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STATEMENT BY THE ACP CO-PRESIDENT, HON CHARLES L MILUPI

At the opening ceremony of the

19TH SESSION OF THE ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Tenerife, Canary Islands (Spain)

- Hon. Miguel Angel Moratinos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain
- H.E. Mr. Paulino Rivero, President of the Regional Government of the Canary Islands,
- Mr. Louis Michel, Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly,
- Fellow Members of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly,
- Invited Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to address this distinguished Assembly for the first time. On behalf of the government and people of Zambia, I wish to thank the members of this Assembly for the honour bestowed on me to be Co-President of this prestigious institution. I extend my personal welcome to all the delegates and participants to the 19th Session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and to this end wish all of you a successful Session. I would like to thank the Government and people of Spain in general and the regional government of the Canary Islands for their welcome and hospitality accorded to us. It is evident that no efforts were spared to ensure that we have the best facilities possible for our Session.

Your Excellency,
Co-President,

We have important issues to address during this Session of our Assembly. The financial and economic impact of climate change in ACP States; the social impact of the global crisis; the situation in Haiti, Somalia and Sudan to mention just a few, are all topics worthy of our careful attention, and we will have enough time for constructive debate on these issues in the next few days. I would like to address a few general issues that I think cut across all of the items that are on the agenda of this Session of our Assembly.

Your Excellency,
Co-President,

Crisis Situations in the World

We meet at a time when the whole world seems to be in the grip of one kind of crisis after another. You will recall only some 8 weeks ago, on 12 January 2010, the world awoke to the horrendous news of the earthquake that hit Haiti. The scale of the disaster was such as had not been seen since the Asian Tsunami of 2004. Barely a month after the Haiti earthquake, another quake hit Chile. Just 4 weeks ago, Turkey experienced an earthquake which also resulted in loss of life and destruction of infrastructure.

These natural disasters came in the wake of the worst financial and economic crisis of recent years, which had been preceded by the food and oil crisis that started around 2007. These distressing phenomena only serve to emphasise how closely intertwined the fate of the entire world is. Any catastrophe or disaster in any part of the world can have ramifications beyond national borders.

You will recall that during the 18th Session of the JPA in Luanda, Angola, this Assembly adopted a resolution on the reform of global governance and international institutions. Our planet will continue to face developmental and ecological challenges, and I feel that the most effective way to deal with all those problems is that global governance needs to be more participatory, transparent and adaptable to the world of tomorrow. I feel that the JPA is well placed to be part of the process of change. Through this cross exchange of ideas, experiences and knowledge, each one of us can be a catalyst for the change that we wish to see.

Your Excellency,

Co-President,

Global Governance, World Crises, Climate Challenge

During the 18th Session of the JPA in Luanda, we adopted a resolution on climate change, with the hope that our concerns would also be considered by the UN climate conference in Copenhagen. The global climate is changing without a doubt and a plethora of reasons, both natural and man-made, explain this change. That is the reason why we all have an obligation to secure a safe environment for our needs of today as well as for future generations.

Madame Connie Hedegaard, the EU Commissioner for Climate Change, reportedly sounded a warning in the *Financial Times* of 9 March 2010 that the world will almost certainly fail to agree to a new Treaty on Climate Change later this year in Mexico. The stumbling block seems to be failure to agree on binding emission targets and certain technical criteria. For one thing, developing countries have been arguing for extra resources for mitigation and adaptation as well as acquisition and development of appropriate green technology. For poor countries, there is the inescapable link between climate change, the environment and development.

Your Excellency,

Co-President,

Millennium Development Goals

We are 5 years away from the target for attaining the Millennium Development Goals. The 2009 MDG Report indicates that only a few countries have made real progress towards attaining the goals. For instance, China has halved the number of its population living in poverty. India has also made progress on some of the MDG goals. This is a clear indication that attaining the MDGs will largely depend on economic growth and eventually, the widest distribution of its benefits.

For the countries that need to make the largest push to attain the MDGs, namely those in sub-Saharan Africa, progress is dismal. Some of the fundamental issues that will determine whether or not the MDGs are achieved include gender, political stability, economic growth and of course the availability and effectiveness of development aid.

