



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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10822/08 (Presse 182)

**ACP-EC Council of Ministers
Addis Ababa, 13 June 2008**

The joint ACP-EC Council, which took place in Addis Ababa on 12-13 June 2008, is the highest-level meeting between the ACP states and the EU and is foreseen by the Cotonou Agreement, the most far-reaching partnership agreement of its kind in the world.

The meeting provided the occasion for a full political discussion on issues of major concerns such as the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), the question of food prices and food security as well as the question of financing for development and aid effectiveness. The ACP states and the EU agreed a joint statement on the three issues in the form of a resolution.

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B - 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

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On EPAs:

- The resolution underlines the importance of regional integration and the smooth integration of ACP states into the world economy.
- The Council noted the progress achieved in the CARIFORUM in agreeing a full EPA as well as the considerable work that needs to be done in other regions and reiterated the commitment to make every effort to ensure that all regions conclude WTO compatible full EPAs, with due regard for ACP circumstances.
- The parties recognised the need for a flexible and pragmatic approach when moving from interim agreements towards regional EPAs and encouraged the initiative for regional Aid for Trade packages building on the regional programming of the 10th EDF.
- The resolution also noted the link between EPAs, regional integration and the second major issue on the agenda: food security.

On food prices and food security:

- The Council expressed concern for the challenges posed by rising food and energy prices, as well as climate change.
- The resolution noted that ACP governments are committed to strengthening sustainable regional and national agricultural policies and that the EU will provide financial and other support to these ACP national and regional policies, especially through an enhanced focus on agriculture in the 10th EDF.

On aid effectiveness and financing for development:

- The Council is convinced that all MDGs can still be attained provided that concerted action be taken immediately and in a sustained way until 2015 and acknowledged that achieving all MDGs is a shared responsibility between donors and partners.
- ACP states and the EU are determined to join their efforts to influence the outcome of the upcoming international conferences in Accra, New York and Doha.

Resolution of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers

Addis-Ababa, 13 June 2008

On Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and Regional Integration

The Council reaffirms the principles contained in the Cotonou Agreement that economic and trade cooperation shall build on regional integration initiatives of ACP states and aim at fostering the smooth and gradual integration of the ACP states into the world economy.

The Council takes note of the initialling of a regional EPA with CARIFORUM and the initialling of interim agreements by other ACP states. The Council also notes that 42 ACP states have not yet initialled an agreement.

The Council expresses its commitment to make every effort to ensure that all regions conclude WTO compatible full EPAs, within agreed timeframes and with due regard for ACP political choices, development priorities and administrative capacities in order to release their entire development potential. To achieve this goal, and acknowledging concerns identified by ACP states, the Council recognises the value of a flexible and pragmatic approach when moving from interim agreements towards regional EPAs, and, in this context, ACP requests for adjustments will be taken into account where appropriate, to the benefit of regional integration. The Council takes note of the need for those who concluded full or interim agreements to notify these agreements early to WTO, after signature. The Council also underlines the need for putting EPAs and interim agreements into provisional application after signature, pending ratification.

The Council underlines that EPAs need to build upon, foster and support existing regional integration processes, and enhance their overall contribution to sustainable development, food security and poverty reduction. The Council acknowledges the need to accelerate

regional integration in order to build regional integrated markets and foster competitiveness while recognising the need to address jointly the challenges of adjustments and reforms which may be entailed in ACP economies and policies. The Council encourages the initiative for the joint design of regional Aid for Trade packages, building on the 10th EDF regional programming process and in line with the principles of aid effectiveness.

The Council underlines the importance of an ongoing dialogue on EPAs, at all levels, so as to strengthen the partnership spirit, and to ensure synergies between institutions created under EPAs and those of the Cotonou Agreement, which remains the framework for all relations between the ACP and the EU.

On Basic Food Prices and Food Security

The Council is particularly concerned by the additional challenges posed to development by the steep rise in food prices, in relation with, among other factors, climate change and rising energy prices.

The Council acknowledges the need to coordinate responses. The EU is ready to increase as required financial contributions to the short-term measures in order to meet the higher costs of existing safety nets and relief programmes and fund new ones. The Council believes that sustainable food production is the long-term solution to the food crisis and agrees to continue joint efforts to enhance ACP productive capacities. ACP governments are committed to strengthening sustainable regional and national agricultural policies, and to give them appropriate priority in their budget processes, with a view to increasing production and productivity, including through the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in Africa, paying particular attention to small-scale farmers. The EU will provide financial and other support to these ACP national and regional policies and strategies, in particular through an enhanced focus on agriculture under the 10th EDF.

Complementing ongoing international activities in this area, the Council calls on the ACP-EC Committee of Ambassadors to initiate a high-level experts meeting comprising representatives of the EU and the ACP to which other donors and multilateral agencies would be invited in order to initiate actions, including mobilisation of resources to address the effect of high food prices in the short-, medium- and long-term.

The Council underlines that by stimulating regional markets as well as investment, transport links and policy coordination, regional integration can help boost agricultural production and reduce food and agricultural input price volatility.

On Aid Effectiveness and Financing for Development

The Council is convinced that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) can still be attained provided that concerted action be taken immediately and in a sustained way until 2015, while remaining seriously concerned about the trend towards the MDGs in many ACP regions and countries.

The Council acknowledges that achieving all MDGs is a shared responsibility between donors and partner countries.

While encouraging the efforts taken so far by ACP countries to attain the MDGs by integrating them into their national development strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and by implementing relevant pro-poor policies, the Council affirms that they should continuously be supported by an increase in ODA, notably in line with the commitments taken in Monterrey in 2002, in Gleneagles in 2005 and in the European Consensus on Development in 2005, as recently confirmed by the Council of the EU in May 2008. The Council also calls on other donors to keep their ODA commitments.

Strong and inclusive economic growth and the development of the private sector are key conditions for poverty reduction and the achievement of the MDGs.

The Council is determined that the ACP and EU should join their efforts to influence the outcome of the upcoming Accra High Level Forum (HLF) on Aid Effectiveness, High Level UN event on the MDGs in New York and Doha Conference to follow-up on the Monterrey Consensus.

The Council calls for progress towards the full implementation of the Paris Declaration.

The Council recognises the need for greater predictability in aid flows, programming and disbursements. The Council calls for extending the use and coverage of multi-year country strategy papers, in response to ACP multi-year national strategies and budgetary frameworks.

The Council underlines the need to use country systems and procedures to the maximum extent possible. Where use of country systems is not feasible, the ACP-EU cooperation should continue to be geared at strengthening the capacities of the ACP countries.

The Council also calls for ambitious political concrete progress at the Accra HLF on Aid Effectiveness. Division of labour commitments should be turned into guidelines for action, and the EU Code of Conduct is a useful step forward to that end, while ACP governments will increasingly take the relevant coordination initiatives in the in-country organisation of the division of labour.