
Policy Briefing Paper

The EU-PACP Economic Partnership Agreement: Time for a new approach



The Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG) has been actively campaigning against the Economic Partnership Agreement (“EPA”) between the European Union and 76 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in the Pacific. PANG believes that under the currently proposed deal, Pacific ACP (PACP) Governments will,

1. lose important ‘policy space’ that can be used to stimulate development, and regulate trade and investment in the social interest.

PANG also believes that in its current form the EPA will

2. exacerbate poverty in the Pacific,
3. fracture the fragile regional integration processes and make it harder for Pacific ACP countries to break away from a commodity dependence model.

PANG urgently calls on Members of the European Parliament to use all their influence to stop these unfair deals and call for a new approach to trade policy with developing ACP countries.

Introduction:

In the Pacific, relations with Europe, Australia and New Zealand (NZ) have in recent decades been marked to a degree by development cooperation and trade preferences (preferential access to markets for Pacific exports) as provided for under agreements like the Lomé Agreement with the European Union and the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (SPARTECA) with Australia and NZ.

The 1990s saw the widespread adoption of neoliberal market policies in the developed world (including among donor organisations and international financial institutions), the rise of a multilateral trade liberalisation instrument (in the WTO), and a proliferation of bilateral free trade deals. Development cooperation and special/preferential treatment for smaller developing nations has increasingly been replaced by a free trade policy.

The European Union (EU) and the 76 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries began trade talks in 2002. These trade deals were supposed to deliver development to some of the poorest countries in the world, with Europe pledging to conclude agreements that would serve the interests of the ACP, with ‘due regard for their political choices and development priorities’.

Six years on there is growing discontent with the negotiations, which have seen the EC use unprecedented pressure to ‘force’ new agreements on individual countries. As recently as October 2008, ACP leaders meeting in Accra, Ghana, expressed concern about the “undue pressure that is being put on some ACP countries to move forward to signing and ratification of interim or final EPA’s before legitimate concerns have been adequately addressed”.¹

Despite enormous pressure, more than half of the ACP countries refused to sign a deal with the EU by the ‘deadline’ of December 2007 and of those that did initial an Interim-EPA, many are calling for renegotiation of contentious clauses. In the Pacific, Papua New Guinea and Fiji initialled interim EPAs in late 2007 to protect market access for exports of tuna and sugar into the EU market. Throughout 2008, Pacific Trade

¹ 6th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government ‘ Decision No 1/ VI/ Summit/ 2008 on Economic Partnership Agreement’, Accra, Ghana, 2 – 3rd October 2008, ACP/28/056/08

Ministers have called for renegotiation of some of the more onerous demands placed on Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Fiji within the interim EPAs.

Even in the Caribbean, the only region to have signed a comprehensive EPA, signing of the deal was postponed several times due to intense criticism from within the region that the deal would undermine development in the Caribbean. The Pacific Network on Globalisation, along with many other organisations from the Pacific, calls for Pacific ACP Governments not to sign an EPA similar to that signed by the Caribbean.

Given the current global financial crisis and its likely impact on developing countries PANG calls for an urgent overhaul and review of the EU's external trade policy with respect to developing countries in general, and the Pacific in particular. PANG believes that trade cooperation between the EU and the Pacific Island states should be founded on an approach that is:

- Based on a principle of non-reciprocity;
- That reflects the special circumstances of small island developing states;
- That protects PACP countries producers' domestic and regional markets;
- That relieves undue pressure for trade and investment liberalisation; and,
- Allows the necessary policy space and supports PACP countries to pursue their own development strategies.

Overview of the Pacific ACP Countries

Approximately 8 million people inhabit the 14 PACP countries that make up the region². These countries are remarkably vulnerable to economic and natural impacts – they are dispersed across a large portion of the Pacific Ocean, which results in very high transportation costs. The physical remoteness of the Pacific Island nations, and consequently high transport costs, act as barriers to sustained economic growth and market expansion.

The region is heavily import-dependent: exports of goods and services account for 46.5% of regional GDP while the imports of goods and services represent 60% of the regional GDP. The EU is the destination market of around 11% of Pacific exports, while 4% of the PACP imports originate from the European Union. The PACP countries' main trading partners are Australia, New Zealand and several East Asian countries (especially Thailand and China).

