

As Regional Negotiations end in Dar es Salaam

EAC Headquarters, Arusha, Tanzania, Monday 1 June 2009: A dedicated session on regional negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)-Trade in Services is to take place on 3-5 June 2009, in Nairobi, Kenya to among others, receive EAC Partner State's requests on trade in services. The session will also receive offers on trade in services from the Partner States and develop further the legal text on trade in services.

The dedicated session in Nairobi follows the regional negotiations on Trade Related Issues (TRIs) held on 18-22 May 2009 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The Dar es Salaam session developed Legal Text for the respective trade related issues for purposes of the bilateral EAC-EC-EPA Negotiations; prepared textual response to the EC text; and made appropriate recommendations to the EAC Policy Organs.

The EAC-EC-EPA trade related issues include Competition Policy, Investment and Private Sector Development, Trade, Environment and Sustainable Development and Intellectual Property Rights. The mandate to negotiate on these issues both at the regional and bilateral levels in the EPA negotiations is stipulated under Article 37(e) of the initialled Framework Economic Partnership Agreement (FEPA).

At the Nairobi dedicated session, the East African Business Council (EABC) and the Toronto based International Lawyers and Economists Against Poverty (ILEAP) are expected to make presentations and share their perspectives on the preparatory process in regard to EPA. In addition to providing views from the private sector on the preparations, the EABC/ILEAP session will consider broader modalities, as well as issues related to the legal text, and the formulation of requests and offers.

Noting that some Partner States are further advanced in their preparations than others, the aim is to present a number of elements that could be considered by interested Partner States, with a view to promoting a degree of commonality on how Partner States are preparing at the national level.

This is being done in order to help calibrate national efforts and better facilitate the subsequent regional process (as and when appropriate). Insights from those Partner States who have progressed in their preparations will be sought as well, so as to benefit from their recent

experiences and derive lessons learned for the way forward.

On account of being renowned for its contributions on Trade in Services issues particularly in developing countries, ILEAP will be requested to act as a resource when Partner States are making their presentations on Request-Offer. The key deliverables by the EPA experts for this EPA regional negotiations meeting include; Presentation of National Level Offers on Trade in Services; Presentation of National Level Requests on Trade in Services; and Development of the Text on Trade in Services.

Background Information

As per the provisions of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community (EAC), the EAC Heads of State in their Summit of April 2002 took a decision that in all multi-lateral issues, EAC shall negotiate as a bloc. At their 6th Extraordinary Summit of 20th August 2007, the Heads of State further reiterated this position and in particular directed that EAC sign Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU) as a bloc.

Following this Summit directive, the EAC Ministers of Trade met in Nairobi, Kenya on 11th October 2007 and re-affirmed the position that EAC as Customs Union with binding commitments will be required to sign an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with European Union (EU) as a Customs Union. The EAC Partner States therefore would make their market access to the EC under the EAC Customs Union framework, using the EAC list of sensitive products, tariff phase down schedules based on EAC Common External Tariff (CET/CTN).

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