

**DECISION ON THE ACP-EU NEGOTIATIONS**  
**FOR ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (EPAs)**  
**- Doc. EX.CL/10(II)a**

**The Executive Council:**

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report and **DECIDES** to;
2. **ENDORSE** the two papers issued by the Commission on the EPA negotiations, (Annexes I and II of the Report);
3. **REITERATE** that the African countries concerned are willing and ready to negotiate the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the EU as provided for in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, and to **CALL UPON** all Member States concerned to address the pending critical issues such as geographical configuration, agricultural subsidies, impact assessment studies etc.;
4. **REITERATE** that the African Union and the RECs, as its building blocks, constitute the institutional framework for African integration, solidarity and unity which must play a coordinating role for African RECs and countries in the EPA negotiations;
5. **URGE** all Member States that the conclusions of the EPAs should not undermine the unity and solidarity of Africa and the objectives, principles and processes establishing the African Union and its envisaged African Common Market;
6. **EMPHASIZE** that, because the RECs constitute the building blocks of the African Union, their negotiations and commitments with the EU in respect of the EPAs, should be coordinated by the Commission of the African Union at the levels of both the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels, Geneva and Addis Ababa, and the capitals of Member States of the AU in order to ensure the maintenance of coherence in the common African positions in the WTO and the EPA negotiations;
7. **CALL UPON** Member States concerned which have not yet done so, to ratify the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, in order to qualify, *inter-alia*, for financial resources under the European Development Fund (EDF);
8. **FURTHER URGE** Member States to pursue policies of diversification and value-addition in their economic and agricultural programmes and to ensure that the continent's supply-side constraints are arduously addressed in international negotiations;
9. **REQUEST** the Commission to urgently re-activate and deploy the AU Panel of Experts to provide technical backstopping to the African negotiators, at all levels of the negotiations, and accordingly **DECIDES** that adequate budgetary provisions should be provided;

10. **FURTHER EMPHASIZE** that EPAs must address development issues and not be geared solely to the achievement of WTO rules compatibility;
11. **FURTHER REQUEST** the UNDP, AU development partner institutions and all bilateral donors to continue to provide financial resources to facilitate the effective operationalization of the AU Panel of Trade Experts.
12. **REQUEST** the Chairperson of the Commission of the AU to report regularly on the progress of the negotiations to Council and the Assembly, at all stages, for appropriate political guidance and to submit the outcomes of the EPA negotiations for the endorsement of the policy organs of the African Union.