



**16th REGIONAL SEMINAR OF ACP-EU
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTEREST GROUPS
Windhoek, 8-9 November 2018**

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), representing organised civil society in the European Union (EU), held the 16th regional seminar of ACP-EU economic and social interest groups in Windhoek (Namibia) on 8-9 November 2018, in accordance with the mandate conferred on it by the Cotonou Agreement. This meeting brought together delegates of economic and social interest groups from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the European and ACP members of the EESC's ACP-EU Follow-Up Committee.

Representatives of EU and ACP institutions, the diplomatic corps, international and regional socio-professional organisations, and of Namibian non-state actors more generally, also attended.

The participants discussed three issues: a) civil society and trade; b) resilience in the face of environmental changes in the SADC; and c) intraregional migration. The following declaration was adopted.

FINAL DECLARATION

1. On the contribution of civil society to trade

The participants

- 1.1 consider that the contribution of economic and social interest groups to the Cotonou partnership agreement between the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States has continued to be essential in consolidating relations between the two regions since the inception of the ACP in 1975;
- 1.2 recall the importance for non-state actors from all the parties to participate, from the beginning, in the negotiation, implementation and monitoring of any agreements between the ACP and the EU, and in particular of trade agreements, and call for explicit references and provisions regarding the role of non-state actors in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these agreements;
- 1.3 emphasise that engagement should start at national level, by promoting values such as accessibility, representativeness and participation;
- 1.4 believe that the two main economic partnership agreements (EPAs) negotiated within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) – namely agreements with the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) States and with the SADC EPA States – will contribute to regional economic integration and, ultimately, to poverty reduction, social inclusion and sustainable development;

- 1.5 highlight that trade and sustainable development chapters in trade agreements facilitate the development of joint mechanisms and bodies whereby non-state actors from the EU and from the other party/ies to trade agreements can meet, exchange and make recommendations;
- 1.6 encourage all parties to these agreements to establish joint monitoring mechanisms for EPAs and involve civil society in this regard;
- 1.7 regret that the EU-ESA EPA States agreement includes no provisions for the involvement of economic and social actors in its monitoring and implementation;
- 1.8 call on the SADC to engage more systematically and to strengthen dialogue with economic and social actors from the region, dedicating adequate time and resources so as to capture the experiences of these actors concerning barriers to implementation and to enable them to provide input into the monitoring of EPAs;
- 1.9 express their willingness and availability to support and structure such a dialogue within the EU-SADC EPA States agreement, with the support of the SADC secretariat and the EU Directorate-General for Trade;
- 1.10 stress that the ESA EPA rendez-vous clause (Article 53) is an opportunity to include socio-economic partners and civil society organisations and to provide for a sustainable development chapter;
- 1.11 recognise the simplified trade regime implemented by some COMESA Member States, namely Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, to the benefit of cross-border traders, in particular small and informal traders, the majority of whom are women;
- 1.12 recommend that simplified trade regime mechanisms across the SADC are monitored by representative national economic and social interest groups, promoted through robust awareness-raising programmes and trade information desk officers, and encouraged through simplified registration requirements;
- 1.13 recommend the monitoring of trade facilitation programmes by national working groups and/or focal points focusing on improving livelihoods by making it easier to do business, facilitating business procedures, and simplifying trade for cross-border traders;
- 1.14 express their interest in the future Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs, announced by the President of the European Commission on 12 September 2018, which aims to increase private direct investments in Africa;
- 1.15 recall in particular African economic and social actors' expectations regarding the implementation of the External Investment Plan (EIP) adopted in September 2017 and agreed at the African Union-European Union Summit in Abidjan in November 2017, which will facilitate the mobilisation of private investments in Africa;

- 1.16 stress that the EIP should ensure accountability of beneficiaries through democratic participation, for the benefit of communities, while promoting the principles and standards of decent work as well as the effective implementation of the ILO's fundamental conventions;
- 1.17 request EU delegations in the SADC countries to identify the economic and social actors likely to benefit from the EIP;
- 1.18 believe that the implementation of the EIP will tackle some of the root causes of migration and capital flight, by encouraging investment projects in the partner countries and responding in part to the issue of young Africans who lack prospects;

