



ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Declaration of the Co-Presidents on Post-Cotonou Negotiations on the occasion of the meeting of the 36th Joint Parliamentary Assembly

The Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) welcome the adoption of the negotiating directives by the EU and the negotiating mandate of the ACP Parties, and the launch of negotiations intended to conclude a successor Agreement to the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

The Co-Presidents draw attention to the resolution adopted at the 35th session of the JPA on a strong parliamentary dimension, and to the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 14 June 2018 on Negotiations for a new ACP-EU Partnership Agreement. The Co-Presidents echo the desire expressed by both negotiating parties in their respective mandates to conclude a successor Agreement at ACP-EU level, recognising the desire of the ACP Group of States to maintain its deep and unique partnership.

An ambitious and comprehensive Agreement is needed between the two parties to reflect the new geopolitical reality and tackle common challenges including climate change, poverty, terrorism, migration, illicit financial flows and achieving the SDGs. Globalisation can only be effectively harnessed and regulated at multilateral level, in which the ACP and EU can emerge as a powerful joint force.

The Co-Presidents reiterate that the new institutional and financial architecture must reflect these ambitions that continue to be based on the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. In addition to the regional pillars, the common foundation must remain a strong element of the Partnership, with regular meetings at all levels to monitor the implementation of the Partnership Agreement and build momentum for ACP-EU cooperation at the global level.

The post-2020 Partnership must be one of equal partners and better serve the needs of its citizens in ACP countries and the EU. In this regard, the Co-Presidents emphasise that a strong parliamentary dimension is essential for democratic legitimacy. This must include an autonomous Joint Parliamentary Assembly, meeting independently of the ACP-EU Council meetings, in order to assess the impact of the Agreement, hold the executives to account and provide a genuinely pluralistic parliamentary forum for citizen representation. Adequate resources are needed in order to support the Partnership including JPA at secretariat level.

Democratic legitimacy goes beyond parliamentary representation, and requires a formalised participation of non-state actors as provided for in the current Cotonou Agreement.