

Brief Statement for the President of ACP Parliamentary Assembly and Co-President of the ACP-EU JPA, Honourable David Matongo, on the occasion of the press conference at Palais du Peuple on 2 December 2010

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Co-President Louis Mitchel Media personnel, ladies and gentlemen First, I wish to say how delight I am to be in Kinshasa and it was indeed very special to have His Excellency President Joseph Kabila open the 20th Session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Session this morning. I wish to register the ACP Parliamentary Assembly's sincere appreciation to President Kabila, his government and the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo for their warm welcome and for hosting this Joint Parliamentary Assembly Session. Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, the JPA start today after three days of the traditional ACP Parliamentary Assembly Meetings, and standing committee meetings which usually take place before the JPA starts. The ACP Parliamentary has concluded, against a backdrop of challenging developments in international economic relations and in our age-old partnership with the European Union. After a very frank exchange of views as behoves a family, we were able to concur on a way forward on issues, which we want to discuss with our European counterparts in the next three days. Our Parliamentarians in the ACP Assembly, exchanged views on reports from the standing committees on Political Affairs; Economic Development, Finance and Trade; and Social Affairs and the Environment on issues that affect our regions and countries. One of the major issues that the MPs discussed is the new Lisbon Treaty's silence on the ACP Group and the need to reinvigorate our traditional partnership with our EU friends on the basis of inter-dependence and mutually shared obligations. Trade issues, as usual, formed an important part of our deliberations. Our MPs feel a deep sense of concern regarding the lack of more progress in the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations with the EU. Based on that, I wish to reiterate that the ACP Council during its meeting last month in Brussels issued a Resolution, in which it expressed the view that our various member States need to scale up efforts to complete the negotiations while urging the EU to show greater flexibility and understanding by removing some of the obstacles standing in the way of a speedy and successful completion of the negotiations. Ladies and gentlemen, the ACP-EU JPA has been a unique forum where politicians from the South are given the opportunity to discuss in an open and frank manner issues that affect the lives of their peoples with their European counterparts in a spirit of transparency and solidarity. I wish to underline that the history of the JPA speaks for itself. We are looking forward to a three-day meeting with our European Members of Parliament and hope to conclude with a strong message on various issues that affect our peoples. May I conclude by underscoring that the successful conclusion of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly, this week, is evidence of the DRC's ability and competence to host international meetings. Thank you very much.

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