The region is still predominantly rural: subsistence agriculture is the mainstay of the economies of most islands. A decline in agricultural productivity, combined with cheap imports has led to a deterioration of the food security situation in many Pacific states³. Sugar, produced almost exclusively by Fiji, is the main agricultural export from the region. The fishery industry shows the greatest potential for future exports increase, employment and development of local know-how and skills.

Tourism now represents more than one third of the national GDP of many PACP countries (though for countries like Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands tourism plays a much smaller role). Remittances from Pacific Islanders living and working overseas have grown dramatically, with annual average growth of 36 per cent since 2000 to reach US\$425 million in 2005⁴.

In the five years of EPA negotiations prior to 2007, PACP states put forward proposals for the composition of a potential EPA, including elements such as a development agreement on fisheries, improved Rules of Origin for Pacific exports, an agreement that would help to target investment at small and medium enterprise in the region, and proposals to allow Pacific workers to work in the European market. Unfortunately, the EU rejected most of the PACP's proposals⁵.

² PACP Countries are Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

³ South Centre (2007) "EPA Negotiations in the Pacific Region: Some Issues of Concern" *South Centre Analytical Note* (SC/AN/TDP/EPA/11). South Centre, Geneva.

⁴ Pacific Economic Survey, Connecting the Region. Commonwealth of Australia 2008.

⁵ When the EU released its draft EPA in August 2007, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat issued a media release expressing "deep concern", saying that the EC's draft text "contained explicit provisions setting out the Commission's demands while reflecting

In November 2007, PACP Trade Ministers travelled to Brussels to find a way forward for the EPA discussions. The Ministers were not keen to sign a deal they felt reflected “almost none” of their positions put forward and key interests. They were, however, interested in securing continuing market access for important exports of tuna (from Papua New Guinea) and sugar (from Fiji), as these exports were threatened by the EU’s promised tariff increases from January 2008.

It is in this context that Papua New Guinea and Fiji initialled interim EPAs, covering goods-trade between the Pacific and the EU. Pacific Trade Ministers have noted publicly that discussions at the November 2007 meeting with (then) EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson were completely unsatisfactory. The co-chair of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and Cook Islands Minister for Foreign Affairs, Wilkie Rasmussen, wrote formally to Commissioner Mandelson to explain that Mandelson had been “insensitive” to Pacific protocols and issues, and “the result was that division occurred between the Pacific Island Countries”. He assured Mandelson that “the general feeling is that Papua New Guinea and Fiji initialled the Interim Agreement because of fear that they would lose their preferential trade arrangements with the European Union”⁶. His letter was subsequently backed up by public statements⁷ made by the region’s lead negotiator, Hans Joachim Keil of Samoa.

Perhaps the only real development gain for the Pacific in the Interim EPAs is revised Rules of Origin (RoO) for processed tuna exports to the EU. Whereas the old RoO specified that to gain duty-free access to the EU market, fish had to be caught by an EU or ACP vessel, the new RoO allows duty-free access as long as the fish is processed onshore in a PACP EPA signatory country, no matter who catches it, or where.

However, the EU’s multilateral and bilateral trade negotiations are likely to erode the preferential market access for the Pacific in coming years, meaning that Pacific exporters will face direct competition with producers from Thailand and the Philippines. In return for this marginal development gain, and in line with the EU’s interpretation of what is required by the WTO for a compatible regional agreement, Fiji and PNG agreed to remove tariffs on “substantially all imports” from the EU. The interim agreements provide for the liberalisation of 88 per cent of the value of PNG’s imports from Europe immediately, and 81.6 per cent for Fiji over 15 years.

PNG had already unilaterally reduced the majority of its important tariffs, so the main effect of the interim EPA was to *bind them* at zero. For Fiji, 23 per cent of the value of EU imports is liberalised on entry into force, and an additional 13 per cent is to be liberalised after five years. The bulk of the liberalisation will come in years 6-10, when 40 per cent of the value of EU imports (and 32 per cent of previous duty collected) will be liberalised. The final tranche (18 per cent of value) occurs in years 11-15. The interim deal also has a standstill clause that means tariffs can only go down and no new duties can be introduced between the EU and the Pacific Island Countries.

