



# Alternatives to the EU's EPAs in Southern Africa

The case against EPAs and thoughts on an alternative trade mandate for  
EU policy

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## Introduction

This paper is a contribution to the debate on alternatives to the current EU Trade Policy. Its focus is on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and the strategies of Non State Actors to achieve progressive change. The paper begins by explaining the background of EU-Africa trade relations and then analyses the current EPA negotiations and their impacts. This sets the basis for the development of alternatives. ANSA's (Alternatives to Neo-liberalism in Southern Africa) principles on EPAs and, more generally, on trade policy and regional integration are presented. But alternative ideas do not become reality without actors working towards change. Therefore, in the last section, this paper devotes special

attention to strategies of Non-State Actors in the field of trade policy and presents recommendations on how to make the work on alternatives more effective.

ANSA sees itself as a focal point, guide and catalyst that stimulates people, institutions and movements in Southern Africa as well as beyond to join hands and forge alliances in a common pursuit of an alternative to neo-liberalism. The discussion in this paper will draw upon the following ten ANSA principles: as outlined in Box 1 below:

### **BOX 1: THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF ANSA (ALTERNATIVES TO NEO-LIBERALISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA)**

1. Trade and development policy is led by the people
2. Autocentric development, based on domestic, human needs and the use of local resources
3. Regional integration, led from the grassroots
4. Selective de-linking and negotiated re-linking
5. Alternative science and technology
6. National, regional and global, progressive alliances
7. Redistribution of wealth to empower the non-formal sectors
8. Gender rights as the basis for development
9. Education for sustainable human development
10. A dynamic, participatory and radical democracy.

*Source: (ANSA 2007a)*

## A. HISTORY OF EU-AFRICA TRADE RELATIONS

Africa and Europe have had a long relationship dating back to the Berlin Conference of 1884 when European countries partitioned Africa for colonisation. This lopsided colonial relationship between Africa and Europe lasted from 1884 to 1957 when the first African country (Ghana) got its independence; the rest followed in the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s respectively.

After the attainment of independence, however, most African economies remained linked to their former European colonial states, who continued to own and control the key economic sectors (mining, industry, agriculture, fisheries, services, commerce, tourism and banks). This encouraged the continuation of a lopsided trade relationship (which continues to this day) in which African countries supply raw materials while European countries export manufactured or finished products.

To address this imbalance in trade and economic ties between the EU and ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) countries, trade negotiations were initiated, initially under the Lomé Conventions (1975 to 1990), then under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) (2000), and currently under EPAs. It is worth revisiting the core principles of CPA.

The core principles of the CPA (Article 35) on economic and trade cooperation were as follows:

- Economic and trade cooperation shall be based on a true, strengthened and strategic partnership.
- “Economic and trade cooperation shall build on regional integration initiatives of ACP states, bearing in mind that regional integration is a key instrument for the integration of ACP countries in the world economy.” (Article 35, CPA, 2000)
- “Economic and trade cooperation shall take account of the different needs and levels of development of the ACP countries and regions. In this context, the parties re-affirm their attachment to ensuring special and differential treatment for all ACP countries and to maintain special treatment for ACP LDCs (Least Developed Countries) and to taking due account of the vulnerability of small, landlocked and island countries.” (Article 35, CPA, 2000)

The above principles were based on the understanding that “Africa in particular, remains a marginal player in world trade (6% in 1980 and 3% in 2008) since the continent’s trade structure still lacks diversity in terms of production, exports and markets. As such,

negotiations to further liberalise African economies as prescribed by Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), will be a futile and possibly suicidal exercise until certain pre-requisites are met and instituted within their economies. The emphasis on trade liberalisation alone as a means to stimulating growth and development is therefore misplaced” (SEATINI, 2009: 3). The argument from the onset became that liberalising trade or opening up Africa’s markets to the EU through bilateral trade agreements won’t be the panacea to solve the development challenges that the continent faces.

