

**STATEMENT BY HON. EUNICE KAZEMBE, MP,
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE OF MALAWI**

AND

PRESIDENT OF THE ACP COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

AT

**THE 18TH SESSION OF THE ACP-EU JOINT
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (JPA)**

**LUANDA, ANGOLA
WEDNESDAY, 02 DECEMBER 2009**

[Salutation - Check against delivery]

- 1 Mr. Wilkie Rasmussen, Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly**
- 2 Mr. Louis Michel, Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly**
- 3 Ms. Gunilla Carlsson, Swedish Minister for Development, President-in-Office of the EU Council**
- 4 Honourable Members of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly**
- 5 Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to address this Honourable Assembly for the first time. On behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Malawi, I wish to thank Honourable Members of this Assembly for the honour to represent the ACP Council of Ministers on this momentous occasion.

But first of all, let me extend my gratitude to the Government and people of Angola for their hospitality and warm welcome accorded to us in this beautiful country, and also for the excellent facilities put at our disposal in order to make this 18th Session of the ACP-EU JPA a success.

Once again, ACP and EU Parliamentarians have an opportunity to reflect on the issues that affect their Partnership and uphold the democratic principles on which it is based. This Assembly and its members, individually and collectively, have been a force in the quest for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. This Assembly must also not relent in asking pertinent questions that need to be addressed in the context of trade and development cooperation in the framework of multilateral institutions such as the World Trade Organisation and most importantly, the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement.

This 18th Session of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly is taking place amidst economic and financial crisis the world is facing today. It has been observed that for most ACP States, the crisis has brought about slowdown in growth rates, export decline, job losses and food shortages. It also created instability in financial systems, a decline in remittances and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), just to mention but a few. While it is a global crisis, our developed partners are able to cushion the challenge through bail out schemes but for developing and particularly LDCs, it remains a scourge.

Co Presidents, Honourable Members

Since your last meeting held in April 2009 in Prague, Czech Republic, the ACP Council of Ministers has been addressing a number of issues relating both to global challenges such as climate change, WTO negotiations, and to more specific ACP-EU Partnership matters such as EPAs, the second revision of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and how the ACP-EU Partnership will be affected by the recently ratified Lisbon Treaty.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (EPAs)

On the current state of the EPAs, until today only the Caribbean Region has signed and is implementing a full EPA. The rest of the six regions are yet to conclude their respective EPA Agreements, with some having initialled or signed and others yet to initial the EPAs. In a nutshell, the EPAs need to be given serious consideration so as to realise the positive impact that they are intended for. ACP and EU negotiators during their last meeting focused on a number of contentious issues that remain unresolved, including technical understanding of the WTO provisions and EPAs compatibility.

Honourable Members,

Considering the varying degrees in the EPAs with some countries initialling, signing and not initialling at all, EPAs in their present form pose challenges to

regional integration efforts which this Assembly need to appreciate. I wish to urge all negotiating configurations to reflect their positions in the spirit of ACP solidarity. Our commitment is to continue with the negotiations in the interest of our Regions, States and indeed people. As we have stated so many times, and allow me to repeat it once more, EPAs should not be an end in itself, but real instruments for sustainable development for generations to come.

THE TREATY OF LISBON AND PROSPECTS FOR ACP-EU PARTNERSHIP

The Lisbon Treaty, which has just been ratified, marks another milestone in the evolution of the EU. From its humble foundations in the 1957, the Treaty of Rome focused mainly on trade relations and development coordination among its Member States. However, the Lisbon Treaty represents a shift in the EU's emphasis from peace and economic development within the Union to strategies intended to address global challenges. The EU has the ambition to become a major international political and economic force, and any reform in its composition, institutional structure or working methods is bound to have ramifications beyond the EU's borders.

Co-Presidents, Honourable Members

It is important to always recall that the Cotonou Agreement has, as its primary objective, eradication of poverty, promotion of sustainable development and the gradual integration of ACP States into the global economy. One of the critical questions to be asked about the Lisbon Treaty is how committed the EU still is to the objectives of Cotonou, and indeed to the ACP Group.

