

**DECLARATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY AT THE MEETING OF
EASTERN AFRICAN COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS
Kampala, Uganda 17th-18th November 2008**

We the Civil Society Organization and private sector representatives from the five EAC partner states of **Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania** met in Kampala Uganda from the 17th-18th of November 2008 to review the participation of civil society in regional Trade related processes, particularly, the EAC common market negotiations, EAC-EU EPA negotiations and WTO.

We note that the process of economic and social integration is complex and its success depends on the collective efforts of its partner states, civil society, and private sector as well the people of East Africa.

We recognize and encourage the efforts of EAC governments towards deeper and wider integration in the East African Community.

We recognize the efforts of the partner states to simultaneously negotiate the EPAs and WTO

As civil society was in the vanguard of the campaign for East Africa to negotiate as a bloc in bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations, we welcome the assent of the East African Trade Negotiations Act 2007 which will facilitate joint negotiations and also ensure clear, structured and institutionalized participation of all the key stakeholders.

We are concerned about the limited engagement of key stakeholders i.e. trade Unions, Private Sector and Civil Society in the EAC regional integration process; and the lack of clear rules, structures and mechanisms for participation.

We are deeply concerned that the limited time frame to conclude the EAC Common market negotiations does not permit for adequate consultation with key stakeholders on critical issues i.e. land ownership, free movement of labour and asymmetrical levels of development among partner states.

We further note that there is an absence of harmonization on positions taken in the EPA negotiations on the one hand and WTO and the other. We are concerned about the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement which contains clauses that will have far reaching implications on our regional integration, revenue base, productive capacity and policy sovereignty.

We therefore call upon the EAC Governments to:

- Establish a clear and institutionalized structure for stakeholder participation at national and regional levels
- Ensure that the controversial issues in the interim Economic Partnership Agreement are reopened and renegotiated.

- Reject the negotiation of binding rules in Investment, government procurement and competition policy
- We demand that negotiations for the common market should not be unduly hurried merely for meeting deadlines, but the time frame be extended until critical issues of concern to stakeholders are addressed.

We commit ourselves to work towards an integration process that will ensure the interests of the people are taken on board and will work with government towards this end