The objectives of the CPA favourable to ACP countries included “achievement of sustainable development, eradication of poverty, reinforcement of regional integration, improved market access, and the gradual integration of Africa into the global economy” (CPA, 2000). Africa, therefore, expected that in the shaping of this important partnership and new trade regime, EU partners will be supportive of the attainment of these objectives. In other words, trade agreements between the EU and ACP countries that have progressed from the Lomé Convention, to the CPA, and now under EPAs, have always been seen as being more than just trade agreements. They have always been taken as instruments intended to change the productive, industrial and trade architecture of ACP economies.

## B. THE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS NEGOTIATIONS

As from September 2002, the CPA gave the legal basis to negotiate the current EPAs. EPAs are meant to be a comprehensive arrangement governing Aid and Trade relationships between the EU and ACP countries, and compatible with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Rules. The deadline for EPA negotiations to be concluded was set for December 2007, and taking effect from January 2008. So far, however, EPA negotiations have failed to meet this.

The deadline was missed due to a flurry of resistance especially from Non State Actors in Africa. ANSA participated in the resistance; the dominant belief was that EPAs are a re-colonisation strategic plan, designed by the European Union to perpetuate their self-interests of economic growth. The price Africa pays for signing EPAs is the increasing dependence of African countries on trade with Europe including aid and debt.

Technical and political hurdles stood in the way of concluding full and comprehensive EPAs by the end of 2007, including a divergence in understanding of what pro-development EPAs constitute, that persisted for most of the previous phases of the negotiations. According to the UN Economic Commission of Africa (ECA) (2008), EPAs should have a “Development Chapter” that has the following key elements:

- “It should have shared understanding of development including references to overcoming major trade-related constraints and achieving certain satisfactory living standards within given time frames” (ECA, 2008: 8).
- It should also have “unequivocal commitments to putting development at the centre of EPAs and the understanding that all provisions of the EPA should support development” (ibid.).
- “Clear commitments on adequate resources with clear obligations on EU and the member States; and an appreciable indication at some length of areas of cooperation and interventions with a clear prioritisation of regional integration, infrastructure, regional and global competitiveness, diversification and value addition, investment generation and industrialisation, and references to key international instruments on development and aid” (ibid.).

But the fear that EPAs are simply trade tools and not development instruments cannot be wished away. The UN Economic Commission for Africa in its 2009 Economic Report on Africa (ECA, 2009) notes that, “between 1960 and 2007, the GDP [gross domestic

product] contribution of agriculture value added in Africa decreased from 41% to 22%. [During the same period], the GDP share of industry increased from 17% to 32%, while the share of services [recorded a rise] from 42% to 46%” (ibid.: 60). The report further notes that this structural change has not resulted in the type of economic diversification that is most needed to sustain growth and development in the long term” (ibid.). In fact, the African productive structure has become less diversified and the implementation of EPAs in their current form will further weaken any prospects of developing the productive base that is critical in supporting the industry and service sectors.

### The “STOP EPA” campaign by the African Civil Society

ANSA supported national processes, in various SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries and at the regional level, urging various actors to engage their policy makers, trade negotiators and other relevant and critical stakeholders demanding EPAs to stop, fearing that they would further plunge African countries into irreversible underdevelopment. ANSA convened and participated in various workshops, some of which culminated in declarations and positions being put forward on the pertinent issues in the negotiations.

The Non State Actors from Africa established a plethora of issues that places ACP countries in compromising positions in the EPA negotiations which included the following:

**1. Capacity and technical expertise limitations:** The EPA negotiations demand a variety of expertise/skills/knowledge/experience, e.g. from lawyers, economists, statisticians, business analysts, trade experts, etc. The European Commission (EC) negotiators can afford to pull together these different skills, knowledge, expertise and experience in one team of negotiators. The African teams, on the other hand, have to rely on their diplomatic personnel already working in the foreign missions in Europe. Hence, the African teams’ diversity of skills, knowledge, expertise and experience which they could contribute to the negotiating teams is compromised, affecting their capacity to have an in-depth understanding of the content of the voluminous EPA documents, and to competently analyse and critique the intents and potential hidden agendas behind the technical language.

