



25- 27 October 2006 : A Seminar with the trade Unions of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States

The European and ACP Trade Unions call for a strong social dimension to the EPAs.
A trade union guide in preparation

1. One year ago, John Monks (ETUC) and Adrien Akouete (CSTT- TOGO) signed a contract with Lingston Cumberbatch Director of the Project Management Unit.
2. This project "Boosting the capabilities of ACP trade unions in the Economic Partnership Agreements" is a joint project for European and ACP trade unions.
3. This project was made possible because of the support (financial, administrative and moral) of the ICFTU, the WCL and the ILO (ACTRAV).
4. 36 trade unionists from 25 ACP countries participated in the seminar. They are representative of the six regions of the EPAs. 8 delegates have written one or several national reports (in total 24 reports) which were synthesized by Professor Frederic Lapeyre. On the basis of this synthesis, Professor Lapeyre presented the delegates with the draft of the final guide, compiled with the assistance of two other experts: Thierry Amougou and Grégoire Ngalamulume.
5. The three-day seminar was held in order to discuss, approve and adopt the draft guide. This guide (which will be published in FR, EN and PT) will be a tool for our colleagues in ACP countries. It will provide a kind of roadmap that should enable the workers' representatives in the ACP countries to become real economic, social and environmental players in the discussions and negotiations within the framework of Economic Partnership Agreements. Their partners will be employers and regional and national institutions.

6. The European and international trade union movement, like the ACP trade unions, are very concerned about the positive impacts of these Agreements. Without denying certain possibilities (regional economic integration for example) the trade union movement considers that, without a specific and ambitious social programme in each EPA, social and economic development risks being severely hampered by these negotiations.
7. The guide, which will be available at the end of November, presents the social arrangements to be integrated into each EPA (guarantee of social rights, promotion of decent work and social protection) using responsible participation methods via contractual practices and social dialogue.

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