

ATPC II NEWS

Africa Trade Policy Centre

The monthly newsletter of the African Trade Policy Centre

Editorial

The first phase of the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) was successfully completed in 2007. An external evaluation of the Centre concluded that:

“ATPC has, since its inception, proved its relevance, efficiency and ability to respond in a timely manner in assisting African countries to build capacity in trade-related issues. Stakeholders adjudge the Centre to be effective in undertaking activities related to its service lines, especially in research, training and dissemination of its products”.

Following the success of ATPC I, CIDA and ECA have signed an agreement for the second phase of the project. ATPC II has indeed been launched with programming missions to the Secretariats of the East African Community (EAC) from 8-9 September 2008 and Southern African Development Community (SADC) from 25-26 September 2008. A similar mission is planned for ECOWAS by the end of 2008. This gives a strong signal of the new strategic orientation of ATPC, which is to embark on a regional approach to trade policy capacity building.

In addition to the programming missions to EAC and SADC, ATPC has also received a team from the Gender Equality and African Regional Institution Project (GEARI), prepared proposals on an African template for the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between African countries and the EU, and organized a major continental workshop during which the proposals for the template were endorsed. This illustrates the deepening of ATPC's activities in the areas of mainstreaming gender in trade, and trade negotiations.

This edition of ATPC newsletter is dedicated to the programming missions, the workshop on EPAs and the GEARI mission to Addis Ababa. It also reports recent ATPC studies and events on trade facilitation.

Editor: Ambassador Peter G. Robleh

ATPC II launched with Programming Missions to East African Community and Southern African Development Community Secretariats



As part of activities to launch the second phase of the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC II), a programming mission was undertaken to the Secretariat of the

East African Community (EAC) in Arusha, Tanzania from 8-9 September 2008. A similar mission was undertaken to the Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Gaborone, Botswana from 25-26 September 2008. The purpose of the missions was to reach agreements on the modalities for setting up Trade Policy Units (TPUs) at EAC and SADC, and to prepare implementation plans for ATPC II funded activities.



Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

During the mission to Arusha, the ATPC II team met the EAC Secretary-General, Ambassador Juma Volter Mwapachu, Director General of Customs and Trade, Mr. Peter Kiguta, Director of Trade Ms. Flora Musonda, and several experts working on various aspects of trade related to the service lines of ATPC II, including international trade, internal trade, environment and natural resources, export promotion, gender, and standards.

At the SADC Secretariat, the ATPC team met individually and collectively with staff members from various divisions of the Secretariat working on trade and crosscutting issues including, environment, gender and HIV/AIDS.

While the approach used during the first phase of ATPC to deliver technical assistance, notably by undertaking impact assessment studies for individual African countries achieved positive results, the Centre's overall strategy has shifted and now involves pan-African institutions and sub-regional bodies in the process of trade policy formulation in Africa. This would enable sustainability and strengthening of institutional capacities.

The rationale for a regional approach in addressing Africa's trade related problems is compelling. First, regional integration arrangements can help African countries overcome constraints arising from small domestic markets – allowing them to reap the benefits of scale economies, stronger competition, and more domestic and foreign investment. Second, the small size of African countries makes cooperation in international negotiations an attractive option achievable through regional integration arrangements. In essence, cooperation can increase countries' bargaining power and visibility.

Therefore, RECs are central to the continent's quest for robust, self-sustaining economic growth and development, since they are at the forefront of regional integration in Africa. They are also increasingly involved in negotiating regional trade agreements such as the Economic Partnership Agreements with the European Union and Free Trade Agreements with other regions. The regional dimension of ATPC's work will therefore

be reflected in a greater focus on building the capacity of RECs.

The strategic orientation of ATPC II will rest on three pillars which are (1) providing fully integrated trade capacity building for RECs as institutions; (2) providing comprehensive capacity building for trade constituencies; and (3) mainstreaming cross-cutting items in trade policy analysis and implementation.

The expected impact of ATPC II is effective and more equitable African participation in international trade processes for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.