**2. Time constraints:** The African EPA negotiators largely comprises the diplomatic staff based in Europe, as part of other day-to-day duties in the foreign missions, whilst the EC has a dedicated team of full-time experts selected on the merits of their trade negotiations skills, knowledge, experience and expertise. Thus the negotiators from African countries suffer time constraints for research, reflection, analysis, consultation, review and forward planning. The negotiations were also being fast tracked to meet the deadline of December 2007.

**3. Reconfiguration constraint:** African countries have established their regional blocks such as SADC, COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) to foster regional trade and integration. However, the EU reconfigured these countries into new groupings just for purposes of EPA negotiations, thereby undermining the objectives of self-initiated regional integration by the African countries. This “divide and rule” strategy makes it difficult for the African countries in the new configurations to develop, agree and adopt common positions in the EPA negotiations.

**4. Accountability constraint:** The greatest resistance against EPAs is being driven by Non-State Actors

(Civil Society) in African countries. However the majority of the African governments are enthusiastically willing to continue with the EPA negotiations against the will of their people. These African governments make no effort to inform, update, report back to or consult the people over EPA negotiations.

**The state of affairs with regard to the signing of EPAs by African States**

At the time of writing, four years after the original deadline, EPAs are at an impasse. A small number of ACP countries have signed agreements; some have initialled agreements under pressure, but are fighting for a re-negotiation of contentious issues, while others have refused any agreement with the EU because the text on the table is not acceptable to them. One result of this situation is the disruption of existing regional integration processes, especially in Africa, where the AU and the various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have been disregarded and ignored by some African countries, which proceeded to initial and/or sign EPAs, against the advice of the African Union (AU). A generic comparative analysis shows further disintegration of various African regional groupings (see Table 1), which is very worrying to all concerned Non State Actors (civil society players in particular).

**TABLE 1: STAGES OF EPA NEGOTIATIONS BY AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

<b>Countries who have no EPA</b>	<p>ESA Djibouti (LDC), Eritrea (LDC), Ethiopia (LDC), Somalia (LDC), Sudan (LDC), Malawi (LDC).</p> <p>‘SADC’ Angola (LDC).</p> <p>Central Africa Congo, CAR (LDC), DRC (LDC), Gabon, Chad (LDC), Equatorial Guinea (LDC).</p> <p>ECOWAS Nigeria, Mauritania (LDC), Senegal (LDC), Gambia (LDC), Guinea (LDC), Guinea Bissau (LDC), Mali (LDC), BurkinaFaso (LDC), Liberia, Sierra Leone (LDC), Togo (LDC), Benin (LDC), Niger (LDC), Cape Verde.</p>
<b>Countries who have initialled but not signed an interim EPA</b>	<p>ESA Comoros (LDC), Zambia (LDC).</p> <p>‘SADC’ Namibia.</p> <p>ECOWAS Ghana.</p> <p>EAC Burundi (LDC), Kenya Rwanda (LDC), Tanzania (LDC), Uganda (LDC).</p>
<b>Countries who have signed but not taken any steps to ratify an interim EPA</b>	<p>‘SADC’ Botswana, Lesotho (LDC), Swaziland, Mozambique (LDC).</p> <p>Central Africa Cameroon.</p> <p>ECOWAS Ivory Coast.</p>
<b>Countries who have ratified an interim EPA</b>	<p>ESA Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Zimbabwe.</p>

Source: European Commission’s overview of state-of-negotiations: [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/december/tradoc\\_118238.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/december/tradoc_118238.pdf); European Commission’s website on ACP relations: <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/bilateral-relations/regions/africa-caribbean-pacific/>

In July 2007, an ANSA workshop issued a communiqué whose conclusion stated that: *“the SADC and ESA governments and civil society organisations at large should reject the imposition of the proposed EPAs on the basis of lack of a common position on EPAs within the SADC and ESA governments and between the governments and CSOs [civil society organisations] in various countries and that EPAs are destroying regional integration initiatives [such] as SADC and COMESA”* (ANSA, 2007b).

