

## **SPEECH: Statement by ACP Secretary General at the 25th Session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly**

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*Brussels, 4 October 2011*

Mr. President,  
Hon. Members,  
Your Excellencies Ambassadors of ACP States,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you once again to Brussels for the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly. Your presence here presents another opportunity to buttress our efforts to deepen cooperation between the ACP Group of States and the European Commission.

**Mr. President,**

In my address to you during the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of your Assembly, I mentioned a number of issues concerning the external and internal environment affecting the ACP Group of States. Central to all the issues I mentioned was the need to re-examine the Future of the ACP Group. I am pleased that this issue is on the agenda of your meeting today. A related issue which you will also be discussing from the Report of the Committee of Political Affairs is the Impact of the Lisbon Treaty on the future of ACP-EU relations. I wish to encourage Members to seize the opportunity to propose amendments to the Draft Resolution on this theme to express our concerns. We will continue, as a Secretariat, to facilitate and support the efforts of Honourable Members to discuss this issue and propose solutions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous Chairperson of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors Working Group on the Future of the ACP Group, H.E. Sutiawan Gunessee, who is the previous Ambassador of Mauritius to Brussels. His commitment and dedication helped lay the groundwork of the Working Group. He has been replaced by H.E. Patrick I Gomes, the Ambassador of Guyana. Ambassador Gomes is one of the longest serving ACP Ambassador in Brussels, and has a deep knowledge of development issues, in particular, ACP-EU relations.

**Mr. President,**

There are other current issues that threaten to have a negative impact on our States. One of the most pressing issues at the moment is the impact of the Libyan crises on the Sahel-Sahara zone of West Africa. Several Africans previously leaving in Libya have fled to Niger in particular putting great pressure on the scarce resources of this post-conflict country. More worrying, however, is the free flow of arms, not just small arms and light weapons, but also, heavy and sophisticated armaments into Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. This situation now poses a real threat to the peace and stability of these fledgling democracies.

Euro zone crisis, which has impacted stock and bond markets, exchange rates, government spending, and tax rates is also of extreme concern to ACP Countries in view of our partnership with the EU. There is real risk that there will be significant fallout affecting global markets if this is not addressed. One of the areas of concern for the ACP Group is the possible impact on aid budgets in developing countries as austerity measures become the norm. This is one of the reasons why we attach a lot of importance to the 4<sup>th</sup> High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Busan, in South Korea from 29 November to 1 December 2011.

For this reason, the ACP Group will participate in the Forum, and will be represented at the final meeting of the Working Group in charge of preparing the final draft of the Busan document, which will be held in Paris this week. I was glad to learn, during the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the JPA held in Hungary that the JPA will also decided to send representatives to the meeting in Busan.

One of the objectives of the Busan Forum would be to take stock of the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action and to identify the priorities and actions to be taken, as well as an agenda for aid effectiveness after Busan. Another Busan objective involves broadening the aid effectiveness agenda to include other stakeholders, especially parliaments, civil society organisations, the private sector and sub-regional organisations, as well as other sources of financing (emerging economies and South-South cooperation).

During their 9<sup>th</sup> Ministerial meeting at ACP House in April 2011, the ACP National and Regional Authorising Officers recommended ACP countries should speak with one voice at Busan, so that progress in aid reform would be duly verified and aid for the poorest populations optimised.

As part of our preparations, Mr. Talia Abdel Malek, Co Chair of the OECD Working Group on Aid Effectiveness in charge of preparing the final draft of the document for Busan will address the ACP Committee of Ambassadors here at ACP House on 13 October 2011.

#### **Mr. President,**

Aside from the issue of aid effectiveness, the ACP Secretariat is also actively pursuing other activities that impact on the development of our States. For instance, on 16 September, the Secretariat hosted a seminar for ACP Senior officials on the exploitation of mineral resources in ACP States.

As you are all aware, the ACP Group of States have the greatest endowment of mineral resources in the world. Unfortunately, the exploitation of these resources, which have played a major role in the industrial development of the world, has not brought equal benefit to our states and peoples. Significant amounts of these resources remain untapped, and we must ensure that their future extraction is conducted in an ethical and sustainable development framework, while easing any negative social and environmental effects, and maximizing sustainable development.

The meeting culminated in the adoption of a Draft Framework of Action with a number of important focus areas, which if followed-up diligently, will lead to the optimal utilization of our mineral resources for the benefit of our peoples. It is in this context that we welcome the recent initiative to move the trading of diamonds from London to Botswana. We commend Botswana, South Africa and the United Kingdom for this impactful action which will serve as a good example of beneficiation to mineral producing ACP countries.

Another important area of activity for the ACP Secretariat is commodities. The Secretariat organised the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference on Sugar in Maputo, Mozambique from 24-26 July 2011, whose theme was "Prospects for ACP Sugar in Light of Changing Global Market Trends". The Meeting was facilitated by a number of key stakeholders including representatives from the EU Sugar industry, EU officials, researchers and the International Sugar Organisation. One of the issues discussed by Ministers was the need for specific measures to address income stabilization for farmers, price volatility, food security, and climate change, among others. The ACP Group is in favour of maintaining the current quota system for sugar and supports the orientation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2020 proposed by the European Commission in respect of policy and management tools in order to ensure the predictability and stability of the ACP Sugar market in the European Union.

#### **Mr. President,**

Aside from initiatives such as the ones I have mentioned above, the Secretariat will intensify its engagements and collaborations with other organisations in order to increase the profile of the ACP Group and highlight our development concerns. In this regard, I was privileged to attend and address meetings of the Pacific Leaders Forum that were held in Auckland, New Zealand, on 6 and 7 September 2011. I am glad to inform you that the ACP Group has been accorded permanent observer status in the Pacific Leaders Forum, which is a very welcome opportunity as we seek to build partnerships beyond Europe.

These are the few issues on which I wanted to address you, and I wish you a successful meeting.

**H.E Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas**  
**ACP Secretary General**

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