

The OACPS officially opens the OACPS Information Centre for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Equatorial Guinea, as it hosts the Centre's First SSTC Symposium

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Brussels, 6 September 2021/OACPS: On 3 September 2021, the Information Centre for South-South and Triangular Cooperation of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS-SSTC Centre) held a symposium in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on the theme: “*Broader partnership as a means of accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals*”.

The event, held under the distinguished patronage of the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, H.E. Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, also used the official launch of the new Centre to mobilise several eminent personalities of the Government of Equatorial Guinea, ambassadors, diplomats, and representatives of international organisations accredited to Equatorial Guinea. Private sector and civil society representatives, as well as many international development cooperation stakeholders also took part in this Symposium.

Objectives of the Symposium

The Symposium was a forum for the exchanging and sharing of experiences among different participants, to give the Centre food for thought during the strategic planning of its future activities. Specifically, the Symposium had two main objectives:

1. Take stock of the progress made by the OACPS and its partners, in terms of South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and launch the operational activities of the new OACPS-SSTC Centre in Malabo; and
2. Reflect on ways to promote diversified partnerships, especially with the global South and the main international development stakeholders, to build the capacities of the OACPS Information Centre for SSTC to promote, coordinate, and facilitate more South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

In his keynote address, the Secretary-General of the OACPS, H.E. Mr Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, thanked H.E. Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for his many contributions to the proper functioning of the organs of the OACPS and its influence on the world stage; as well as for his Government's outstanding support of the OACPS-SSTC Centre.

He also stated that, as a platform for sharing knowledge, experiences, and good practices, as well as transferring technologies, the OACPS-SSTC Centre would be an important lever within the OACPS for promoting and facilitating South-South and North-South Cooperation, by developing and diversifying partnerships with the countries of the global South, as well as other nations and organisations, with the ultimate aim of eradicating poverty and achieving the sustainable and inclusive development of the peoples of the Members of the OACPS.

In his speech at the official opening, President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo thanked all the Members of the OACPS for the trust they had placed in his country when they unanimously decided to establish the headquarters of the OACPS-SSTC Centre in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. He stated that the Centre would be the “*facilitator for exchanges between OACPS countries and those of the Global South, in general, to advance towards economic and social transformation, through the promotion and exchange of scientific, technological, innovative, and entrepreneurial knowledge.*”

Key takeaways

At the end of the rich exchanges on the general theme and the different thematic presentations proposed, the Symposium's participants noted that the OACPS, by its constitution, its history and its objectives, is in and of itself, a manifestation of South-South Cooperation. It has several comparative political, institutional, structural, and operational advantages that imbue it with tremendous potential as regards South-South and Triangular Cooperation, which complement North-South Cooperation, which already exists.

They also agreed that the OACPS-SSTC Centre is a very important lever for the OACPS in its vision to *become the leading transcontinental organisation working in solidarity to improve the living standards of the peoples of the OACPS through South-South and North-South Cooperation. In fact, several Members of the OACPS now have successful development experiences, which can be shared as best practices.*

The Symposium noted the need to organise regional fora on South-South and Triangular Cooperation, jointly coordinated by the OACPS, through its SSTC Centre, with regional organisations and institutions. These fora would bring together government representatives, development partners, private sector representatives, civil society organisations, think tanks, and

other actors who can produce data and generate SSTC initiatives.

The Symposium also noted the need for the OACPS to use the OACPS-SSTC Centre to further encourage cooperation among member countries, as well as regional and interregional cooperation, and even beyond that. At this stage, the sub-regional plan for prevention, preparation, and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, financed by the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa [*Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale* - CEMAC] is a good example to follow. Finally, the Symposium noted that global cooperation, despite its limitations, can be achieved and produce mutually beneficial results as in the case of the COVAX initiative.

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