

New Chief Legal Counsel appointed for ACP Group

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Brussels, 7 March 2012/ ACP: The Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group) welcomed its newest member, Chief Legal Counsel Ms Katalaina Maka Sapolu on 1 March 2012.

Ms Sapolu is now the principal legal adviser to the ACP Secretary-General and the governing Organs of the 79-member ACP Group. The role covers legal issues arising from the Georgetown Agreement, which founded the ACP Group as an intergovernmental organisation, as well as the Cotonou Agreement – the most comprehensive partnership agreement between developing countries and the European Union.

As the Chief Law Officer, Ms Sapolu is also tasked with advising on institutional matters relating to the ACP Secretariat and representing it in contentious and non-contentious legal matters.

“The ACP is a unique organisation with potential to provide *the* platform for the largest grouping of developing countries to have a global voice on the international development agenda that affects them. I am privileged to have this opportunity to work for the organisation,” said Ms Sapolu upon her appointment.

An international law specialist from the Pacific Island state of Samoa, she joins the ACP after serving as Deputy Director of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, United Kingdom, where she was also Head of the Justice Section from 2002 to 2009. In that capacity, Ms Sapolu managed the development and delivery of programmes of assistance on judicial, law and justice reforms to Commonwealth countries. Before the end of her term in August 2009, she was Acting Director of the division and the principal legal adviser to the Secretary General and Management Committee and governing bodies.

Prior to this, Ms Sapolu practised law as a Barrister and Solicitor in Samoa from 1988 to 2002, mainly in civil and criminal litigation, while her solicitor’s work involved corporate and commercial matters, estates and conveyancing. During this period, she served as the President of the Samoa Law Society from 1997 to 2001.

Ms Sapolu holds a Master of Laws (LLM) degree with Merit specialising in Public International Law from Queen Mary, University of London; a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree from the University of Auckland, New Zealand; and Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Newcastle, Australia. She is married with one son.

(Pictured: Ms Katalaina Maka Sapolu in her office at the ACP House in Brussels)

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