize every opportunity to communicate your views on various policy and trade issues to the political partners in the Cotonou Agreement, but also to international institutions and to international socio-professional organisations.

Having explained why we are all here today, I would now like to turn my attention to the subjects to be discussed over the next three days. I am sure that you will agree that these are very topical issues. Indeed, they are currently at the very "heart" of the ACP-EU cooperation. I am thinking in particular

of the Economic Partnership Agreements and of the EU-Africa Strategy, both of which represent significant opportunities and challenges for the future. The other principal topics that we will be discussing include the role of non-state actors in implementing the Cotonou Agreement, the development of human resources in ACP countries and finally, the promotion of the participatory process and of social dialogue at the all-African level. Indeed, this afternoon will be largely focussed on EU-African relations, with several keynote speakers, including the EU Commissioner for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid.

If I could just touch upon two of these subjects: the Economic Partnership Agreements and the EU-Africa Strategy. Firstly, on the EPAs: undoubtedly this has been the subject of much heated debate over the last three to four years, a debate which is still continuing *both* in ACP countries and in Europe. We have today a very diverse situation regarding ACP-EC trade relations and the question is "*how will this relationship evolve in the remainder of 2008 and indeed, beyond*". For if I understand correctly, the EC negotiators hope to encourage more ACP countries to conclude comprehensive EPAs at the regional level, in order to facilitate regional integration. However, on the African and Pacific side, it is still not clear whether they wish to continue the negotiations towards full regional EPAs and I have in mind the Least Developed Countries in particular, which currently enjoy full market and quota free access to the EU, as a result of the EU's "Everything-But-Arms" programme.

Now without wanting to pre-empt the discussions that we will have tomorrow on the EPAs, I would like to make a few comments. In my view, market access provisions such as those currently offered by the EU to Least Developed Countries, or indeed those offered to all ACP countries under the Cotonou Agreement, are *insufficient* for the sustainable development of ACP countries. It is the familiar dictum of trade being a necessary but insufficient condition for development, which in my view holds quite a lot of truth. For this reason, I would argue that the EPA negotiations *should* continue, but at the appropriate pace for the capacities of African and Pacific countries. Moreover, the final EPAs should include social and environmental provisions, such as those that we have seen in the EPA concluded for the Caribbean region. They should also include provisions for civil society monitoring of the implementation of future EPAs, again, as we have seen for the Caribbean EPA. Having said that, I would also like to stress that it is paramount that a number of accompanying initiatives already begin to be put in place, in order to *enable* these countries to successfully implement the EPAs. And here I have in mind capacity-building measures in order to overcome the supply-side constraints of ACP industries and of their agricultural sectors.

I will not go any further on this issue, this can be an appetiser for tomorrow's discussions! If we now move to the EU-Africa Strategy: what strikes me most is firstly, the ambition of the Strategy. Secondly, the fact that the spirit of partnership and of civil society participation that was formalised for the first time in the Cotonou Agreement, permeates the entire EU-Africa Strategy. Thus, civil society is not only encouraged, but is actually expected to actively participate. And I am pleased to note that there is also a specific reference to the EESC, which is called upon to establish working relations with the ECOSOCC of the African Union. As a first step in that cooperation we will have the pleasure of hearing from a representative of the ECOSOCC later this afternoon.

Ladies and gentlemen: I could go on and comment on each of the topics that we will discuss over the next three days, but I think that this would be rather impolite towards the next speakers, who are

waiting anxiously to share their views with you. So it remains for me encourage you to take the floor over the next few days, to present you views and to ask your questions. This is an event organised *by* European economic and social interest groups *for* ACP economic and social interest groups.

The conference is now officially declared "open".

Thank you for your attention.



**25th Meeting of the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**SPEECH**

**by**

**H.E. Mr FARRAH ASSOWEH  
President of the ACP Council of Ministers, Minister for Economy,  
Finances and Planning, National Authorising Officer of the Republic of Djibouti**

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**4 March 2008**

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Your Excellency Adanja,  
Ms Glenys Kinnock,  
Mr Hamro-Drotz,

Representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee,  
Distinguished representatives of ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups,

As President of the ACP Council of Ministers, it is a great honour for me, and for my country, Djibouti, to be able to participate in the work of the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups.

The main theme of our meeting, "An Improved Partnership for a Better Development" is a very topical and important issue for us, allowing us to focus our attention on one of the fundamental principles of the Cotonou Agreement (Article 2), that of taking a global and participatory approach to development.

This meeting will provide a unique opportunity for the various stakeholders to meet and engage in a discussion on the practical issues surrounding the role of non-state actors in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement and to search for ways and means of reaping maximum benefit from the opportunities and advantages offered by this most innovative of all North-South partnership agreements. With this in mind, I cannot stress enough the importance of the supporting role played by non-state actors in the implementation of our partnership agreement.

I would now like to share with you in brief some of my thoughts on the main challenges facing the ACP Group.

### **Economic Partnership Agreements**

At its 85th session, the ACP Council of Ministers noted with concern that although five years had passed since the launch of the EPA negotiations, many ACP countries continued to harbour serious doubts concerning the ability of the EPAs to bring about the necessary structural transformation of their economies. Equally, the Kigali Declaration adopted at the session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Kigali (Rwanda) from 19 to 22 November 2007 called for the EPAs to be used as instruments for promoting development and, quite rightly, also sought to establish whether the current direction of the EPA negotiations could genuinely lead to an improvement in the production and supply capacities of the ACP countries, two vital conditions for eradicating poverty.

Consequently, the ACP countries and the EU Member States now need to work together more than ever to make the active involvement of ACP non-state actors in the EPA consultation processes possible. This will enable the non-state actors to become better informed about EPA negotiations and thus make a more effective contribution to the technical discussions held by our respective regions and governments.

We cannot stress enough the long-term effects of the regional EPAs on the economic, social and political situation in the ACP countries. It is therefore vital that both state and non-state actors in the ACP countries strongly reaffirm their position; namely, that the EPAs should be instruments for sustainable development and eradicating poverty in the ACP countries and support the gradual integration of the ACP Member States into the global economy.

In certain regions, incompatibility between the EPAs and the existing regional integration agreements has been part of the cause of the difficulties currently being encountered during the negotiations on the EPAs. Furthermore, the far-reaching changes in the external environment in which the ACP Group is developing, global realignment and the sea change in EU policy, particularly the elaboration by the EU of separate strategies for Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific and for South Africa are all questions which the ACP Group of countries is following closely and with a keen interest.

The ACP countries are willing to sign EPAs provided that this does not leave them worse off than they are under the current system and that these agreements genuinely promote their development and real integration into the global economy. The ACP countries' concerns regarding the EPAs may be summarised as follows:

- i. In the absence of a package of measures which take into account the fragile nature of many emerging sectors of the economy in the ACP countries, the EPAs will expose the ACP countries to competition from EU countries, with devastating effects;
- ii. Opening up the markets in the ACP region will mean substantial transition costs for these countries. They have therefore asked that the emphasis be placed on the developmental aspect of the EPAs. Opening countries up to competition from EU imports will require significant investments in improving the production and supply capacities of ACP countries as well as social measures and other accompanying or compensatory measures. But the ACP states do not have the resources needed to implement these measures and have already been crippled by crises in core product sectors as well as by structural change, debt, the HIV-AIDS epidemic and armed conflict.

Moreover, these states are being forced to cope with a loss of revenue as a result of customs duties being reduced or abolished, thereby seriously undermining the extent to which their governments can provide social services and safety nets, particularly for those economic sectors liable to suffer from the harmful effects of the EPAs. We must therefore focus on how the EPAs can contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

In the light of the above, it seems obvious that if the APEs are to function as real and effective instruments for development, additional resources need to be set aside for us. Action must also be taken both to make such resources more readily available and to remove any obstacles on the supply side, along with any other structural constraints, thus helping stimulate the production capacity of the ACP countries, bolstering their competitiveness and diversifying their economies.

Given these concerns, only one region has signed an EPA thus far, the remainder having only initialled preliminary agreements. In the **Caribbean region**, all 15 CARIFORUM Member States have initialled a complete regional EPA, covering all chapters, in particular services, rules, trade in goods and development aid.

In the case of the other ACP regions, the signature of a full EPA remains a rather distant prospect.

### **The Doha Development Round and the global impact of climate change and migration**

At international level, the new developments that are of greatest interest to the ACP countries are the multilateral trade negotiations at the WTO and the state of play in implementing the Doha Development Programme. Will the developed and developing countries manage to reconcile their respective positions and smooth over their differences to pave the way for the completion of the Doha round in 2008? Another cause for concern for the international community in general is climate change and migration, and their impact on human and environmental development. Against the background of the multilateral agreements on the environment and other accords, will the various nations be capable of taking the measures needed to avoid an environmental and human catastrophe for today's and future generations?

A common ACP-EU approach to resolving these issues would guarantee positive results in the fight against poverty and the promotion of sustainable development.

The ACP Group of countries is planning to hold a second meeting of ACP ministers responsible for migration, asylum and mobility policy during the first half of 2008 and will fully participate in the Second Global Forum on Migration and Development, due to take place in Manila (Philippines) in October 2008. These issues will be discussed at both of these meetings.

### **Future of the ACP Group and the 6th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government**

The ACP Group still faces an uncertain future and we must constantly endeavour to gear our activities to tackling the most pressing developmental challenges facing our people, our member states and our regions. Taking into account current global prospects and the historical background to EU-ACP cooperation, the ACP Group has launched a debate on its future and on how it can continue to play an effective role at international level on behalf of its member states. The 6th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government, which will be held in Ghana in October 2008, will broach issues relating to the future of the ACP Group, the EPAs, the political situation in the ACP countries, and other global questions.

### **Ratification of the revised Cotonou Agreement**

I would like to express my concern at the slow pace of ratification of the revised Cotonou Agreement. To date, **25** EU Member States and **46** ACP countries have ratified the document and deposited their instruments of ratification. However, to enter into effect, it must be ratified by at least two-thirds of the ACP countries and by all EU Member States. It will not be possible to tap into the resources

available under the 10th EDF until this ratification process has been completed. As economic and social actors, we must exert pressure on our governments and call for the conclusion of the ratification process as soon as possible.

### **Meeting of the national and regional authorising officers held in early 2008**

During their meeting held in January 2008, the EDF national and regional authorising officers reaffirmed that the recognition of non-state actors by ACP and EU countries would be dependent on factors such as the extent to which they meet the needs of local people, their specific skills, their degree of organisation and transparency as well as their management efficiency. Consequently, the setting-up of negotiation mechanisms at regional and national level for non-state actors remains a high priority for the ACP Group.

Non-state actors have launched a process of intra-ACP dialogue, which should lead to the creation of a single forum for civil society from all ACP countries. They believe that if ACP civil society is better organised, it will be able to participate more effectively in the implementation and assessment of the Cotonou Agreement. These questions must be addressed at the next meeting of the civil society forum, which is scheduled to take place in the second half of 2008.

### **Conclusions**

A common ACP-EU approach to dialogue on policies and the search for mutually acceptable solutions should reflect the concerns that all parties have shown on a wide range of issues, especially regional and international trade systems, migration, climate change, food security, health, education, the access of non-state actors to financing and HR development in the ACP countries.

Accordingly, the discussions which we are embarking on today must seek to formulate and develop a clear and precise proposal on how to genuinely involve the economic and social partners in the ACP countries and allow them to make a positive contribution to the EPA negotiations in progress and take part in strengthening our partnership.

The observations that I have shared with you aim to sketch out a general direction for our discussion on the relevant aspects of the Cotonou Agreement as regards implementation and partnership, which are of particular importance for us.

Thank you for your attention.

**25th Meeting of the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**SPEECH**

**by**

**H.E. Ms ADANJA  
Head of International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance of the Republic  
of Slovenia, President-in-Office of the EU Council**

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**Brussels, 4 March 2008**

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Dear delegates from ACP-countries, members of the European Economic and Social Committee, ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, colleagues from EU Member States, members of the Corps Diplomatique and representatives of NGO's and international professional organizations,

I am very pleased to be here today and for the opportunity of addressing this assembly. The regular meetings organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) with economic and social interest groups from the ACP countries have a tradition of providing fruitful discussions and recommendations on issues directly relevant to ACP-EU relations.

The Slovenian Presidency believes that dialogue and close cooperation between all actors involved can improve the ACP-EU relations. This approach will also be reflected in the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, to be held in Ljubljana, between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> of March.

As a representative of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU, today I would like to talk about the Economic Partnership Agreements and the implementation of the Africa-EU Joint Strategy.

#### 1. On Economic Partnership Agreements – EPA's

The EU Presidency is aware of the great efforts that have been made by the ACP-countries to meet the deadline of the WTO-waiver at the end of last year. This race against time resulted in one full EPA, between the CARIFORUM and the EU, and stepping stone agreements between several sub-regions and individual countries in the other ACP-regions.

The good news is that in this way a deterioration of the trade preferences for almost all ACP-countries as of 1 January 2008 has been averted and free access of most of their goods to the EU-market have been safeguarded.

But the race against time created frustrations on the ACP-side which were aired during the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon. The EU is aware that there is still a lot to be done in the second phase of negotiations but also that this second phase needs to address crucial elements that have so far not received sufficient attention.

A lot needs to be done because the stepping stone agreements have to be turned into comprehensive and regional EPA's. Only such agreements can fulfil the objectives set out in the Cotonou agreement and release the full development benefits of the EPA's. Two issues seem in particular important for this second round of negotiations: 1. regional integration and 2. development and Aid for Trade.

The negotiations should continue with the regional organizations from the ACP-side rather than with individual countries, thus putting back regional integration at the forefront of the process. Regional integration will deepen the interdependence among ACP societies and enhance their mutual trust. Furthermore, economic integration will create larger markets, fostering the exchange of goods and resources among countries in the regions and also between regions.



Slovenia therefore believes that it is crucial that EPA's are concluded with whole economic regions, including both non-LDC's and LDC's. This approach also and foremost means that the EPA's should be an instrument for enhancing regional integration.

On the other hand, we agree that the development aspect of EPA's is of the utmost importance. Therefore, it is necessary to look for the appropriate type of assistance in order to assist the EPA-regions in adjusting to the new situation. In this sense, it is necessary that EU and partner countries continue to engage in serious technical negotiations to define development modalities.

Apart from the technical negotiations there is evidently also the need for dialogue to take place. Both sides, ACP-countries as well as the EU, need to air their positions, listen and explain. The Commissioners Mandelson and Michel intend to visit ACP-regions in order to have such a dialogue. The consultations promised during the EU-Africa Summit between African leaders and the EU Commission President, Mr. Barroso, would also play a very important role, by giving both parties the opportunity to present their opinions, to clarify positions and to improve the relations between the EU and the ACP-countries which became strained at the end of the first phase of the EPA-negotiations.

Although non-government actors and interest groups are not formally part of the negotiations between government institutions, I agree that it is important that these actors are – be it in an informal way – consulted about developments in the EPA-negotiations as well. It would also be helpful to consult specific actors on specific elements of the negotiations before taking a certain position on these elements. From the EU-side this has been facilitated and will continue to be facilitated by not only meetings as this one today and briefings for instance to the European Parliament, but also by consulting representatives of the private sector on specific issues during the negotiations.

## 2. On the implementation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership

Ladies and gentlemen,

Experience shows that political commitments will most likely remain good intentions if the right mechanisms are not put in place. European and African leaders have been open, frank but also constructive in Lisbon, including on the issue of the EPA's.

The Second EU-Africa Summit brought about a quality change in the relationship between the two continents which is reflected also in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and its First Action Plan. Both instruments pave the way for new channels of dialogue at multiple levels, seeking to handle the many dimensions of the relationship in an integrated manner.

Slovenia, as first "post Lisbon" EU Presidency, is committed to kick start the implementation of this new framework, aiming also at stronger bilateral development-oriented trading relationships between Africa and the EU, as well as at establishing effective synergies between African integration processes and the EPA's, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and bilateral trade agreements.

Our immediate challenge is to establish the necessary coordination and cooperation structures and procedures, as the current institutional framework for EU-Africa relations does not entirely correspond to the ambitions of the Joint Strategy.

“An improved partnership for a better development”, the motto of this meeting, is shared by us all. Indeed, the new strategic partnership is not to be limited by the measures agreed at governmental level. There is the need for an effective ownership of this process by civil society and public opinions on both sides.

This sounds easier than it is. The Action Plan is a cross-pillar document, calling for a broad range of activities and actors, including EU institutions, EU Member States and the civil society. In creating the organizational preconditions for our joint endeavour, the Presidency’s approach to implementation is therefore inclusive.

Nevertheless, it will take a lot of political will on the side of all EU actors to establish both tailor-made and lean implementation mechanisms for the Action Plan. First steps in the right direction have been taken over the last weeks, in close consultation with our African Partners.

The Slovenian Presidency hopes that by the time of the next EU-Africa Ministerial meeting at the end of April 2008, the necessary implementation mechanisms are in place and first concrete steps to implement the Africa-EU Strategy and its first Action Plan have been taken. But again, it will take the political will of all actors on the EU side to get there.

Side by side with the internal EU work necessary to establish lean and efficient structures, we are also working closely with our African partners, in order to ensure that both sides’ activities and timelines go with.

