



ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

22 April 2016

**12<sup>th</sup> REGIONAL MEETING (SOUTHERN AFRICAN  
REGION) OF THE ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY  
ASSEMBLY**

**Gaborone, Botswana  
20-22 April 2016**

---

**Gaborone Communiqué**

Website of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp>

## **Introduction**

In accordance with Article 17 of the Cotonou Agreement and Article 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA), Members of the Assembly from the Southern African Region of the ACP Group and their European Parliament counterparts held a regional meeting in Gaborone, Botswana, from 20-22 April 2016. Members expressed gratitude to the Government and Parliament of Botswana for hosting the meeting and the excellent facilities put in place for the success of the meeting.

Their discussions focused on the following subjects:

### **Progress and challenges of regional integration in the region, including Economic Partnership Agreements and the EDF Financing**

The multiplicity of regional integration organisations and overlapping memberships necessitated more coordination in order to ensure coherence of development programmes. Regional cooperation has already contributed to the consolidation of democracy, peace and security. SADC was commended for its rapid reaction to peace and security threats.

The 27 SADC protocols require constant monitoring and close evaluation of implementation. The Parliaments role in the process of adoption of protocols and international agreements should ensure that the development priorities of the people they represent are duly taken into account.

The role of the European Development Fund in supporting integration efforts was acknowledged. However, SADC must take efforts to become more financially self-supporting.

The imminent signature of the SADC EPA in June was welcomed, as well as its potential to integrate the region into the world's market, although concern was raised about the capacity of producers to be competitive in the region and EU markets due to the remaining CAP subsidies and EU quality standards. EPAs must not undermine the WTO rule on the right to development.

Members underlined that EPA negotiations seemed to have been an exclusive prerogative of the executives and yet it was the responsibility of parliaments to adopt laws for domestication and implementation. Members expressed their desire to see the SADC EPA implemented and monitored in an effective manner, particularly with regard to trade and sustainable development, taking into account the views of all stakeholders and civil society.

The Cotonou Agreement is an important instrument for supporting regional integration efforts and the discussions on the successor agreement should pursue this objective.

### **Migration in the Southern African region**

Migration in the region was mainly for economic reasons with a large influx of migrants to South Africa. Members noted the positive contributions of migration, as well as some of its challenging aspects such as xenophobia and stigmatisation as evidenced by attacks against immigrants. Limited national and cross-border monitoring systems made it difficult to obtain accurate data on migration and its causes. A number of existing plans and agreements still needed to be implemented at national level.

Members also discussed migration to the EU. Politics of fear and xenophobia were conflating the issue, despite the fact that refugees actually constituted 1% of the total EU population. It was recognised that asylum seekers were not a security threat, but merely people fleeing their home countries to seek safety elsewhere.

Countries of origin and the international community need to address the root causes of migration. Opening legal channels for migration would be beneficial for origin and destination countries, and reduce the incidence of smuggling and trafficking of migrants. In general, good and workable solutions could only be realised through strong international cooperation.

### **Gender based violence**

Gender based violence (GBV) is a global scourge.

While acknowledging the SADC adoption of the Protocol on Gender and Development of 2008, Members pointed out that concrete action plans need to be implemented, followed up and enforced to fight all forms of GBV, including physical, verbal, emotional, psychological and economic violence.

Whilst the lobbying and awareness raising role of NGOs is very important, Members encouraged national authorities to assume responsibility and ensure adequate GBV training for police, security services and the judiciary.

Members admitted that multiple root causes should be addressed at the same time: cultural traditions based on gender inequality should be changed through education at all levels, in particular in rural areas; economic root causes could be mitigated by appropriate legislation and economic empowerment; equal representation of either gender should be encouraged by law in political assemblies and in corporate boardrooms; finally, combating impunity should be taken serious. They also stressed the important role of males and communities to raise awareness of GBV in order to influence attitudes and behavioural changes.

### **Natural resources management**

Members commended the mineral resources management system put in place by Botswana for generating state revenue from the extraction of mineral resources, including clearly defined property rights, fair and consistent taxation rules with an increasing variable rate for tax on profits and the use of this revenue for investments, as opposed to recurrent costs.

Members insisted on good governance, strong and accountable institutions and good negotiation skills to ensure fair agreements with mining companies and the best benefits for the population, also taking into account environment concerns.

Members called for taxation systems that prioritise higher taxes for raw materials than for processed products in order to encourage local value addition. For ethical and moral reasons, value addition has to be done in the source country. They emphasised the need, in particular for countries getting a large part of their revenue from a limited number of extraction

activities, to diversify their economies. Members expressed concern about the finite nature of national resources.

### **Agriculture and food security in the region**

Members noted that the main reasons for food insecurity in the Southern African region relate to climate change, underdevelopment, lack of expertise at farmers level and financial support.

Members called for promoting agriculture entrepreneurship, especially for women, innovation, improvement of access to information and to microcredits, with a particular attention given to attracting youth into agricultural enterprises. While all insisted on increasing productivity, some Members recalled that favouring an agro-ecologic approach leads to the best results while preserving the environment and public health.

Members agreed that a genuine regional approach requires an important improvement of, among others, transport infrastructure and access to markets, in particular for the benefit of small scale farmers.

### **Energy supply and requirements in the region**

Members noted the energy deficiencies that a number of countries are experiencing, which have led to power cuts and load shedding, in particular due to low hydroelectric generation capacity as a result of drought and subsequent low water levels. This has had serious impact on industries and irrigation-dependent agriculture. Members called for further investment in power generation especially in the renewable energy sector. It was emphasised that the region as a whole had enormous potential in the energy sector - especially renewable energy and the development of small scale and off grid systems - which could be realised with the pooling of investments at regional level.

Members were particularly concerned at the environmental impact of over-reliance on coal-fired plants, although for some countries this was the only option until cleaner and affordable energy sources took off.

\*\*\*

Members called on the Co-Presidents to present the conclusions of the regional meeting to the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly to be held in Windhoek, Namibia, in June 2016, and to forward them to the ACP Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament, the European Commission, regional economic communities in the Southern African region, the Pan-African Parliament, the African Union Commission, the ACP Group of States, the Governments and National Parliaments of the Southern African region of the ACP Group of States and to the EU Member States.