During 2008, PACP trade officials and PACP Trade Ministers have repeatedly asked the EU to allow Papua New Guinea and Fiji to revisit some of the more onerous provisions they committed to in interim EPAs initialled in haste in late 2007. Pacific ACP Trade Ministers have also put forward proposals for a comprehensive, WTO compatible, EPA that contains elements Pacific Ministers feel the region could live with (but leaves out new rules on services, investment, intellectual property, government procurement and other trade related issues).

Both the proposals to revisit elements of the Interim EPAs, and to conclude a more limited EPA, have been resisted by the EU. Currently, the EU continues to push for PACP states to sign a full EPA, containing all of the provisions of the Interim EPAs and a host of new rules in areas PACP Trade Ministers have shown great reluctance to negotiate at this time.

almost none of the key written proposals of the PACP group nor the positions put forward and key interests expressed by PACP Ministers and Officials during discussions that had been taking place between the two sides over the last two years”.

⁶ Rasmussen, W (2008) “Your Letter Dated 27 March 2008” *Formal correspondence with EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson*. April 11, 2008.

⁷ Radio Australia “Pacific delegation leader backs criticisms of European trade negotiator” 23 April 2008, available at <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/programguide/stories/200804/s2225556.htm>

Key Concerns:

Lost government revenue

By pushing Pacific ACP governments to sign a free trade agreement on goods that lowers tariffs on “substantially all trade”, the EU is cutting off an important source of government revenue for many Pacific countries: taxes on imports and exports. This is especially important as PACP countries are likely to begin negotiations for a new free trade agreement (FTA) with major trading partners Australia and NZ in 2009. Australian and NZ Trade Ministers have indicated they will be seeking tariff reductions equal to any concessions offered to the EU, so their exporters to the region will not be ‘disadvantaged’ relative to EU competitors⁸.

While revenue losses through tariff liberalisation with the EU will be relatively small (due to limited trade flows), Australia and NZ will demand the same market access as granted to the EU under the EPA. This will have drastic consequences in terms of lost government revenue.

It is difficult to ascertain *exactly* how much government revenue will be lost if PICs liberalise “substantially all trade” with the EU, Australia and NZ, however one study commissioned by the Forum Secretariat predicts that “countries such the Solomon Islands, Cooks, Federated States of Micronesia, Niue and Nauru could lose between five to ten percent of their recurrent revenue” and “for about half of the Pacific, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tonga, Kiribati, RMI, and Tuvalu full trade liberalisation would present a major fiscal as well as administrative challenge as the adjustments would be between ten and thirty percent of revenue.”⁹

Governments may try to meet the major shortfall in revenue through consumer taxes (like a Value Added Tax – VAT) that will raise the price of food and goods and unfairly penalise the poor. Pacific governments may also reduce the size of their public service, and reduce government expenditure on essential services like health and education.

However, prospects for recovering tax revenue lost upon signing an EPA with the EU, and similar agreements with Australia and NZ, are remote. Studies undertaken by the IMF have found that in the past 25 years, low income countries have completely failed to recover government revenue lost from the reduction of tariffs (and furthermore that the introduction of VAT has had a negligible impact on meeting the shortfall)¹⁰.

Finally, ‘necessary adjustments’ associated with signing new FTAs – such as shifting workers out of currently protected industries – are extremely costly and cumbersome to implement. If PACP governments reduce tariffs on “substantially all trade” with the EU, Australia and NZ, Pacific states will face a double financial burden of coping with serious revenue losses *and* funding new adjustment programs. Most PACP states are already struggling to pay for basic education and health needs.

Lost policy space for development

Pacific ACP countries should be able to retain the policy space needed to diversify their economies and grow local businesses. The interim EPAs, and the EU’s proposed comprehensive EPAs, will cut off policies that are used by PACP states at present, or could be used in the future, to stimulate development and grow local jobs.