The first meeting between EU and AU representatives (4 February, Addis Ababa) achieved a broad understanding on the initial steps to be taken. Jointly we are now working towards presenting the first results to the April EU-AU Ministerial Troika: a joint consolidated proposal on the architecture, mechanism and methodology for the implementation, indicative timelines for the implementation of the activities foreseen in the Action Plan, as well as the first results achieved in the framework of its Eight Partnerships.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The new strategic partnership between the EU and Africa is a particular chance and challenge for the smaller countries in Africa and Europe. Take our country for example. Slovenia is a rather young country. With little more than 2 million inhabitants, Slovenia is also a rather small country. So it has been difficult for us to conceive a comprehensive Africa policy and develop bilateral relations with each of the 40 plus countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

For us, the strategic partnership offers a unique multilateral framework for dialogue and cooperation which complements our (limited) bilateral possibilities and resources. But it is also a big challenge for us: if we want to have our voice heard, we have to bring added value to this partnership, a vision of our own.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Although deep transformations do not occur overnight, we are currently undergoing a period of significant changes. It is up to us all to make these changes work towards an “improved partnership for a better development”.

Thank you for your attention.

**25th Meeting of the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**SPEECH**

**by**

**Ms KINNOCK  
Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly**

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**4 March 2008**

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I would like to recognise, as the President-in-Office just has, the Kigali Declaration on EPAs, adopted at our Joint Parliamentary Assembly last November. This declaration provides the blueprint, I think, for where we have been and what is now needed in these negotiations.

Let me give a brief overview first on where I think we are on EPAs:

- In ECOWAS all countries have refused to initial the interim agreement, with the exception of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. Nigeria is the only non LDC country in that region which has not initialled.
- In SADC Agreements have been initialled with all countries except South Africa and Angola
- In Eastern and Southern Africa all countries have initialled
- In CEMAC Gabon and Congo, Brazzaville have not initialled anything but may do so
- In the Pacific only Fiji and PNG have initialled.

With the exception of Cariforum all regions 'lost' members, and two countries of one region (Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire in ECOWAS) have even signed different treaties!

The Financial Times described the rush to the finishing line at the end of last year as "the cat herding of dozens of developing countries which resulted in a last minute scramble to sign partial, regional and bilateral deals, a tangled cat's cradle, if not a mangled dogs breakfast"

It's a fair description. But of course it wasn't meant to be that way. When negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) began in 2000 it was with the best of intentions - to agree WTO compatible trading arrangements that would contribute to poverty alleviation, development and regional economic integration.

Yet as the December 2007 deadline approached, those of us who had closely followed the negotiations despaired as we saw the process become increasingly mired in conflict and contention.

The fact is that from the outset the Commission negotiators approached the talks on EPAs as if they were conventional free trade area negotiations focused on market opening, rather than as tools for development.

And so, with the exception of the Caribbean, the agreements were inevitably scaled back, with WTO-compatible interim deals, mainly on trade in goods, signed in haste.

Of the 79 ACP countries that took part in the talks, fewer than a third agreed interim EPAs by the 31st December 2007 deadline.

Perhaps the biggest casualty of the whole process has been regional integration. Though it has been reiterated time, and time, again that regionalism is a key component of a progressive development strategy, the Commission's policy of concluding separate deals with individual states, or groups of countries, has possibly, irreversibly, splintered ACP regions.

In Central Africa for example, only Cameroon, because of its high volume of trade with the EU, has signed up to an interim EPA. Not surprisingly, this has resulted in friction between Cameroon and other governments in the regional grouping.

The Commissioner blames what is clearly a limited outcome on NGOs and, indeed, on European Parliament members like myself. This, I believe, fails to recognise the disquiet and concern that has been most forcibly expressed by ACP Ministers and governments, parliaments, the private sector, by business people, farmers, trade unions and civil society more generally.

Several countries agreed, at the eleventh hour, but only because they needed to maintain market access.

This was particularly the case for non-Least Developed Countries who do not qualify for the EU's Everything But Arms agreement for duty-free quota-free market access. As a result, they were threatened with major tariff hikes and trade disruption if they failed to initial an interim deal.

Indeed the ACP Ministerial Declaration in December 2007 made this clear when it stated that the ACP “deplored the enormous pressure which they had been under, and regretted the fact that the process had been contrary to the letter and spirit of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.”

In response to ACP criticism at the EU-Africa Summit, Commission President Barroso appeared to promote opportunities for adjustments to interim agreements. Yet the Commission now asserts that this is not, and never was, the case.

This confusion must be addressed, not least because the Central and West Africa agreement contains explicit reference to the possibility of adjustment at regional level.

Similarly, Namibia has annexed declarations providing for amendments.

We still do not have a clear picture of what has been concluded by each country, and how. But it certainly appears that EPAs will end up closely resembling the EC's ambitious bilateral deals, with very few development concerns thrown in.

The International Food Policy Research Institute has estimated full implementation of EPAs in 2035 would see EU exports to the ACP increase by €29.4 billion while ACP exports could fall by €6.5 billion.

Let us be clear, economic restructuring to accommodate EPAs will be expensive and needs long term resources to deal with capacity building supply side constraints, loss of fiscal revenue and much else. The EU claims that recycled money for the 10th European Development Fund, covering the period 2008-13, and pledged at €22.7bn will be enough to cover both ongoing development assistance plus additional EPA costs.

The Member States promised a further €1bn a year but I think we can fairly assume since it has not yet been committed, it is unlikely to ever materialise.

ACP governments have put pressure on the EU to make binding commitments in the legal text of each EPA to provide the resources necessary. However, the EC argues that EPA negotiations are about trade, not development aid.

In the EU there is €55billion a year to support the process of change and yet ACP agricultural producers are meant to restructure their economies and cope with a liberalised trading environment in circumstances where – let's face it – they are drought prone, flood prone and still often use donkeys and ploughs to farm their land.

The need for reform on Rules of Origin must be addressed, as must EU subsidies that harm ACP producers – particularly on products such as rice, sugar, poultry, cotton, fruit and vegetables.

We must also ensure that there is no attempt made by the EC to pressure ACP countries to liberalise services, investment and government procurement, nor for the strengthening of intellectual property rights or the inclusion of competition rules within EPAs. ACP countries should not be obliged to negotiate binding commitments in these areas which are not required for WTO compliance.

Trade clearly has a part to play in efforts to reduce poverty and fulfil our obligations under Cotonou. You are all, of course, experts on these issues and know the extent of that task. You know that too many of our citizens receive low returns for their labour, and are economically marginalised, exploited and discriminated against.

I am the beneficiary of my country's investment, after World War II in the public services which provided for the health, education, water and sanitation which so many millions in ACP countries still struggle to obtain. A few generations ago in my family they had life expectancies not unlike what we see in Sub Saharan Africa today and I was born in a house with no gas, running water or electricity.

What many countries in Europe have learned is that this means providing public services free at the point of need and that social indicators will then improve as will greater respect for civil and political rights.

And since Friday is international Women's Day, we will of course, again acknowledge that in most societies and families, traditional gender roles and power relations place women and girls at a clear disadvantage.

This represents such a terrible waste of talent and holds back the economic development of all our countries.

But such action should, however, not be a substitute for governments having predicable funding and the capacity, and, of course, the commitment to make public systems work in the interests of the poor.



After all meeting the MDG targets on health, education, water and sanitation would require an extra \$47 billion a year compared with annual global military spending of \$1 trillion.

As Europeans, our aim should be to globalise social justice and we must hold the European Union and our governments to account. Similarly in ACP countries the same pressures must be applied because only then will we realise the promise offered to us the MDGs.

**THE EU-AFRICA STRATEGY:  
OPPORTUNITIES AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE**



**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**SPEECH**

**by**

**Mr Dimitris DIMITRIADIS  
President of the European Economic and Social Committee**

**on**

***"The EU-Africa Strategy"***

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**4 March 2008**

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Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Colleagues,

I would like to begin my presentation this afternoon by firstly, welcoming very warmly to the EESC Mr Michel, EU Commissioner for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid. I think that it has to be said that the European Economic and Social Committee and DG Development of the European Commission, have *excellent* cooperation, which spans now for some years. This is in no little measure the result of the personal commitment and interest of Mr Michel in ensuring that socio-professional organisations are directly involved in EU development cooperation. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Commissioner for his determined efforts to fully include economic and social interest groups in ACP-EU relations, throughout his mandate.

However, I also hope Commissioner that you welcome our cooperation because of the valuable contribution that the EESC makes to the ACP-EU development partnership, both in terms of content and in terms of contacts. It is for this reason that, we wanted to involve you in this conference, in order for you to be able to consult the ACP and European representatives of economic and social interest groups.

If we now turn to the topic of this session, namely: 'The EU-Africa Strategy'. I will not go into too much detail on the strategy because I am sure that the Commissioner will do this in his own presentation. Nonetheless, there are three points that I would like to raise:

- The first point relates to the work that the EESC is already doing on the EU-Africa Strategy, at the request of Mr Michel;
- The second point concerns institutional cooperation between the EESC and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union, as foreseen in the Strategy;
- The third point relates to the role of civil society in the implementation of the eight partnerships of the EU-Africa Strategy.

If I review each of these points in order: at the request of Mr Michel, the European Economic and Social Committee is currently working on an exploratory opinion on the EU-Africa Strategy, and specifically, on how to encourage employment creation in Africa. Undoubtedly, employment creation is central to all sustainable development strategies for Africa. Indeed, it is such a vast and complex subject linked to issues such as the modernisation of the agricultural sector, restructuring and diversifying local industries, regional integration, the informal sector, decent work, etc. etc., that the Bureau of the EESC has had to grant the rapporteur a exemption for the length of his report! Mr Dantin, the EESC rapporteur and also President of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee is of course in the room with us today, and will be able to inform you fully on the progress of his report and to put forward any questions that he may have.

The point that I wanted to make is that for each and every one of the eight Partnerships of the EU-Africa Strategy to be successfully implemented, human resource development and employment creation are key. Consequently, I am very glad that you decided to consult the EESC on this issue.

The second point that I wanted to make relates to the institutional cooperation between the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, or ECOSOCC of the African Union, and the EESC. This is foreseen in the EU-Africa Strategy, under the chapter on the 'Institutional Architecture and Implementation'. We had worked alongside your services, Commissioner, in order to include this cooperation or twinning, in the Strategy.

As a first step in this cooperation we have invited the ECOSOCC of the African Union to participate in our conference and I am pleased that a representative of the ECOSOCC of the African Union will be giving a presentation during the next session. In addition, once the ECOSOCC is fully constituted, then we will certainly be sending a delegation to Addis Ababa, to explore potential avenues for cooperation between our institutions. We will of course keep your services fully informed on this cooperation.

The last point that I wanted to make relates to the eight Partnerships that are foreseen in the strategy, and then I will leave the floor to you Commissioner. In fact, my comment relates more to the spirit of the Partnership. It is simply this: on behalf of all representatives of the ACP-EU economic and social interest groups present here today, thank you and the African Union for having the vision and the courage to make it a 'people-oriented' partnership! I say courage because it is a very challenging agenda and with not much time to implement it. So we all need to contribute to its success, economic and social actors included.

Thank you for your attention.

**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**SPEECH**

by

**Mr MICHEL  
EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid**

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**4 March 2008**

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Mr President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank the Economic and Social Committee for responding so positively to my request to draw up an opinion on the new Africa-Europe partnership and for putting this issue on the agenda for this meeting.

You know how committed I am to the dynamic involvement of non-state actors in the implementation of the Joint Strategy and the first Action Plan under that strategy, which were both adopted last December in Lisbon. The social partners have a key role to play in this context, which is in many ways revolutionary. Their contribution is essential to achieving the economic development objectives set out in the Africa-Europe strategic partnership. Indeed, it is an avenue that should be actively pursued with a view to translating the Lisbon policy commitments in this area into tangible results.

The Lisbon Summit was an historic moment for our two continents. By finally turning the page on an outdated donor-recipient relationship, this summit officialised a new shared vision enshrined in a joint strategy. The results of this summit and the very fact that it took place mark the renewal of a partnership of equals, free from complexes and pragmatic, based on mutual responsibility. On that basis, this partnership embodies a shared desire to support the ability of partner countries to establish their own vision and choose their own means of development. The first principle on which the relationship between Africa and Europe is based is now that of taking ownership.

1) ***Modernising the Africa-Europe partnership: working together to face the challenges of the future together***

Before focusing on the economic and social development priorities identified with our African partners, I would like to take a moment to look back at **the political context that led to this necessary modernisation of the Africa-Europe partnership.**

**First of all**, I should highlight the resurgence in interest in the African continent from a number of powers. In a world characterised by economic globalisation and the multi-polarisation of power, Africa has become an opportunity for these powers, a new frontier for the international community. This resurgence of interest is based around **three sets of issues**: economic issues; strategic and security issues; and issues of power.

The economic issues are linked to the increasing globalisation of the economy and to the clear wish of the traditional and emerging economic powers to have access to the African continent's tremendous national resources. The figures speak for themselves: Africa has 12% of worldwide crude oil reserves, 90% of the world's platinum, cobalt and chrome reserves, and more than 60% of the world's manganese and coltan reserves.

The strategic and security issues, for their part, are connected with Africa's new status as a theatre of globalised strategic challenges. Africa not only has to deal with Islamist terrorism, nuclear

proliferation, illegal trafficking of various kinds, and failing or fragile states; all these phenomena exist alongside or are fuelled by poverty, which still affects around 400 million people out of a population of 800 million. On top of these "traditional" factors, there is increased vulnerability to the disastrous effects of climate change.

With regard to the issues of power, these are reflected in an increased and/or renewed presence of major geopolitical players such as China. China is emerging as an investor, as a trading partner, but also, increasingly, as a "responsible global player" - through increasing participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations on the continent. However, the United States also come to mind: they are increasingly active in politics and defence, for example with the plan to set up a specific strategic command, AFRICOM. Their energy supplies are also increasingly of African origin. By 2010, 25% of America's oil imports are expected to come from Africa, against 16% today.

*The combination of all these factors in this context of economic globalisation and political multipolarity risks making Africa the SUBJECT of a new Great Game. The Partnership outlined in Lisbon will help provide it with the means to become a PLAYER.*

Secondly, though it would be better to say in parallel, Europeans are aware of the need to respond to the sweeping political and economic changes that have taken place in Africa since the beginning of the 21st century. The creation of the African Union should enable Africa to respond to the challenges of a multipolar world. Its socio-economic programme, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), was set up in 2002 to meet the challenges of globalisation. These two interrelated initiatives are the expression of a desire in Africa to avail itself of a continental institutional governance structure and to make its voice heard on the international stage with its own global political agenda. Moreover, Africa has increased its partnerships with various international partners and has sent a clear signal to Europe about the latter's need to rethink its relations with Africa. Africans and Europeans have converged in their analysis: it was essential that Europe should stop viewing Africa as its sole preserve, based in part on special bilateral partnerships perceived as the fruits of the colonial past. It was no less essential for Africa to take ownership of a certain number of responsibilities in Europe-Africa relations.

The drafting of the Africa-Europe Joint Strategy is not, therefore, **a measure of defiance** towards or by a Europe that is losing momentum. Instead, it is the expression of a shared wish to turn the page on the Congress of Berlin for good and to put an end to the donor/beneficiary approach, which has clearly demonstrated its limitations. As far as Europe is concerned, it is certainly not a question of abandoning its principles or some of its methods such as the granting of various types of aid in the form of gifts. Nor is there any question of stopping the quest for more effective aid. However, this now needs to be done with our eyes open. The aim of the Africa-Europe Joint Strategy is thus to lay the foundations of a partnership of equals in terms of rights and responsibilities based on political dialogue and with an ambitious and concrete agenda.

Three ambitions form the defining characteristics of this partnership:

1) *To go beyond development* by establishing holistic dialogue and cooperation between Africa and Europe.

2) *To go beyond institutions* by closely involving all the state actors and representative assemblies in Africa-Europe political dialogue. Also and more importantly, however, it means involving them in the implementation of the political priorities of this dialogue on the ground.

3) *To raise our profile in the wider world* by promoting greater cooperation between our two continents in international bodies. Many of the current and future global challenges concern humanity as a whole, and therefore call for joint responses based on consensus. However, to work together more effectively we must also promote the reform of those international institutions to make them more representative of the new global geopolitical stage.

**This is not just about broad political principles.** The thematic priorities set out in the Joint Strategy are fleshed out in concrete terms by the First Action Plan implementing the Joint Strategy and its eight sectoral partnerships. These areas for action and priorities make up a clear "road map" for our respective Commissions, the Member States of the EU and each of the partner countries, the parliaments, the representative bodies and non-state actors of our two continents... a shared road map to achieve our common goals together.

**2) *Sustainable economic development: a major objective of our partnership***

Sustainable economic development is one of the four cross-cutting objectives of our partnership. The creation of decent jobs in the formal economy is, of course, closely related to this.

The facts are straightforward and irrefutable. Firstly, despite a promising growth rate of 5%, Africa needs to achieve double-digit growth if it is to have a hope of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Secondly, 20 years ago, Africa accounted for 5% of world trade in absolute terms. Today, that figure has dropped below 2%. It is clear that, without sustained economic growth, without the creation of formal, decent jobs, without increased investment, without an improvement in political and administrative governance, without stronger and more diverse production capacity in Africa, without rapid development of its private sector, without strengthening the education system across the board with a particular focus on gender inequality in access to education and employment – in short, without a combination of all these factors, it is illusory to hope for a significant and sustainable reduction in the level of poverty on the continent and for Africa to be able to take its place in the world economy.

All eight of the partnerships that make up the first Action Plan can and must contribute to the achievement of this aim. The need for **coherence** underpins all our partnerships in the area of development. For the record, these are:

- Partnership for peace and security;
- Partnership for democratic governance and human rights;
- Partnership for trade and regional integration;
- Partnership for the Millennium Development Goals;
- Energy partnership;
- Partnership on climate change;
- Partnership on migration, mobility and employment;
- finally, the partnership on science, the information society and space.

Let me take a few moments to talk about two of them: firstly, the **partnership on migration, mobility and employment** and secondly, **the partnership on trade and regional integration**.