2. Resilience in the face of environmental changes in the SADC

- 2.1 highlight the recommendations made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) "Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty", in particular to limit global warming as manifested by, for example, the probability of drought and precipitation deficits and the increase in the frequency, intensity, and/or amount of heavy precipitation in SADC Member States;
- 2.2 stress, in this regard, the paramount importance for SADC policies and EU-SADC EPAs to be ambitious, but also highlight the need to fight against biodiversity loss, land degradation and desertification while implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- 2.3 insist on the particular importance of the UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties to be held in Katowice, Poland (2-14 December 2018) which has ambitions to finalise the rules for the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change under the Paris Agreement Work Programme (PAWP);
- 2.4 call for clear recognition of the key role of and the full participation of economic and social actors in the planning, follow-up and evaluation of strategies for adaptation to, and mitigation of, environmental changes, as these actors are the best placed to identify strategies and drive change at the local, regional, and national levels, in particular in the SADC;
- 2.5 highlight and welcome the existence of the 18 Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) in the SADC in both terrestrial and marine environments, integrated into a functional network where shared natural resources are sustainably co-managed and conserved to foster socioeconomic development and regional integration for the benefit of people living within and around TFCAs;
- 2.6 point out that the majority of small farmers play a key role in mitigating environmental changes, thanks to initiatives fostering adaptation, while ensuring food security, creating jobs and promoting rural development in the SADC Member States;

2.7 wish to promote, in the broadest possible way, the exchange of good practices developed in some countries;

3. **Challenges of intraregional migration flows**

3.1 consider migration to be a human phenomenon which has always been a factor for economic and social progress;

3.2 believe that countries of origin must achieve adequate levels of development to facilitate a degree of well-being that makes migration more of a choice, rather than the only prospect and aspiration for young people in particular;

3.3 strongly believe that migration should be analysed simultaneously from the perspective of countries of origin and host countries, before conducting the joint analysis needed to develop a regional policy framework;

3.4 stress the need to create and promote networks and links among CSOs of both countries of origin and host countries to maintain communication, information and coordination, and especially to share good practices;

3.5 stress the vulnerability of women, children, elderly people, and people with disabilities involved in illegal migration, and the need to develop legal, effective and safe migration pathways at regional level, while establishing global standards to guarantee the respect of migrants' human rights;

3.6 reiterate the importance of integrating immigrants – beyond just the case of legal migration – through appropriate inclusive measures targeting a region affected by the informal economy, increasing synergies with the labour market, facilitating access to basic social services and ensuring mutual recognition of qualifications as well as of acquired social security rights;

3.7 welcome the work that has been done with a view to finalising the Global Compact on Migration and strongly support its content as an attempt to set an international minimum standard for migrants;

3.8 highlight the reality of cross-border human mobility across the SADC, which is characterised by complex challenges such as irregular migration and limited legal channels for labour mobility, and an increase in human trafficking, xenophobia, unaccompanied and separated migrant children; the need to protect vulnerable migrants; and statelessness;

3.9 support SADC measures fostering free movement of goods and persons and protection of workers in the region;

- 3.10 call, in particular, for the rights of informal cross-border migrants to move across borders more easily in the SADC to be secured, where necessary by reforming exclusionary immigration legislation in the Member States;
 - 3.11 call on the SADC Member States to deliver on a comprehensive regional framework coordinating existing approaches and strategies with regard to migration and border management, immigration and refugee policies and the smooth movement of labour;
 - 3.12 stress the importance of the freedom of association and the need to directly include and integrate migrant workers on the labour market in negotiations on all issues affecting them and their livelihoods through democratically elected and trade union representatives, which may entail having to establish innovative new negotiation forums;
 - 3.13 insist on the need for SADC countries to acknowledge and enforce the ratified and signed conventions and protocols related to labour and employment;
 - 3.14 call for work permit provisions in the legislation of SADC Member States to be adjusted so that they also cater for work in the informal economy, including own-account work;
 - 3.15 support an approach that facilitates the recognition and accreditation of the skills and qualifications of migrant workers and that takes into account the needs of both sides, in particular the development of countries of origin, with due respect for the principle of equal opportunities for all;
 - 3.16 reaffirm the need for EU and SADC countries to cooperate on legal migration and mobility by promoting a common migration policy that is consistent, respects human rights and is based on a spirit of solidarity and cooperation with countries of origin;
 - 3.17 all agree that all legal systems need to incorporate and respect a ban on hate speech, especially about migrants, refugees and foreigners in general, and commit to being vigilant against populism, xenophobia and racist attitudes.
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