

**DECLARATION OF THE ACP BANANA PRODUCER ASSOCIATIONS ON THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE
BAM SEMINAR HELD IN BRUSSELS, BELGIUM FROM 12th TO 13th OF DECEMBER 2016**

The representatives of the ACP banana sector, participating in the BAM seminar organized by the EU Commission in Brussels from 12th to 13th of December 2016,

RECALLING that the €190 million Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM) were provided to ACP banana exporting countries as compensatory measures to mitigate the negative impact of the WTO Geneva Agreement signed in 2009, which created a tariff reduction schedule meant to reduce EU tariffs for bananas from €176 to €114 per ton for all Most Favoured Nations by 2019;

RECALLING that the European Union has since then granted Latin American banana exporting countries a landing duty of €75 per ton by 2019 through bilateral trade agreements, acting against the spirit of the Geneva Agreement and allowing them to save more than €1.17 billion on customs duties to the detriment of ACP region since 2010;

UNDERSCORING that this accelerated pace of preference erosion greatly outpaced the implementation schedule of the BAMs, posing an immediate and vital threat to the competitiveness of the ACP banana sector, and demonstrating the need for additional EU support measures to the sector;

CONCERNED by the absence of clear commitments from the EU towards pursuing a specific support to the sector through adequate financial instruments after the end of the BAM implementation;

RECALLING that ACP banana producers are instrumental in tackling more effectively the global and common challenges faced by the EU and ACP countries in the areas of trade and economic development, migration and sustainable agriculture, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

EMPHASIZING that the considerable challenges faced by ACP banana producers in the coming years to manage the impact of climate change, further increase the productivity and competitiveness of their industry while meeting with growing environmental and social standards require additional and sector-specific cooperation between ACP and EU stakeholders;

CALL UPON the EU to take the following urgent actions to ensure fair competition and safeguard the future of ACP banana production:

1. **To stand by its commitment not to go below the tariff rate floor of €75 per ton applicable to third countries** in the context of future Free Trade Agreements or those under negotiation;
2. **To implement a new set of adequate financial support measures to enhance the competitiveness of the ACP banana sector and to bridge the gap generated by the reduction of landing tariff from €114 to €75 per ton, in close cooperation with industry actors.** This new set of financial supports, which could comprise operating grants, investment grants and other relevant financial instruments as part of the EU development policy, should focus on key commercial, technical and agronomic measures and be structured to efficiently cover for the different financial capabilities and needs of small, medium and large-scale producers. Undisbursed BAM funds should also be redeployed to support these new measures.

ACP banana producers are willing to commit to an intensified dialogue with the EU towards addressing the above challenges and setting-up a stronger, efficient and sustained win-win partnership supporting a trade agenda for sustainable development conducive to a sound development of the sector.

Brussels, December 13th 2016