### *The partnership on migration, mobility and employment*

It is no good talking about creating decent jobs in the formal sector in Africa without dealing with the issue of mobility and migration. The figures speak for themselves: 11% of Africa's population is unemployed. 45% of Africans are "working poor", living on less than one euro a day. This is on a continent where more than half the population is under 18 and where there are 200 million young people aged 12 to 24. Moreover, we are kidding ourselves if we think we can have an open debate on the issue of illegal migration without tackling the issue of youth unemployment in Africa.

### *The creation of decent jobs, especially for young people, is therefore a key aim of the partnership for migration, mobility and employment.*

The **first** message of this partnership is simple: **jobs, jobs, jobs**. Through support for governance, for poverty reduction, for economic development, this aid will help to create more and better jobs and will offer young Africans a better future in Africa.

Another key to increasing Africa's competitiveness – and thus facilitating job creation – lies in its **ability to train and keep its most brilliant minds**. One in sixteen African students study abroad, and some of them do not go back. This brain drain is a tragedy for Africa. With exchange schemes such as Erasmus Mundus and the Nyerere programme, we provide African students with the opportunity to study for a year or more in Europe or elsewhere in Africa and then to return to their country of origin to reinvest their new skills and knowledge. The rules governing these two programmes have been drawn up and revised to encourage this development.

The **second** message is more complex: we must **manage labour migration**. Let's be honest: for demographic reasons, Europe needs migration. Without migration, the size of the population of working age could fall by 48 million by 2050. Africa also reaps benefits from labour migration through the skills, experience and money that migrants bring back: billions of euros "sent home" every year. We need to make the best possible use of this twofold potential.

The challenge is to ensure that potential African migrants are fully aware of the job opportunities that are open to them both in Europe and in their own part of Africa - whilst providing them with the

necessary education and discouraging them from engaging in illegal migration. This is the main idea behind **the setting up of migration information centres** – the first will officially open in Mali in March this year.

But we must go further. This year, the EU intends to start negotiating **mobility partnerships** with certain third countries that are cooperating with it in managing migratory flows. The Community and one or more Member States, cooperating on a voluntary basis, will be able to offer increased opportunities for mobility to citizens of these countries in exchange for the latter's efforts in combating illegal immigration more effectively. This initiative is unprecedented.

The **third** and perhaps most important message flows from the first two: **migration cannot be managed unilaterally**. A little more than a year ago, we launched an EU-Africa political dialogue on these issues at the Tripoli conference. We need to take this dialogue further by discussing openly how we can reconcile Europe's interests with Africa's. How, for example, can the 4.6 million Africans living in Europe help their countries of origin to move forward and to prosper? How can we protect refugees and displaced persons within their own countries? And finally, how can we work together to combat illegal migration?

### ***The partnership for trade and regional integration***

It is very satisfying to see that Europe and Africa now share **the same vision of the importance of regional integration as a driving force for economic development**. In Africa as in Europe, it is seen as a way of transmitting growth – embryonic, fragile, but real – from certain African countries to their neighbours. Whilst Africa has set itself the long-term goal of creating a common market covering the continent, going the regional route is a sensible yet ambitious intermediate stage, as much remains to be done to fully integrate the sub-regions of West, Central, East, Southern and North Africa.

**What are we aiming for with our African partners? Firstly**, we would like to start dialogue and sketch out, if possible, avenues to explore on a difficult subject: simplifying the architecture of regional organisations in Africa. **Secondly**, we would like to improve dialogue and cooperation between the African Union and the regional economic communities so as to strengthen synergies rather than perpetuating rivalries. **Finally**, we consider it necessary, indeed imperative, for many reasons, to speed up the trade agenda in two areas: concluding the Economic Partnership Agreements and developing more harmonised standards, without which there can be no genuine free movement of goods.

Following the encouraging results of the Lisbon Summit, I decided to **focus particularly on this issue of regional integration in the ACP countries in general, and in Africa in particular**. In September, the Commission will adopt a communication on *Regional integration for development in the ACP countries*, which will bring its vision up to date and propose ways of further strengthening its support for our partners' initiatives. We are not working alone: as we did last year with our counterparts from the African Union vis-à-vis our respective civil societies in the context of drawing up the Joint Strategy, **we are this week launching a public consultation**, accessible via the European

Commission's Europa site, to collect stakeholder opinions on what is working, what is not working, and what could be done better. I invite you and your respective organisations to take part.

**(Conclusion)**

Africa's sustainable economic and social development is one of the key objectives of the Africa-Europe partnership. Creating decent jobs in the formal economy is one of the main means to this end. I am convinced that African and European socio-economic actors have a key role to play in meeting this challenge. For this reason, I am calling for their proactive involvement in implementing the eight Lisbon partnerships.

I consider strengthening the dialogue between the Economic and Social Committees of our two continents to be essential in this context. I am pleased that a representative of the African Union's Economic, Social and Cultural Council is here with us today.

In concrete terms, I would encourage your two institutions to participate actively in the meetings of African and European non-state actors that are expected to take place before the Africa-Europe ministerial meetings that will be held every six months. I would also like to invite you to participate actively in Africa-Europe business forums and to discuss with you at whether it would be appropriate to organise regional business forums in Africa.

Thank you.

**REVIEW OF THE NEGOTIATIONS OF THE ECONOMIC  
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (EPAs) AND PERSPECTIVES  
FOR THE FUTURE**





**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**NOTE**

**given by**

**H.E. Mr MOUSSA CHECHEM  
President of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors  
and Ambassador of the Republic of Djibouti**

**on**

***"The State of the EPA Talks and the Prospects for the Future"***

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**5 March 2008**

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**NOTE ON THE STATE OF THE EPA TALKS  
AND THE PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE**

**I. STATE OF THE TALKS**

Ladies and Gentlemen, representatives of civil society and the private sector,

As you all know, Economic Partnership Agreements are one of the key concerns of the ACP Group at present, given their importance to the ACP economies.

These EPAs will have major implications for the standard of living of the people you represent and it is completely normal that you should be well informed about everything that happens during the negotiations on the EPAs in question, so that you can take the steps necessary to make an effective contribution.

Although the talks are the responsibility of the regions and it will not be possible for me to give you any details regarding them, I can give you a general view on their state of progress.

I know that some of those among you have taken an active part in the talks for their regions or countries and will be able to add to what I have to say if necessary.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The examinations conducted at ACP level under Article 37(4) of the Cotonou Agreement have shown that it will not be possible to conclude the EPA talks within the time limit set. However, the persons responsible for the various negotiating parties have given a firm undertaking to do everything to conclude these talks on time, as far as possible.

The efforts made to achieve this objective have not been conclusive for certain negotiating regions.

As regards the threat facing ACP exports to the EU, and particularly those of the non-LDC countries in the absence of a viable alternative (other than the GSP), the EU proposed resorting to temporary EPAs which would be focused primarily on trade in goods, since this is the field which requires compatibility with WTO rules.

So, certain regions or certain ACP countries were able to conclude agreements with the EU towards the end of December 2007.

To date, 35 EPAs have been concluded, including a complete EPA (Cariforum).

All these agreements have been initialled; none has been signed or ratified.

Since 1 January 2008, EU imports from ACP countries are no longer covered by the trade regime of the Cotonou Agreement. These imports are currently covered by the following:

- the trade regime relating to complete or interim EPAs initialled in December 2007;
- the normal generalised preferences scheme (GSP);
- the Everything But Arms (EBA) facility for the least developed countries (LDCs).

To the above should be added the special case of South Africa, which is a member of the ACP Group and has signed the Cotonou Agreement but whose trade with the EU has to comply with the relevant provisions of the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA), which binds the latter to South Africa.

### **1) Trade regime relating to EPAs**

So far, 35 ACP countries have initialled a complete or temporary EPA with the EU either within a regional or sub-regional framework (region of the Caribbean with a complete agreement, sub-region of Eastern and Southern Africa, sub-region of the Community of East Africa, sub-region of Southern Africa), or individually (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Cameroon).

The list of the countries in question can be found in Appendix 1 to this document. For these countries, a new regulation (Council Regulation (EC) n° 1528/2007 was adopted on 20 December and was published in the Official Journal of the EU on 31 December. This regulation was set up to replace the provisions of Annex V of the Cotonou Agreement (see Appendix II to this document). Article 2 of the Regulation stipulates that the list of the countries in question will be modified as and when other regions or states from the ACP Group conclude an EPA with the EU.

The common denominator of all these EPAs is that they all contain a complete chapter on trade in goods. In this connection, the EPAs that have been initialled vary from one region or from one country to another.

These differences concern primarily the products covered, the timetable for liberalisation and the list of sensitive products excluded from liberalisation. Information on this can be found in Appendix III to this document.

The Cariforum Agreement, which is complete and covers a whole series of issues such as trade in goods, services, rules and support for development, is currently undergoing a legal clean-up before it is published officially. It will then be signed, ratified and referred to the WTO. However, steps have been taken to implement initialled EPAs from 1 January 2008 in order to avoid distortions of ACP/EU trade resulting from the expiry of the time limit granted by the WTO for the trade regime of the Cotonou Agreement.

Talks continue on interim EPAs in order with the aim of completing them by the end of the year.

## 2) **Generalised preferences scheme (GSP)**

Non-LDC ACP countries who have not initialled either a complete or an interim EPA will have to export their products to the EU under the GSP, which is much less favourable than the trade regime of the Cotonou Agreement. The GSP+ would have been a better alternative for these countries but the conditions to benefit from it were not met at the right time.

## 3) **"Everything But Arms" facility**

This facility, which was incorporated into the GSP in 2001 and is a variant of it, allows all LDCs to export all their products except arms to the EU duty and quota-free. ACP LDCs which have not initialled a complete or interim EPA with the EU can use this facility pending the conclusion of an EPA.

However, it should be noted that the GSP's rules of origin are less favourable than those of the Cotonou Agreement, particularly as regard cumulation of origin, the list of minimal operations, the value tolerance rule and the conditions which ships have to satisfy if the fish that they capture outside territorial waters are to have originating product status. It is also important to note, bar one exception (cumulation of origin), the rules of origin adopted for initialled EPAs are more attractive than those of the Cotonou Agreement (e.g. textiles, fisheries products).

On 21 January 2008, the EU Commission's Directorate-General for Taxation and the Customs Union (DG TAXUD) drew up a memo for the heads of delegation of the ACP countries which had not initialled an EPA; this memo, ref. TAXUD/C/S/PS D (2008) 22037 which is appended to this document (Appendix IV), summarises the conditions governing exports from ACP countries that have not initialled an EPA.

It should be noted that this memo dates from 21 January 2008, although the relevant provisions of the Cotonou Agreement ceased to apply from 1 January 2008 and no transitional period was granted to the ACP countries.

The European Union and the ACP countries or regions that have not reached an agreement are currently trying to conclude their talks by the end of 2008.

Timetables have been drawn up on this matter by the regions concerned. These can also take advantage of the experiences of other countries or regions that have concluded EPAs with the EU.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should now like to say some words on the prospects for the future.

## II. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

All the EPAs that have been concluded will have to be signed, ratified and referred to the WTO for approval. We should already start to reflect on the strategy to be followed to defend them effectively at the WTO. Before that, we shall have to do everything possible to come up with EPAs which are not limited to issues of market access but are instruments that really foster development. In my opinion, the ACP countries or regions should only sign texts that they have negotiated with the EU after they have analysed the implications carefully. Moreover, EPA texts will not have any legal basis and their provisions will only be binding after these agreements have been signed and ratified.

If we really want these EPAs to contribute to the integration of the ACP countries into the world economy and the reduction of poverty, steps must be taken to ensure that they are implemented as judiciously as possible. Proper machinery must be set up to ensure that implementation is monitored effectively so as to avoid any slip-ups on the way which could harm the interests of the two sides, particularly those of the ACP countries.

EPA Committees have already been envisaged in regions and countries that have already initialled agreements but what about the ACP Group as a whole? Should not provision be made for coordination machinery covering all ACP states to ensure that their experiences are collated and shared and thus achieve the consistency and solidarity throughout the Group that was the case in the past?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

That, briefly, is what I have to say to you on the state of the EPA talks and their prospects for the future.

As you see, we still have a great deal to do to arrive at our destination. I am counting on you a great deal to get more involved in the negotiation process in order to ensure that due account is taken of the interests of the people you represent, some of whom are among the most marginalised and disadvantaged.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I should like to thank you for your efforts in defending the interests of your respective regions and countries and for having taken the trouble to listen to me.

**WHAT ROLE FOR NON-STATE ACTORS IN THE  
NEGOTIATIONS AND IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
EPAs?**





**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**SPEECH**

**by**

**Mr Gérard DANTIN  
President of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee  
of the European Economic and Social Committee**

**on**

***'What role for non-state actors in the negotiations and implementation  
of the EPAs?'***

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**5 March 2008**

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Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Colleagues,

This morning we have had the pleasure of listening to the ACP and EC negotiators on the state of the EPAs negotiations. They have shed light on some of the complexities surrounding the current ACP-EC trade relations. The situation is indeed diverse and it is very easy to get a bit lost in all these different trading arrangements! However, I see this session on 'The role of non-state actors in the negotiations and implementation of the EPAs', as a direct continuation of the previous one. And I can say that without any apprehension, as the EPA signed with the Caribbean, which is currently the most advanced of all ACP-EC trade agreements, actually *institutionalises* the involvement of civil society in monitoring the implementation of the EPA. So whereas in most ACP regions, non-state actors have been insufficiently informed and consulted on the EPA negotiations, what we see for the Caribbean is an EPA which calls on civil society to help monitor its implementation. And this begs the question: if civil society has been recognised as a useful and legitimate actor in the Caribbean, why not in other regions?

Consequently, my presentation to you today will firstly look at the civil society provisions in the Caribbean – EC EPA, which I hope will be replicated in other regions. Secondly, we will look at what non-state actors in the African and Pacific regions could do, in order to increase their involvement in the forthcoming negotiations. As we heard from the European Commission this morning, we currently have interim agreements with most regions and they hope to move towards full EPAs in the near future, so theoretically, there is still time for non-state actors to be involved in these discussions.

Perhaps as a short parenthesis I would like to mention that the European Economic and Social Committee has been pushing for an institutional role for non-state actors within the EPAs since 2005, when we proposed this idea in a report requested by the former EU Commissioner for Trade, Mr Pascal Lamy. This report, which was called 'How to include social aspects in the EPAs' and for which I was co-rapporteur, stressed the importance of finding the means or a system to enable non-state actors to meet and debate together at the same time in the same place. Concretely, we recommended the establishment of non-state actor networks or platforms which would be involved in monitoring the negotiations and future implementation of the EPAs. So I am particularly pleased that for the Caribbean region the EPA foresees exactly such a structure.

So what does the CARIFORUM – EC EPA actually include? According to article 232 of the EPA, a civil society Consultative Committee will review all economic, social and environmental aspects of the trade agreement and make recommendations to the CARIFORUM – EC Council. Moreover, the Consultative Committee can either be consulted or make recommendations at its own initiative. However, it is stated that membership of this Committee will be decided by the CARIFORUM-EC Council and there is no mention of how this body will be funded.

So, it would appear that some guidelines are available but there are still issues to be clarified, for example:

- Who will participate?
- What exactly will its mandate be?
- How it will be financed?

I will share a few ideas with you but not to go into too much detail, as the next two speakers after me, Mr Meyer, President of the Caribbean Employers' Confederation and Mr Lewis, Secretary General of the Caribbean Congress of Labour will also address some of these issues.

Firstly, as regards the composition of the Consultative Committee, arguably, as it is a regional trade agreement, it would be preferable to include organisations that have a *regional* outreach and which represent a wide spectrum of actors, *including* economic and social interest groups. It is for this reason that on behalf of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee, I would like to express support for the inclusion in the civil society Consultative Committee of the 'Caribbean Non-State Actor Network' that Mr Meyer and Mr Lewis represent. However, in order to be fully representative of the region, the existing non-state actor network needs to be expanded to include the Dominican Republic and Haiti, which are currently not represented within the structure. One final word on the composition: as this is a Caribbean - EC trade agreement, then obviously, the Consultative Committee should be a joint body with European organisations included. And I believe that we will see some involvement of the EESC.

On the question of mandate, perhaps it would be advisable if the future Consultative Committee does not get involved in complex quantitative and qualitative investigations on issues such as on market access, supply side measures, economic reforms etc. I think that such technical aspects of the EPA will be closely monitored by the civil servants of the CARIFORUM-EC Council and several experts. Arguably, the Consultative Committee should maximise the expertise of *civil society*. It is more about bringing the value-added of non-state actors on issues such as employment creation, social and environmental issues and general economic policy.

A quick comment on the funding, which is of course crucial. I think that the most realistic possibility will be for the activities of the Consultative Committee to be initially financed by the Regional Strategy Programme of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF, which has still to be finalised. But for this to happen, I would urge Caribbean civil society to start lobbying CARIFORUM and their national authorities. I should also add that for the Caribbean EPA, in order for anything to move ahead, first of all it has to be signed. Apparently there will be elections in some Caribbean countries in the near future so I hope that the results of these elections do not affect the decision to sign the EPA.

Having described the ideal scenario for civil society involvement in monitoring the implementation of the EPAs, I would now like to move onto the second part of my presentation, which deals with the role of non-state actors in the future EPA *negotiations*. If there are negotiations still to be carried out, then how can civil society in the African and in the Pacific regions be involved?

I think that the approach should be two-fold: firstly, non-state actors in the regions must organise *themselves* at the national and at the regional level into networks or platforms. I know that some of you in the audience have done this in your countries and of course we will hear from the next two speakers how this has been done at the regional level in the Caribbean. Indeed, one of the reasons why it should be relatively easy for the Caribbean to establish the civil society Consultative Committee is because they had already done the groundwork at the regional level: they had already created their non-state actor platform. So motivation and even creativity are key!

