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ACP PRESS RELEASE: 2 February 2011: The African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group in partnership with the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) successfully hosted a one-day Symposium on Enhancing South-South Cooperation: Challenges and Opportunities this week in Brussels, Belgium.

It was the first time that the ACP Group, which has a Partnership Agreement with the European Union, officially known as the "ACP-EC Partnership Agreement" or the "Cotonou Agreement" since 1975, hosted a symposium engaging its traditional partner, the EU, and other emerging economies which include: India, Brazil and South Africa.

The objectives of the symposium were to: raising awareness of vital issues linked to international aid for development, from the standpoint of both traditional and emerging donors; exploring possibilities for the ACP Group's effective participation in South-South cooperation programmes; and devising a process that will enable the ACP Group to contribute to the deepening of partnerships for South-South and triangular cooperation.

Speaking at the symposium, Chairman of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors and Ambassador of Guyana, H.E Mr. Patrick I. Gomes, said that the ACP Group was greatly honoured that the vibrant, emerging actors of IBSA - India, Brazil, South Africa - providing innovative leadership for South-South Cooperation, were able to attend.

"Their knowledge, approach and experience can contribute to energising and enriching the policymaking processes and delivery modalities for Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action, and our own Annual Action Plans under the Cotonou Agreement," Ambassador Gomes told the Symposium.

Ambassador Gomes said that it is envisaged that from the platform of accumulated experience and expertise within the 79 Member States of the ACP Group, a process with new partners and innovative thinking will bring "us closer to the goals so clearly stated in the founding document of the ACP Group of States."

As stated in the Georgetown Agreement in 1975, the countries of Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific unequivocally and unambiguously set themselves the overriding task to eradicate poverty from the lives of their citizens.

Secretary-General Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas said the symposium provided a platform to share and to learn from each other's development experience with regard to the diverse configuration of development partnerships and cooperation in which "we are engaged, and to be able to find ways and means to make them more effective."

"The discussions today should, I hope, be able to raise awareness of key issues linked to international aid for development, explore the possibilities for the ACP Group's effective engagement in South-South cooperation programmes, and assist in devising a process that will enable the ACP Group to contribute to the deepening of partnerships for South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation," he said.

The keynote address was delivered by a well-known French academic, Jean-Mitchel Severino, followed by presentations from representatives from the Brazilian and Indian Governments as well as a representative from the European Commission.

At the ACP level, Cuba, South Africa and Nigerian also made presentations followed exchange of views from the ACP members and the panelists.

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