

## What has the UK government been saying on this?

In December the UK government claimed that the current agreements were a success but our analysis reveals a huge gap between the EPAs that have been initialled and the kinds of deals the Government said it would support.

The UK government has promised repeatedly that poor countries should not be forced into trade agreements which would undermine their development and in 2005 it issued a position statement on EPAs saying it believed poor countries should not be forced to liberalise their economies. But the ACP countries that have initialled EPAs are being forced to do just that.

The 2005 statement was a progressive step but so far senior ministers across the government have yet to show sufficient leadership and to translate their promises into reality.

Instead, they have been claiming that their efforts have persuaded the EU to move much closer to their position and that there is only so much they can do against the other European countries.

However, all is not lost! The UK government has demonstrated its development credentials in the past. It must now do so again by:

- supporting developing countries calls for the deals to be renegotiated
- calling on the European Commission not to force developing countries to continue negotiating.

Failure to do this, risks undermining previous gains made on aid and debt. But, with political leadership, the government could turn this around and make an enormous difference to 76 of the poorest countries in the world.

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