



## ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

### **Declaration by the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on - Beyond the Cotonou Partnership Agreement**

Mr Louis Michel and Mr Musikari Kombo, Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, welcome the current discussions at ACP and EU levels, on the future configuration of ACP-EU relations after 2020 and stress the important role that parliaments play in this context.

The Co-Presidents underline the importance of the issues discussed and call for a thorough debate to better define the respective interests of both the ACP and the EU, in order to continue and to intensify their partnership beyond 2020.

The ACP Group forms a solid block that should explore its collective strengths in order to play a meaningful role in view of the global challenges and the new opportunities opened up by the emerging economies.

In this regard, the Co-Presidents recall that a strengthened ACP Group would be a capable international interlocutor with whom the EU and other partners could cooperate efficiently in pursuing objectives of mutual interest. The follow-up of the Rio+20 Conference, the post-2015 development agenda or the finalisation of the Doha Development Round present such opportunities.

The Co-Presidents are of the view that the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) have potential to support and strengthen current and future regional integration efforts, if the development concerns of ACP states are adequately taken into consideration.

The Co-Presidents warn of the loss of parliamentary activity and of executive control of national parliaments should the Cotonou Agreement not be duly replaced after 2020. In this sense, they recall the key role that the ACP-EU JPA plays in strengthening political dialogue between the parliamentarians of both regions and in the legitimization of the scrutiny powers of the parliaments of the ACP states.

The Co-Presidents welcome that these issues will be thoroughly discussed at the 7th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government that will take place in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 13 to 14 December 2012, whose central theme is “*The future of the ACP Group in a changing world: challenges and opportunities*”.