

NEWS RELEASE

International
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Policy Council



IPC Applauds EU Full Market Access Offer to Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Regions

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The International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) welcomes the European Union's readiness to improve its market access offer to the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries with which it is engaged in Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations (EPA), to be concluded by the end of 2007.

One stumbling block in the negotiations has been that the EU has not been prepared to offer improved market access to those ACP countries that do not fall into the least developed country category, as an incentive for reaching these agreements. With this announcement, the EU will offer to extend its "Everything But Arms" offer of duty-free, quota-free (DFQF) treatment, already in place for all least developed countries, to non-least developed ACP countries.

Besides providing for improved market access, this proposal will also further the EPAs' goals of facilitating regional trade within the six different EPA groupings. Having different market access rules for partners in such a trade agreement is not conducive to increased trade within the regions.

Further, IPC encourages the EU to improve its rules of origin applicable to the ACP countries. DFQF access becomes truly meaningful when it is accompanied by rules of origin that are easier to administer and take into account the level of development in the beneficiary countries.

Market Access and the WTO Doha "Development" Round

IPC calls upon other developed countries, as well as developing countries that are in a position to do so, to provide 100% duty-free, quota-free access to all least developed countries as part of the WTO Doha Round Agreement, or even better, before such an Agreement is reached. "This would not only give a needed boost to the negotiations, it would also squarely put development back into what is, after all, the Doha "Development" Round," said Charlotte Hebebrand, President and CEO of the International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council.

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