



## **EU Bully tactics in Pacific EPA Negotiations!**

The Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG) calls on the EU to adhere to the development principles underlying the common EU-ACP platform: the Cotonou Development Cooperation Agreement.

A letter leaked to the Financial Times, from the EU to Pacific EPA head negotiator Kaliopate Tavola shows that the EU has rejected almost all of the Pacific's development-oriented proposals for the agreement.

“The obstinacy of the EU position as laid out in this letter makes the Pacific EPA even less attractive for Pacific states to sign up to, only a year out from the negotiation deadline, and makes a mockery of the EPA as ‘development-oriented’ – I don’t know why the EU thinks Pacific states would ever agree to this!”, says PANG Chairperson Feiloakitau Kaho Tevi.

The letter insisted that negotiations on the agreement must be completed by 31 December 2007 and no additional funding will be supplied for the implementation of the EPA. It also rejected both the idea of a standalone agreement on fisheries and the Pacific proposal for a labour mobility scheme saying: “Let us be clear about the fact that your ambitions in this area go far beyond the possible offers that we will be able to make in the end.” It also pressed the EU’s demands that government procurement and intellectual property rights be included in the EPA.

The letter demonstrates the one track state of mind of the EU negotiators and their perception that the Pacific regional negotiations are little more than precedents for EPAs in the Caribbean and African sub-regions where the EU has more vested interests. The only natural resource that they are gunning for in the Pacific is fisheries, where they refuse to negotiate a standalone agreement that has the potential to provide the most benefits to the Pacific.

“This is basically a flat out rejection of Pacific proposals and shows little concern for Pacific development issues” says Tevi. “The EU has tried to disguise this free trade agreement as ‘development assistance’ as part of the Cotonou agreement when really there are few benefits the Pacific will gain from it.”

“The EPA is a form of extortion especially given the power and resource differential between the EU and the Pacific, as well as the wide-reaching consequences that this agreement will have for the lives of Pacific people. Pacific EPA negotiators and Pacific people need to make it clear that the Pacific EPA is unacceptable in its current form and should not be signed” said Tevi.