The declaration by the 5th Ordinary Session of African Union (AU) Ministers of Trade held on 20 March 2009 in Addis Ababa confirmed the fears that Non State Actors have raised since the EPAs were launched. The interests of Africa are compromised by the individual countries that have signed EPAs against the advice of the AU, also violating the letter and spirit of Article 35.2 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (2000) which specifies that: *“economic and trade cooperation shall build on regional integration initiatives of ACP States, bearing in mind that regional integration is a key instrument for the integration of ACP countries into the World economy”*.

### C. THE QUEST FOR AN ALTERNATIVE EU-ACP TRADE POLICY

The current structure of the EU-ACP trade relations, and the threats included in the EPAs under negotiation makes it mandatory for civil society to formulate and campaign for alternatives. NGO and social movements in the EU have joined hands with colleagues in ACP countries in the framework of the **STOP EPA campaign**. Some EU civil society organisations have started a process towards a radical change of the EU trade policy, under the title “Towards an Alternative Trade Mandate for the EU”. The following discussion is intended to ‘walk the talk’ about stopping EPAs from an ANSA perspective:

- Primarily, the EU trade arrangement with the ACP countries is influenced by the current neoliberal globalisation process, driven by the global monopoly capital that dominates the world market, world trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) in developing countries. The thrust of neoliberalism is maximisation of “profits” particularly for FDI, whereas ANSA prioritises human needs and interests. The contradiction is that EPAs seek to advance the neoliberal globalisation agenda even though neoliberalism is the major cause of the escalation of poverty levels and the entrenchment of poverty amongst the people of Africa.
- The current neoliberal globalisation process is directly responsible for the current global crisis as illustrated by:
  - > Persistent growth of abject poverty and mortality rates among people of developing countries particularly in Africa;
  - > Worsening global climatic changes resulting from massive destruction of the environment by largely multinational corporations in their thirst and wild global chase for profits;
  - > Deteriorating living standards of a majority of African people resulting from the unjust, unfair and disproportionate distribution of social, economic and political resources, opportunities, and privileges in many African countries. The situation fuels unrests, protests, riots, demonstrations, to the extent that some of the mass-based struggles result in the regime change agenda spreading quite fast, e.g. in Arab-Africa countries;
  - > The global financial crisis which has hit most private banks in the USA & EU, has resulted in the USA & EU Governments bailing out private banks using public funds;



- > The spread of protests in developed countries e.g. the on-going Occupy movement which has spread from Wall Street to London to Frankfurt and other European cities where tension is growing and mass protests looming.

Hence, it is timely to formulate, adopt and implement an alternative approach to the EU trade policy.

### The ANSA Initiative's Perspectives and Strategies for an Alternative EU Trade Mandate

As one element of its work, the ANSA initiative has developed a comprehensive alternative vision for trade and regional integration policy in Southern Africa (see Box 2). The current EU trade policy, especially the EU's negotiating position on EPAs, undermines such an alternative model. To allow Southern Africa and other regions to develop a people-driven, bottom-up approach to economic development, the EU should

revise its positions. Box 2 reflects ANSA's positions on the challenge posed by EPA negotiations and how civil society organisations in the EU and Africa can work towards a positive change.

ANSA's Principles No.1 and 10 (see Box 1) call for trade and development policy to be "*led by the people*" and "*a dynamic, participatory and radical democracy*". This therefore should be the same approach for an Alternative EU Trade Policy and reflected in the campaign *Towards an Alternative Trade Mandate for the EU*<sup>4</sup>. In other words, with respect to EPAs, this demands that the people (Civil Society) in ACP countries dynamically participate in the EPA negotiations processes, so that their demands are taken on board in an Alternative EU Trade Policy that prioritises human needs and serves the interests of people and the environment.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.s2bnetwork.org/themes/towards-an-alternative-trade-mandate-for-the-eu.html>

## BOX 2: ANSA'S PROPOSALS FOR ALTERNATIVE TRADE AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION POLICY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

### The fair trade alternative

For ANSA, fair trade refers to Southern African economies having the political right to determine their own developmental trade processes. Southern African economies cannot be subjected to a form of trade liberalisation based on the same marketing rules and trade liberalisation timeframes - such as those advocated under EPAs. Southern African economies should oppose the current free trade concept and implement asymmetrical trade openness based on human centred development benchmarks. Such an approach would take levels of development into account. Southern African economies should learn to unite and defend regional interests when negotiating bilateral and multilateral trade arrangements (that is, in the WTO and in the EPA negotiation process).

