



## ACP-EU - JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

### ***Press Release***

Tuesday, 27 November 2012

#### **Louis Michel: "Only a regional solution can put an end to the crisis" in DRC**

Only an inclusive and regional solution, bringing together the presidents of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), of Rwanda, of Congo-Brazzaville and of Uganda can put an end to the conflict in the eastern part of DRC, Louis Michel, Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint parliamentary assembly, said on Tuesday at the opening of the 24th session of the Assembly in Paramaribo (Suriname). He called for a "profound reform of the security system" in the DRC.

The UN stabilization mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) must "use all necessary means to ensure the protection of the population," Mr Michel (ALDE, BE) underlined. "The establishment of a permanent dialogue between the countries of the region, in particular between the DRC and Rwanda" must be supported by the international community, he added. He stressed it was "high time to find structural solutions to the problems of the two Kivus."

The Joint Parliamentary Assembly of MEPs and their counterparts from African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries will focus on the current situation in the Great Lakes region, in Mali and in Somalia. Parliamentarians will also discuss ICT-based entrepreneurship, the importance of access to energy and the post-2015 Millennium development goals. The Assembly will adopt resolutions on Thursday.

#### **Madagascar: time to act**

Free, credible and democratic elections in Madagascar cannot take place unless the neutrality of the political transition, the return of exiles and participation at the presidential election by all are guaranteed, Mr Michel said. He urged the Southern African Development Community to "take all necessary measures", including "the use of sanctions," for a full implementation of its roadmap for Madagascar.

#### **JPA fact-finding mission to Mali early 2013**

The international community must help to "solve the crisis in the north of Mali and ensure the stability of the central government in Bamako," ACP Co-President of the Assembly Musikari Kombo (Kenya) said. "Terrorist organisations must be effectively neutralized," he added. Like Mr Michel, he called on Algeria to play a more active part, especially when it comes to putting an end to arms supplies to the rebels in Mali.

The Bureau (presidium) of the JPA decided to send a fact-finding mission to Bamako at the end of January 2013.

### **Economic partnership agreements: more than trade**

Economic partnership agreements (EPAs) between the ACP countries and the EU, which are to replace the system of preferential trade tariffs, "must be used as instruments of development," said Mr Kombo. He wondered if one of the reasons why negotiations have dragged on for so long wasn't that "EU trade negotiators have been obsessed with a narrow liberalization agenda with an exclusive focus on trade aspects."

Mr Michel for his part stressed that the Caribbean region, the first to implement a complete EPA, "understood that only an agreement accompanied by appropriate support can boost its trade with the EU as well as with the region's neighbours."

The Speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname Drs. Jennifer Geerlings-Simons, commended the fact that holding the APP in Suriname definitively makes her country an independent one in the eyes of the entire world. She urged for the search of new ways for the future growth "towards more sustainable societies in every part of the world, in every sense of the word."

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) brings together elected representatives of the European Union and the ACP countries, with MEPs and MPs from 78 states that are signatories of the Cotonou Agreement, which is the basis for ACP-EU development cooperation.

Other topics on the agenda in Suriname include a debate with Emmanuel Nganou Djoumessi, Minister of economic affairs, planning and regional development of Cameroon; Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis, Minister of foreign affairs of Cyprus for the presidency of the Council of the EU; and representatives from the Commission. They will also discuss the post-2020 future of the ACP-EU partnership and Cuba.

The Assembly will vote on Thursday 29 November on three resolutions:

- "Responding to the political and humanitarian crisis in Somalia: the challenges for the European Union and the ACP Group", Co-Rapporteurs: Véronique De Keyser (S&D, BE) and Ali Soubaneh (Djibouti)
- "ICT-based entrepreneurship and its impact on development in the ACP countries", Co-Rapporteurs: Rabindre T. Parmessar (Suriname) and Younous Omarjee (GUE/NGL, FR)
- "The importance of access to energy for sustainable economic development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals", Co-rapporteurs: Manuel Jiménez (Dominican Republic) and Horst Schnellhart (EPP, DE)

### **List of speakers:**

Louis MICHEL, Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint parliamentary assembly  
Musikari KOMBO, Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint parliamentary assembly  
Jennifer Geerlings-Simons, Speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname

### **Venue:**

Kamer van Koophandel en Fabrieken (KKF), Prof. W.J.A. Kernkampweg 37, Paramaribo, Suriname

Debate: Tuesday, 27 November 2012

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