

# acrimony of economic partnership agreements

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# introductory: critical features and lessons of EPA experience

- **content**

- liberalisation
- deregulation
- protectionism
- (re) weaponization of aid

- **process**

- inherent asymmetry of power; reinforced by
- united-integrated versus fragmentation and incoherence; reinforced by
- deficit of strategic vision

- **a (not-so-tiny) fly in the ointment**

- (un) civil society
- limited by a detachment from main social forces;

# content: liberalisation, deregulation and protectionism

- **liberalisation (of trade in goods)**
  - from non-reciprocal preferences to reciprocal free trade
- **deregulation**
  - services; **investment; competition; government procurement**; capital accounts
- **protectionism**
  - technology – TRIPS, **including data exclusivity**, agricultural advantage (CAP); SPS
- **‘weaponization’ of aid**
  - from separate to separate but direct adjunct to negotiation
  - adjustment costs; payment of negotiators; studies, etc; [even civil society advocacy]
- **all to the distinct disadvantage of ACP. Anti-developmental**

# short commentary: strategic interest and forum shopping

- **Lome IV Mid-Term Review:** Consolidation of EU variant of Neo-Liberalism
- **The Straight and Crooked Road From Lome to Cotonou**
  - Intergrating ACP smoothly and gradually into WTO
  - The American Challenge: Clinton and AGOA
- **Cotonou and the Rise of Free Trade Agreements**
  - From REPAs to EPAs to (R)EPAs
- **Rise of the BRICs and New Additional Competition**
- **Resulting EPA Agenda:** the march of Singapore Issues; Global Europe Strategy; Raw Materials Initiative, etc

# process

- inherent asymmetry
  - EU-ACP Economic Relationship Inherited from colonialism
  - Primary Commodity Export Dependence; reinforced in different forms from Yaounde, to Lome, via Structural Adjustment to Cotonou
- Strategic unity (Europe) versus strategic fragmentation (ACP)
  - ECOWAS; UEMOA – A marriage of total contradiction negotiating a mortgage
- Deficit of strategic Vision on EU
  - Lost in post-independence period; reinforced by SAP;
- Negotiating through dependence
  - Mandates
  - Negotiating Positions
  - Meeting the Costs of Negotiation

# the monkey-wrench of (un)-civil society

- First the Good News: Civil Society Significant Disruption
  - a counter-narrative to a unilateral narrative of TINA; or development agreement
  - technical arguments
  - social experiences
- But can be over-rated
  - Global Crisis, and awakening of governments
  - Delay/disruption; no cessation
- A short –case study of West Africa
  - Actually sat in negotiations
  - At best confused the process; at worst diluted mass mobilisation
- How So?
  - An uneasy juncture of anti-globalisation advocacy with aid groups (POSCAO and ATN)
  - Strong on the Inside Weak on the Outside
  - Appealed to Poor Victims; Not Proactive Agents in Society

# dare we learn?

- **Partnership? --Your Partner Depends on Who You Are**
  - Europe /ACP Are Not Yet Partners
  - Recognition of respective inherently conflictual locations in Global order
  - Aim for Outcomes Which reduces or eliminates the Basic constraints?
- **It is raw materials, markets and industrialisation, stupid**
  - Who decides what to do with ACP resources and markets?
- **Negotiating Strategy and Position Do Not Drop from the Sky**
  - ACP should build their strategy from conscious understanding of their reality
  - Not by copying and pasting Europe
- **“Civil Society” Must Dare to Mobilise Outside/Beyond Itself**
  - A narrative constructed from reality of society as a whole, from perspective of building productive capabilities and economic transformation
  - Speak not for the vulnerable, socio-economic constituencies around control of productive resources
  - Social mobilisation, not public mobilisation