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Brussels, 6 September 2017/ ACP: A major gathering of ministers and senior government officials from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands will take place in the Bahamas on 18-21 September. With up to USD 5.3 billion worth of fish exports entering the international market each year from these regions, the meeting seeks to reinforce shared commitments to improve governance and boost development of fisheries and aquaculture resources.

The Prime Minister of the Bahamas Dr. The Hon. Hubert A. Minnis is scheduled to open the two-day 5th Meeting of ACP Ministers in charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture on 20 September, preceded by the Meeting of Senior Fisheries Officials on 18-19 September. The event is especially important for the ACP Group of States, whose 79 member states include more than 60 that export fisheries products, both from maritime and inland fisheries and from aquaculture. Of these, more than 50 countries are coastal States, most of them with important coastal fishing communities.

The meeting will allow governments to take stock of the ACP strategic plan of action for fisheries and aquaculture, share national or regional good practices, deepen partnerships and discuss priority issues for multilateral engagement.

“The fifth meeting follows on several very significant global agreements that have a bearing on the overall fisheries policy landscape. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the FAO Port State Measures Agreement are key global agendas that the ACP needs to be plugged into. Fisheries policy makers in ACP countries will be able to reflect and combine their efforts to move forward on these agreements and achieve the relevant SDGs,” stated **ACP Assistant Secretary-General in charge of Sustainable Economic Development and Trade Mr. Viwanou Gnassounou**.

“Fisheries is an extremely important sector, contributing to food security, livelihoods, export revenues and poverty eradication. The meeting is especially timely for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as the Bahamas, where the sustainable development of the blue economy is essential for accelerated economic growth. But the sector faces many challenges. Ultimately, the aim is to strengthen high level, broad-based shared commitment to tackle these challenges while promoting the sustainable development and growth of ACP fisheries and aquaculture,” stated the former **Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources of the Bahamas Ms. Rena Ginton**.

With a focus on SDG 14 (conservation and sustainable use the oceans, seas and marine resources), the senior officials meeting will address issues such as Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, effective fisheries management, the blue economy, aquaculture development, small scale fisheries and fisheries subsidies reforms.

The outcomes of the senior officials' meeting will then feed into the ministerial discussions, which also features a Ministerial Roundtable on ocean governance, alongside invited development partners and key actors.

Finally, Ministers will also be presented with the “Intra-ACP Blue Growth Initiative for Fisheries and Aquaculture”, an initiative by the ACP Secretariat to improve private sector productivity and competitiveness of fisheries and aquaculture value chains in ACP countries and regions.

Parallel side events on the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FTI) and Implications of the Recent Arbitral/Tribunal Awards for fisheries governance are also scheduled during the week.

For more information, visit www.bahamas.gov.bs/acp ^[1] or contact :

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