But equally important is the responsibility of the negotiators to better inform you on the negotiations and to consult you. And we would like to recommend that in the coming months, information and consultation sessions for civil society and the media, are organised by the negotiators to present the current EPAs and to update you on future negotiations. Such seminars would be particularly useful when the EPA in question has a regional dimension, like in the SADC and ESA countries.

Finally, I know that among the recurring problems of non-state actors whenever we discuss the issue of consultations, are the issues of capacity and funding. These two often go hand in hand and once again, I express my hope that the Regional Strategy Programmes which are still not finalised, include funding for non-state actor capacity-building and networking. There are of course other sources of EU funding and we will hear details on this during the session tomorrow on access to EU financing for non-state actors.

Before ending my presentation, I would like to make two short comments regarding the social and environmental chapters which are included in the CARIFORUM – EC EPA. In the social chapter there is an explicit recognition of the benefits of the ILO core labour standards and of decent work to the economic efficiency, innovation and productivity of Caribbean countries. In the environment chapter it is stated that the sustainable management of natural resources and of the environment will be integrated into every level of the partnership.

Now in Barbados in May of last year, when the EESC organised a regional seminar in the Caribbean, the delegates had expressed their support for the EPA, but under certain conditions. Among those conditions was the inclusion of social and environmental chapters, which we have now seen materialise. This is important because market access is a necessary, but *insufficient* condition for development. This is also why I reiterate the request for social and environmental chapters to be present in *all* EPAs.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I have tried to give an overview of the ideal scenario for both the involvement of non-state actors in the negotiations and in the implementation of the ACP-EC trade agreements. I think that for the Caribbean region, the future of the civil society Consultative Committee looks both challenging and full of opportunities. For the African and Pacific regions which are likely to continue negotiations, many of the problems faced by civil society over the last few years of negotiations will remain the same, unless things drastically change. But the reality is that we need to catch up with the lost years of the negotiations when we were not really involved, not really consulted and rarely listened to. Let us all move ahead together.

Thank you for your attention.



**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**SPEECH**

**by**

**Mr MEYER**

**President of the Suriname Trade and Industry Association and former member of the ACP-EU  
Follow-up Committee of the EESC**

**on**

***"The functioning of Non-State-Actors Networks in the Caribbean during the negotiation and  
implementation of the EPAs"***

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**5 March 2008**

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"The functioning of a Non-State-Actors Networks in the Caribbean during the negotiation and implementation of the EPAs"

### **Background**

Since the signing of the COTONOU-Agreement in June 2000, the complementary role and the potential of contributions of Non-State-Actors to the development process was recognized.

### **Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA)**

#### **Article 4**

To this end, under the conditions laid down in this Agreement, Non-State Actors shall, where appropriate:

- be informed and involved in consultation on cooperation policies and strategies, on priorities for cooperation especially in areas that concern or directly affect them, and on the political dialogue;
- be provided with financial resources, under the conditions laid down in this Agreement in order to support local development processes;
- be involved in the implementation of cooperation project and programmes in areas that concern them or where these actors have a comparative advantage;
- be provided with capacity-building support in critical areas in order to reinforce the capabilities of these actors, particularly as regards organization and representation, and the establishment of consultation mechanisms channels of communication and dialogue, and to promote strategic alliances.

### **Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA)**

#### **Article 6**

#### Definitions

The actors of cooperation will include:

- a) State (local, national and regional);
- b) Non-State:
  - Private sector;
  - Economic and social partners, including trade union organisations,
  - Civil Society in all its forms according to national characteristics.

**Recognition by the parties of non-governmental actors shall depend on the extent to which they address the needs of the population, on their specific competencies and whether they are organised and managed democratically and transparently.**

**Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA)**  
**Article 7**

Capacity building

The contribution of civil society to development can be enhanced by strengthening community organisations and non-profit non-governmental organisations in all spheres of cooperation. This will require:

- encouraging and supporting the creation and development of such organisations;
- establishing arrangements for involving such organisations in the design, implementation and evaluation of development strategies and programmes.

During the first five years of the implementation of the COTONOU PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT the involvement of the NON-STATE ACTORS was far from satisfactory and in every region at all levels the demand was made for more involvement, more information, more dialogue and of course more capacity.

The NSAs were overloaded with new tasks to be fulfilled in the EU-ACP-relations, but their capacity was traditionally weak and not prepared for the new tasks.

Although mentioned in all reports and discussions before the signing of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, there were no direct accessible funds for capacity building of the NSAs, to enable these to take part in the dialogue.

**Participation of Non – State Actors during the EPA-negotiations – the Caribbean Region**

The negotiations for the "Caribbean EPA" were launched in April 2004 and work started in our region almost immediately. The negotiators felt that the input of the region should be along structured mechanisms.

A Caribbean Regional Preparatory Task Force (RPTF) was established to oversee cooperation matters related to the EPA negotiations and that was composed of a broad spectrum of ACP and EU-Actors: European Commission, the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery, the OECS-Secretariat, the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL), the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC), the Caribbean Association for Industry and Commerce (CAIC), the CPDC, the Caribbean Policy Development Centre, the University of the West Indies, CEDA and Dominican Republic Representatives.

For a start this was a logical approach and at least the REGIONAL Representatives from the State and Non-State-Actors were involved through REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE BODIES or INSTITUTIONS.

At a meeting of the RPTF of March 2006 it was decided that the CEC, the Caribbean Employers' Confederation would coordinate the 1st Meeting of the NON-STATE-ACTORS to discuss the EPA-Negotiations and to establish the NSA NETWORK of the Caribbean Region.

The CEDA, Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) was invited to provide logistical and financial support.

The main objectives of this meeting were to discuss the key issues of concern to the Non-State Actors in the region and to establish a formal NSA-Network, its guidelines and membership.

In the meantime the four representatives of the four Regional NSAs bodies met for a number of times at meetings of the RPTF, the CARIFORUM and the CARICOM.

Encouraging support was given to the further structuring of the Caribbean Non-State Actors by:

- the Caribbean Employment Forum of Oct. 2006 in Barbados
- the 9th Regional Seminar of the EESC (the European Economic and Social Committee) held in Barbados in May 2007.

At the signing of the EPA in the CARIFORUM-region the CRNM summarized the involvement of the NSAs as follows:

**The interaction between the State – and the NSAs-community helped ensure that the Trade Negotiating-Agenda was aligned with other objectives that also contribute to sustainable development.**

1. Through the consultation process, the ongoing dialogue and exchange of positions enhanced consensus building. All of this contributed to the regional negotiating positions.

The EPA now focuses on strengthening the capacity of the STATE, the social partners and the representatives of civil society, on managing policies for **lasting** and **sustainable development – Capacity Building and Governance** – as well as on the **Economic and Social adjustment** involved in the process of liberalization.

#### **Monitoring of the implementation of the EPA's**

Due to the continuing participation of the NSAs in the RPTF meetings, as well as in the Programming Meetings, for the CRSP, CRIP, the Social Partners (CCL, CEC) were able to keep the social clause in the centre of the negotiating table, resulting in a social paragraph (Chapter 5, Part 2) dealing with socio-economic issues such as:

- Job creation, decent work, education & training, social protection, formalizing the informal sector, sustainable development, investment, infrastructure, corporate social responsibility) "AND NOT ONLY CORE LABOUR STANDARDS".

Now that in Chapter V (Part II) of the EPA-Agreement the social aspects are dealt with; the social partners, the private sector as well as the civil society will continue their role to monitor sustainable development during the implementation of the EPA's.

All has to do with:

- social dialogue
- decent employment
- social solidarity
- enhancement of businesses
- enhancement of SMEs
- competitiveness (skills development, productivity)
- environment protection
- food security
- and others

**The final result of the participation of Non-State Actors during the negotiations is that in Part III, Art. 6 the creation of a CARIFORUM-EC Consultative Committee is established with the task:**

**To promote dialogue and cooperation between representatives of organizations of Civil Society (NON-STATE ACTORS), including the academic community and social and economic partners.**

Representativity of Regional Actors, duly mandated Organizations, recognized by global Institutions.

Such dialogue shall encompass all economic, social and environmental aspects of the relations between the EC and the CARIFORUM States as they arise in the context of the implementation of this Agreement.

But how do we structure such a dialogue in the Caribbean area to fulfil all requirements from the State- and the Non-State Actors?

#### **I. STATE-Representatives**

This chapter will be sorted out by the CARIFORUM ACTORS.

#### **II. NON-STATE ACTORS**

##### **Group A: Social and Economic Partners**

1. Employers from the CARICOM-Region, members of the CEC.
2. Employers from the Dominican Republic and Haiti
3. Trade Unions from the CARICOM-Region, members of the CCL
4. Trade Unions from the Dominican Republic and Haiti

The CEC and the CCL are regionally recognized representative bodies, that have been participating satisfactory in the RPTF during the EPA-negotiations and are able to take the responsibility to ensure – under the supervision of the International Institutions such as the IOE (International Organization of Employers) and the ITUC (International Trade Union Congress) – the optimal representation and participation of the Caribbean region.

The regional social partners will decide regionally on the quality of the representatives, their mandate, their obligations and the rotation within the region.

**Group B: Other Economic actors**

1. Chambers of Commerce, members of the CAIC, the Caribbean Association for Industry and Commerce
2. Members of the Caribbean Association for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (CASME)
3. Other Economic Interest actors such as: farmers, manufacturers e.o.
4. Economic Interest actors from the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

**Group C: The NGOs or "civil-society" actors**

1. NGOs associated with the CPDC, the Caribbean Policy Development Centre
2. Other CARICOM-Regional recognized "civil-society" actors
3. NGOs (civil society actors) from the Dominican Republic and Haiti

**Group D: The Academic Community**

1. Representative(s) of the Universities in the Region (UWI, Suriname, Guyana)
2. University Community from the Dominican Republic and Haiti

Due to the large size of the Caribbean (geographic) area, a minimum representation is expected to be established for covering all the "Groups" of the Non-State Actors in all sub-regions:

Group A:	5 representatives
Group B:	5 representatives
Group C:	5 representatives
Group D:	2 representatives

Some final remarks are to be made for the serious functioning of the NON-STATE ACTORS-representation in the CARIFORUM-EU-Consultative Committee.

- a) The Regional Organizations are in great need for capacity building and for taking up their new tasks a serious restructuring must take place.
- b) The four recognized regional NSAs start up the dialogue with national organizations in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

This will lead to a "CARIFORUM-wide" covering of the Regional NSAs.

- c) The members of the Regional Organizations should encourage the formation of similar structures in the 15 States of CARIFORUM. This will ensure the most effective and efficient dissemination of information as well as contributions from the "basis to the top".
- d) There will be at the end a Regional wide "pyramid" of dialogue that originates from the national level, into the dialogue in a Caribbean Economic and Social Committee.

The relations between CARIFORUM and the EU will be strengthened by the operating institutes as mentioned in the COTONOU-Agreement such as:

- CARIFORUM – EU-SOCIAL & ECONOMIC FORUM
- CARIFORUM – EU-BUSINESS FORUM
- CARIFORUM – CIVIL SOCIETY (NGO) FORUM

Of course I do expect the other sub-regions of the ACP-Group will follow and undertake the same.

**Mr Marcel A. Meyer**

President of the CEC, Caribbean Employers' Confederation

**Mr Lincoln Lewis**

Secretary General of the CCL, Caribbean Congress of Labour

**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**PRESENTATION**

**by**

**Mr KIRIRO  
President of East Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) and member of the ACP-EU Follow -up  
Committee of the EESC**

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**5 March 2008**

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## **Introduction**

As farmers' organizations, we have consistently advocated for market access for our produce. We have prioritized regional markets as our immediate destination for our produce. It is for this reason that we farmers' organizations have involved ourselves in trade negotiations. We got involved in WTO and especially Agreement on Agriculture and thereafter EPAs that were being negotiated between ACP-EU governments. Our concern is to ensure that all these trade negotiations remain development oriented to enable us develop our agriculture to a point where we can be competitive in the markets. On EPAs, we got involved in awareness creation of our farmers and assisted them contribute to the mid-term reviews that were being conducted by government.

Our involvement in the review of EPAs was meant to give us an opportunity to;

- Make an analysis of the structure and the process of negotiation.
- Re-examine the preparatory phase, capacity and commitment of ACP government to negotiate EPA that is development oriented.
- Examine the content and states of the negotiations.

As regions we produced our own output on the mid-term review. The synthesis of our different outcomes resulted to a compromise positions on EPAs that resulted into the following joint recommendations. The recommendations nick named the "EPA we want." Were as follows:

- One that give priority to regional integration – integration leading to opening and developing regional markets.
- One that defines a trade regime based on asymmetry and equity – gap between EU and ACP – revisit principle of SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENTS.
- Improve participation by farmer organizations and other actors.
- Ensure capacity for thorough preparation and participation in the negotiations to ensure that ACP states define and defend a negotiating position in conformity with challenges and the interests of each ACP region.
- Overall farmers would like to see an EPA that ensure sustainable food security through improved production and improved incomes.

### **Background - EU- Position**

Communications regarding EPAs from the EU traded and Development Commission – Peter Mandelson and Loins Michael have been consistent. Their conviction is that EPAs are supposed to help ACP countries, citing benefits such as help ACP states build stronger economies and end their dependency on trade preferences and based on basic commodities. This in their view would give greater confidence and more opportunities to local businesses and attract new investments and as a result build stronger regional markets. The current trade regime being negotiated (EPA) is in their view expected to come up with a trading regime that will transform trading relationship in ACP from one based on dependency into one based on economic diversification and growing economies. This in our view as farmers was a very simplistic interpretation and approach.

EU also wanted us to believe that EPAs are not meant to address EU problems with ACP- states, but view their current trading regime as inappropriate since it discriminates against some developing countries, some non-ACP countries and many others. In their view this trading arrangement was not compatible with globalization and other anticipated trade arrangement such as WTO. According to EU, they promised ACP and Non ACP countries a reformed trading arrangement in Europe that would facilitate global trade.

### **The positions of the FO networks – Before December 31<sup>st</sup> 2007**

**The governance of the negotiations:** Limited involvement by stakeholders; They should have involved parliaments, the civil society actors including the press. In general, the negotiations have largely been shrouded in secrecy with very little, if at all any official information about the progress and the issues thereof, available in the public domain.

The departure from the original negotiation framework in some regions is undemocratic, illegal and an abuse of the spirit of Cotonou. Intimidation, undue influence, manipulation by the EU to compel some countries to sign also go against the spirit of partnership.

**The impact of negations on regional integration.** The network considers that efforts by the European Commission to have free trade agreements signed with certain countries taken individually, if their respective regional economic blocks were to refuse violates the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement, and would even contribute in time to dismantle the integration process and development issues in the ACP regions.

For the FOs networks, the EU would be responsible for the worsening of the poverty situation, of the food insecurity and of the clandestine immigration, if it were to insist on the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreements which gives precedence to European trade.

In their view the EU is subreptitiously imposing its will on the ACP States. They do not understand what can be the strategic interest of the EU in closing the negotiations at 31 December 2007 at any cost, by proposing EPA formats which do not correspond to the preoccupations of the regions and even counteract efforts of regional integration.

The networks recommend to their negotiators to abandon the logic of the current negotiations and consider the questions from the viewpoint of the ACP population.

Likewise, as they were not satisfied with the present negotiations, the networks repeat and re-word the proposals they made in the context of the mid-term review.

1. Whatever the urgency and the requirements related to the WTO, which is convalescing anyway, give priority to regional integration and to the instruments necessary to build it, the customs' union and the protection mechanisms favourable to the development of intra and inter-community agricultural markets. The argument according to which it is impossible for the EU to ask the WTO to accord an extension of the waiver beyond the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2007 seems incomprehensible. So they keep asking for a clarification of

the GATT article 24 about <special and differential treatment.> They agree with the analyses that propose that the ACP countries take the initiative to ask the WTO for a waiver, justified by the inability to offer reciprocity to the EU. In this regard, the networks think that a request by the ACP countries to the WTO is justified.

2. The gaps in productivity and competitiveness between ACP and EU economies argue in favour of an EU-ACP trade regime based on asymmetry and equity, and measures aimed at developing the farm production sector and building the capacity of its private economic actors, who are first of all the agricultural producers.
3. The networks deem it necessary to continue political dialogues in order to foster convergence frameworks between the ACP countries involved, while supporting the producers' organizations in the development of trade circuits within and between the countries of the same region, and even between regions. The promotion of value chains or the vertical integration of supply chains requires a public-private partnership that the networks offer to support from the private sector side.
4. The networks had expressed the wish that the ACP States should take more time and endow themselves with more resources in order to be better prepared. According to their evaluation, what is at stake today is the political courage of the ACP and EU States to support them in the realization of their wishes, without demagogy or manipulation, in their strategies to promote and structure intra and inter-regional agricultural markets that ensure food sovereignty, regional integration and customs' unions.

### **The proposals put forward by the networks of farmer organizations**

#### **Towards the EU**

- Call upon the European commission to respect the initial framework of negotiations and takes its principles on board
- A wider discussion on European support mechanisms for the agricultural sector in ACP countries involving the FO networks

#### **Towards the ACP**

- Although the networks would like to see a reorientation of the EPAs responding to their preoccupations, they note that the challenges which face the development of the ACP will not disappear from one day to the next. Whether or not the EPAs are signed on the agreed date, Whether or not the DOHA Round is completed, they intend to organize themselves and to interact with their governments and other stakeholders, to tackle the existing challenges and new ones. They will address the priorities for which they feel they are able to take responsibility or in which they wish to be involved: food security, agricultural development, environmental and climate change, the energy crisis, etc. they request the support of the national governments of African regional integration organizations and of their partners in order to strengthen the FOs' capacities so that they can constitute a force of proposal and pressure in every country advocating the development needs of agricultural sector.

