

MALTA,

THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS,

THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA,

THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND,

THE PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC,

ROMANIA,

THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA,

THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC,

THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND,

THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN,

THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND,

and

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY,

hereinafter referred to as 'the EC Party',

on the other part,

together hereinafter referred to as 'the Parties',

PREAMBLE

WE the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States of the Eastern and Southern African (ESA) region, constituted as the ESA Group and its individual member States, on the one hand, and the European Community (EC) and its Member States, on the other;

HAVING REGARD to the Partnership Agreement between the Members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States of the one part, and the EC and its Member States of the other part signed on 23 June 2000 (hereinafter referred to as the 'Cotonou Agreement'), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Treaty signed on 5 November 1993, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Treaty signed on 17 August 1992 and its Protocol on Trade, the East African Community (EAC) Treaty signed on 30 November 1999, and the African Union Constitutive Act signed and adopted on 11 July 2002;

HAVING REGARD to the Treaty Establishing the European Community;

HAVING ALSO REGARD to the decision of the eighth Summit of the COMESA Authority of Heads of State and Government held in Khartoum, Sudan on 17 March 2003 on the establishment of the ESA configuration for the purpose of negotiation of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU);

CONSIDERING that the ESA States and the EC and its Member States have agreed that their trade and economic cooperation shall aim at fostering the smooth and gradual integration of the ESA States into the world economy with due regard to their political choices, levels of development and development priorities, thereby promoting their sustainable development and contributing to poverty eradication in the ESA States;

REAFFIRMING their commitment to promote and expedite the economic, cultural and social development of the ESA States with a view to contributing to peace and security and to promoting a stable and democratic political environment conducive for sustainable national and regional development;

REAFFIRMING also that the EPA shall be consistent with the objectives and principles of the Cotonou Agreement and, in particular, with the provisions of Part III, Title II thereof;

REAFFIRMING that the EPA shall serve as an instrument for development and shall promote sustained growth, increase the production and supply-side capacity of ESA States, foster structural transformation of ESA economies and their diversification and competitiveness and lead to the development of trade, the attraction of investment and technology and the creation of employment in ESA States;

RECALLING the commitments of the international community on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals as contained in the UN Declaration of September 2000;

REAFFIRMING that advancing the development agenda requires genuine international cooperation and the full implementation of agreed commitments made at the Conferences of Rio, Beijing, Copenhagen, Cairo and Monterrey, as well as in the Programmes of Action in favour of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) respectively;

BEARING in mind the rights and obligations of the Members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the importance they attach to the principles and rules governing international trade and the need for a transparent, predictable, open and fair multilateral trading system;

REITERATING the need to ensure that particular emphasis be placed on regional integration and the provision of special and differential treatment to all ESA States, maintain special treatment for ESA LDCs, and take due account of the vulnerability of small economies, landlocked, island, coastal, drought prone and ESA States emerging from conflict;

COGNISANT that substantial investments are required to uplift the standards of living of ESA States;

RECALLING the commitments of the Parties within the framework of the WTO,

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

Scope of the Interim Agreement

This Interim Agreement establishes a framework for an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

Article 2

General EPA objectives

The objectives of the Economic Partnership Agreement are:

- (a) contributing to the reduction and eventual eradication of poverty through the establishment of a strengthened and strategic trade and development partnership consistent with the objective of sustainable development, the Millennium Development Goals and the Cotonou Agreement;
- (b) promoting regional integration, economic cooperation and good governance in the ESA region;
- (c) promoting the gradual integration of the ESA region into the world economy, in conformity with its political choices and development priorities;
- (d) fostering the structural adjustment of the ESA economies and diversification including value addition;
- (e) improving the ESA region's capacity in trade policy and trade related issues;