

Statement by the Secretary General at the 44th Pacific Island Leaders' Forum, Majuro, Marshall Islands, 4 September 2013

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Your Excellency, Hon. Christopher J Loek, Chairman of the Forum, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands; Distinguished Heads of State and Government of the Pacific Islands Forum; Hon. Tuiloma Neroni Slade, Secretary-General of Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat; Heads of Regional and International Organizations; Members of the Diplomatic Corps; Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr Chairman

It is with a profound sense of honour and gratitude that I join you at this 44th Pacific Forum Leaders' meeting. I am grateful for the opportunity for the first time, to address this eminent assembly.

It is a pleasure to be here in the Pacific, to witness your rich, diverse and vibrant cultures. It also gives me the privileged occasion to understand better the needs, potentials and priorities of the Pacific and its people.

I wish to congratulate President Loek, the Government and good people of the Republic of Marshall Islands for hosting this important summit, thank you for the excellent arrangements, the warm welcome and your gracious hospitality. KOMMOL TATA.

I wish to convey to your excellencies the most sincere gratitude and best wishes from my predecessor, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, who has been requested by the United Nations Secretary General and Chairperson of the African Union to become the United Nations and African Union's Joint Special Representative for Darfur and mediator.

Since taking office in April this year, I am committed to strengthening the link between Africa, Caribbean and Pacific regions. It is a bond based on common history, shared values and collective response to common global challenges.

Mr. Chairman

The ACP Heads of State and Government met in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in December last year. The summit demonstrates the determination of the ACP member states to remain united as a group and retain relevance by enhancing the ACP-EU relationship as a unique North-South development cooperation model,

I wish to express my appreciation to the outgoing chair of the Forum, the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Rt Hon. Henry Puna who represented the Pacific at the Summit. His valuable contributions enriched the discussions and added the Pacific concerns to the Summit Declaration (Sipopo). MEITAKI MA'ATA

Mr. Chairman

The ACP Leaders noted the need to re-invent a more dynamic and innovative ACP Group, in this regard welcomed the setting up of an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to review the vision and mission of the ACP and to come up with new scenarios and models that can steer the Group into the twenty-first century, and to make it a more meaningful player on the world stage.

The Eminent Persons Group is chaired by a former Nigerian President, Mr. Olusegun Obajanjjo and made up of representatives from all the ACP regions, including two from the Pacific. I am delighted to inform Pacific Forum Leaders that the first consultation on the future of the ACP Group will take place in Samoa in the middle of next month.

I urge your Excellencies to contribute to this process in order to create an ACP Group that is not only relevant to the current evolving geopolitical landscape, but most importantly an ACP that will better serve the needs of the Pacific region.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The ACP Leaders recognized, that south-south and triangular cooperation has the potential to transform the policies and approaches of developing countries by providing local solutions that are more suited to the context of each country and stressed the need for ACP countries to exploit and strategically translate this potential through tangible measures that are conducive to equitable, sustainable and results-driven development.

Leaders noted nonetheless that south-south cooperation and north-south cooperation are complementary and emphasized the need for the ACP group to strengthen Intra-ACP development cooperation and to adapt effectively to the ever-changing global

environment - so as to overcome new challenges and to explore the possibility of better positioning the group at the international level.

The ACP Group has deepened its engagement in South-South and Triangular cooperation, and is planning to embark on a mapping exercise as well as hosting a major symposium in 2014.

The ACP Secretariat intends to cooperate closely with ACP Regional Organizations to facilitate this exchange of best practice and experience across the ACP Regions, and achieve synergy and added impetus to complement the work already undertaken at the regional level.

11th European Development Fund

The European Development Fund has been the main institutional instrument for ACP-EU development finance cooperation. At the 38th Session of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers held in Brussels, in June this year, adopted the financial protocol for the 11th EDF, with a financial envelope of about € 29.1 billion.

The 11th EDF will cover the 7 year period from January 2014 to December 2020. At a time of unprecedented financial crisis in the Eurozone area, the ACP Group is grateful for the generosity and commitment by our European Union partners.

Mr. Chairman, the Hon Deputy Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Edward Natapei, was the ACP Co-Chair of the ACP– EU Ministerial Development Finance Cooperation Committee, in the June Session, and he was responsible for facilitating agreement and recommending to Council the adoption of the Financial Protocol. TANK YU TUMAS

Mr. Chairman

I welcome the theme of this Year's Summit; "Marshalling the Pacific Response to the Climate Challenge". The theme aptly demonstrates the urgent and immediate need for action, failure to act would lead to catastrophic consequences. I commend you Mr. Chairman for your leadership, vision and inspiration.

The ACP Leaders in their recent summit recognized that Climate change poses one of the most serious, immediate and long-term threats that undermine the achievement of sustainable development and the very survival of ACP States, in particular the Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked countries in Africa.

Mr. Chairman

I believe the exposure of Pacific communities to the dangers of climate change is common global knowledge, it is a reality, it is affecting livelihoods, peace and security, causing threats to water and food security and the forceful displacement of peoples. Climate change must be addressed today with a sense of urgency.

As we prepare for the Small Island Development States (SIDS) conference in Samoa in 2014, I believe it is an opportunity to move beyond elaboration of the problems, to exploring feasible means where substantive progress can be made, as well as identifying pragmatic actions, to accelerate implementation of the outcome of the two previous conferences.

Mr Chairman,

Most of the members of the Small Islands Development States are ACP members as well (in fact 36 out of the 38 who are United Nations members). I trust that next year's conference would be an occasion where the Pacific can assert its position, and effectively draw the world's attention to the impacts of climate change in the region.

From an all ACP level we will continue to explore how best we can support the Pacific with respect to mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction. At the international level, we support efforts for concrete outcomes with the pressing issue of making financial, technological and capacity building support for adaptation, available to vulnerable countries.

Mr. Chairman

We applaud the European Union for its leadership role and commitment in the area of climate change. The signing of the ACP-EU Building Safety and Resilience programme in the Pacific" is testimony to this.

This Safety and Resilience programme is the Pacific component of our cooperation with the European Union on Disaster Risk Reduction. This programme will bring a new impetus to the Pacific region in terms of the much-needed synergies between disaster risk reduction and climate change. The ACP will support the Pacific ACP to ensure the sustainability of the results.

As we reflect on the on post 2015 overarching framework, the ACP-EU joint Ministerial Council in their June session, agreed to develop joint declaration for consideration in their 2014 session.

Mr. Chairman

Today, our world is being affected by great shocks, which require urgent response. These global issues such as climate change, migration, natural disasters, food, commodity, financial and energy crises – have worldwide ramification, requiring global collective action. Like never before, we need political will, good leadership, optimism, effective action and dynamic change with a sense of urgency.

The time has come to craft new form of multilateralism that is multi-dimensional, multi-stakeholder, all-inclusive and action oriented to tackle these global challenges. Let us bring results and delivery through concrete actions, create hope and opportunities to allow the developing countries, and the Pacific in particular to create the future they want.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you and fellow Pacific Forum Leaders for your attention and also thank this august assembly for the opportunity to deliver a statement on behalf of the ACP Secretariat. May your deliberations be fruitful and may this 44th Session be another resounding success.

Alhaji Muhammad Mumuni
ACP Secretary General

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