- **The FO networks urge the ACP to;**
  - take the initiative to request the WTO to grant a waiver for the LDCs;
  - formulate their own position paper for the negotiations
  - set up permanent mechanisms of dialogue between the ACP Secretariat, the African union, the regional integration institutions and the producers organization

### **The commitments of the networks**

#### **The networks commit themselves to:**

- work towards meeting the challenge of improving the offer of agricultural and agro-food products, in quality, in order to meet the demand of the ACP populations and industries;
- strongly defend the interests of the family farms in all the policy negotiations;
- promote trade exchanges within and among the ACP regions;
- They engage the presidents of the networks to work towards the establishment of a dialogue forum of the FO networks of the ACP countries and of Africa by the end of 2007. in this perspective the networks plan to hold a further meeting to discuss in greater depth the structure and the lines of action of an <ACP agricultural platform > and to prepare for the next steps in the negotiations between Europe and the ACPs (Lisbon and Kigali so far as Africa is concerned);
- Monitor the negotiations and the circuits of exchange of information among the networks in order to be more reactive and attentive to the development challenges of the countries;
- Continue to conduct advocacy and lobbying directed towards the governments and the partners in favour of regional integration, customs union and of the intra and inter regional agricultural markets on which they must be based and geostrategic interests over ACP integration, the strengthening of their production units and their regional markets, the regional policies based on the principles of food sovereignty.

**Quality over time is what is needed.** The negotiation should not be guided by timeframe but at meeting the needs and aspiration of the people of the different regions taking into account their unique and different levels of developed and at the same time it should facilitate rather than dismantle the integration movement.

**The development dimension.** The FO's maintains the importance of inserting development provisions throughout the economic partnership agreement and the need to provide the regions with the funding mechanisms necessary to address its transformative needs.

**Fall back.** There is need for the states to put in place the necessary precautions to cushion the negative fall out of failed agreement or the consequences of not signing, this should be negotiated with the stakeholders at national level.

As the negotiations approached the end (Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> 2007) there was a shift of strategy from the EU side. EU acknowledged that some countries would not be able to conclude the negotiations by their deadline. Instead of no deal at the end of the year, EU asked ACP countries to focus on reaching

agreement on trade in goods –A light EPA. This shift confirmed our fears all along as farmers in ACP countries that EU was not interested in development issues on EPAs. Their interest is an agreement that will allow EU invade ACP markets. This will definitely not meet ACP expectations.

The commissioner even used existing development support to the ACP i.e. \$23.3 billion in development – EDFs, \$28 billion in AID FOR TRADE TO encourage signing of A light EPA.

Towards the end of the signing deadline December 2007, the regional farmers organizations positioned themselves different as governments intensely consulted to decide on the position to take as the deadline was approaching. The last minute position taken by farmers organizations were all based on regional specificity as regards the character of agriculture and demands on negotiated positions from producers that would be inclusive i.e.

- **West Africa** – West African Farmers say stop the signing of EPA. As for ROPPA which is the network of farmers organizations in Western Africa, Food sovereignty and regional integration are their main expectations and according to them the EPA negotiations in their current form will only entrench poverty and are therefore a threat to survival of farmers in the region.
- **Central Africa** – They do not see how a family farmer will benefit from EPAs. PROPAC which is the central African network of farmers organizations advocates for the negotiations period to be extended to allow negotiation of an EPA that is development oriented.
- **Eastern Africa** – They considered full and well negotiated EPAs. As good for economic development and regional integration. As regards EAFF which is a regional farmers network they are concerned about opening of markets, but for the sake of producers some of whom are small scale farmers and in absence of any safeguards from government as an alternative they would support the regional government to sign, but sign as a regional Economic Community (RECs) in this case EAC to ensure sustainability of the regional integration process.
- **Southern Africa** – The Southern Africa farmers would like negotiations to continue until a favourable agreement is obtained. SACAU the regional farmer network accept that there are key issues to be dealt with before trade. The solutions is not however in fighting EPA negotiations, but in using the remaining time of negotiations to ensure that issues of interest to farmers are taken into account in the final agreements

The Eastern Africa Farmers Federation has continued raising issues of concern to smallholders in the region. EPAs will have profound impact on the agricultural sector. We have continued to inform our members about the negotiations through awareness creation. We were aware that our farmers had not been adequately involved by our states in the negotiation.

The ESA as a negotiation region have already disintegrating. The five (5) EAC countries already agreed to sign a light EPA.

The European Commission has already initialed an interim Partnership Agreement with Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. They are expected to continue negotiating a full EPA. The export goods from EAC will maintain the status quo conditions. Under the reciprocity clause, the signatory countries will liberalise 82% trade by value: 64% in two years, 80% in 15 years and the remainder in 25 years. This will cover 74% of their tariff lines. Agricultural products will however be excluded from liberalization.

The farmers of Eastern Africa condemn the light EPA because we believe that is only a FULL EPA properly negotiated that can deliver full development. Our worry is that signing any form of EPA will see out states loss leverage to negotiate and may witness EU frustrate our efforts to negotiate a meaningful development component thereafter. It is now crystal clear to all of us that with EU pushing the trade component, confirms that EU is just interested in the markets. EU will thereafter use the current EDF resources not for our development but to facilitate EU access to our markets. We are informed that EU is already pushing for a transitional parcel of compliance much shorter than 25years.

Our position as farmers of the region is that we want our states to negotiate an EPA that will facilitate development, fast track our regional integration to facilitate trade, ensure development of our agriculture and protect our markets. These are the principles and values we shall be repeatedly informing our governments and negotiators as we proceed with negotiations that will lead to signing of a full EPA.

Thank you.

# **HUMAN RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT**





**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**PRESENTATION**

**by**

**Ms KING**

**Member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee  
and President of the Social Affairs Section of the EESC**

**on**

***"Human Resources Development for Economic Development –  
examples and lessons from ACP countries"***

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**5 March 2008**

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**A presentation to the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Group, Brussels, 5 March 08 :**

**Human Resources Development for Economic Development - examples and lessons from ACP countries**



**Brenda King**

Member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee

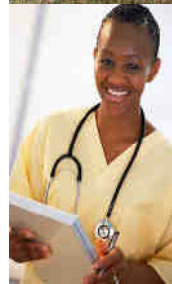
**Eric Osei**

Senior Economic Development Manager,  
London Development Agency  
London, England



## Overview

- Development of human resources (HRD) for economic development
- Why is (HRD) so important ?
- Investment comparison between different nations/economies
- Current position of ACP countries
- Factors affecting HRD in ACP countries
- Best practice examples and case studies



## Development of human resources and economic development

- Economic development is critical to all countries
- Driven by Govt. investment in : education & training; industries, enterprise & job creation, physical infrastructure, public services, health, R&D, attraction of foreign investment
- Well managed economies: jobs and prosperity highly developed education and health infrastructure; good governance; physical development; better quality of life; community & social development; equity with safety net for the poor, sick and under-privileged



## Why is the development of human resources is important ?

- Human Resource Development (HRD): education and training of a nation's citizens so that they are able to reach their full potential
- HRD is a key driver and component of economic development
- HRD - leads to a number of social and economic benefits including jobs; reduction in poverty; increase standard of living and better quality of life; better civil society etc
- Ability and level of a country to invest in the education and training of its citizens will depend on a number of factors.
- In developing countries, education and training of **women** yield higher return than men
- Development of **people** in developing countries is more conducive to economic development – than investment in physical infrastructure



## Comparison between different nations/economies investment in training and education

- **Advanced /developed economies**
  - OECD countries - rich and generally well managed economies
- **Middle income developing countries**
  - Examples include Barbados, Bahamas, Bermuda, Trinidad & Tobago (T & T)
- **Least developed countries**
  - Examples include many sub Saharan African countries, Bangladesh, Samoa, Solomon Islands



## Human Development Index (HDI)

- HDI - measures the average **achievements** in a country in 3 basic dimensions of human development: (i) A long healthy life (ii) Knowledge (iii) Decent standard of living
- Three main categories of HDI:
  - **High Human Development**- countries with HDI of **0.8 and above**. Mainly EU and OECD countries. **BUT** includes some ACP countries ranked as follows : Barbados (31), Seychelles (47), Cuba (50), T&T (57)
  - **Low Development**: HDI **below 0.5**. Of the 31 countries in the category, 29 are located in Africa – the exception are Haiti and Yemen
  - **Middle development**: HDI between **0.5 and 0.8**. 30 ACP countries in this category. Dominica ranked at 68, Samoa (75) and Swaziland (146)



## Current position of ACP countries – Economic Development and HRD

- General improvement in education and economic development of poorer ACP countries
- General improvement in education and economic development of poorer ACP countries – brought about by economic improvement, increasingly stable governments and investment in human resources
- Improvement in tackling poverty and corruption in poor ACP countries
- Africa achieving consistent economic growth- average of 5.5% in 2006 (OECD)



## Current position of ACP countries –cont'd

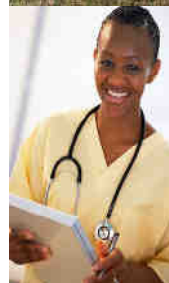
- However, the scale of poverty is so huge for the majority of the Africa population – with **basic needs** taking priority of education, skill and other human resource activities:
  - More than 44 million children do not go to primary school
  - More than 300 million African people do not have access to clean water
  - 1 in 5 of the poorest African people living in the continent survive on just 1 Euro (US\$ 1.30) a day.
  - More than 10 million children die of hunger and preventable disease, one child every 3 seconds
  - Over 25 million in Sub- Saharan are infected with HIV or AIDS



## Factors affecting HRD in ACP countries

### 1. Unfair trade rules and tariffs

- OECD countries protectionist and unfair trade policies
- ACP countries have limited or no access to OECD markets
- Unfair trade rules and tariffs are devastating to poor ACP countries and prevent them from attempting to tackle poverty
- EU has made proposals at the WTO negotiations to reduce the highest EU tariffs and export subsidies- particularly the CAP
- **Recommendations**
  - ACP Follow up committee welcomes and support EU proposal- and hope other rich nations will follow this example
  - EU support initiatives which supports poor ACP to trade, start enterprise and grow their economies.- e.g. **microfinance** and **small business start-up schemes** for the very poor





## Factors affecting HRD in ACP countries – cont'd

### 2. Attracting foreign investment

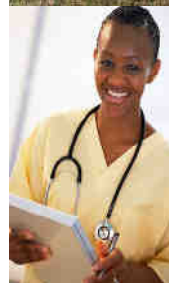
- Attracting foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is critical for economic development and HRD of ACP countries
- FDI is often the biggest investment and jobs generator in ACP countries. FDI market is huge:
  - In 2007, FDI market was worth \$1.2 trillion dollars – employing 53 million around the world.
  - FDI to Caribbean & Latin America: \$187 billion
  - FDI to Africa : \$39 billion
- Many ACP countries not maximising the foreign investment and associated HRD potential
- **Recommendations**
  - Create conducive business environment for investment
  - ensure mutually beneficially to both the host country and MNC
  - ensure that foreign investment leads jobs, social and economic development



## Factors affecting HRD in ACP countries – cont'd

### 3. Migration of skilled professionals- “ Brain Drain”

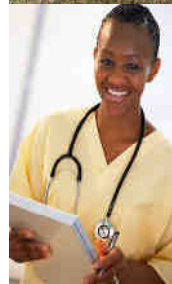
- Migration of skilled professionals to rich OECD countries is one of the biggest problems facing ACP countries
- OECD report: migration of skilled professionals to rich countries has a devastating effect on the development of poor countries
- Critical that ACP Governments work with EU and other donor countries to develop packages and incentives for retention of skilled professionals & encourage skilled migrants to return.
- A number of good examples of how different Government are addressing this problem:
  - China, India & South Korea – targeting professionals in key sectors to return with a good financial incentives and other packages
  - Grenada – university offers medical students scholarships and financial assistance on condition that they return – to put the newly acquired skills for country.



## Factors affecting HRD in ACP countries – cont'd

### 4. Good Governance –

- focus on democratic governance
- effective management of economy & country's resources
- citizen participation in the decision-making & communication process

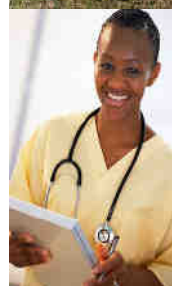


## Vision of peace and prosperity

50 years ago Africa had a vision to:-

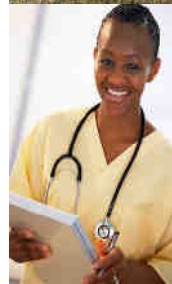
- liberate itself from colonialism and apartheid
- achieve independence to create an environment of peace and prosperity for all Africans

*Liberation did not automatically mean prosperity, peace and security for all*



## Importance of good governance & the rule of law

- basis for sustainable development as:-
  - encourages stability
  - building block for truly democratic societies
  - ensures civil rights of all citizens are equally respected



## Achieving peace and prosperity

African governments to achieve the vision of peace and prosperity for all have establish:-

- African Union
- Pan African Parliament

Focus on:-

- Good governance
- Economic, technological an cultural development



## Achieving peace and prosperity

Develop frameworks:-

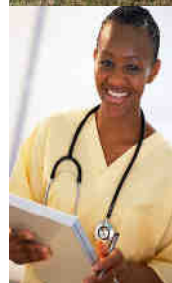
- ESC
- New Partnership for Africa's Development
  - create a culture of Human Rights
  - introduced peer review system
  - accelerate sub-regional and continental integration
  - champion the rights of the continent in the international arena



## Vision of peace and prosperity

Results:-

- Most African economies are better run.
- To sustain these developments, there must be:-
  - continued stability
  - respect for the democratic process
  - respect for the rule of law
  - involvement of civil society



## Factors affecting HRD in ACP countries – cont'd

### 5. Investment in Education

- Universal Goal: by Year 2015, no child would be denied her/his right to education.
- In 2000, 113 million children were out of school. In 2015, it is estimated that 75 million will be out of school.
- It is estimated that Euro 6.5 billion a year is needed to put all children into school.

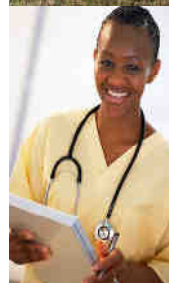
Source: <[www.campaignforeducation.org/schoolreport/index.html](http://www.campaignforeducation.org/schoolreport/index.html)>



## Factors affecting HRD in ACP countries – cont'd

### 6. Focus on Gender

- Universal Goal: By 2005 as many girls as boys will be in in school
- In 2007: For every 100 boys out of primary school there are 133 girls.
- Girls who complete primary school are:
  - ✓ 50% less likely to be infected with HIV
  - ✓ have children who are 50% more likely to live past the age of 5



## Factors affecting HRD in ACP countries – cont'd

### 7. Involvement of Civil Society

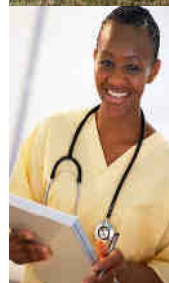
- Using Kenya as an example - Sanitary towels & school attendance
  - campaign to pressure mounted on government and parliament to abolish tax on sanitary pads
  - make policy-makers better informed on the needs of girls
  - Small things – just not fees – can keep children out of school



## Factors affecting HRD in ACP countries – cont'd

### 8. Focus on Innovation

- ACP countries are
  - over dependent on external technologies and importation of finished goods and services
  - export raw materials for little returns, thereby weakening their ability to compete



## Factors affecting HRD in ACP countries – cont'd

### 8a. Barriers to Innovation

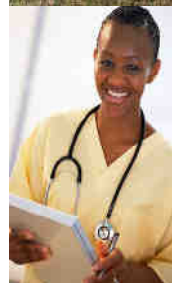
- outdated curricula
- inadequate science & technology facilities
- absence of direct links between science & industry
- rapid technological innovations → out-of-date knowledge infrastructure
- brain drain, due to instability or lack of opportunity



## Factors affecting HRD in ACP countries – cont'd

### 8b. Some Statistics

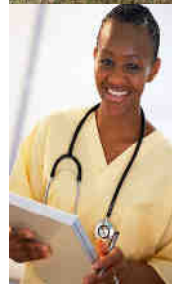
- African has 12% of the world's population but
  - 0.36% of the world's scientist & engineers
  - 0.8% of the world's scientific publications
  - practically none of the world's patents



## Case Study – Rwanda

Aim: to build capacity in science & technology

- invests 1.6% of GDP on science & research institutions including:-
  - teaching science in primary and secondary schools
  - creating centres of higher learning and research in agriculture, health, infrastructure, environment and biodiversity



## Case Study – Rwanda cont'd

- plans to increase investment to 3% of GDP over the next five years
- has a goal to increase the number of science students in tertiary institutions to 70% of the student population

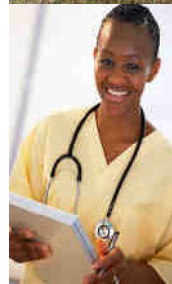




## Africa-EU Follow-up committee recommends(1)

Each ACP government should :-

- guarantee free & compulsory education for all
- implement a plan to make this a reality
- spend adequate amounts on education:
  - minimum of 6% of the government's spend
  - at least 20% of what the government spends on services should be on education

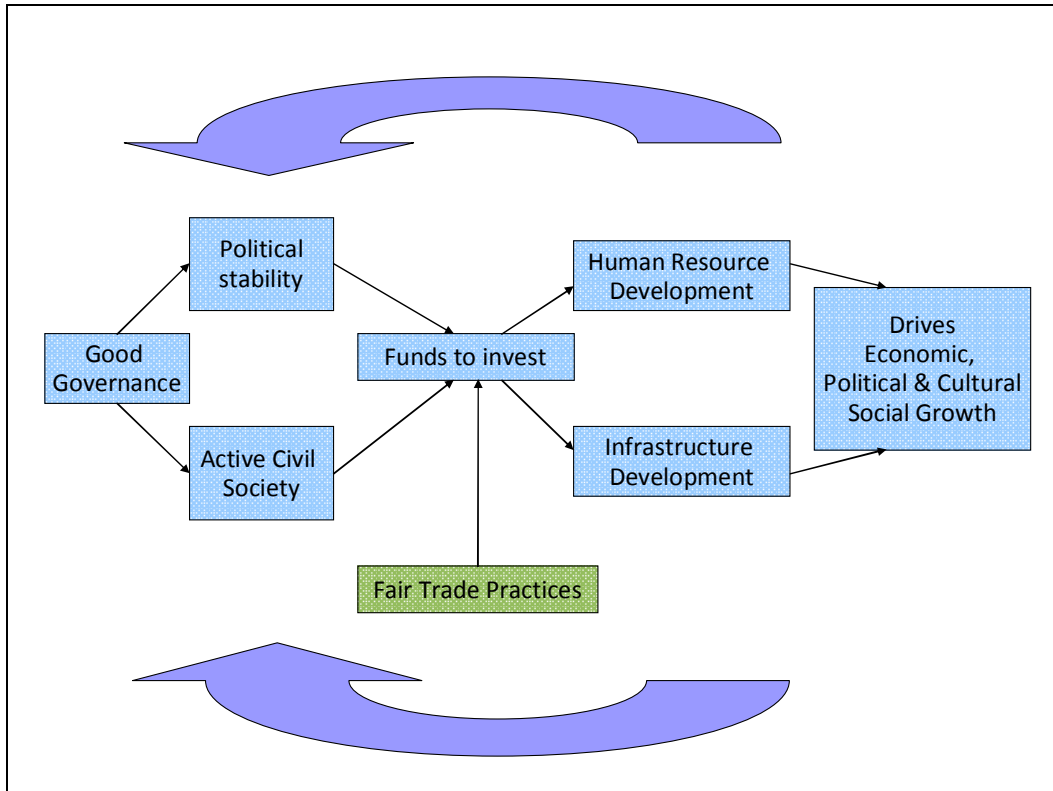


## Africa-EU Follow-up committee recommends(2)

EU (G8) should:-

- Keep their promises and pay for the financial gap to enable Education For All to happen.
- Provide ACP countries with the support they need through a global financing plan called the Education For All Fast Track Initiative
- Make sure no child is discriminated against from an equal chance of a quality, free education in their own country.





