

Liberalisation of trade relations between the EU and the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) is at the centre of the new Cotonou Agreement signed on 23. June 2000 in the capital of Benin. The new EU-ACP agreement foresees the beginning of negotiations for so-called 'Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)' between the European Union and the ACP countries in September 2002, to be concluded by January 2008 at the latest. In Spring 2002, ACP countries are expected to finalise the regional configuration in which they will begin negotiations on new trade agreements with the EU. According to a joint action plan, both parties will subsequently adopt their negotiating mandates during the Summer of 2002.

The ACP countries are to a large extent marginalised in world trade. 25 years of EU-ACP cooperation under the framework of successive Lomé conventions have not been able to significantly change this. The failure to launch a 'development round' in the interest of developing countries in Doha questions the role of the multilateral world trade system. Against this background, we take the opportunity to subject the strategies and aims of European trade policy towards ACP countries in its totality to critical examination and to investigate its underlying political tendencies. In the time remaining until the

commencement of EU-ACP negotiations we would like to contribute to a broad debate on the direction of future EU regional trade policy and to formulate clear political expectations and recommendations for the political actors in Berlin and Brussels. Furthermore, we would like to include the general public in a broad debate on the ecological and social impacts of free trade agreements.

Which steps have to be taken to adjust EU-ACP relations according to the vision of a fair and sustainable partnership? Which policies should the German government and the European Union, national parliaments and international organisations implement to design future Economic Partnership Agreements in a socially just and ecologically sustainable way? And how can civil society in the ACP countries and the EU translate its strengthened position in the Cotonou agreement into proactive participation in the design of future policies? These are only some of the questions we would like to jointly address with the participants of this international conference.

Peter Eisenblätter, terre des hommes
Klaus Schilder, World Economy, Ecology & Development
Volker Vinnai, Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation

ACP Countries



Conference Organisation:

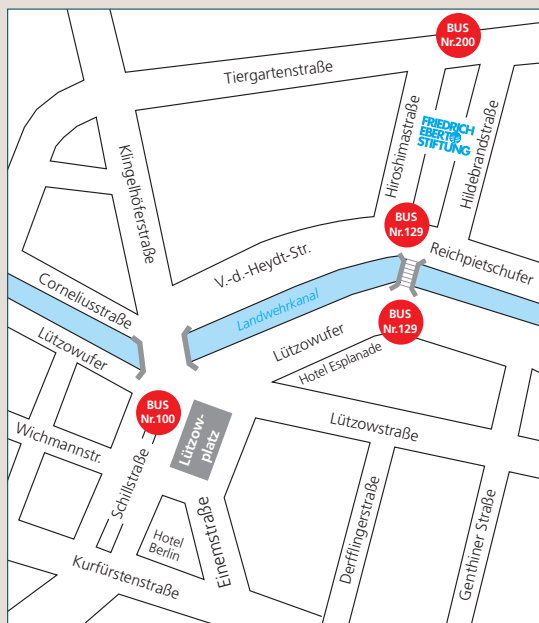
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Conference Center:

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Public Transportation:

Bus 100 to Stop Lützowplatz
 Bus 129 to Stop Hiroshimasteg
 Bus 200 to Stop Hildebrandstr.
 From Airport Tegel Bus 109 or X9 to Bahnhof Zoo, then Bus 200 or 100

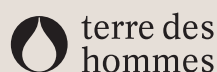
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INVITATION

The Cotonou Agreement – New Perspective for European Trade Policy?

International Conference
 in Preparation of the Negotiations between EU and ACP Countries
 on Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreements

Berlin, 7.-8. March 2002



9:30 h **Welcome and Introduction**
Werner Puschra, Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation

10:00 h **I. Who Profits from Free Trade? – Ecological and Social Impact of Regional Trade and Investment Agreements**

Impulse:

Impact and Consequences of Trade Liberalisation Policies

Klaus Schilder, World Economy, Ecology & Development

Case 1:

Regional Integration und Liberalisation –

The South Africa Free Trade Agreement and the Future of SADC

Dot Keet, Centre for Southern African Studies, Cape Town

Case 2:

Regional Cooperation and the Situation of the Least Developed Countries (LDC's) in the Caribbean

Lingston Cumberbatch, Chairman ECDPM, Maastricht and Consultant, Brussels

11:15 h Coffee Break

11:30 h Case 3:

Which Role for the New Actors? – Civil Society Participation in the Cotonou-Process

Bibiane Mbaye Gahamanyi, Environnement et Developpement du Tiers Monde, Dakar

Questions and Discussion

Moderation: *Peter Eisenblätter*, terre des hommes

12:30 h Lunch

13:30 h **II. Implications for a Fair and Sustainable EU-ACP Trade Cooperation**

Working Group Trade Policy

To sign or not to sign? EPAs and alternative Options for EU-ACP Negotiations

Impulse: *Moses Tekere*, Trade and Development Studies Centre, Harare

Moderation: *Axel Schmidt*, Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation

Working Group Investment

The MAI through the Back Door? – Investment Liberalisation in Regional Free Trade Agreements

Impulse: *Sabina Voogd*, Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations, Amsterdam

Moderation: *Mirjam van Reisen*, Networc, Brussels

Working Group Civil Society Participation

Options for Participation of ACP and EU Civil Society

Impulse: *Simon Stocker*, Eurostep, Brussels

Moderation: *Geert Laporte*, ECDPM, Maastricht

15:00 h Coffee Break

15:30 h Continuation of Working Group Sessions

17:00 h Snack

18:00 h Panel Discussion:

European Trade Policy following Doha Increasingly Regional?

Initiatives for a Balanced and Sustainable Partnership with Southern Countries

Panellists:

Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development*

Jean-Robert Goulongana, ACP Secretary General of the African Caribbean and Pacific States, Brussels

Karl Friedrich Falkenberg, European Commission, Director DG Trade

Tetteh Hormeku, Third World Network Ghana & ACP Civil Society Focal Point West Africa

Christopher Stevens, Institute for Development Studies, Sussex

Moderation: *Christiane Grefe*, Die Zeit

9:30 h **Policy Dialogue:**
Introduction and Moderation: *Christiane Kesper*, Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation

On the Eve of EU-ACP Negotiations – Policy Requirements for Future Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreements

Statements:

Rapporteur Working Group Trade Policy

Paul Goodison, European Research Office, Brüssel

Rapporteur Working Group Investment

Jens Martens, World Economy, Ecology & Development

Rapporteur Working Group Civil Society Participation

Bibiane Mbaye Gahamanyi, Environnement et Developpement du Tiers Monde, Dakar

11:00 h Coffee Break

11:15 h Responses:

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Georg von Koppenfels, Head of Department 411 (Globalisation, Trade and Investment)*

European Commission

Karl Friedrich Falkenberg, Director DG Trade

European Parliament

N.N., Member of the European Parliament*

12:30 h Lunch