ATPC proposals on an African template for EPAs endorsed at end of continental workshop



African experts on Friday, 10 October 2008, ended a continental workshop on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between European and African countries at ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa with the endorsement of proposals towards an African template for EPA negotiations.

The discussion of the proposals for the template, which were drafted by the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC), was one of the key agenda items at the African Workshop on the Economic Partnership Agreements which was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa from 8-10 October 2008 under the theme "Reaping the benefits of the EPAs".

The endorsed recommendations for the template will be forwarded to the African Union Commission for consideration in the finalization of a draft template to be considered by African Chief Negotiators and Senior

Continued from page 2

Officials and possible adoption by African Trade Ministers at their next meeting. The request for the template was originally made by the Conference of African Union Ministers of Trade and Ministers of Finance at their meeting in April 2008. It is envisaged that the recommendations for provisions for the draft template will contribute to the African Union's effort to adopt a consolidated EPAs template for the continent.

The main aim of the two day regional meeting was to take stock of the results of EPAs negotiations in the light of what African countries had hoped to achieve while at the same time evaluating how the progress towards the African Economic Community is likely to be affected by the EPAs.

In that context, in addition to discussing and improving elements proposed for the draft template for a pro-development EPA prepared by ATPC participants also addressed pertinent negotiation issues including regional integration, market access, development, trade facilitation, and services.

In light of the issues discussed, the following recommendations were made:

- Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and member States, with the support of relevant organizations, should analyse the implications of emerging issues, including global financial market problems, on the implementation of EPAs, and Africa's development in general;
- African countries and institutions promoting regional integration need to better articulate the impact of EPAs on the continent's regional integration agenda; and
- ECA should assist in bringing all stakeholders on board the EPAs process and in developing a mechanism to respond to emerging issues that may influence the implementation of EPAS.

The Gender Equality and African Regional Institution Project (GEARI) Undertakers Second Mission to ATPC

A team from the Gender Equality and African Regional Institution Project (GEARI) visited the African

Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) in Addis Ababa from 7-16 October. The GEARI team, composed of Nancy Spence and Constance Kunaka, was received by Mr. Abdoulahi Mahamat, the Officer-in-Charge of the Trade, Finance and Economic Development Division (TFED) and also had several working sessions with ATPC staff members.



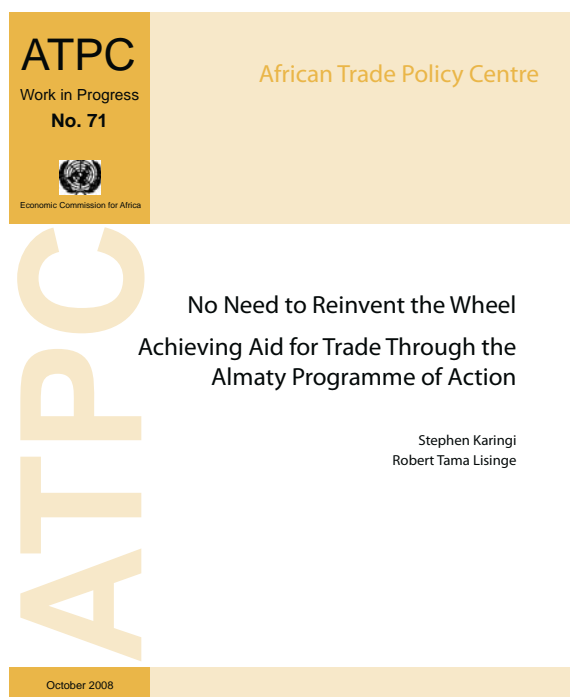
The same delegation from GEARI visited ATPC in October 2007. During that mission, the GEARI team focussed on introducing the GEARI Project and on preparing a Gender Audit as well as setting up a Gender Working Group (GWG) at ATPC. The team also gathered initial information about ATPC's structure, staff, policies and programs to gain a clear understanding of its nature and scope in order to select the most appropriate approaches for gender mainstreaming in the Centre.

