

Equatorial Guinea, ACP Sign Headquarters Agreement for ACP Information Centre for South-South and Triangular Cooperation

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Equatorial Guinea and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States took a significant step forward to establish the ACP Information Centre for South-South and Triangular Cooperation when they signed the Headquarters Agreement on 9 August 2019 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The Signing Ceremony followed the symbolic launch of the Centre last year in Malabo on 5 October. The Centre will be the first ACP permanent representation in an ACP Member State.

See below for the Address by ACP Secretary General, H.E. Patrick I. Gomes at the Signing Ceremony.

Your Excellency Senor Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea,

Honourable Members of the Government and Chamber of Deputies of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea,

Excellency, Chair of the ACP Task Force & Dean of the Committee of ACP Ambassadors

Representatives of international and regional organisations,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure and immense honour for me to have this opportunity to address Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and this august assembly, today.

We are gathered for the very special ceremony marking the formal establishment of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Information Centre for South-South and Triangular Cooperation -- a gift of Your Excellency, the government and the people of Equatorial Guinea, to the people and the ACP Group of 79 member states.

This event is truly South-South Cooperation in Action.

Allow me, on behalf of the ACP Group, to extend our sincerest gratitude and to pay tribute to Your Excellency's exceptional generosity manifested in the establishment of the ACP Information Centre.

I especially thank You, President Obiang Nguema, for your determination and continued commitment., demonstrated through various actions and initiatives towards the ACP Group and the promotion of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SS&TrC).

We also commend all 79 ACP Member States for their commitment, dedication and solidarity to the cause of the ACP Group as a whole, and their deep sense of purpose to end poverty in all its forms, in ACP countries.

Indeed, from Georgetown, Guyana to Sipopo, Equatorial Guinea, and Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, through much effort and commitment, the journey to fulfil the aspirations of the citizens of the ACP Group has been long and steadfast, requiring unwavering commitment to peace, security and justice.

The Georgetown Agreement established the ACP Group in 1975, with clear objectives for the sustainable development of Member States and their integration into the global economy. This task entails working together (ensemble; entre si –junctos) for a new, fairer, and more equitable world order.

The political decision of Heads of States and Government to work in solidarity, led to the definition of multiple areas of cooperation geared towards the wellbeing of ACP citizens, which is the ultimate goal of all of our actions, including this event today.

From its very beginning, the ACP Group has engaged in South-South & Triangular Cooperation between its member states, in addition to North-South Cooperation, by the Lome and Cotonou Agreements, with Europe.

The recognition by ACP Heads of State and Government of the role and active contribution of South-South and Triangular Cooperation to capacity building, through the sharing of development experiences, was strongly advocated at the 7th Summit held in Sipopo, in 2012.

It was in the Sipopo Declaration, inspired by President Obiang, that ACP Leaders called for the establishment of an organisation for South-South Cooperation.

That call became a reality with the offer of Your Excellency in October 2016 to host the ACP Centre here in Equatorial Guinea.

Your Excellency's response was not in words alone but also in deeds, and is translated now into a centre with staff, facilities, information services and collaboration with international organisations, including the United Nations.

This gift from the President, government and people of Equatorial Guinea is the first ACP permanent representation in an ACP Member State, thereby attesting to the Group's commitment, and enhancing our visibility, solidarity and unity of purpose.

The acceptance, with gratitude, of Equatorial Guinea's offer by the Council of Ministers at its 107th Session held in Lomé, Togo, in May 2018, further consolidated the strong and unambiguous political support of the Group to South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

Moreover, today's historic achievement requires that special tribute be paid to the consistent efforts and active commitment of H. E. Ambassador Senor Carmelo Nvono NCA, the Ambassador and Head of Mission of Equatorial Guinea in Brussels. The dedication of the Ambassador and his team to this cause is truly commendable.

Your Excellency, Senor Presidente:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While this signing ceremony today demonstrates the ACP's continuing political support for the Centre, considerable work has taken place along the way.

With the appointment of the Head of the Centre, expected in October this year, a major task will be to deepen partnerships on best practices in development project design, including the ACP Secretariat's South-South Knowledge Exchange Programme. This resulted from the 2016 Symposium on Integrated rural development and how to strengthen women and youth empowerment through job creation and entrepreneurship.

Also forging and strengthening partnerships is another important area that will build on the experiences of other stakeholders and bring together relevant synergies.

The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), the Commonwealth, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, and Brazil among others, are partnering with the ACP Group in implementing various projects on South-South Cooperation.

Particularly significant is the agreement with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) signed in 2016 that enables us to embark on mutually beneficial areas of cooperation.

Your Excellency,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You may recall that the symbolic launching of this ACP Information Centre took place last year here in Malabo, on the 5th October. His Excellency, Daniel Evina Abe'e, the Ambassador of the Republic of Cameroon in Brussels and Dean of Committee of Ambassadors ably represented the ACP Group in that important event. It was, indeed, a milestone in the promotion and implementation of South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

[[The Centre in Malabo, it was stated will:

- conduct case studies on South-South and Triangular Cooperation, gather and disseminate information on development solutions for ACP countries and other developing countries, through programmes and projects;
- create an on-line platform to exchange information, in real time, on case studies and on the above-mentioned South-South and Triangular Cooperation activities; and
- serve as an interface with the ACP Secretariat in Brussels for our project inventory data-base on the formulation,

implementation status, and results of intra-ACP projects of more than 20 years

The Centre will undertake its activities in the global context of development cooperation and contribute to fulfil global agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and facilitate the achievement of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development.]]

We therefore invite all ACP Member States, national, regional and international organisations, civil society, the private sector, academia, and other stakeholders to firmly support the ACP Information Centre in whatever form you wish, including sharing information, experiences, financial support, partnering in capacity building and exchanging personnel, among others.

That being said, we wish to commend and thank the ACP Task Force on the Future Perspectives of the ACP Group, led by His Excellency Ambassador Daniel Evina Abe'e, our Dean and the ACP Committee of Ambassadors, for their commitment, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, and Francophone Affairs of Equatorial Guinea.

The ACP Secretariat and I personally congratulate Your Excellency, the Government and the People of Equatorial for the positive strides made thus far for the wellbeing of all citizens, in the 50 years since Independence.

We are confident that the progress of Equatorial Guinea will also be ACP's progress and it will benefit the ACP Information Centre for South-South and Triangular Cooperation here in Malabo.

Mr. President of the Republic,

Excellencies,

May I conclude, by reiterating to Your Excellency and the authorities of Equatorial Guinea, our deepest appreciation, for the facilities offered by the establishment of the ACP's South-South Cooperation Centre in Malabo.

Yours is a gift of inestimable value, for present and future generations.

Muchas gracias Excellentissimo Senor Presidente!

Merci beaucoup a tous!

Muito Obrigado

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