During the past four years, we have witnessed a gradual re-alignment of the EU's development cooperation policies with the ACP Group, as seen in the three separate EU regional strategies for Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific Regions, as well as for South Africa. In the spirit of ACP-EU Partnership, the three regional

strategies and the one for South Africa should aim at strengthening the key pillars of the ACP-EU Partnership as delineated in the Cotonou Agreement. This means that the regional strategies should be *Cotonou-Plus*, both in regional coverage and content of cooperation, and most importantly, should not undermine the solidarity of the ACP Group.

Although we would like to see the build-up of parallel Partnerships as a means of helping countries and regions to better position themselves in the global arena, we feel that the European Union should be mindful that these new regional development initiatives are not advanced at a great cost of degrading the largest North-South Partnership in the world. You will have noticed that central to these concerns is the future of the ACP Group. In view of these sentiments, it would be interesting to see how the new external actions of the EU envisaged in the Lisbon Treaty will address these issues.

2nd REVISION OF THE COTONOU PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Honourable Members,

As you may already be aware, the ACP Group and the European Union are presently embarked on the second statutory 5-year revision of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

The revision of any Agreement should aim at improving the provisions, including the Lisbon Treaty, and to make it more applicable to the needs of the people it serves. The ACP Group would like to see a more effective ACP-EU Partnership, and it is within this spirit that we are entering into the 2nd revision exercise. Further, we have to jointly ensure that we safeguard the guiding and principal ethos of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

On the whole, despite the reservations expressed, progress has been made and

useful compromises are expected from both sides in the upcoming meetings. Cross-cutting issues, with fundamental implications for our Partnership, are addressed in a systematic and coherent manner, and I am optimistic that the outcome of the revision will be a stronger, practical, and innovative Partnership, including the role of national parliaments and other non-state actors in the Partnership. I can confirm that both sides are well-disposed to working together so as to conclude the negotiations within the prescribed timeframe.

THE DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AND THE SEVENTH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF WTO

Honourable Members

ACP Ministers of Trade met on 13 November 2009 in Brussels to review the state of the world economy and the situation of the WTO, including the Doha Development Agenda. They concluded that the multilateral trading system must operate to support all countries in their development efforts, failing which it will miss its declared goals of contributing to sustainable development and poverty alleviation through trade. At the on-going WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva, our Ministers are urging WTO Members to exercise the necessary political will to conclude the Doha Round in order to enhance confidence in the rules-based multilateral trading system, halt the rise of protectionism and help stabilize the global financial system.

The ACP Group also considered that the negotiations must be carried out in a multilateral, inclusive and transparent manner. A successful conclusion of the Doha Round should have meaningful outcomes in its key development components of interest to the ACP Group which include special and differential treatment, technical assistance for capacity building programmes.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND COPENHAGEN 2009

Honourable Members,

One of the important subject, if not the most topical subject today, is perhaps climate change, this being a considerable and urgent threat to the global environment. The world is experiencing abnormal and unnatural variances in the climate system. Unprecedented rise in global temperatures, rising sea levels, melting of the ice caps, and extreme weather are some of the occurrences, and it is generally accepted that these phenomena are to be attributed to heightened levels of greenhouse gases. Human activity releases an enormous amount of carbon into the atmosphere. Therefore action should be taken as a matter of urgency to regulate and reduce carbon emissions worldwide, and global cooperation is needed to halt and reverse these threatening trends. It is my hope that this Assembly will come up with a clear position in support for the efforts being put in place to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change during the Copenhagen Conference to take place shortly.

Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

Honourable Members of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly,

President-in-Office of the EU Council

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I hope I have given you an overview of some of the challenges that the ACP Council of Ministers has been dealing with for the past six months, and that will be further addressed through its various organs during the coming weeks and months. I am aware that these challenges also feature highly on the agenda of this 18th Session of the ACP-EU JPA, and therefore I wish you every success in your deliberations.

I thank you for your attention. May God bless us all.