### Policy reversal - restrictive trade policy

Southern Africa should not hesitate to resort to protective tariffs or import controls in order to support its infant industries. This strategy has historically worked for countries such as France, Germany (which used various instruments of trade policy, such as customs duties and export subsidies, to promote the growth of industrial development and close the gap between itself and Britain), the United States (which charged approximately 48% import tariffs to protect its industrial products during the early 1900s), and Britain (which protected its wool

industry), and will undoubtedly benefit Southern Africa as well. Recent development experiences in South-East Asia have shown that such policies have helped countries in that region to protect their new industrial sectors such as electronics, ship building and semi-conductors.

Southern Africa must politically reclaim its right to set nationally-driven trade policies which are pro-development, such as the right to protect infant and new industries. The region can also use some clauses contained in the WTO agreements, such as enforcing protectionism of infant and new industries within the auspices of special differential treatment and extended utilisation of transitional periods.

Protectionism should be practiced until technological, institutional and knowledge gaps between developing countries and industrialised countries have been closed.

### Import substitution – a regional approach

Southern African economies must strategically aim to produce for the domestic regional market first. The selection of commodities that each country would produce, would be based on their varying comparative advantages. The aim of this strategy should be to improve intra-regional trade and substitute import commodities with those that can be produced regionally.

This import substitution strategy should also be targeted towards the promotion of industrial production and the agro-industry, as this does not require the region to immediately invent new productive processes or products totally alien to the region. Thus, Southern Africa should protect the regional infant industry and the regional market from external competition until the industry has matured and is able to compete with imports and foreign suppliers both outside the region and internationally. This strategy should also be complemented by national and regional export promotion strategies.

#### **Regional economic cooperation and integration**

The full potential of intra-regional trade has yet to be fully exploited through greater coordination of efforts aimed at harmonising customs procedures and reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers, and at improving transport and communications links through greater investment in developing regional infrastructure. Opportunities also exist for intra-regional trade in labour, water, infrastructure, electricity and services. The countries within the region that currently dominate the regional economy should lead by example, that is, countries like South Africa and Mauritius should reinvest within the region and such investments should be subject to strict regional investment rules, that is, rules that observe technology transfer, decent employment, reinvestment of resources into the host country etc.

#### **Export commodity diversification**

The region must design and undertake a horizontal diversification programme which incorporates the production of more dynamic, higher-value-added products that are unrelated to existing or traditional exports, especially in labour-intensive manufactured products. It would even be more strategic to have commodity diversification borne from agriculture, as this would ease the transition without cutting back on primary commodity production, which is still the main source of export products. This means taking agriculture beyond exporting raw materials to exporting processed materials, food and food ingredients. This strategy would entail Southern African economies strategically selecting different commodities in which they each have a comparative advantage, nationally and regionally so as to avoid the risk of further depressing commodity prices if all countries produce the same commodities. The strategy's success will depend on enhanced farmer access to agricultural inputs, including improved seeds and credit, efficient extension

services and better cultivating techniques, good rural infrastructure and improved access to land with secure titles.

#### **Government intervention in trade**

Governments have a critical role in macroeconomic management and in encouraging and promoting horizontal and vertical diversification towards higher value-added products. They can achieve this through an integrated programme of "supply-side responses" such as the provision of fiscal and other incentives, extension services, trade facilitation, market research and quality control. Governments, in partnership with the private sector, also need to promote regional economic cooperation with the objective of overcoming the constraints of small domestic markets and altering the traditional export structure. In addition, they should adapt to the challenges of increasing global integration and the associated challenges of increased competition.