- **Export restrictions – cutting off options for ‘value adding’ for Pacific resources**

The Interim-EPAs initialled by PNG and Fiji contain clauses that would prevent those countries from using export taxes, or from imposing any restrictions on exports (such as bans or quotas). Pacific ACP states

⁸ As then Australian Trade Minister Alexander Downer put it, “it’s obviously in Australia and New Zealand’s interest that any new deal that the South Pacific may do with the European Union doesn’t disadvantage Australian exporters into those countries”. ABC story 13/06/07. <http://www.abc.net.au/ra/news/stories/s1950447.htm>. His views are aligned with his NZ counterpart, who has argued that PACER “ensures that New Zealand, which already allows tariff-free entry to goods produced in Pacific Islands, is not disadvantaged by preferential access to Pacific markets being given to European countries. NZ Trade Minister Phil Goff, 12/06/07. Press Release.

⁹ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. 2007 *Responding to the Revenue Consequences of Trade Reforms in the Forum Island Countries – Final Report*. PIFS, November, 2007.

¹⁰ International Monetary Fund, 2005. *Tax revenue and (or?) trade liberalisation*. (prepared by Thomas Baunsgaard and Michaels Keen). June, 2005.

who sign on to Interim (or full) EPAs will no longer be able to limit or tax exports of their natural resources (fish, wood, oil, minerals, agricultural products, raw materials etc.) so as to preserve them for local value-added processing, in order move from commodity producers to value-added producers. This is in direct opposition to current policy in many PICs, where governments are actively encouraging downstream processing of raw materials in agriculture and other key sectors.

By way of example PNG currently has an export tax of 30 per cent on the export of logs (worth well over K100million each year to the PNG Government). Furthermore, the PNG government announced this year (*after* initialising their Interim-EPA) plans to ban all round log exports by 2010 to encourage domestic processing of timber and the development of the local forestry industry¹¹.

Fiji currently has an outright ban on the export of logs. In Fiji the log export ban has helped to develop the local furniture manufacturing industry. If Fiji and PNG sign the already-initialised Interim EPAs they will have to do away with these export restrictions, posing a threat to a major source of revenue, the environment, and the local industries that they have stimulated.

The Solomon Islands also levy an export tax on logs responsible for roughly 14% of government revenue. This would have to be eliminated should they choose to sign an EPA – posing a serious fiscal problem for the Solomon Islands government.

As they stand, provisions on export taxes in the Interim EPAs will probably stop some PACP states from signing onto any EPA at all. It should be noted that the EU has allowed other states to maintain some export restrictions in their Interim EPAs. Ghana for example, managed to escape a complete ban on its log export restrictions in its Interim EPA.

PACP states have requested during 2008 that the EU allow the provisions on export restrictions within the Interim EPAs be removed or reworded.

- **Infant industry ‘safeguards’ – no ability to nurture local business**

Interim EPAs signed by PNG and Fiji include very poor infant industry safeguards. Infant industry clauses in trade agreements are mechanisms that are supposed to allow states to protect new industries from foreign competition until they are strong enough to compete in the global economy. The safeguards included in PNG and Fiji’s interim EPAs, however, are heavily restricted and limited to mitigating the damage of import surges for *existing* sectors¹². Pacific governments cannot use tariffs to nurture *new* industries, making it extremely difficult to develop competitive value-adding processes and compounding the Pacific’s high dependence on exporting raw commodities.

Furthermore the ‘infant industry’ provisions have to be phased out within 20 years, arguably just when they might have been most useful, as most of the Pacific’s liberalisation commitments will by that time be in force.

Pacific Trade Ministers and Trade Officials have criticised the EU publicly for not allowing revision of these provisions. PNG Trade and Foreign Affairs Minister, Hon. Sam Abal, for example, told the Islands Business Magazine in October 2008 that “the EU should give more of an opportunity for industry in the Pacific Islands to grow... That’s why they are called infant industry, somebody learning to crawl before he can walk”¹³.

Robert Sisilo, the (former) head of the Solomon Islands trade delegation to Brussels, insists that his country must be allowed to retain infant industries protection as a tool for development “in the same way that almost all European countries did when they were at a similar level of economic development”. Mr Sisilo said that giving up the right to protect infant industries is too high a price to pay, and one that the Solomon Islands “cannot afford to pay”.

