

"No tricks, no threats: it's time to listen to the needs of poor people"

This was the view of Kathini Maloba of the Kenyan Women's Worker Organisation as campaigners protested against EPAs outside the European Parliament.

3 November 2008



On 23rd September 2008, Traidcraft supporters and campaigners from across Europe demonstrated outside the European Parliament. They urged MEPs to use their powers to block the unfair Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) currently being negotiated between the European Commission and countries across Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific.

The campaigners were calling for the European Commission to stop bullying developing countries into signing the controversial trade deals and to listen to their concerns.

Media from around the world attended the stunt which saw campaigners sport the giant heads of Peter Mandleson, EU commissioner for trade, and Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France which currently holds the EU Presidency. During the event, campaigners from Belgium handed in over 100,000 signatures that they had collected in opposition to the deals.

Camilla Porter, Traidcraft Campaigns Officer, said:

"MEPs have a real opportunity to stand up for the many thousands of people across the world who have opposed these deals - from church groups, farmers, civil society groups, students, trade unionists, academics, think tanks and UN institutions. Isn't it time to make the Commission listen to the many voices of reason who have called for EPAs to be renegotiated."

Kathini Maloba of the Kenyan Women's Worker Organisation, said:

"I want MEPs to send a clear message to the European Commission that they will not ratify these unfair trade deals unless ACP concerns are listened to. Kenya could lose up to USD100 million from drops in government revenues – this could have a devastating impact on the everyday lives of the Kenyan people."

Estimates of the drop in government revenues come from the report "Impact of Economic Partnership Agreements on the Kenyan economy" by Agayo Ogambi (Kenya National Chamber of Commerce, pg 21).