

New ACP-EU Trade Arrangements: New Barriers to Eradicating Poverty?

By GAWU, DHS, CIECA, ADEID, GRAPAD and EUROSTEP

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INTRODUCTION By Guggi Laryea [Page 9]

...The Cotonou Agreement - the framework for partnership between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of countries and the European Union – states the overall goal of the ACP-EU² partnership as centred on poverty reduction and eradication consistent with sustainable development and the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy.

...This study describes how proposed ACP-EU trade arrangements – Economic Partnership Agreements - could impact on the fight against poverty in five ACP countries: Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Benin and Cameroon.

3. AIM OF STUDY [Page 13]

The main focus of the study is on examining what the different consequences are for people in the ACP with the removal of tariff barriers to EU products on the one hand, and the easing of non-tariff barriers to ACP products on the other.

While the impact of tariff barriers such as import duties and quotas are well known in their restriction of the free flow of trade, non-tariff measures such as standards¹³, Sanitary – Phytosanitary standards¹⁴, and rules of origin¹⁵, effect on trade is less well researched. In theory most non-tariff measures are supposed to facilitate trade relations by providing relevant information about products being traded such as their quality, origin and safety. However, in practice they may act as effective barriers to trade by disqualifying goods from entering markets through complex and unnecessary conditions.¹⁶

16 National Foreign Trade Council, “The European Union in particular uses standards as barriers to trade and is aggressive in promoting its standards in third countries in order to gain competitive advantage”. “US Commerce Under Secretary for International

Trade Grant Aldonas”, cited in *Looking Behind the Curtain: The Growth of Trade Barriers that Ignore Sound Science*, INC, May 2003.

[italics emphasis in original]

...The conclusions of this analysis are that if EPAs are based on liberalised trade between the EU and the ACP countries, rather than advance poverty reduction, they will set back poverty reduction programmes and strategies in the ACP and undermine the Cotonou Agreement, with regard in particular to the promotion of social sector funding...