

Secretary-General Chikoti extends congratulations to EU Partners on Europe Day

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Brussels, 9 May 2022/OACPS: Every year on May 9, the European Union (EU) celebrates the anniversary of the historic Schuman Declaration and welcomes the progress made by EU Member States since the 1950s to create a united, integrated and prosperous Europe, based on the fundamental values of solidarity, respect for human rights and democratic principles. On this occasion, H.E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, Secretary-General of the the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), extends his congratulations to the OACPS's longest-standing partner, the European Union.

As the OACPS anticipates the signing of the New OACPS-EU Partnership Agreement, which was initiated by the OACPS and EU Chief Negotiators in April 2021, the Organisation looks forward to building an even stronger partnership, based on unity, solidarity and respect for the rule of law within all of the combined 106 Members of both the EU and the OACPS.

Secretary-General Chikoti further supports the choice to focus on youth as the theme for the 2022 celebrations. Much needs to be done to ensure the future of our youth. In 2020, Africa had the youngest population in the world and currently represents the world's second largest population compared to other world regions. The continent's population is also the fastest growing in the world and is expected to remain so until 2100. Since the African nations are the largest block of States within the OACPS, it is clear that the youth must be a priority as we work together with our European partners during the *European Year of Youth* and beyond.

Secretary-General Chikoti also notes that the Schuman Declaration was intended to secure long term peace and stability in Europe. In light of the ongoing war in Ukraine, he calls on all parties to engage in dialogue to resolve the conflict and return to peace, stability and security for all.

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