

Cameroonian politician to preside over ACP and ACP-EU parliamentary assemblies

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Brussels, 18 January 2018/ ACP: The new President of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly Hon. Joseph Hyacinthe Owona Kono of Cameroon (*pictured left*) met with the ACP Secretary General H.E. Dr. Patrick Gomes for the first time in Brussels yesterday, since officially taking over the reins from Hon. Ibrahim Rassin Bundu of Sierra Leone in December.

Hon. Kono, a long-time Member of the National Assembly of Cameroon, will also serve as Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly during his two-year term. The ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly is a key consultative body for the ACP-EU partnership and a major political platform that brings together lawmakers from Europe and those from Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific to debate issues of common concern.

Hon. Kono's tenure comes at an especially significant time for the longstanding partnership between the EU and ACP countries. The legally-binding "Cotonou Agreement", which outlines parameters for trade, development cooperation and political dialogue between the two blocs, is coming to an end in 2020. Negotiations for a new framework are to begin no later than August 2018.

The meeting with the Secretary General touched on ongoing preparations for these negotiations, especially in light of the publication on 12 December 2017 of the European Commission's recommendations to the EU Council for a "Post-Cotonou" partnership, along with a request to open talks with the ACP.

The ACP Secretary General and Hon. Kono agreed on the importance for all the organs of the ACP Group to play a role in framing the ACP position for the negotiations. They also discussed the role of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly and the Joint Parliamentary Assembly in ACP-EU and Intra-ACP cooperation.

The upcoming period will also focus on the aspirations of the ACP Group to become a more "effective global player", as the only trans-regional intergovernmental association of developing countries in the world with a permanent secretariat.

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