

Revolutionizing economic diversification and empowerment through inclusive and sustainable aid for trade

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The next Global Review of Aid for Trade will take place at the WTO under the theme “Supporting Economic Diversification and Empowerment for Inclusive, Sustainable Development through Aid for Trade”. The Event will take place at the WTO headquarters in Geneva from 3 to 5 July 2019.

In the spirit of cooperation, the EU-ACP TradeCom II Programme, African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Secretariat, the EU-ACP Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and COLEACP, have jointly organised the session around the theme “**EU-ACP Trade and Development Cooperation - Revolutionizing economic diversification and empowerment through inclusive and sustainable aid for trade**”.

The discussions will seek to respond to the question: *How EU-ACP aid for trade cooperation can drive the sustainable development agenda and create synergies with other trade and cooperation instruments for more effective, sustainable and progressive results?*

Over the past 40 years the ACP and the EU have promoted a unique trade and development cooperation model that inspires global North-South cooperation. Recent global developments have contributed to structural adaptation and improvement in their cooperation that further bridge the economic divide between developed and developing partners, and lay solid foundations for achieving the SDGs.

Trade cooperation through regional Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with sustainable development and economic integration objectives remain central to the EU-ACP cooperation model. It should provide greater impetus to the ACP's sustained export competitiveness and expansion, effective penetration into and climbing regional and global value chains, and effective negotiation and implementation of multilateral and regional trade agreements. Specific trade cooperation components focus on:

- Supporting and strengthening regional and national regimes to support the expansion of inclusive trade and micro/macro-economic growth targeting inclusiveness, youth unemployment, and poverty reduction;

- Enhancing the productive capacity for trade and value chain expansion, diversification and competitiveness, including through transformative processes such as value-addition;
- mainstreaming vulnerable sectors such as women and youth into instruments and policies that promote more equitable participation in trade and distribution of wealth;
- Dissemination of trade and investment knowledge and cooperation instruments between the public and private sector and other actors of the civil society;
- Harnessing the trade-related aspects of the green and digital economy; and
- Overall promotion of sustainable development.

As with current EU-ACP cooperation objectives, the aim of maintaining inclusiveness while seeking to achieve greater integration into the global economy and promoting sustainable development remains central going forward. ACP countries can, with a continued structured partnership with the European Union and the underlying political commitment, endeavour to accelerate the pace of inclusive integration into the regional and global economies.

Enhancement of EU-ACP trade cooperation must therefore maintain inherently inclusive aspects while seeking to achieve greater integration into the global economy and promoting development that is sustainable. This implies harnessing the strengths of the EU Aid For Trade Strategy to ensure that it brings real gains in the areas of trade and investment and poverty eradication through job creation. This also means real and full implementation of the EU External Investment Plan whose objectives include encouraging investment in partner countries in Africa, promoting a new model of participation of the private sector and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Finally, this implies maintaining the solidarity of the ACP Group going forward and a commitment to sharing best practices for enhanced cooperation and connectivity.

The following panellists - **Viwanou GNASSOUNOU**, Assistant Secretary-General, ACP Group of States; **Axel POUGIN DE LA MAISONNEUVE**, European Commission, DevCo European Commission, **Elizabeth NSIMADALA**, President, Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation (EAFF), **Aaron ADU**, Managing Director, Global Shea Alliance (GSA), **Dr. Hermogene NSENGIMANA**, Secretary General, African Organisation for standardization (ARSO), **Deryck OMAR**, Executive Director, Caribbean Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ), **Thê Quang DONG**, Director, Francophonie économique et numérique and **Dr. Arjoon SUDDHOO**, Deputy Secretary General, Commonwealth Secretariat - will debate the questions that underlie discussions around EU-ACP Trade and Development Cooperation, in particular:

1. How has EU-ACP trade cooperation contributed to assisting ACP women and youth to increase their presence in trade?
2. How can the EU-ACP partnership contribute to making quality infrastructure an empowering tool for greater trade inclusiveness for ACP countries and developing countries as a whole?
3. How can EU-ACP partnership boost the sustainable involvement of ACP Micro, Small and Medium-sized enterprises in trade and their integration into the global economy?
4. How have the EPA, interim EPAs, African Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) contributed to developing quality in ACP trade and trade policies?
5. How can regional enabling environments and policies be enhanced to encourage greater connectivity within ACP countries and also with the global market? And can ACP countries cope with the challenges and opportunities that e-commerce presents to them?

You are welcome to attend the session on 04 July at 11:00 to 13:00 hrs in Room S1, and to follow [#Aid4Trade](#) ^[1] on Twitter.

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