#### **International watchdog**

It would be strategic for Southern Africa to effectively advocate for an independent international institution that has the sole responsibility for monitoring the impact of trade agreements on the economies of the region in relation to industrialised countries. The review processes conducted by such an institution would then feed directly into negotiation processes at the bilateral and multilateral levels. In addition, this institution would then be responsible for conducting impact assessments of trade provisions (bilateral and multilateral) on trade creation and diversification in Southern Africa and other developing countries and thus provide a potential guide on the best options regarding trade policy.

Source: ANSA (2007a)

Therefore, while the 'STOP EPA campaigns' should be more vigorously organised, nurtured and embarked upon within the African countries forthwith, it is also necessary to have a similar civil society engagement in STOP EPA campaigns in the EU to confront the European governments and the European Commission (EC).

With respect to the ongoing negotiations, the contentious issues raised (since the start of EPA negotiations) by the African Countries regarding reciprocity, trade in services, tariffs, agricultural subsidies, among others, should be urgently addressed and resolved.

### A Minor Victory

The fact that the deadline for signing EPAs has constantly shifted from the initial December 2007 to the current January 2014 should be considered as partial victory of the STOP EPA campaigns by civil society partners. The deferring of the deadline to sign EPAs has provided civil society in EU and ACP countries with another opportunity to promote, support and engage with the STOP EPA struggle more vigorously.

## D. CHALLENGES FOR NON STATE ACTORS

The current EPA dispensation demands that the Non State Actors in Africa be adequately resourced and more effectively capacitated to confront their governments, regional blocks e.g. SADC, ECOWAS, COMESA, the EU and the EC, as a matter of extreme urgency, and to adopt and implement ANSA's ten Principles (as presented in Box 1).

A major challenge faced by European Non State Actors is deteriorating funding towards supporting their partners in Africa to drive the STOP EPA agenda more vigorously at all platforms. It would be desirable to find ways to mobilise more funding to support the campaign for Alternative EU Trade Policy within Europe and Africa. On the other hand, European Non State Actors need to engage their governments and the EC, putting them to task to formulate, adopt and implement an Alternative Trade Mandate for EU trade policy and for EPAs.

As per the spirit of ANSA Principle No. 6 "*National, regional and global, progressive alliances*", there is urgent need to intensify and solidify North-South collaboration, mutual solidarity support, cooperation and collective action between the EU and ACP Non State Actors. Together they are in a stronger position to demand an alternative system, policy mandate, and conditions for the trade agreements between the EU and African Countries.

