



PRESS RELEASE

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.../for immediate release

Information Seminar **EU-ESA Economic Partnership Agreement Negotiations**

From 26 to 27 July 2010 at Ryall's Hotel in Blantyre the European Union (EU) and the Government of Malawi will jointly host an information seminar on the *Role of Malawi in the EU and Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) Negotiations*. The event aims to provide a platform for exchange of views on benefits and challenges of EPAs. It brings together representatives of the private sector, the government, non-state actors and the media with a view to help stakeholders better understand EPAs and their potential impact on the national and regional economic climate and business realities.

The seminar will be opened by the Minister of Industry and Trade of the Malawi government, Hon. Eunice Kazembe, M.P., and the Director for Development and EPAs at the Directorate General for Trade of the European Commission, Mr Peter Thompson. The seminar will include presentations from high-level representatives of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Directorate General for Trade of the European Commission, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and other national, regional and international experts on the subject. Participation is limited to those institutions and individuals who have received invitation letters. However, all media is invited to attend a separate press briefing on Monday from 9 to 9:30am and a press conference on Tuesday at 12:30pm. A separate media advisory will be sent out to media houses with practical details.

Background

EPAs are being negotiated between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Their objective is to introduce new trade and development arrangements compatible with the rules of the World Trade Organisation, progressively remove barriers to trade between the EU and ACP countries, and enhance cooperation in all areas relevant to trade. EPAs are seen as key to boosting economic and trade cooperation as set out in the ACP-EC Cotonou Partnership Agreement, and aim at fostering the smooth and gradual integration of ACP States into the global economy.

For more information and enquiries please contact

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