The main objectives of the second GEARI mission were to share the gender audit report's findings with ATPC staff so as to achieve consensus on priorities for action and to validate the findings of the audit report. The mission also focused on working with ATPC staff members to finalize recommendations for a gender mainstreaming action plan and a capacity building plan for the Centre. The third GEARI mission, planned for 2009 will focus on providing training to ATPC staff members, based on the capacity building plan. GEARI mission II was a success as all its objectives were achieved. The contribution of the GEARI team was well received and appreciated by ATPC.

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

ATPC Studies Link WTO Negotiations and the Aid for Trade Initiative with the Almaty Programme of Action



One of the recommendations that came out of the evaluation of the first phase of ATPC was that the Centre should scale up its work on trade facilitation. To that end, ATPC plans to undertake several studies and organize trade facilitation events over the next few years. As a start, the Centre has already undertaken two studies: one focuses on how to leverage WTO negotiations in operationalising the Almaty Programme of Action and the other explores the relationships between the Aid for Trade initiative and the Almaty Programme of Action.

Both studies, to be published as part of the ATPC Work in Progress Series, were presented during the African Regional Review Meeting of the Almaty Programme of Action (APoA) that was organised from 17-20 June 2008 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting was organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS). The objectives of the African review meeting were to assess the progress made in establishing efficient transit transport systems on the continent and to agree on what needs to be done to further galvanize global part-

nerships to assist African landlocked and transit developing countries to effectively implement the APoA.

Participants commended ATPC for its pioneering work on the coherence between the APoA and the WTO negotiations on trade facilitation, as well as on the linkages between the programme and the Aid for Trade Initiative. They agreed that WTO negotiations on trade facilitation and the Aid for Trade Initiative provide new opportunities to operationalise the APoA. They also supported the proposal to include specific actions recommended by the APoA in Aid for Trade action plans.

Participants also made the following recommendations:

- ECA and ATPC should disseminate the report of the studies to African trade negotiators based in Geneva and Brussels as well as to those based in the capitals;
- UN-OHRLLS should support efforts to raise awareness of the coherence between the APoA and the WTO negotiations on trade facilitation as well as between the programme and the Aid for Trade Initiative; and
- ECA and UN-OHRLLS should assist African countries and RECs in mainstreaming the APoA in national and regional Aid for Trade Action plans.

ECA Organises Workshop on Trade Facilitation and Study Tour to the Port of Djibouti



ATPC with the support of the Trade, Finance and Economic Development Division (TFED) of ECA organized a workshop on trade facilitation and a study tour to the Port of Djibouti and two border posts between Ethiopia and Djibouti on 5 and 6 May 2008. The events were organized in collaboration with DP World, the company responsible for managing the Port of Djibouti.

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

The workshop and study tour were attended by senior officials from Ethiopia and Djibouti, including representatives of customs, ports authorities, ministries of transport and trade, road and rail authorities, chambers of commerce, transit agents, maritime organisations, transport operators, and the private sector. Participants exchanged views and experiences on constraints to the movement of goods along the Addis-Ababa-Djibouti corridor and made recommendations on how to improve the present situation. In particular, they underscored the need for close collaboration between all stakeholders with the view to reducing delays and the cost of moving goods along the corridor. In that regard, they stressed the importance of accelerating the establishment of a technical committee for the management of the corridor.

Participants experienced some of the problems faced by transport operators as they, together with several trucks involved in international transport as well as local traffic, were delayed for several hours during the visit to the border posts due to heavy rainfall and a

flash flood that made portions of the road difficult and in some cases impossible to use.

Participants thanked ATPC/ECA for organizing the workshop and study tour and urged the Commission to assist in the creation of the Corridor Management Committee.

Information/Upcoming Events

ATPC Programming Mission to ECOWAS

ATPC Gender Inception Meeting, March 2009

ATPC News is produced by staff of the Trade, Finance and Economic Development Division, Economic Commission for Africa.

If you have any comments on the contents of this newsletter, or would like to contribute to discussions, please contact Robert Tama Lisinge, ATPC/TFED, UNECA, P.O.Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Tel: +251-11-5443 443; Fax: +251-11-5513038; email: tlisinge@uneca.org