

# ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly: "Promoting the resilience of populations to natural disasters"

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Port-Au-Prince, Haiti 18 December 2017/ ACP-EU JPA: The 34th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) opened on Monday 18 December in Port-au-Prince, Haiti with a firm call by the Co-President Michele Rivasi for international decision-makers present to effectively address the impacts of natural disasters, and include climate change adaptation strategies in all sectors.

Other key issues cited included the proper management of mineral resources in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries so that they benefit ACP sustainable development, peaceful political transition in Zimbabwe, and the outright condemnation of slavery practices in Mauritania and Libya.

"It is our duty to make every effort to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters for affected populations", said Michèle Rivasi, Co-President of the ACP-EU JPA.

The 34th session of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) bringing together parliamentarians from the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and European Union (EU) countries was officially opened by Haiti's President Jovenel Moïse, accompanied by Youri Latortue, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Haiti. The co-chairs commended the Haitian authorities for their welcome in spite of the terrible hardships they had endured.

During the ceremony, Ibrahim Rassin Bundu (Sierra Leone), the JPA Co-Chair for the ACP, stressed how "the Assembly and its members have been a positive force in the quest for sustainable development and poverty eradication". He reiterated the importance of the parliamentary dimension of the ACP-EU partnership to "give a democratic nature to cooperation". "The post-Cotonou Agreement must therefore continue to have a strong parliamentary dimension", he added.

### Responding to the challenges posed by natural disasters

Michèle Rivasi, acting co-president of the JPA for the European Union, stressed the increase over the last decade of "catastrophic events that could destroy years of development and investment". She has requested that people's resilience capacities be promoted. "Security, poverty reduction and prosperity depend on the integration of climate change adaptation strategies in all sectors," she added. This urgent matter will be discussed on Monday and concluded with a resolution on Wednesday.

### Valuing mineral resources for sustainable development

The Assembly will also debate this week on the link between ownership, exploitation and development of ACP mineral resources and sustainable development. These vast resources can be transformative for societies if local communities benefit from them, said the ACP-EU Co-President.

### Other key topics of the 34th session

This session will also discuss the critical situation of migrants in Libya. There will also be an urgent debate and resolution on the risks of a deterioration of the internal situation in Mauritania. The parties also strongly wish to address the issue of slavery.

Support for the peaceful transition in Zimbabwe after 37 years of Robert Mugabe's rule and concerns the ACP has about institutional tensions in Catalonia is also on the agenda for discussion.

MEPs will discuss the issue of sustainable tourism as a vehicle for development with Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

In addition, the Assembly will debate and vote on three resolutions on Wednesday 20 December on:

- Challenges concerning the link between security and development in ACP and EU policies (debate Tuesday afternoon, co-rapporteurs: Mohammed Goumaneh (Djibouti) and Enrique Guerrero Salom (ES));
- improving access to basic health systems, particularly in the fight against infectious diseases (debate Wednesday morning, co-rapporteurs: Mfanawemakhosi Dlamini (Swaziland) and Ana Zaborska (PL)); and
- The blue economy: opportunities and challenges for the ACP Group of States (debate Tuesday morning, co-rapporteurs: Oumouri Mmadi Hassani (Comoros) and Thierry Cornillet (FR)).

### General information

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) brings together 78 MEPs and representatives from 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries that signed the Cotonou Agreement, the basis for ACP-EU cooperation and development work.

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