

**DECISION ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF THE
WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)**

- Doc. EX.CL/10(II)b

The Executive Council,

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report and **DECIDES** to ;
2. **EXPRESS** grave concern at the slow progress so far made in WTO negotiations in respect of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) and take note that the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the WTO is scheduled to take place in Cancun, Mexico on 10-13 September 2003;
3. **CALL UPON** Africa's development partners to fully implement the commitments they had made in Doha with respect to the core elements representing the Development Agenda;
4. **URGE** all Member States of the AU which are also members of the WTO, participating in the negotiations on Regional Trade Agreements at the WTO, and other Member States of the AU participating concurrently in ACP-EU Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations, to ensure that their commitments in these two separate negotiating forums are consistent with their regional integration commitments under the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community;
5. **REQUEST** the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union to ensure that the positions adopted by Member States in the WTO negotiations are compatible with the provisions of both the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (AEC); **FURTHER CALL ON** the Commission to harmonize such positions with on-going activities of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) with the aim of providing technical advisory services to the African negotiators; and in that regard **CALL ON** the RECs to work in close collaboration with the Commission of the African Union;
6. **FURTHER REQUEST** the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union to convene urgently the First Ordinary Session of the Sub-Committee of Ministers of Trade of the Specialized Technical Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration of the AU, in order to develop, *inter alia*, an African Common Position on issues currently under negotiations at the WTO and others that are likely to be on the Agenda of the Fifth WTO Ministerial Conference;
7. **CALL UPON** on the UNDP, all the Bi-lateral Development Partners as well as the relevant UN Agencies, to provide technical and financial assistance to the Commission of the African Union, to enable it undertake the necessary measures to provide technical backstopping to Member States in these important negotiations through the

immediate re-activation of the AU Panel of Trade Experts;

8. **REQUEST** the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, to set in motion all the necessary measures for the formal notification to the WTO of the Constitutive Act of the African Union along with the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, as a Regional Trade Agreement;
9. **AUTHORIZE** the Chairperson to renew the application of the Commission of the African Union to the Director General of the WTO and all the relevant bodies of the WTO, to request the granting of Permanent Observer Status to the African Union in all WTO Bodies;
10. **STRONGLY URGE** all Member States of the WTO to leave no stone unturned, in supporting the said application, and to appeals to all concerned to refrain from obstructing the process, and/or undertaking activities detrimental to the overall interest of the African Union in the pursuit of Permanent Observer Status at the WTO;
11. **URGE** all Member States currently engaged in negotiations in Geneva under the WTO to constantly consult and exchange information at all levels, with their counterparts in Brussels currently engaged in similar WTO-compatible Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations with the European Union as well as with the Commission of the African Union;
12. **REAFFIRM** its support for AU's application for an observer status in the WTO and **CALL UPON** the African country blocking the granting of the status to desist from doing so.