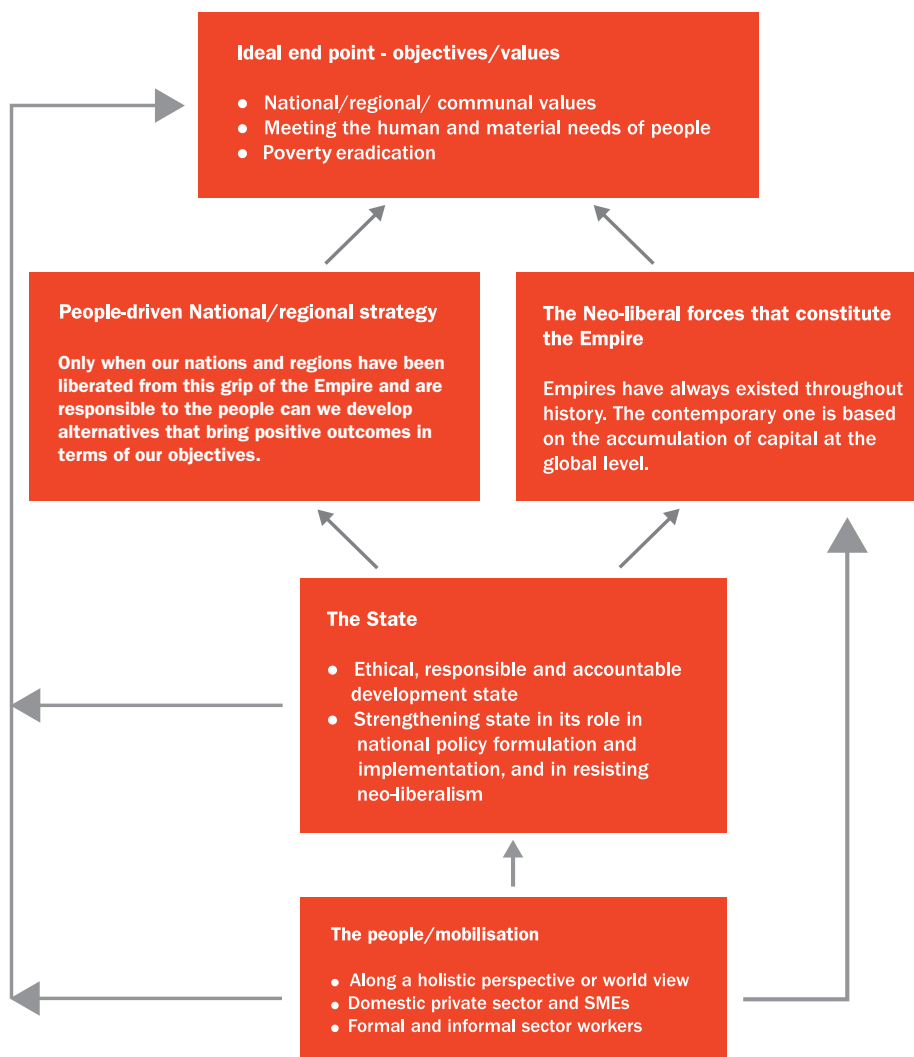
The ANSA vision and mission as defined by the ten ANSA Principles is founded on a human-centred and people-driven development strategy that puts human interests first before the interest of capital to maximise profits for foreign and local private business entities. These profit driven motives do not take into account key issues such as current negative climatic change (global warming) and other massive damages to the environment by multinational companies. Neither do they consider escalating poverty levels and high mortality rates, particularly in Africa, nor other adverse effects such as de-industrialisation in developing economies, facilitated by the instruments of neoliberal globalisation such as EPAs, PRSPs (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund), WTO rules etc.

Once again, a major global challenge for civil society networks, movements, programmes and organisations is to create awareness, build consciousness, re-mobilise, and re-politicise the masses; so that they are capable of engaging in policy reform dialogue and collective action demanding alternative trade mandates and development protocols, agreements and charters away from the neoliberal globalisation ideology.

The current bilateral and multilateral trade contractual obligations under EPAs and WTO rules imposed upon developing countries are top-down, profit-motivated schemes, designed and implemented without Non State

Actors' involvement. Hence, Non State Actors should advocate for a bottom-up approach towards trade and development issues at all platforms. This is illustrated in Diagram 1.

**DIAGRAM 1: THE ANSA BOTTOM-UP WORLDVIEW OF DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES TO NEOLIBERALISM**



Source: ANSA (2007c)

**Note:** In the alternative model, the arrows primarily lead from bottom to top, in contrast to the current neoliberal system where they lead from top to bottom.

**Towards an Alternative Strategy for an EU Trade Policy**

The strategic action that both Non State Actors and state agencies in Europe should take to address the need for alternatives to the current trade mandate of the EU fits very well into the ANSA operational strategy of *Walking on Three Legs* (see Diagram 2 below). Although each of the ANSA legs are separate, they are inter-related, inter-connected and feed into each other in processes intended to achieve common goals of the initiative.

**1. The first leg of the ANSA operational strategy is research and information, compilation and dissemination**

As stated in the previous discussions, the issue around EU trade policy and mandate are equally subjects of research, analysis of facts and figures, compilation of data, and information dissemination to all interested and concerned parties in Europe, in ACP countries, and beyond.

