

NEWS: African Union preps for 8th WTO Ministerial Conference

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Accra, 29 November 2011/ GNA – The African Union (AU) in Collaboration with the African Caribbean Pacific Multilateral Trade System (ACP MTS) on Monday ended a two-day preparatory meeting aimed at facilitating preparations and participation of AU countries for the eighth World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Geneva.

The meeting is also to review the operations and functioning of the Multilateral Trade System and make decisions necessary for reinforcing the values of the WTO system among the membership, especially its African Members.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Ashree B.C Servansing, Permanent Mission Representative of the Republic of Mauritius said the major issue discussed at the meeting was that of development.

He noted that development issues had previously been neglected and it was important to reclaim the concept and put it back at a table come December in Geneva.

Mr Servansing said the African Group at the WTO had played a pivotal role to have the agenda of divided into two main categories, which were the Doha Development Agenda and the WTO Regular Program.

He said the meeting was to provide opportunities to discuss existing issues within the Doha Round that impacted on African trade and to coordinate the positions of AU member states on common text on those issues.

Mr Anthony K. Nyame-Baafi, Ghana's representative at the forum, said the meeting was to serve as a forum for the exchange of views on the items and issues that would be discussed and deliberated upon during the Ministerial conference from December 15 to 17 in Geneva.

He said it would carry out an appraisal of the key issues of negotiation, analyze the political climate in the run-up to the conference, and adequately prepare member states in the conference. "The outcome is to create an appropriate awareness on the major issues to be discussed during the ministerial conference".

The ACP MTS programme is an European Union program that gives a response to the need to actively involve ACP countries in the ministerial trading system, enhance their national development and support their international integrity.

It is also specifically designed to provide tutoring activities aimed at creating and consolidating negotiation capacities able to ensure all countries equal benefit from the WTO policies and rules.

The programme's main purpose is to enhance the participation of the ACP countries in the multilateral trade negotiations and support the implementation of existing WTO agreements and to accelerate accession process of ACP candidates to join the WTO.

- Ghana News Agency

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