¹¹ Bashir, M (2008) “Reforms planned for forest” *The National* (Papua New Guinea daily newspaper). Accessed at: <http://www.thenational.com.pg/082008/nation2.php> Accessed on: 18/11/08

¹² Completely missing the rationale for infant industry provisions in the first place – that is, to nurture *new* industries.

¹³ Pareti, S (2008) “PNG Goes with the Region” *Islands Business Magazine*. Accessed at: http://www.islandsbusiness.com/islands_business/index_dynamic/containerNameToReplace=MiddleMiddle/focusModuleID=18332/overrideSkinName=issueArticle-full.tpl. Accessed on: 18/11/08

PACP states have requested during 2008 that the EU allow Pacific states to revisit the wording of the infant industry provisions in the Interim-EPAs.

- **Services – undermining universal access to services**

The Pacific does not want to negotiate services at this time. This is primarily because the European Commission has not shown any willingness to allow Pacific workers to enter the EU to provide services.

An agreement on services could also have dangerous implications for the region in terms of ensuring everyone can access essential social services. In the Pacific region, many people lack access to basic services. It is estimated that one in three people living in rural areas do not have access to clean water and around 70 per cent of the population in the region does not have access to electricity.

Policy regarding services (including trade policy) should ensure services are available to *more* people, not that services are carved up and privatized. Opening service markets is especially a concern as many countries in the region lack regulation to ensure services are extended universally.

PACP states have requested during 2008 that the EU allow Pacific states to conclude a comprehensive EPA that does not contain new rules on services.

- **New investment rules – cutting off options for local partnerships**

The EU's proposed model for a comprehensive EPA with the PACP states would severely restrict the ability of Pacific governments to regulate foreign investments to ensure investments contribute to development in PACP states.

Performance requirements, such as requiring new investors to hire local workers and managers, train local workers, partner with local businesses or use local inputs and suppliers can be an important way to stimulate local business and employment, and encourage technology transfer in developing states. If PACP states sign on to an EPA with the EU similar to that signed by the Caribbean in October 2008, they will no longer be able to use these performance requirements on investments from the EU.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) says performance requirements can be very useful in sectors like the construction sector. The construction services sector is an area that is especially important for meeting development objectives in developing countries – including providing new employment for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. In the Pacific, the construction sector is a major employer, linked to other key sectors such as tourism, and mining and resource extraction¹⁴.

UNCTAD argues that developing countries should make use of performance requirements – including local content requirements, and requirements of association and joint ventures – to ensure the inclusion of local firms and professionals in the development of the construction services sector. UNCTAD argues specifically that developing countries should ensure any new commitments or rules they accept allow the policy flexibility needed. Unfortunately, the comprehensive EPA proposed by the EU for the Pacific region fails this test.

Pacific governments should not give away the ability to regulate investment in the interests of development in the Pacific. As a report commissioned by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Report clearly states:

It would not make sense for PACPs to purchase fine-sounding arrangements for promotion of an inherently improbable flow of PDI [Private Direct Investment] by Europe, by giving up powers to protect and manage aspects of their domestic economies that they would otherwise use to good effect.¹⁵

PACP states have requested during 2008 that the EU allow Pacific states to conclude a comprehensive EPA that does not contain new rules on investment.

¹⁴ For example, Pacific Building Systems (Fiji) has undertaken \$100M worth of construction projects in the past two years, employing thousands of tradespeople and labourers (see <http://www.pbs.com.fj/about.htm>). ExxonMobil this year announced the construction of a Liquefied Natural Gas plant in PNG that will employ around 10,000 workers during construction phases (see http://www.rigzone.com/news/article.asp?a_id=69114).

¹⁵ Hughes, A.V., "Distant Prospects: Promoting investment in the Pacific through an ACP-EU agreement", Report to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, December 2004, p.9.

