

1 Introduction

Ghana has been a WTO member since 1 January 1995 and a member of GATT since 17 October 1957. This document contains an extract from the Ghana Policy Statement contained within the World Trade Organisation Policy Review WT/TPR/G/298 dated 16th April 2014.

2 Trade Policy

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Ghana attaches great importance to regional economic cooperation and integration. Ghana actively participates in ECOWAS activities at all levels, including the Conference of Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers, Senior Officials and the Community Parliament, among others.

With regard to the implementation of ECOWAS protocols, integration programmes and activities in the area of trade, Ghana has taken actions on the following:

- **Free Movement of Persons:** Ghana has abolished entry visas and permits for ECOWAS nationals, adopted the ECOWAS travel certificate and implemented the ECOWAS Brown Card scheme.
- **Free Movement of Goods:** In line with the harmonization of customs documents by ECOWAS Member States, Ghana has adopted the ECOWAS certificate of origin, customs nomenclature (HS) and the customs declaration form. Ghana is charging the Community levy of 0.5% on imported goods from countries outside the region. Ghana is also fully implementing the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) under which unprocessed goods from the region enter Ghana duty-free. However, industrial products must satisfy ECOWAS rules of origin and other certification conditions before being eligible for ETLS benefits.
- **Common External Tariff:** As a step towards the conclusion of an ECOWAS customs union, and in pursuit of further regional integration, the ECOWAS countries are committed to the establishment of a Common External Tariff (CET). This aspires to harmonize the tariff structures of the Anglophone countries with that of the common external tariff currently upheld by the francophone UEMOA countries. The leaders of ECOWAS States adopted a Common External Tariff (CET) for all fifteen Member States of the Community in November 2013. The ECOWAS CET is expected to be implemented after the ECOWAS Member States in the WTO have negotiated with other WTO members and have been given the green light.

Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU

Until 31 December 2007, about 97% of the exports of the ACP countries, including Ghana, entered the European Union (EU) duty-free in accordance with the Cotonou preferential trade regime. The WTO waiver, under which the Cotonou regime was permitted, expired on 31 December 2007. To retain such duty-free access beyond this point Ghana, together with other West African (WA) countries (ECOWAS + Mauritania), has been negotiating a WTO-compatible Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU. Under the new regime, the WA region and the other five ACP regions negotiating EPAs with the EU are expected to also open their markets progressively in an asymmetrical manner to EU exports. This will be accompanied by EU-supported measures to

accelerate West Africa's integration processes, upgrade its industries and build its productive capacity and competitiveness. This is to enable West Africa to take full advantage of market access opportunities offered by the EU and to integrate into the global economy.

As a precautionary measure to safeguard duty-free market access to the EU against any possible delay to the implementation of the WA EPA, Ghana has initialled an interim EPA (iEPA). The iEPA retains the EPA principle of maintained duty-free access to the EU in exchange for a gradual opening of the Ghanaian market, but foregoes the benefits of a harmonised regional agreement. At a meeting held on 6 February 2014, the West Africa Chief Negotiators and their EU counterparts found a compromise on the West Africa-European Union Economic Partnership Agreement (WA-EU EPA) by ironing out thorny issues that had proven divisive after more than a decade of negotiations. The thorny or outstanding issues relate to market access, development assistance, MFN clause, non-execution clause, agriculture subsidies, and rules of origin. Indications are that the WA-EU EPA would be signed by 1 June 2014.

Bilateral Trade

Ghana has signed bilateral agreements with a number of countries with the objective of taking advantage of opportunities offered in key strategic markets, fostering business cooperation and technology transfer and encouraging Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). However, should the ECOWAS Customs Union come into existence these agreements would have to be submitted to the ECOWAS Commission for acceptance or rejection by the Union.

On Preferential Trade Arrangements, Ghana benefits from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) offered by industrialized countries other than the EU and the United States of America. The United States offers a number of African countries, including Ghana, special access to its market under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Under AGOA over six thousand products from the beneficiary countries enter the USA market duty-free and quota-free. Apparel made from U.S. fabric, yarn or thread also enters the U.S. market duty-free and quota free. Ghana is currently in the final stages of negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Turkey, the 4th negotiation round of which concluded on 21 November 2013.