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ACP PRESS RELEASE 23 November 2010: A one-day conference launching a series of debates on the Sustainable Development in African, Caribbean and Pacific States was organised last week by the Department of Sustainable Economic Development and Trade Department (SDET) to discuss climate change challenges confronting ACP countries. The Conference-debate gathered ACP Ambassadors and high-level speakers including Mr Louis Michel (Former EU Commissioner in charge of Development and Co-president of APP), Mr Martin Khor (Director of the South Centre), Mr Lucas Assunção (Head of Unit at UNCTAD in charge of Environment and climate change), Dr Mulugetta from ACPC-UNECA, Mr Riera, Director, European Commission among others. The conference marked the beginning of discussions with the extremely crucial theme of climate change in order to better prepare the ACP States' participation in the forthcoming 16th edition of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties due to be held from Monday 29 November-10 December 2010 in Cancun (Mexico).

With the theme, "Climate Change and Sustainable Development of ACP States: challenges and financing prospects" the conference-debate shed lights on existing financing mechanisms for a low-carbon growth and mitigation /adaptation strategies in ACP regions.

In opening the conference, ACP Secretary-General Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas said: "Changing climate constitutes a danger to equitable and sustainable development requiring that adaptation strategies seek to manage the risk, support developing countries and their populations in building their resilience to climate change impacts, and ensure joint efforts within the framework of the ACP-EU partnership to eradicate poverty.

Additionally, stakeholders in the effort to cope with the impact of climate change should also consider mitigation strategies as useful tools." In that context, presentations highlighted: ■that despite being the lowest emitters of carbon-dioxide (Co2), ACP states are amongst the biggest victims of global warming;

■the fragility of the majority of ACP States, particularly the Small Islands Developing States confronted by the problem of climate change;

■the fast-tracking of resources pledged by the EU to provide developing countries in general, and ACP countries in particular with resources (2,4 billion Euros per year from 2010-2012), with a view to tackling climate change challenges;

■the existence of various common positions between ACP regions and the European Union in the area of climate change, namely the Cariforum-EU Declaration on Climate Change and Energy (May 2008); the Declaration of the Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum and the EU on Climate Change (November 2008).; the Africa-EU Declaration on Climate Change (December 2008).

In addition to these bilateral EU-ACP regions bilateral Declarations, participants also noted the urgent need to translate into concrete actions All ACP-EU Declarations on climate change adopted respectively in May 2009 in Brussels and in Ouagadougou in June 2010. A follow-up conference-debate will be organized after the Cancun COP-16 to assess its results and agree on the way forward on climate change both at the regional and the All ACP levels.

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