- **Intellectual property rights – undermining traditional knowledge**

The Pacific is currently developing its own approach to the protection and promotion of traditional knowledge (including traditional knowledge relating to biological diversity in the region), which could be undermined by the IP rules proposed by the EU. An agreement on IP would be very expensive to implement, and could lead to more expensive medicines, educational materials, software, seeds, and other inputs. A report by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development on an IP section in the EU-Pacific EPA concluded:

“The combination of TRIPS-Plus implications of many of the elements suggested by the EC, the challenges that would face non-WTO Pacific countries even to adhere to TRIPS and the general lack of development in those countries, *it is strongly recommended that Pacific countries do not agree to the inclusion of an IP section in the EU-Pacific EPA.*”¹⁶

PACP states have requested during 2008 that the EU allow Pacific states to conclude a comprehensive EPA that does not contain new rules on intellectual property.

- **Government Procurement – Restricting government purchases for local development**

Government procurement is the purchase by governments of goods and services. These can involve major contracts, such as the purchase of textbooks for schools, or the construction of government buildings, or a road or tunnel. Governments often give preference to local companies who apply for these contracts, this can be to help meet development goals of growing the expertise of local firms, encouraging local employment, or encouraging purchases from a particularly poor or disadvantaged region.

Under the EPA proposed by the EU, PACP states would no longer be able to discriminate in favour of local companies applying for government procurement contracts. EU companies would have to be allowed to bid for contracts from Pacific governments on the same terms as local companies.

Developing countries have successfully resisted the inclusion of any rules on government procurement at the World Trade Organisation. The EU is using the EPA negotiations to push developing countries to make commitments that go well beyond what is required by the WTO.

PACP states have requested during 2008 that the EU allow Pacific states to conclude a comprehensive EPA that does not contain new rules on government procurement.

Recommendations

The Pacific Network on Globalisation believes that the EU-PACP Economic Partnership Agreement has the potential to seriously damage the economies of Pacific Island States and will drastically reduce policy options available to Pacific governments to stimulate development in the region.

PACP countries should have the right to maintain their own sovereignty, and the ability to make their own decisions about trade and development policy. They should, for example, retain the ability to use investment regulations, tariff barriers and export restrictions to promote equitable, local and sustainable economic development.

Given that the EU-PACP Economic Partnership Agreement proposed by the EU will strip Pacific governments of these policy choices, and that any new EPA will set a poor precedent for negotiation of a new trade agreement with major trading partners Australia and New Zealand, the current EPA negotiations should be stopped.

The European Parliament should immediately call upon the European Commission to stop:

- Placing any kind of pressure on PACP negotiators to conclude a comprehensive EPA under the guise of ‘development’; and,
- Imposing arbitrary deadlines for the completion of negotiations.

Instead, the EU and its member states should:

¹⁶ Musungu, S. “An Analysis of the EC Non Paper on the Objectives and Possible Elements of an IP Section in the EU-Pacific EPA”, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development and International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, August, 2007.

- Implement a full review of the EU's approach to EPA negotiations with the Pacific, placing sustainable development for the poor at the heart of this review;
- Commit to exploring feasible political alternatives, such as improving the EU's General System of Preferences (GSP) to allow Pacific states to maintain market access to the EU;
- Respect the decisions of Pacific Trade Ministers, who do not want to negotiate issues of services, investment, intellectual property, and government procurement at this time; and,
- Allow a renegotiation of elements of the Interim EPAs initialled in haste by Papua New Guinea and Fiji, under threat of tariff increases on important Pacific exports (especially provisions relating to export taxes and infant industry protections).

Pacific ACP states should:

- Implement a region-wide review of the implications of the EU's proposed comprehensive EPA, assessing implications for the sustainable development of Pacific economies and the environment;
- Formally request that the European Commission offer alternatives (such as improvements on the EU's General System of Preferences) to meet the EU's obligations under the Cotonou Agreement that no country would be left worse off if they choose not to sign an EPA;
- Allow full public debate, and parliamentary debate, of the EU's proposed Economic Partnership Agreements *before any EPA is signed*; and,
- Refuse to enter into free trade negotiations with Australia and NZ until the above review and parliamentary debate have been conducted, and full assessments have been made of alternatives to a reciprocal free trade agreement.

Finally, if the European Union fails to offer a new trade agreement that places development at its heart, including maintaining policy space for development and respecting Pacific peoples' right to make their own choices about trade policy, Pacific leaders should refuse to sign an Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union.

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