

**DECISION N°4/LXXXV/07  
OF THE 85<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE ACP COUNCIL OF MINISTERS  
HELD IN BRUSSELS FROM 21<sup>ST</sup> TO 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2007**

<b>ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (EPAs)</b>
---

**The ACP Council of Ministers,**

- meeting in Brussels, (Belgium), from 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007,
- A. **RECALLING** the objectives contained in the Georgetown Agreement and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement;
- B. **RECALLING** the Declaration of the 4th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government held on 23 and 24 June 2004 in Maputo, Mozambique, with regard to economic development dimension; and Decision No. 5 of that Summit on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs);
- C. **RECALLING** Decision No.6 of the 84<sup>th</sup> Session of the ACP Council of Ministers on EPAs;
- D. **HAVING REGARD** to the Africa Union Heads of State and Government Declaration on Economic Partnership Agreements Negotiations issued in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 29 January 2007 which was informed by the outcome of the African Union Ministers of Trade who met on 17 January 2007;
- E. **DULY NOTING** the outcome of the meetings of the ACP Ministers responsible for EPAs and of the ACP and Joint ACP-EC Ministerial Trade Committee meetings held in Brussels from 26 February to 1 March 2007;
- F. **HAVING REGARD** to the final communiqué of the 8th EU – Africa Ministerial Troika meeting held in Brussels on 15 May 2007 which, inter alia, welcomes the political impetus given to the EPA negotiations by the regional Ministerial meetings with the purpose of arriving at a mutually satisfactory conclusion within the agreed timeframe;

.../...

- G. **CONSIDERING** the review reports on EPA negotiations at the regional and all ACP level, in which ACP States express their political commitment to conclude the negotiations as stipulated in the Cotonou Agreement provided that all the outstanding issues are satisfactorily addressed;
- H. **COGNISANT** of the conclusions adopted by the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council of 24 May 2005, 10 April 2006, 16 October 2006 and 15 May 2007 in which EU Member States, *inter alia*, reiterated their political commitment to ensure EPAs will serve as development instruments for ACP States and that the concrete design of the EPAs will be the outcome of the negotiations;
- I. **HAVING REGARD** to the outcome of the informal dialogue between the ACP and EU Ministers on the pro-development agenda of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) held in Bonn, Germany on 13 March 2007;
- J. **WHEREAS** the principal objectives of ACP regions in undertaking the EPA negotiations is sustainable development, the structural transformation of their economies; increase in the production and supply capacity of their countries; promotion of sustained growth; and to eventual eradication of poverty;
- K. **WHEREAS** there is a great need to prioritize national and regional policy formulation and to build implementation capacities in ACP countries in advance of any trade liberalization and other commitments being proposed by the European Commission in the context of negotiations;

**DECIDES TO:**

1. **urge** the ACP negotiating regions and the European Commission to make every effort to deal with the outstanding negotiating issues in order to ensure that all concerns and interests of ACP States are fully taken on board. In particular, development issues including the provision of adequate resources, additional to EDF and on a predictable basis, to finance EPA related adjustment costs should be addressed;

.../...

2. **to call on** the European Union and the European Commission to ensure that irrespective of the outcome of the negotiations, no ACP State is left worse off. Furthermore, the EC should adopt the necessary transitional measures so as to avoid any disruption in the ACP exports to the EU beyond 2007.
3. **mandate** the ACP Ministers responsible for Trade negotiations and EPAs as well as the Chief Negotiators to meet during the second half of 2007 to assess progress of the negotiations and address all outstanding issues that may hinder the timely conclusion of the negotiations. In this regard, the ACP Ministers of Trade will decide on the road-map and calendar of activities to be followed in the finalization and signature of the economic partnership agreements. The Technical Follow-up Group on EPA negotiations and, if necessary the Ministerial Trade Committee shall meet prior to and assist in the preparations for the meeting of ACP Ministers responsible for Trade negotiations and EPAs.

Done in Brussels, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007

**Honourable Mohlabi Kenneth TSEKOA**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations**  
**of the Kingdom of Lesotho**  
**President of the ACP Council of Ministers**