Quote from HE Pohamba, President of Namibia, expressing his vision:

*“Africa at peace with itself, interacting economically and politically with the rest of the world as an equal partner and a prosperous continent, free of diseases, with a highly competent workforce.” 2007*





**AN IMPROVED PARTNERSHIP FOR A BETTER  
DEVELOPMENT**



**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**PRESENTATION**

**by**

**Mr LÓPEZ PEÑA  
Acting Head of Unit, DG Development, European Commission**

**on**

***"Consultation of Non State Actors and Local Authorities  
in 10th EDF programming"***

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**6 March 2008**

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## **EESC 6 March 2008**

European Commission – DG DEV

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### **Consultation of Non State Actors and Local Authorities in 10th EDF programming**

**Antonio Lopez-Pena – European Commission - DG DEV**  
**Antonio.LOPEZ-PENA@ec.europa.eu**

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## **10th EDF programming process**

European Commission – DG DEV

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- Participation as fundamental principle (programming guidelines)
  - Annex 5 of Country Strategy Paper
  - Letter Commissioner Michel
  - Questionnaire to EC delegations in ACP countries
  - Summary report
-





## Summary Report: Results (1)

European Commission – DG DEV

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### Country context

- Typology of countries
    - 12 country type 1, 39 country type 2, 13 country type 3
  - Mapping study
    - 41 countries dispose of mapping
  - Financial support
    - So far, 171M€ earmarked in 35 countries
- 

Slide 3



## Summary Report: Results (2)

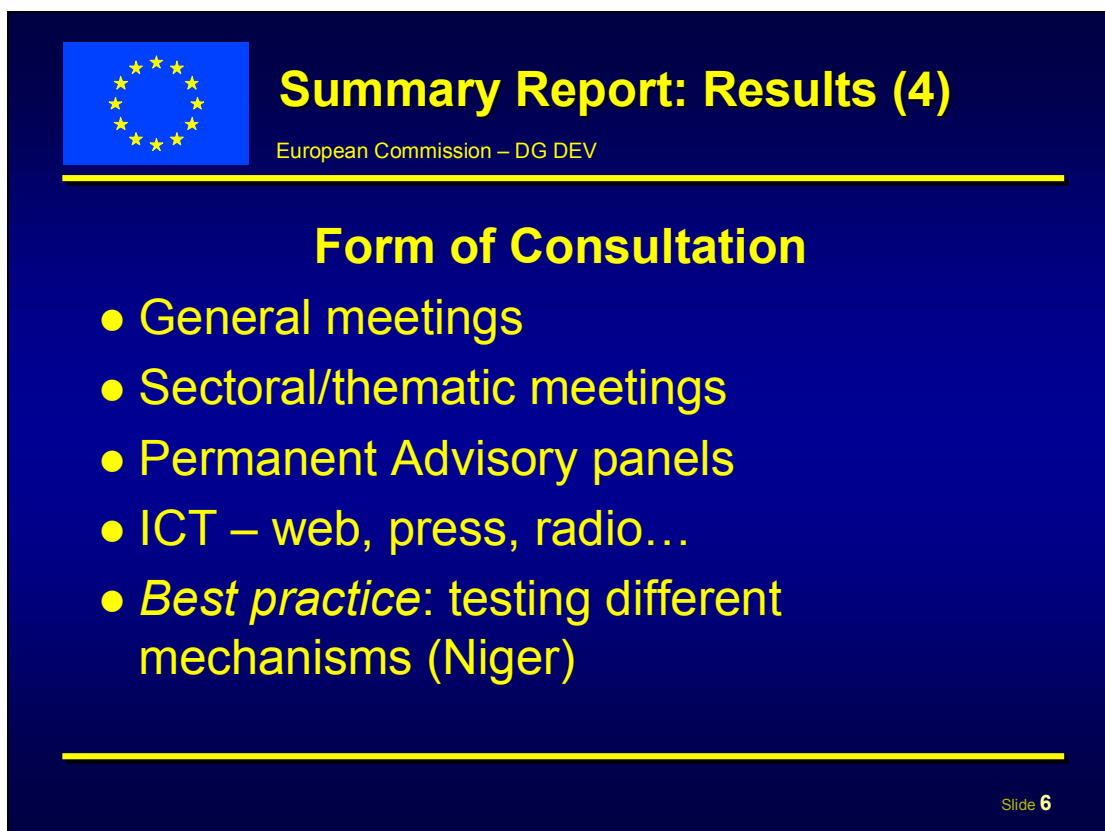
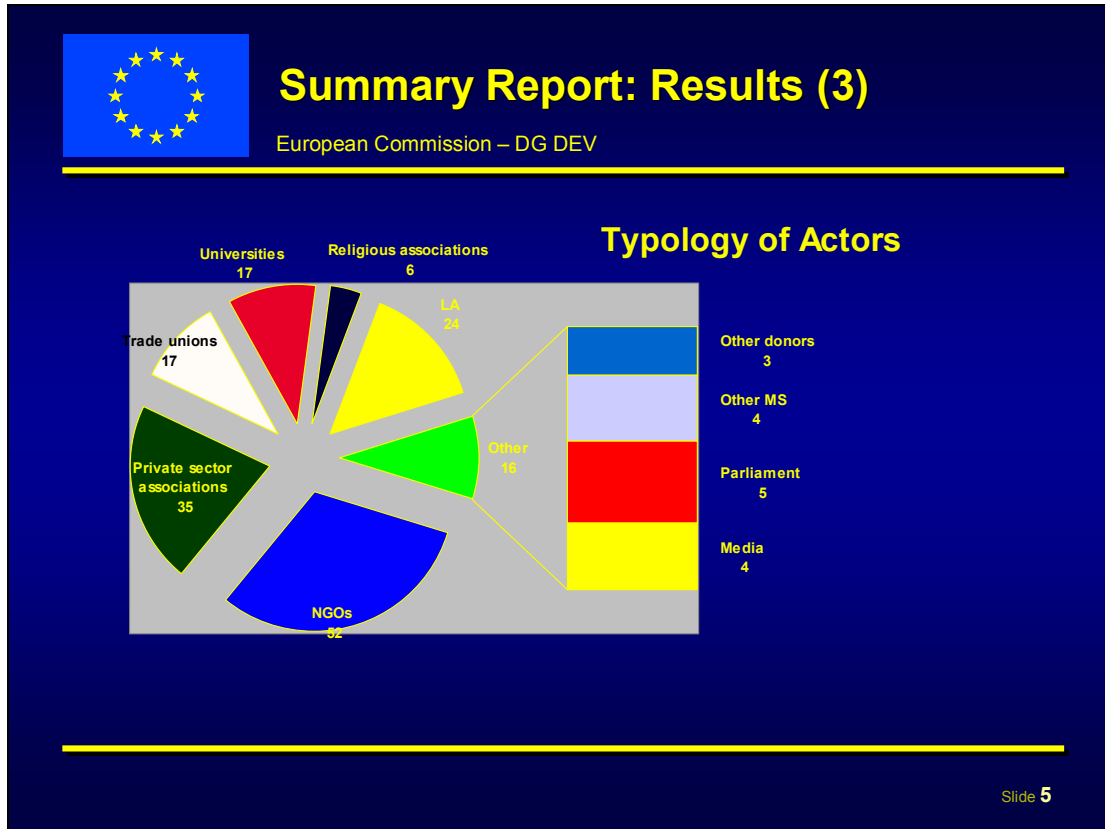
European Commission – DG DEV

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### Initiative for consultation

- 39 cases EC Del alone
  - 23 cases EC Del + Gvt
  - 2 cases Gvt alone
  - *Best practice*: consultation at NSA request (e.g. Cameroun, Benin, Senegal..)
- 

Slide 4





## Summary Report: Results (5)

European Commission – DG DEV

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### Timing

- Reasonable timeframe required
  - Consultation mainly held at late stage
  - Inadequate deadlines (input-feedback)
  - *Best practice*: use of permanent structures (panels) allows early involvement, yielding better results
- 

Slide 7



## Summary Report: Results (6)

European Commission – DG DEV

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### Stakeholder input

- 41 cases input provided
    - In 23 cases, substantial, relevant input was incorporated into CSP
    - In 18 cases, input of low quality
  - 23 cases no input provided
- 

Slide 8



## Summary Report: Results (7)

European Commission – DG DEV

### Attitude of government (trends)

- In 45 cases: “open”, “positive” or “cooperative”
  - *Best practice*: formalisation of relations (MoU, framework agreement with NSA)
- Difficult partnerships: in 13 cases “reluctant” or “hostile”

Slide 9



## Summary Report: Results (8)

European Commission – DG DEV

### Stakeholder attitude (trends)

- In over 40 cases: “positive” and “ambitious”
- Strategic partners in dialogue VS apolitical implementing partners
- Representativity
  - Independence from gvt
  - Consultation of most relevant stakeholders

Slide 10



## Conclusions

European Commission – DG DEV

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- No case of 'no involvement'
  - 'Consultation' in 33 cases: not just informed but associated to definition of orientations
  - 'Information' in 31 cases: ad hoc dialogue + information sessions at rather late stage
- 

Slide 11



## Recommendations

European Commission – DG DEV

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1. Reinvigorate dialogue and interaction
  2. Ensure involvement of broad typology of actors
  3. Move from ad hoc information to institutionalised dialogue
  4. Improve Communication and Transparency
- 

Slide 12

**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**SPEECH**

by

**Mr Gérard Dantin  
President of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee  
of the European Economic and Social Committee**

on

*"An Improved Partnership for a Better Development"*

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**6 March 2008**

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Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Colleagues,

As my colleague Mr Jahier has explained, the EESC has for years been involved in monitoring the involvement of non-state actors in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. More recently we have cooperated with the European Commission on reviewing non-state actor consultation on the programming of the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund. We are each here today, to present the conclusions of our respective reports. And of course, to make proposals on how to improve non-state actor consultations in the future.

Having read the Commission report and have listened to Mr López Peña, I would like to make two preliminary comments. Firstly, I welcome the action – oriented approach of the Commission report. I agree that now we have to move quickly towards improving the consultation of non-state actors, with specific objectives to be followed by the EC Delegations. Secondly, I also appreciate the honesty of the Commission. I say this because it is only through honesty on the shortcomings to date, that the actions proposed by the Commission will be implemented by the EC Delegations.

However, it is now time for me to present our conclusions and recommendations and I will regroup these into three principle areas. Firstly, our conclusions and recommendations on the *levels of information* of non-state actors on the Cotonou Agreement. Secondly, our conclusions and recommendations on the *consultations* of non-state actors by ACP authorities and the EC Delegations. And thirdly, our views on *capacity-building* of non-state actors.

So let us begin with the *levels of information* of non-state actors on the opportunities available to them via the Cotonou Agreement. From what we have seen, over the years there has been an improvement in this area. More non-state actor organisations are informed on Cotonou today, than they were in 2003. This is to be expected, five years into the implementation of the Agreement! And I should qualify my response: I am saying "more", not "all", for I know from the replies to the questionnaires that we have received from some of you here today, that there are representatives of organisations (trade unions, employers, farmers and consumers) which have stated that they are still *insufficiently* informed on the Cotonou Agreement. Nonetheless, I do recognise that progress has taken place and this is a very good thing.

I think that one of the reasons for the progress has been the appointment in each EC Delegation in ACP countries of an individual responsible for relations with civil society: a civil society focal point. However, our experience is that, human nature being what it is, there are considerable differences between the individuals and the impact of the civil society focal points. For example, we have been to some ACP countries where the individual in question is full of dynamism and fully committed to their role as a bridge with non-state actors, and the results reflect this dynamism. We have also been to countries where the civil society focal point is simply a "civil servant", with not much inclination to communicate beyond the walls of the Delegation. The result is that we have organised hearings in some ACP countries where it is literally the first time that the Commission civil society focal point



has met *some* of the organisations in the room! Now, I think that this is the *exception* rather than the rule. Also, I do appreciate that the EC Delegations are often short-staffed and that the civil society focal points are often juggling many files, in addition to their civil society role. However, I do find it unacceptable that it is only after a visit by the European Economic and Social Committee (based in Brussels), that the official in question actually meets his or her "constituency"!

So what can be done to improve this? Well, one thing that we have been asking for a couple of years, is for the contact details of the civil society focal point to be made available on the websites of the individual EC Delegations, not just on the general Commission website in Brussels. In addition, the civil society focal points' contact details could also be distributed by post to all of the non-state actors with which the Delegation has already had contacts. These are simple ways of ensuring that the *local* non-state actor organisations will actually know whom to contact in the Delegations.

The second recommendation relates to improving communication by the Delegations. I welcome the fact that the report that Mr López Peña has includes a chapter on "Improving communication and transparency" and I would like to support those recommendations. On behalf of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee, I would like to add that information on the Cotonou should be distributed via: newsletters, information sessions, workshops, use of the local radio stations, the national and regional media. Information could also be distributed via schools, universities and via the Internet. Partnerships could also be established with regional institutions. Any and every opportunity is a good one!

The third point that I would like to make on this subject of "information to non-state actors", relates to the famous "mapping studies" of non-state actors that many EC Delegations have conducted. This is a very good step in the right direction and something that we had asked for some years ago. However, what we have seen from visits to ACP countries is that there are differences among EC Delegations on what constitutes a mapping study. For example, for some, it simply involves cataloguing the non-state actor organisations in the country. For others, it has involved detailed studies of the representativity and capacity of the organisations. Now, unsurprisingly, I would like to support the second option!

I would now like to move on to the second chapter of my presentation, which relates to the *consultative process*. On this, the progress has been less obvious. In fact, the results are mitigated both on the quantity and the quality of the consultations, as the report of the European Commission also concludes. We have best case scenarios where civil society is consulted on a regular basis, on time, is listened to and is provided with feedback on the consultations. But we also have countries where the non-state actors complain that they are invited to meetings very rarely, they receive the documents one day before and that these meetings are simply information sessions on what has already been decided.

The whole issue of civil society consultation is in fact very sensitive and this starts with the basic question of what constitutes "consultation" and secondly, whose responsibility is it? As far as I am concerned, consultation is exactly what I described as the best case scenario: in other words, civil society organisations are invited to meetings to discuss proposals on a policy area or programming. They receive the working documents sufficiently in advance, they go to the meeting and they discuss their views openly. After the consultation, they are informed on which proposals were taken on board and which not. Now, I know that for some organisations, this is not enough. Some organisations want to go to a meeting and to brainstorm without any prior proposals from either their national authorities or the EC Delegations. In effect, they wish to be at the inception phase. Personally, I think that this could be counterproductive, as they would not necessarily have the expertise nor the breadth of vision of the entire development needs of the country. However, there should not be the other extreme either, where civil society is simply informed on what has been decided for a particular policy area. It is precisely the difficulty in finding a middle road that is often so challenging.

As regards the responsibility, it is actually everyone's responsibility: ACP authorities, the EC Delegations and non-state actors. What we have found along the years is that the consultative process works the best, when all three actors come together. For non-state actors this means being motivated and taking the initiative to demand consultations. It means also being organised at the national level into single representative non-state actor platforms or networks, so that the EC Delegations and your national authorities can consult one or two platforms, instead of 100 different organisations. Last but not least, it is also the responsibility of non-state actors to distribute widely information they receive both horizontally and vertically within their organisations and beyond.

