

AUC and RECs coordinate positions on EPA negotiations, 24-25 July 2013, Libreville, Gabon.

RECs/African EPA negotiating groups met under the coordination of the AU Commission on 24-25 July 2013 in Libreville, Gabon to review recent developments, assess the current state of play in the EPA negotiations and chart the way forward. The meeting was facilitated by ECCAS and received technical support from research institutions and contributions from regional Business Councils and Chambers of Commerce.

The coordination meeting provided a platform for the RECs/EPA Negotiating groups in Africa to exchange information on EPA negotiations in their various regions and share experiences on implementation of interim EPA. It also updated participants on progress made on the implementation of decisions on boosting intra-African trade and facilitated the coordination of views on the way forward.

To achieve its objectives, the meeting was exposed to a number of presentations by the RECs/EPA negotiating groups, namely the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) negotiating group, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Government of Gabon and other Brussels-based Regional Coordinators of the RECs negotiating EPAs also contributed to the coordination meeting.

The very wealthy and productive interactions among participants led to a number of recommendations that will be submitted to the AU Trade Ministerial Conference in October 2013, the High Level Trade Committee (HATC) and the AU Summit in January 2014.

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mrs. Félicité Ongouori NGOUBILI, the Ambassador of Gabon in Belgium.