While aid undoubtedly is important, the issue that policy makers - and this includes legislators such as ourselves - have to ensure is that development aid reaches its intended beneficiaries. For instance, according to a 2006 Report of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the 50 least developed countries on average only receive about one third of all aid that flows from developed countries. This seems to imply that aid is not moving from rich to poor depending on their development needs but rather from the rich to their closest allies. Let us remind ourselves that since the Paris Declaration in 2005 and then the Accra Agenda for Action in 2008, the issue is no longer about the amount of aid; it is also about its effectiveness.

Recent events, such as the massive government funded financial bailouts in the US, gives the impression that money is not the problem. The reality could be that other things or interests are prioritized rather than the MDGs. Military spending in the world is about US\$800 billion. Agricultural subsidies in OECD countries amount to US\$327 billion a year. In contrast, estimates have been made that attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) would require about US\$100 to \$120 billion a year, less than 0.5% of global GDP.

For instance, on MDGs number 2, 4, and 6 which are to do with health, I noted with concern that the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No. 10 of 2008 states that overall EC funding to the health sector has not increased since 2000 as a proportion of its total development assistance despite the Commission's MDG commitments and the health crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. The report further says that the Commission contributed significant funding to help launch the Global Fund but has not given the same attention to strengthening health systems although this was intended to be its priority. One of the recommendations that the Report made was for the Commission to consider increasing its aid to the health sector during the mid-term review to support its commitment to the health MDGs.

It is undeniable that the ACP States are resource rich. It is therefore unacceptable that the owners of the natural resources that are in demand in the world are today themselves the poorest in the world and they have to rely on aid. The engagement between Europe and the ACP States must move to a new level. It must endeavour to deliver sustainable development. This engagement should be such as to enable the ACP Group of States to gain greater value for their natural resources.

Your Excellency,

Co-President,

Democracy, Governance and Political Issues

Earlier I made reference to political stability as being one of the determinants to achieve the MDGs. It is a source of concern that some of the most fragile States in the world are in the ACP family. After a good start in the 1990s, it seems that the continent is on the verge of losing the positive gains attained in the first wave of democratization in the 1990s. Post-conflict countries such as Mozambique, Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia appear to be well on their way to full recovery. However, recent events in Madagascar, Niger and Guinea are blights to our positive democratic track record.

I am gratified by the response that the international community has taken in Niger and Guinea, and especially at the regional level where the African Union and ECOWAS have paved the way with their direct involvement in dealing with the conflicts. I also commend the efforts of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to broker a peaceful settlement of the crisis in Madagascar. As parliamentarians, and as members of the JPA, we must be totally opposed to any undemocratic assumption of power, whether they are military coups d'Etats or civilian manipulation of the democratic process.

Most worrying perhaps, is that it has become apparent that elections, which should be the ultimate arbiter of political differences as well as the guarantor of peace, stability and security, have become a major source of conflict and political violence.

Differences between opposition and ruling parties often engulf society as a whole. Social unrest, strikes, street demonstrations, violence and loss of life are the inevitable result. Because of such problems, I feel that assistance for strengthening democracy, constitutional governance and elections processes should be seen as a development priority in its own right.

I am particularly concerned about the issue of political instability because of its obvious correlation with poverty. Some of the minimal gains that have been made in poverty reduction will be lost because of political instability. But there is evidence also that poverty and economic crisis will lead to instability even in those countries that have traditionally been stable. I am reminded of the demonstrations that took place in several African countries because of the rising prices of food and fuel in 2006 and 2007. It is therefore in the interest of future political stability to ensure that developmental benefits are distributed across the broad spectrum of our societies.

Your Excellency,

Co-President,

To conclude, I would like to recall that the world has been confronted with many challenges in the past which were seemingly insurmountable at that time. The world as whole has enough human, material and financial resources, and I would like to think that in this Assembly alone, we have men and women of resolve who are willing to commit their minds to addressing the developmental challenges of this century in all corners of the world, which is our common heritage.

Your Excellency,

Co-President,

I thank you for your kind attention.