Among the best examples that we have seen so far of this cooperation between non-state actors, the national authorities and the EC Delegations has been in certain countries of the Caribbean, where "Non-State Actor Panels" were initiated by the EC Delegation and Memoranda of Understanding for the operationalisation of these Panels were signed with all three categories of players. These Panels are quite recent and it still has to be seen how they will develop, but I think that they are a good model for other countries.

Before ending this section of my presentation on the consultative function, I would like to make one recommendation to the Commission: where possible, for the Commission headquarters to give instructions to the EC Delegations. Instructions or perhaps to be more polite, "guidelines" on how best to carry out mapping studies, on how best to encourage non-state actors to establish Platforms, on how best to carry out consultations and capacity-building. I say this because there has been more than one occasion where we have been to ACP countries, we have organised hearings in which the civil society focal points have participated and we have made the proposals that I have made to you today. To my disbelief, after the meeting the civil society focal points approached us to ask whether we could send them information on what EC Delegations had done in other countries, so that they might do the same!

Ladies and gentlemen: the last point that I would like to address this morning relates to *capacity-building* for non-state actors. Now, I was a little surprised to read in the Commission report (I quote) "Non-State Actors also appear at times apolitical and only interested in participatory processes where there is a perspective for capacity-building support" (page 27). Now, firstly, in my view, non-state actors should be "apolitical". But what really caught my eye from this sentence was the lack of understanding of the extent to which funding for capacity-building constitutes a *real* obstacle to the involvement of non-state actors in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. This is something that comes up repeatedly when we consult non-state actors: the necessity for limited funding to pay for a Secretariat to coordinate activities among the member organisations, to pay for training for members. Limited funding to pay for photocopying paper, the rental of computers and meeting rooms etc. Limited funding also, in order to cover the travel costs to participate in meeting, especially if they are meetings at the regional level. This is quite basic stuff, but fundamental to the successful involvement of any organisation. Personally, I am convinced that the availability of limited funding of a non-state actor platform and its successful involvement of the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement go hand in hand. And I say this as when we carried out our study on the identification of best practices for the programming process of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF, the countries where the consultative process was the most effective from the 14 that we examined, were also the same countries where non-state actor platforms had already received EC funds. For those of you who will ask the question "which countries", the answer is Barbados, Fiji, Senegal and Mali.

Ladies and gentlemen, I will have to stop my presentation here as I have already spoken too long, but as you can see, it is a subject which passions me! Very quickly to add that I hope that the EC Delegations will continue involving economic and social interest groups in the consultations – this is actually quite a recent phenomenon as many Delegations viewed non-state actors as simply NGOs. Finally, one last comment to reiterate again our desire to see the EC procedures for access to EU funds for non-state actors to be simplified where possible, as they are currently too complicated and favour organisations specialised in accessing EU funds. I will finish here and I look forward to all of your questions.

Thank you for your attention.

**INFORMATION SESSION ON ACCESS TO EU FINANCING  
FOR NON-STATE ACTORS**



**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**PRESENTATION**

**by**

**Mr BOURATSIS  
Acting Director, EuropeAid, European Commission**

**on**

***"Thematic programmes of the EuropeAid"***

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**6 March 2008**

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# THEMATIC PROGRAMMES

Internet: [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/index_en.htm)



1

## THEMATIC PROGRAMMES

- Community aid is implemented through GEOGRAPHIC AND THEMATIC PROGRAMMES (Art. 4 of Regulation 1905/2006 (DCI))
- Thematic programmes are SUBSIDIARY AND COMPLEMENTARY TO GEOGRAPHIC PROGRAMMES and cover a specific area of activity of interest (Art. 11.1 of Regulation 1905/2006 (DCI))
- Actions undertaken through THEMATIC PROGRAMMES shall ADD VALUE to and BE ADDITIONAL to, and COHERENT WITH, actions funded under geographic programmes (Art. 11.2 of R.1905/2006 (DCI))

Actions are of the following nature:

- multi-regional and/or cross-cutting actions, including pilot projects and innovatory policies;
- actions in cases where there is no agreement on the action with the partner government(s);
- actions relevant to the purpose of a specific thematic programme which respond to a Community policy priority or an international obligation or commitment of the Community;
- where appropriate, actions in cases where there is no geographic programme or it has been suspended.

2



## THEMATIC COOPERATION (1/2)

EuropeAid

- **TWO INSTRUMENTS:**
  - European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)
  - Instrument for Stability (IS)
- **FIVE PROGRAMMES:**
  - Investing in People (IP)
  - Environment and sustainable management of natural resources, including energy (ENRTP)
  - Non-state actors and local authorities (NSA & LA)
  - Food security (FS)
  - Migration and Asylum (M & A)

3

## THEMATIC COOPERATION (2/2)

EuropeAid

- **THREE LEGAL BASES:** Regulation (EC) N° 1889/2006 of 20.12.2006, (EIDHR), Regulation (EC) N°1717/2006 of 15.11.2006, (IfS), Regulation (EC) N° 1905/2006 of 18.12.2006, (DCI).
- **GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE:** Programmes: ENPI, EDF, DCI / Instruments: ENPI, EDF, DCI, IPA
- **BUDGET:** More than **EUR 6700 m** for the period of the financial perspective 2007-2013, around **EUR 3600 m** for the programming period 2007-2010, and a budget of **EUR 785 m** for 2007.
- **BUDGET HEADINGS:** 25
- **CONTRACTS:** 1200-1500 contracts per year
- **DEVOLUTION:** Actions are being progressively devolved
- **VISIBILITY:** High political visibility
- **EP ROLE:** The EP continues to have a key role in the evolution of these programmes
- **NSAs:** Preferred implementing bodies
- **DIALOGUE:** These programmes require a permanent dialogue with civil society organisations ⇒ role of the delegations

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## THEMATIC INSTRUMENTS AND PROGRAMMES

EuropeAid

INSTRUMENTS/ PROGRAMMES	LEGAL BASES	BUDGET			BUDGET HEADINGS
		2007 2013	2007 2010	2007	
EIDHR	R.1889/2006	1104	554	133.3	19.04.01;19.04.05;21.04.04; 19.01.04.07 19.06.02;19.06.03
IS	R.1717/2006	-	-	10.9	21.05.01.01;21.05.01.02;
IP	Art. 12 }	1060	541	95.3	21.05.01.03;21.05.01.04 21.04.01;21.04.05
ENRTP	Art. 13 }	890	470	84.9	21.03.01;21.03.02
NSA&LA	Art. 14 }R.1905/2006	1639	903	210.9	21.02.01;21.07.03
FS	Art. 15 }	1709	925	201.5	19.02.01.01;19.02.01.02
M&A	Art. 16 } Art. 2 R.1638/2006	384	205	48.0	
		6786	3598	784.8	

## EUROPEAN INSTRUMENT FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS (EIDHR)

EuropeAid

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in countries and regions where they are most at risk.
2. Strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform.
3. Supporting actions on human rights and democracy issues covered by EU guidelines: human rights dialogue, human rights defenders, death penalty, torture, and children and armed conflict.
4. Supporting and strengthening the international and regional framework for the protection of human rights, justice, the rule of law and the promotion of democracy.
5. Building confidence in democratic electoral processes: EU/EOMs

**BUDGET:** EUR 554 m (2007-2010) and EUR 133 m (2007) with EOMs

### IMPLEMENTATION 2008:

- Calls for Proposals:
  - Local: CBSS (EUR 45.6 m) in 72 countries, 17 of them in Latin America (EUR 9.3 m)
  - Headquarters: 4 (EUR 49 m)
- Targeted Projects: EUR 10.5 m

6

## EOMs

EuropeAid

### OBJECTIVES:

- Accurate assessment of the electoral process, conformity with international standards
- Reduction of fraud, violence and manipulation
- Legitimacy and confidence in national institutions
- Proposals for improvement (Final Report)

**BUDGET:** EUR 125 m (2007-2010); EUR 30 m (2008). Average cost: EUR 2.5 m/EOM

### IMPLEMENTATION:

- Direct contracts with UNDP and IOM
- 2007: 10, of which 2 in Latin America (Guatemala, Ecuador)
- 2008: 12, of which 2 in Latin America: Bolivia (April) and Ecuador (July)

### ROLE OF DELEGATIONS

- Invitation
- Preparation and support for exploratory missions
- Negotiation of the EOM
- Support for the EOM if requested

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## NON-STATE ACTORS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES (NSA & LA) (1/2)

EuropeAid

### OBJECTIVE:

Reduce poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

- Strengthen civil society in order to facilitate the participation of NSAs and local authorities in poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies
- Raise public awareness of development issues and promote development education within the EU and acceding countries
- Strengthen coordination and communication of NSA and local authority networks in the EU and acceding countries

This is a programme designed in collaboration with those concerned to support them and their "own initiatives"

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## NON-STATE ACTORS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES (NSA & LA) (2/2)

EuropeAid

**BUDGET:** EUR 903 m (2007-2010), of which EUR 213 m (2008)

**IMPLEMENTATION 2008:** Calls for proposals

	Headquarters	Delegations
Objective 1	EUR 65 m (12.2.08)	EUR 110 m 61 countries/14 in Latin America (1-2/08)
Objective 2	EUR 29 m (19.2.08)	
Objective 3	EUR 4 m (2.4.08)	

**DIALOGUE:** Importance of dialogue with NSAs and LAs

9

## Environment and sustainable management of natural resources, including energy (ENRTP)

EuropeAid

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Assist developing countries to make progress towards incorporating environmental sustainability (MDG7) in their decision-making processes.
- Promote the implementation of EU initiatives and help developing countries to meet international obligations on the environment.
- Promote coherence between environmental and other policies and improve environmental competences.
- Strengthen environmental governance and policies at international level.
- Support partner countries in taking decisions in favour of sustainable energy.

**BUDGET:** EUR 450 m (2007-2010) and EUR 101 m (2008)

**IMPLEMENTATION 2007-2008:**

- Calls for proposals: Headquarters: EUR 60 m (2007-2008): forests, climate change, biodiversity, desertification, sustainable forms of energy, FIEGT.
- Targeted projects: UNDP, WB  
Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund (GEEREF)

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## MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

EuropeAid

### OBJECTIVE:

- To help third countries better manage migratory flows in all their dimensions.
  - combating illegal migration, readmission
  - combating human trafficking
  - promoting sound management of labour migration, protection against exploitation and exclusion
  - promotion of asylum and international protection

**BUDGET:** EUR 205 m (2007-2010), EUR 85 m (2007-2008)

### IMPLEMENTATION 2007-2008:

- Calls for proposals: 2007-2008: EUR 62 m, 6 of them for Latin America, 42 projects already chosen in 2007
- Targeted projects: 2007: 2 projects for EUR 19 m (UNDP, UNHCR)  
2008: 3 projects for EUR 14 m

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## STABILITY INSTRUMENT

EuropeAid

**OBJECTIVE:** (Priority 2, administered by AIDCO:F2)

Combating terrorism and organised crime, including human trafficking, drug, firearms and explosives smuggling and effective control of illegal trade and transit.

### BUDGET:

- 2007: EUR 9 m
- 2008: EUR 12 m

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Centralised and with direct contracts

- 2007:
  - Fight against drugs trafficking from/to Afghanistan: EUR 5.2 m
  - Expert support facility: EUR 3.8 m
- 2008:
  - Fight against drugs trafficking from/to Afghanistan: EUR 4.3 m
  - Prevention of drug smuggling in Latin America and the Caribbean
  - Combating terrorism in sub-Saharan and north Africa
  - Measures to combat firearms and explosives trafficking in Africa (with a link to Latin America)

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**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups  
Brussels, 4, 5 and 6 March 2008**

**PRESENTATION**

**by**

**Ms DELLICOUR  
Head of Unit, EuropeAid, European Commission**

**on**

*"Access to EU funding for Non-State Actors"*

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**6 March 2008**

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EuropeAid

## Access to EU funding for Non-State Actors

Dominique Dellicour, EuropeAid – European Commission  
25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest  
Groups  
Brussels, 4-6 March 2008



## EDF

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### Non-State Actors as key players in:

- **Sectoral programmes**
- **Capacity-building programmes**



## Background

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### Cotonou Agreement:

- NSAs must be **involved throughout the process of consultation, programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.**
- **Legal and political recognition** of NSA participation in the development and cooperation process.

**A real change from previous cooperation approaches relying more on civil society (essentially NGOs) as partners for implementing development projects and programmes.**

## Cotonou Agreement

EuropeAid

### How to involve these Actors?

- Provide the **necessary information** about the partnership agreement;
- Make sure civil society is **consulted** about economic, social and institutional reforms and policies that the EC will support;
- Facilitate the involvement of NSAs in the **implementation** of programmes and projects.
- **Give NSAs appropriate support in building their capacities**

## 9th EDF

EuropeAid

In order to support NSAs in their role as **responsible, informed and competent partners** in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the country and so bolster its democratic foundations, most NIPs in the 9th EDF have included sums of up to 15% of the financial envelope for capacity-building of NSAs.

## First review of the 9th EDF: Programmes for NSA capacity building

EuropeAid

- **Amount: EUR 202 m**  
**42 programmes**  
**(38 countries)**
- **+ 16 other programmes**  
**(EUR 150 m)** with a broader goal (governance/rule of law) including a component for capacity-building of NSAs.
- **+ South Africa,**  
**1 programme**  
**(EUR 10 m, 2003)** to support civil society

ACP Regions	Countries
West Africa	14
Central Africa	5
East Africa	4
Southern Africa	8
Indian Ocean	1
Caribbean	3
Pacific	3

## Main focuses of NSA capacity-building programmes (1)

EuropeAid

- **Dialogue and consultation** between NSAs and between NSAs and the public administration (at different levels: Benin (national and sectoral level), Burkina Faso (regional level), Mauritania (local level), and with the other PTFs).
- **Strengthening operational/organisational capacities** of NSAs in their roles of communication/advocacy/ analysis and actors complementing the State (e.g. Uganda).
- **Grassroots initiatives** to promote good governance (e.g. Mali).

## Main focuses of NSA capacity-building programmes (2)

EuropeAid

- **Developing a civic culture/** promoting a constructive dialogue on human rights and gender (e.g. Guinea).
- **Suitable legislative and regulatory frameworks** to enable civil society to operate (e.g. Benin, Burkina Faso)
- **Participation/involvement of NSAs in EPA negotiations and regional integration processes** (e.g. regional integration programme in West Africa).

## Main focuses of NSA capacity-building programmes (3)

EuropeAid

- Special attention to **including the gender dimension** (e.g. Botswana).
- Specific rights and needs of vulnerable groups such as **children** (e.g. South Africa) **and indigenous peoples** (e.g. Suriname).
- Complementary and **partnership role with the public sector, in some social sectors (education and health)** (e.g. Dominican Republic).

## Implementing methods

EuropeAid

- **Institutional support:** several instruments used to strengthen NSA capacities.
- **Funding of grassroots initiatives** targeted directly at getting the public involved in specific development challenges (such as local governance and social sectors).

## New strategy for engaging with NSAs

EuropeAid

- **Global, integrated and cohesive strategic support** for consolidation of civil society as a force for development.
- Inclusion of **economic and social partners such as trade unions and the private sector** in its non-profit activities.
- Seeking better complementarity and **partnership for development between state and non-state actors** at national, regional and local level.

## 10<sup>th</sup> EDF

EuropeAid

- Funds set aside for capacity building of NSAs **have increased** in comparison with those under the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF.
- Decentralisation and NSAs: the new programmes should play a part in the **creation and management of the shared public space**.
- Role of NSAs in **global and sectoral budget supports**.
- **Horizontal approach** involving NSAs in all sectors of cooperation, besides their role as service providers.

## Want to find out more?

EuropeAid

### DELEGATIONS:

❖ Focal point for non-state actors.

❖ Delegations website:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/delegations/intro/web.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/delegations/intro/web.htm)

### HEAD OFFICE:

❖ AIDCO/F: Thematic programmes

❖ AIDCO/E4: Quality support for operations - Governance, security, human rights and gender

❖ EUROPEAID website:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/cgi/frame12.pl>



## **CLOSING SESSION**







**CONCLUSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE "AN IMPROVED  
PARTNERSHIP FOR BETTER DEVELOPMENT":  
25th Meeting of ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups,  
Brussels, 4-6 March 2008**

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), representing the economic and social components of organised civil society in the European Union, organised the conference "An Improved Partnership for a Better Development: 25th meeting of ACP-EU economic and social interest groups" in Brussels, Belgium, in accordance with the mandate conferred to the EESC by the Cotonou Agreement. Under the aegis of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the conference brought together delegates from the economic and social interest groups of most ACP countries, members of the EESC and representatives of the Economic and Social Councils of EU and ACP countries. Representatives of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the European Commission, the General Secretariat of the ACP Group of States and European and international institutions and socio-professional organisations also attended.

**FINAL DECLARATION**

**Executive Summary**

**With regard to the Economic Partnership Agreement:**

- EPA negotiations should continue, at an appropriate pace for the capacities of ACP countries. The negotiations should include economic, social and environmental provisions which will maximise the developmental dimension of the EPAs
- A number of accompanying measures are essential to the successful implementation of the EPAs and their contribution to development. These measures must help to facilitate the restructuring of ACP industries, product diversification, the development of infrastructure, the modernisation of the agricultural sectors, human resources development, fiscal reforms and good governance
- Sufficient financial resources from the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF and the "Aid for Trade" programme should be ensured
- Non-state actors must be regularly informed and consulted as the negotiations on the EPAs continue
- Institutional provisions for the participation of non-state actors in monitoring the implementation of the EPAs (civil society Consultative Committees) should be introduced in all EPAs. Participants should include, inter alia, economic and social interest groups with a regional outreach.