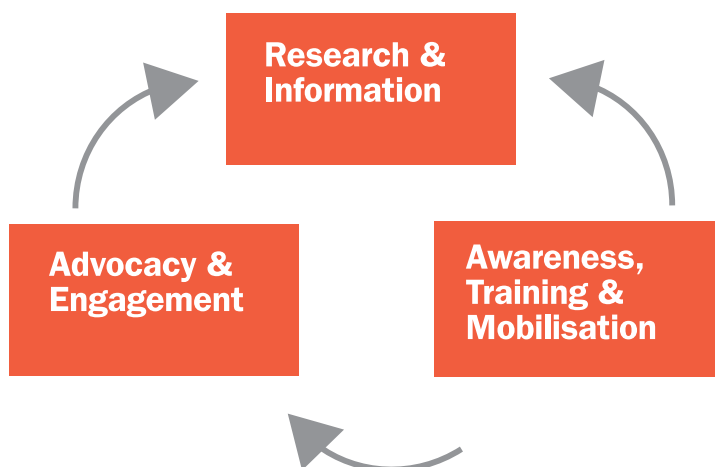
**2. The second leg is ‘Awareness, Education, Training and Mobilisation’**

ANSA believes that “ideas are a powerful force once they are seized by vast numbers of people.” It should not be taken for granted that everybody is aware, conscious, well informed, and ready to take action upon the alternatives to the current EU trade mandate/policy, who the beneficiaries are, etc. with particular emphasis on EPAs and their implications to ACP countries. Therefore this leg is important to state and Non State Actors in both Europe and Africa.

**3. The third leg ‘Advocacy and Engagement’ includes the following activities:**

- Democratisation of the policy spaces at all levels and the system’s thrust and mandate to ensure effective participation of civil society stakeholders in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation discourse.
- Empower, capacitate and motivate Non State Actors to demand that their governments establish social dialogue platforms and meaningfully engage them in policy reform dialogue, or risk the unfavourable outcomes of mass protests and mass demonstrations on the streets.

**DIAGRAM 2: ANSA STRATEGY—WALKING ON THREE LEGS:**



Source: ANSA (2007a)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The current EU trade policy towards ACP countries fails to address the imbalances between the regions. EPAs are not only an inadequate response to trade patterns dating back to the colonial times, but they also risk undermining existing regional integration approaches and limiting the policy space developing countries need to pursue their own economic and social development strategies. If this policy were successful and EPAs concluded under the current terms, alternative proposals such as ANSA's for alternative trade and regional integration policy in Southern Africa could not be transformed into practice.

Therefore EU trade policy needs to be radically revised. The EU must change its approach in the EPA negotiations, re-negotiate contentious issues and respect the policy space and the prioritisation for bottom up regional integration processes of its trading partners. EU trade policy needs to be democratised, among other things to ensure effective participation of all stakeholders at all stages of the policy process.

It won't be easy to induce such a radical revision of a central policy field of the EU. Non State Actors like those promoting an Alternative Trade Mandate for the EU will have to maintain their stamina over a long period. Some key steps are to:

- Facilitate the process of developing an Alternative Trade Mandate for the EU within the framework of the bottom-up operational strategy proposed by the ANSA bottom-up Operational Framework from the Grassroots to the Empire.
- Implement the three-pronged strategic implementation (action) plan proposed by the ANSA Initiative, so that targeted stakeholders and interested parties (i.e. civil society, policy makers and policy implementers, targeted beneficiaries and or role players, victims and perpetrators e.g. policy advisers, among many others) get actively involved and participate effectively in the agenda for an Alternative Trade Mandate for the EU.
- Engage in research (fact finding missions around the agenda) and dissemination of information to the variety of stakeholders and interested concerned parties, in order to create awareness and consciousness of the implications of the current trade mandate for EU trade policy, to justify the need and content of their proposed alternative.
- Encourage, motivate, and convince stakeholders and interested parties to participate actively in pushing forward the agenda for action towards an Alternative Trade Mandate for the EU and convince policy makers/ implementers to adopt the proposed Alternative Trade Mandate for the EU and radically implement the program of action proposed.

It is important to keep in mind that the issue of trade and alternatives to the current trade policy is of primary interest not only to those in Europe, but more so to the stakeholders in ACP countries, particularly African countries. Therefore collaboration, networking, solidarity action, mutual support, and cooperation between stakeholders in Europe and ACP countries is of equal importance, so that they collectively drive the agenda.

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