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**Grain de sel: EPAs are very much debated amongst farmers in developing countries. Could you tell us what is at stake for your region in particular and why?**

**Julius Moto:** We have to deal with a large area: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. The issue at stake is food sovereignty for family farmers. We should not worry about market when the majority of family farmers are going on empty stomach and not eating the right quantity. When there is prolonged drought, most parts of Eastern Africa is food insecure and as such they depends on food aid.

Some of our products could be exported, but we soon have SPS problems (for instance fruits, cut flowers, and vegetables). It is important to harmonise standards within the region. What consumers want should be in conformity with what is produced. There should be a common document on regional trade.

There is also a problem considering regional trade and non-tariff barriers. There still are too many administrative problems and non-tariff barriers at the frontiers. The non-tariff barriers have to be removed. Tariff dismantlement should be agreed upon depending on capacities of countries to adjust on tax revenues.

There is a need for assistance. Bilateral assistance exist (for instance GTZ), there should also be some help from COMESA.

We are for the application of the principle of asymmetry for the less developed States (for instance, Burundi is far from reaching Kenya).

**GDS: What are EAFF main expectations towards EPAs? (risks and opportunities)**

Regional integration is our main expectation. Trading within the region, in a common market and not export towards the US.

Other expectations are the following:

- Improved incomes through competition.
- Rebirth of East African community, trade have improved. Services industry shall thrive better.
- A free trade arrangement can lead towards greater quantity of trade.
- Poverty can be reduced. There is a market existing with consumers willing to buy.
- Efficiency of agricultural production, industrial producers, services.
- A cut on time and costal production so as to be productive on any market.

It should be harmonious and regulated to facilitate. All rules about fair play. Like in a football game.

Risks and opportunities are the following:

Livelihood security. Some products are in competition with EU. E.g Dairy, poultry, cereals, cooking oils and beef plus associated products.

We want a longer period of tariff dismantlement. Farmers from Europe receive subsidies. Some productions are of low quality. I express concern. We need a maximum protection to protect the growth of the sectors in Eastern Africa. They need to be developed with the region and the world (Asia, America).

I would say 10 to 15 years protection is adequate. Mainly for fruits, vegetables and flowers, but also other products which could be exported.

**GDS: What would happen if the EPAs were not signed? According to you, do alternatives exist? What are they?**

JM: I am optimistic they will be signed. Mr Thomson said ministers of Commerce responsible of EPA negotiations agreed on a date. There is a political will to sign EPAs agreements in December. The negotiation will continue. It will not be the end of negotiations. During the implementation of the EPAs we will keep learning. To me SPG, TSA, unilateral listings, non-tariff barriers and unfriendly rules of origins are not appropriate alternatives.

In the total absence of EPAs we have to be prepared to face the WTO rules. But to me, as I said, there is a political will to sign, so the agreements will be signed.

East Africa doesn't advocate stopping EPAs. They are a very good objective for economic development and to promote more regional integration. We get our money from the market.