

## Caribbean Heads urge innovation, stronger voice for ACP Group

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*Paramaribo, Suriname, 25 November 2012/ ACP:* The President of Suriname joined fellow Head of State from Guyana in welcoming parliamentary delegates from the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group last weekend, calling for stronger economic cooperation amongst its 79 member states, less reliance on foreign aid, and a united voice on global development issues.

In his keynote presentation at the opening ceremony of the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly on Saturday in Paramaribo, H.E Desiré Delano Bourtese urged members to embrace South-South cooperation in creating new economic models for sustainable development. He said leaders must “create order” in national economies first.

“The ACP has shown its strength and remains a considerable force that cannot be overlooked... I call upon you to put in all your efforts in deepening the relations that exist among us. It is in our interest to shift the balance in our favour by vigorously promoting cooperation among ourselves,” he told a packed hall.



He drew on the CARICOM Enterprises initiative – economic joint ventures amongst Caribbean nations in the fields of gold, energy, water and agriculture – as an example of steering regional and South-South cooperation to offset the need for foreign aid.

“I challenge the ACP Group to similarly think outside the box, and promote closer cooperation among different sectors of our societies. We have the resources to do exactly what is needed for our survival and development,” said President Bourtese.

As special guest of honour, Guyanese President H.E Donald Ramotar also highlighted the potential of the ACP Group as a global influence, speaking against any division of members into “different political groups”.



Instead, President Ramotar urged parliamentary members to rally together on issues such as food security, unemployment, poverty reduction, and corruption.

He called for the ACP voice to be heard more loudly on international issues, such as developments in the Middle East, democratisation of multinational institutions such as the IMF, and broadening relationships with emerging economies such as BRICs.

The ACP plenary session was held in preparation for the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly to start Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November.

*(Pictured from top: Suriname's President Bourtesse [right] greets President Ramotar of Guyana, Chair of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly Hon. Musikari Kombo and ACP Secretary General Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas in Paramaribo; H.E President Desiré Bourtesse; H.E President Donald Ramotar at the opening of the 30th session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly]*

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