

New ACP-EU Partnership: Chief negotiators conclude successful series of regional consultations, culminating with African leaders' meeting

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Brussels 03 May 2019/ACP: Today, in Eswatini, Chief negotiators Neven Mimica and Robert Dussey met with African Ministers to discuss the African pillar of the future partnership between the EU and 79 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP).

As with other regional consultations held in the Pacific and the Caribbean regions, the objective was to discuss specific needs and priorities of the region, while exploring how to best address them in the future ACP-EU agreement. It is expected that today's discussion will fuel and enrich the tailor-made Africa pillar to be created within the future ACP-EU agreement, also known as the "post-Cotonou" agreement.

In Mbabane, Eswatini, the EU's Chief Negotiator, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica, said: "Today's meeting has given us a strong basis and political direction on how to reinforce EU-Africa relations under our future agreement. We believe that further driving economic growth to improve people's lives and reduce poverty should be at the heart of our work. Other priorities include promoting democratic principles, while protecting our citizens and our environment."

Professor Robert Dussey, the ACP's Chief Negotiator and Chair of the Ministerial Central Negotiating Group, who is also the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Africa integration of Togo, said: "The just completed consultation for the Africa region adds to the outcome of consultations for the Caribbean and the Pacific, which have helped us understand better the priorities of the ACP regions. This is critically important in the context of current negotiations for a new ACP-EU Partnership Agreement. We remain focused on working with our EU partners to address the priorities of the three regions."

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Eswatini, Ms Thuli Dladla added: "The Kingdom of Eswatini is honoured and proud as lead negotiator for the Africa Protocol and host to the just-concluded consultations to have facilitated the expression of Africa's strategic priorities which has set the stage for real engagement to reach a mutually beneficial agreement with the European Union."

Background

The Cotonou Agreement currently governing EU-ACP relations is due to expire in 2020. Negotiations on a new ACP-EU Partnership were launched in New York on 28 September 2018 in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly.

The two first series of talks mainly focused on the common foundation at EU-ACP level. This contains the values and principles that bring the EU and ACP countries together. It also indicates the strategic priority areas that the two sides intend to prospectively work on together. The envisaged structure of the future agreement includes a common foundation and

specific, action-oriented regional pillars, to focus on each region's needs. To that end, the first round of consultations on the regional pillars is now concluded. Through the future partnership, EU and ACP countries will seek closer political cooperation on the world stage. Together, they represent more than half of all UN member countries and unite over 1.5 billion people.

For more information

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