**In relation to a better partnership for a better development:**

- The delegates recognise that the Cotonou Agreement is a positive instrument for the sustainable development of ACP countries
- Despite progress on the involvement of non-state actors in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, a number of persistent challenges remain
- The delegates call on ACP authorities and on the EC Delegation to continue informing non-state actors, whilst also rendering civil society consultations more regular, with systematic feedback
- The participants stress that access to EU funding for capacity-building constitutes one of the key challenges to the ability of non-state actors to contribute to the ACP-EU partnership
- The delegates call on ACP economic and social interest groups to continue to organise into networks, platforms and Economic and Social Councils at the national, regional and pan-regional level.

**On the topic of human resources for development:**

- The delegates stress the links between education, training and job creation, conflict prevention and economic development, particularly in view of the future implementation of the EPAs
- They call for international cooperation in the area of migration and for continued efforts to overcome gender based inequalities
- The delegates stress the key role of economic and social interest groups in human resources development.

**On the negotiations and implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreements**

*Diversity in ACP-EC trade relations: the current state of play*

1. The delegates note the current situation with regard to ACP-EU trade relations, characterised on the one hand by a comprehensive EPA concluded with the Caribbean region, and on the other by interim agreements agreed with 20 other ACP States (jointly or individually), and the application of the Generalised System of Preferences and of the EU's "Everything-But-Arms Programme" to all remaining ACP countries which decided to continue the negotiations.
2. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups and in particular, the delegates from the Caribbean, note the conclusion of the comprehensive CARIFORUM-EC EPA, which includes, inter alia, services, investment, social, environmental and developmental provisions, in addition to structures for monitoring the implementation of the EPA by parliamentarians and non-state actors<sup>1</sup>. The delegates hope that for the Caribbean region, the CARIFORUM-EC EPA will directly contribute to the sustainable development of the region and to its gradual integration into the global economy. Consequently, the delegates call for the rapid

<sup>1</sup>

The term "non-state actors" is defined as stated in Article 6 of the Cotonou Agreement and includes the "private sector; economic and social partners, including trade union organisations; civil society in all its forms according to national characteristics."

signature, ratification and implementation of the Caribbean EPA in a spirit of development and regional integration.

*The EPAs: instruments of development and poverty alleviation*

3. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups stress that trade is a necessary, but insufficient condition for the sustainable development of ACP countries. Moreover, the delegates highlight that the continuation of the negotiations must contribute to fostering regional integration in the ACP regions. Within this context, the delegates view the interim agreements as stepping stones to comprehensive EPAs. The delegates call for the EPA negotiations to continue, at an appropriate pace for the capacities of ACP countries. The negotiations should include economic, social and environmental provisions which will maximise the developmental dimension of the EPAs.
4. The delegates stress the importance of a tailor made approach to the EPA negotiations, particularly with regard to the inclusion of services, investment, intellectual property and public procurement provisions. Although the delegates recognise that the inclusion of such provisions will be advantageous for certain regions, they stress that the ACP countries must retain the ability to reject the inclusion of these provisions.
5. The participants note that the interim EPA agreements will provide legal certainty of quota and duty free access to the EU market. Moreover, simplified rules of origin should directly contribute to the development of ACP industries, notably the textiles, fisheries and agriculture sectors, thereby enhancing employment creation.
6. The ACP-EC economic and social interest groups strongly support the inclusion in the CARIFORUM-EC EPA of the social chapter, which includes, inter alia, an explicit recognition of the benefits of the ILO core labour standards and of decent work to the economic efficiency, innovation and productivity of Caribbean countries. The delegates stress that the development potential of the EPAs will be maximised if similar social chapters are introduced into trade agreements with the other regions, and if the effective implementation of these chapters is ensured.
7. The delegates also welcome the inclusion in the CARIFORUM-EC EPA of the environmental chapter, which stipulates that the sustainable management of natural resources and of the environment will be applied and integrated at every level of their partnership. The participants ask for similar provisions to be included in all EPAs, and for their implementation to be ensured.

*The necessity for accompanying measures for the successful implementation of the EPAs*

8. In order to ensure that the EPAs are successfully implemented and contribute in full to development, a number of accompanying measures and pre-conditions are necessary. These

relate to the ability of ACP countries to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the new trade agreements.

9. Within this context, the delegates call for national and regional strategies for the restructuring of ACP industries and sectors to continue to take place in parallel to the negotiations. Such restructuring will help to improve production and competitiveness, and to attract foreign and local investment.
10. The participants also stress the urgency of diversifying local production, fostering the production of higher value goods and boosting exports, which will contribute to employment creation. To this end, the delegates highlight the importance of investments in infrastructure, telecommunications networks and sustainable energy resources. The delegates call for the greater involvement of non-state actors in the definition of these strategies.
11. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups emphasise the importance of modernising the agricultural sector in many ACP countries in order to improve efficiency and to increase production levels, while strengthening food security. The delegates welcome the decision of the EU to gradually phase out agricultural export subsidies by 2013 and call on the US to follow the EU's example, especially in the cotton sector. Moreover, the participants ask for EU support, technical and financial, to help ACP agricultural producers to adhere to the strict EU health standards for food exports to the EU.
12. In order to implement the above recommendations, the delegates stress the necessity of investing in human resource development, notably in the education of women and of the young, and in the vocational training and re-training of workers.
13. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups note that both interim and comprehensive EPAs will lead to the loss of income for ACP governments, resulting from the gradual removal of customs tariffs. The delegates note the efforts of some ACP countries to introduce VAT-based systems, but stress that attention should be paid to avoid taxing essential products, which would be detrimental to the poorest sections of society.
14. In order to assist ACP countries to restructure local industries, to diversify production and to face the budgetary restrictions ensuing from the reduced tariffs, the delegates ask the EU to continue to provide technical assistance and expertise. Moreover, the delegates welcome the anticipated inclusion within the future Regional Strategy Papers of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF, of significant funds for regional integration, trade and the EPAs, which will contribute towards these objectives. The participants welcome the provision of these funds to all ACP States, irrespective of their decision to sign EPAs. The delegates ask that the Regional Strategy Papers be signed as soon as possible and for the revised Cotonou Agreement to be ratified, in order to enable the rapid disbursement of these funds.
15. The delegates call on their national authorities to articulate specific development needs and to stipulate the technical and financial assistance that would be necessary. Economic and social

interest groups should be involved in the definition of these development needs, both at the macro and micro level. In the event where funds from the 10th EDF and from the EU's "Aid for Trade" programme are insufficient, additional funds should be provided by EU Member States.

16. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups also insist on the importance of introducing administrative and economic reforms in ACP countries, with a view to promoting transparency, good governance and a rules-based environment conducive to attracting local and foreign investment. Non-state actor organisations should be involved in monitoring the levels of good governance.
17. The delegates call for the adoption of better consumer protection rules and closer cooperation on consumer policy and the protection of consumers' health.

*The role of non-state actors in monitoring the implementation of the EPAs: the model of the CARIFORUM-EC EPA*

18. The delegates welcome the inclusion in the CARIFORUM-EC EPA of institutional provisions for civil society monitoring of the economic, social and environmental impact of the EPA ("Civil Society Consultative Committee"). The participants highlight the necessity for all future comprehensive EPAs to include similar provisions.
19. To this end, the delegates call upon the EC and CARIFORUM to rapidly identify sources of funding for the Consultative Committee, for example, via the Regional Strategy Paper of the 10th EDF or from the Caribbean Regional Development Fund.
20. The participants stress that the Consultative Committee should be a joint body, with a broad representation of non-state actors, including civil society, the academic community and economic and social partners. The importance of including organisations with a regional outreach is highlighted. Within this context, they call for the "Caribbean Non-State Actor Network for the EPAs" to be expanded to include representatives from the Dominican Republic and from Haiti. This expanded structure could be included in the civil society Consultative Committee and could also become the nucleus for a future Caribbean Economic and Social Council.
21. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups call on non-state actors in the remaining ACP regions to continue to organise at the regional and national level on the EPAs, and to call upon the ACP negotiators to consult them on future negotiations. The EESC should continue to facilitate this process, with the support of the European Commission.
22. The delegates highlight that regional non-state actor structures established during the EPA negotiations should participate in future bodies to monitor the implementation of the EPAs and could serve as nuclei for future regional Economic and Social Councils.

23. To this end, the participants call on the European Commission to organise information sessions on the EPAs, for civil society and the media, in regions which have signed interim agreements, notably, in the SADC and ESA countries. Moreover, the delegates ask the negotiators to organise information and consultation sessions immediately before or after future negotiating sessions.

### **An Improved Partnership for a Better Development**

#### *The opportunities of the Cotonou Agreement for non-state actors*

24. The ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups recognise that the Cotonou Agreement is a positive instrument for the sustainable development of ACP countries. The delegates also note that the Cotonou Agreement is considered an exemplary model for EU development cooperation with other regions and countries.
25. However, despite recent progress, a number of persistent challenges to the involvement of non-state actors in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement remain. Within this context, the delegates call on the EESC to continue organising general conferences in Brussels and regional seminars in ACP countries for ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups. The delegates also welcome the cooperation between the EESC and the European Commission (EC), in identifying best practices for non-state actor consultation on the programming of the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF).

#### *Progress to date, but persistent challenges*

26. The ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups note that the levels of information among Southern non-state actors on the Cotonou Agreement have improved, but regret the mitigated results regarding the quantity and quality of consultations conducted by the ACP authorities and EC Delegations. The delegates highlight that ACP economic and social interest groups have not been sufficiently consulted. The participants call on their national authorities and on the EC Delegations to take additional steps towards consulting these organisations.
27. Within this context, the delegates call on the National Authorising Officers and on EC Delegations to also take additional steps towards disseminating information on the Cotonou Agreement to a maximum number of local non-state actors, via information sessions, workshops, newsletters, local radio stations, television, national and regional media, schools, universities and via the internet. Partnerships with existing regional institutions in ACP countries could also be developed.
28. The delegates welcome the nomination of an official in each EC Delegation in ACP countries, with responsibility for contacts with non-state actors (civil society focal point). However, the participants ask for the contact details of the civil society focal points to be more widely distributed among local non-state actors and to be made available on the websites of individual Commission Delegations in ACP countries.

29. The ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups call on the EC to conduct non-state actor mapping studies in all ACP countries, as currently many EC Delegations have not carried out these studies. The delegates stress that these mapping studies should not only catalogue non-state actors, but also assess their representativity and capacities.
30. The delegates highlight that non-state actor consultations should be organised on a regular basis by both the national authorities and EC Delegations, with a view to maintaining a continued dialogue. Non-state actors should be invited to meetings and receive relevant information sufficiently in advance of consultations. Moreover, the delegates stress that the objective of meetings should be to consult non-state actors, instead of informing them on policy decisions. To this end, the participants ask to be systematically informed of the follow-up to consultations.
31. The ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups recognise that they are themselves responsible for actively contributing to consultations and for ensuring that information received is widely distributed among non-state actors. The delegates also call on the EC to distribute among EC Delegations examples of best practice of the consultative process, and where possible, to establish standard procedures for consultations of non-state actors.
32. The delegates highlight that access to EU funding for non-state actors remains one of the key challenges to their capacity-building and to the ability of these actors to contribute to the ACP-EU partnership. Within this context, the participants call for procedures for access to EU funds to be simplified, as current procedures favour civil society organisations specialised in seeking international aid. The delegates also ask that following the example of certain EC Delegations, technical assistance for non-state actors on how to access EU funds be made available in all EC Delegations.
33. The delegates welcome the revision of Article 15 of the Cotonou Agreement, which from 2008 enables the EC to award grant contracts to non-state actors, without prior approval by the ACP authorities. Within this context, the participants ask the EC to regularly review the impact of this revision and to publicise its findings.
34. The participants also take note that under the revision of Article 15 of the Cotonou Agreement, the decision on eligibility of non-state actors for grant contracts is taken by *both* the European Commission and the national ACP authorities. Consequently, the delegates call for annual reviews on the eligibility of non-state actors to be introduced, in order to maximise the number of organisations which can participate in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement.

*The importance of dialogue and networks among non-state actors*

35. The ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups stress the importance of dialogue, including social dialogue, and the establishment or strengthening of consultative structures at



the national and regional levels (platforms, networks, Economic and Social Councils, etc.). At the *national level*, the delegates welcome the creation of non-state actor platforms in an increasing number of ACP countries. The participants highlight that such structures should become privileged interlocutors of ACP national authorities and of EC Delegations for consultations on the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. Within this context, the delegates call for the "Non-State Actor Panels" which exist in several Caribbean countries and which have been formalised via Memoranda of Understanding with the national authorities and the EC Delegations, to be viewed as examples of best practice in the other ACP countries.

36. The delegates highlight the importance of non-state actor networks and of social dialogue at the *regional level*, which can contribute to regional integration. To the end the delegates call on ACP economic and social interest groups to continue to organise at the regional and pan-African level.
37. Within this context, the delegates welcome the launching of the EC thematic programme on "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development", which explicitly supports and finances initiatives and activities promoting social dialogue, coordination between networks of non-state actors and between these networks and the EU.

### **Human Resources for Development**

38. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups highlight the direct links between the development of human resources and the sustainable development of ACP countries. However, the delegates note that ACP countries are at different stages of human development. This needs to be considered when developing policies and funding schemes.
39. The delegates stress the linkages between education, employment, social integration, economic development and conflict prevention in ACP countries, and stress the role of economic and social interest groups in each of the above.

#### *Promoting education, training and job creation*

40. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups note the importance of education and training for the emergence of a skilled and flexible workforce, capable of competing in a globalised world. In order to ensure the successful implementation of the EPAs, the necessity for the rapid development of human resources is even more urgent.
41. Within this context, the delegates call on their respective governments to make education a national priority, to instate free, compulsory primary and secondary education, targeting girls and rural areas in particular, and to ensure that this education is of a high quality. They ask that, in line with Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement on education for ACP nationals, where possible, education be identified as a principle objective within the ACP-EU Regional Strategy Papers for the 10th EDF.

42. The delegates call on their authorities to increase national budgets for education and to transform cancelled debt payments into investments for education and training. The high level of education in most countries of the Caribbean, resulting from significant levels of government expenditure, is an example of best practice for other regions.
43. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups call on the EU to honour its commitments and to contribute to the financial cost of enabling free, good quality and compulsory education for girls and boys in the Least Developed Countries.
44. The delegates stress the importance of creating better employment conditions in ACP countries, via the ratification and implementation of the ILO core labour standards and the promotion of decent work.
45. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups highlight the necessity to adapt higher education to the employment market, notably through matching supply and demand of qualifications, encouraging greater cooperation between universities and enterprises and promoting regional cooperation.
46. The participants call for vocational training to be increased, notably in the informal sector and targeting women and youths in particular, in order to integrate the informal economy into the overall economies of ACP countries. To this end, partnerships between vocational training institutes, economic and social actors, local communities, women's organisations and SMEs should be encouraged.
47. In the field of agriculture, the delegates stress the importance of training to modernise agricultural production, farming methods and water management. Training should target the young in particular and encourage community development schemes.
48. The delegates welcome initiatives by the social partners to provide training on HIV/AIDS at the workplace, following the example of the International Organisation of Employers and of the former International Free Trade Union Organisation, now being continued by the International Trade Union Confederation.

#### *Encouraging gender equality*

49. Gender equality involves analysing the impact of government policies and programmes on women and men, girls and boys, in order to ensure that gender-related issues are considered and addressed.
50. The delegates note that despite the significant contribution of women to the agricultural, trade, crafts and manufacturing sectors in ACP countries, women remain the main victims of poverty and illiteracy and are under-represented within the formal employment sector.

51. Consequently, the delegates underline the importance of promoting the role and rights of women in ACP countries and call for the implementation of Article 31 of the Cotonou Agreement on gender-related issues. This should include, inter alia, the adoption of specific positive measures for women to encourage their access to decision-making processes, to training and to productive resources, including the right to own land, access to micro-credit and the formal employment market.

*Overcoming the challenges of migration*

52. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups condemn human trafficking and stress the importance of respecting the dignity of political and economic migrants.
53. The delegates call for international cooperation to manage global migration, particularly in view of the future impact of climate change on migration. Representatives of civil society should be fully involved in these activities.
54. The ACP-EU economic and social interest groups highlight the negative consequences of migration, which deprives ACP countries of the innovation and skills of its population. In particular, the delegates regret the impact of the migration of health workers from ACP countries.
55. Within this context, the participants call for measures to improve the economic and social conditions in the countries of origin, via, inter alia, poverty alleviation strategies, investment in the education and health sectors, employment creation and the promotion of decent jobs, conflict prevention, good governance, etc.
56. The delegates particularly regret the negative impact of the migration of skilled workers from ACP countries and call for ethical approaches, e.g. repayment agreements between host countries and countries of origin, to reimburse the costs of the education and training the latter provide to their nationals.
57. The delegates note the positive contribution of diaspora communities to employment and wealth creation in the countries of origin, via the transfer of remittances, knowledge, skills, investment and technology. Within this context, the participants call for the facilitation of intra-ACP labour mobility and circular migration (North-South). The delegates also stress the importance of technological developments in order to ensure the cheaper and more rapid transfer of remittances.

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Three hundred representatives from social and economic interest groups in the ACP countries and the European Union gathered for a meeting at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels on 4, 5 and 6 March 2008.

Together with top decision-makers from the ACP/EU Joint Assembly, the European Commission, the ACP/UE Council of Ministers and international socio-occupational organisations, they had a forceful debate on their countries' current situation and potential for development within the framework of current or future cooperation between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific States.



*European Economic and Social Committee*

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