



**RESOLUTION ON ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS**

The General Council, meeting in its 3rd session in Washington, DC, on 12-14 December 2007:

- RECALLING** that the long-standing trade advantages available for the developing countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) under the Cotonou Convention with the European Union (EU) are due to expire on 31 December 2007
- NOTING** that many ACP countries are not in a position to finalise the negotiation process for Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) to bring the EU-ACP trade regime into full conformity with the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) by that deadline
- WELCOMING** the stated objectives of EPAs which are the smooth and gradual integration of ACP countries into the global economy and support for regional integration processes in ACP regions
- NOTING** the European Commission's recent proposal for Interim Agreements focusing on trade in goods as a step toward the conclusion of full EPAs by 31 December 2008, which can be signed at the sub regional level including by one single country from an ACP region with the EU
- DENOUNCING** the fact that the imminent deadline is leading some ACP governments to sign up to Interim EPAs that may undermine existing regional economic integration and could be detrimental to their long-term industrial development, cause serious employment losses and deprive them of tariff revenues vitally needed for public services and investment

- URGES the EU and ACP governments to maintain their existing trade arrangements for the requisite time to conclude negotiations on a fully agreeable basis despite pressure at the WTO, in view of the developing or least developed country status of ACP countries
- CALLS UPON the EU to refocus its negotiating objectives towards obtaining real development, rather than on issues not required by WTO rules such as services
- SUPPORTS ACP governments in their individual and common efforts to prolong the negotiations and to develop their own regional integration as a priority objective
- REGRETS that ACP countries not belonging to the list of Least Developed Countries (LDC) and that are not in a position to sign Interim EPAs by the deadline will lose their preferential access to the EU market offered under the Cotonou Agreement, with a catastrophic impact on employment, exports and economic and social development
- URGES the EU to propose “GSP plus” status to those ACP countries that meet the stipulated criteria including ratification and full implementation of the eight ILO core labour standards, or that undertake formally to meet those criteria within a specified time period and at latest within six months, if necessary accompanied by development assistance and cooperation with the ILO
- INSISTS that governments on both sides agree that a strong social chapter including decent work and ratification and full implementation of all core labour standards be at the heart of any agreements
- DEMANDS that henceforth all EPA negotiations should take place under conditions of full transparency and on the basis of formal consultations with social partners
- CALLS UPON the ITUC and its affiliates, and regional trade union organisations, to take action on EPAs in line with the concerns set out above.
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