

ACP trade officials tackle how to focus WTO talks on development

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Nairobi KENYA, 11 September 2012/ ACP: A high level forum taking place this week in Nairobi, Kenya will allow trade officials from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific to address key issues from the WTO Ministerial Conference held last year, as well as new development challenges related to trade.

The forum is expected to yield recommendations for ACP countries to ensure development remains at the core of multilateral trade negotiations.

In a statement at the opening session today, ACP Assistant Secretary General in charge of Sustainable Economic Development and Trade, Mr Achille Bassilekin III stressed the importance of resolving the WTO's Doha development talks as a matter of priority.

At the same time, new "21st century" challenges such as climate change, energy security, job creation and global supply chains could be dealt with by existing Committees.

"The ACP Group is concerned with the lack of progress in the Doha Round of negotiations... Long-standing disagreements between developed economies - such as the United States and European Union - and the major emerging economies - such as Brazil, China, and India - on non-agricultural and agricultural market access, have widely been acknowledged as the reasons for putting the negotiations on hold," he stated.

"We believe that there may be a need for lowering of ambitions on both sides without sacrificing the development agenda, which should at all times remain at the heart of negotiations. This is necessary for the benefit of the least developed, low income, small and vulnerable economies, islands, land-locked countries - categories of countries to which most of the ACP States belong."

He added that a study on the *Definition of development in the Doha Round negotiations from an ACP perspective* will be presented at the ACP Trade Ministers meeting in Brussels this October to add to the debate.

The **ACP High Level Forum on Merging Issues and Challenges in the Multilateral Trading System** (11-14 September) is organised by the ACP-EU Multilateral Trading System programme and the ACP Secretariat, targeted at Trade Directors in ACP countries as well as Ambassadors of ACP missions to the WTO.

In addition to discussing 21st century issues, the forum will look into plurilateral agreements such as Government Procurement, Information Technology Agreement and Anti-Counterfeiting Agreement to assess their impact on ACP trade.

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[Programme for the Forum \(PDF\)](#) ^[1]

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