

Statement by the Secretary General at the High Level Symposium on ACP Private Sector Strategy, 10 November 2014 - Brussels

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It is a pleasure for me to welcome you all to Brussels, Belgium, and to ACP House, your House, for this High-Level Symposium on the ACP Private Sector Development Strategy; A PSD Strategy that will enable the ACP Group to facilitate the growth of a vibrant private sector and assist it play a major role as an engine of sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in ACP member states.

Let me begin by congratulating the Sustainable Economic Development and Trade Department for this initiative, and in particular, the Assistant Secretary General Achille Bassilekin, who made every effort to make this event possible. In order to ensure the participation of the largest number of representatives of the ACP private sector, especially chambers of commerce and industry, the Secretariat has made every effort to raise additional funds to ensure the participation of at least one representative from each ACP country and a host of independent experts from ACP.

I am pleased to report here that we have exceeded the expected target in terms of participation.

Indeed, more than 100 participants representing public and private sector stakeholders from ACP Missions, Embassies, intermediary organisations, ACP Regional Economic Communities, International Organisations and other development partners will be present during these two days to engage in a constructive discussion on how to shape ACP's private sector development strategy over the next five years, assisting member states to grow their economies in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Through this event, the ACP Secretary General has responded to the mandate entrusted to him by the Council of Ministers last June in Nairobi, to operationalize the ACP Private Sector strategic framework adopted last May, along with its joint cooperation framework adopted with the European Union, the ACP's long-term and privileged partner...

It is important to recall the purpose of this symposium.

This High Level Symposium aims to convey an "All ACP Platform" of actions and implementation mechanisms to stimulate the expansion of the private sector in ACP countries and regions, offering the opportunity to make a significant and positive change when it comes to the operationalization of the Private Sector Development Strategy in member states countries and regions.

For the operationalization of the ACP Private Sector Development Strategy, the ACP Business Climate PMU (BizClim) has recruited a Consultant, BKP Development Research & Development GmbH (BKP Development), to provide expertise and logistical support for an in-depth consultation across the ACP regions and the organisation of a high level Symposium.

An extensive stakeholder consultation process feeds into the development of the ACP Private Sector Development Strategy. Indeed, as part of this process, in addition to field missions in all six geographical regions of the ACP Group, a questionnaire has been prepared to collect feedback, suggestions and information on the formulation exercise for a new private sector development strategy for the ACP Group. I understand that responses are still coming in as I speak.

This questionnaire, published on the internet and administered to stakeholders in the regions and countries, along with the feedback from a large number of stakeholders consulted during the field missions, resulted in the gathering of information, data and valuable insights synthesized in the recommendations to be discussed during the meeting.

In terms of the 2-day gathering, under this Symposium format, as privileged representatives of the wide variety of stakeholders to this process, after the presentation of the recommendations regarding the key components and structure of the anticipated ACP PSD strategy this morning, a general discussion will take place. Later in the afternoon, a platform will be available to the three geographic regions of the ACP for a review and possible enhancement of the proposed Draft Strategy in the forms of the recommendations to be presented in the morning of Day 2 of the Symposium.

In the afternoon of Day 2 of the Symposium, actual and potential partners of the ACP Group as well as selected project management units of the ACP-EU partnership will have the opportunity to articulate how further synergy can be developed and lessons learned from existing and past programs for a better operationalization of the ACP Private Sector Development Strategy. The symposium findings and recommendations will then be synthesized for consideration in the Draft ACP Private Sector Development Strategy that can then be validated.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During these two days of stakeholder interaction, you will be hearing from the private sector experts about the various successful efforts and actions being undertaken in ACP regions and countries.

I would like the successful experiences in one region or country to be highlighted to serve as examples for the other countries or regions of the ACP group.

I would also like the Symposium to be a Launchpad for enhanced intra-regional collaboration, networking and communication not only around the ACP Private sector strategy but also on possible investment, trade, knowledge and expertise sharing opportunities across and within regions of the ACP Group.

From a process point of view, I would like to inform this distinguished audience that the outcomes of this Symposium will be integrated into the final Draft ACP Private Sector Strategy Document to be submitted to the Committee of Ambassadors for consideration in view of the 100th session of the ACP Council of Ministers, scheduled in Brussels, from 9 to 12 December 2014.

I wish to all participants and distinguished guests a fruitful exchange for the articulation of an ACP Private Sector Development Strategy, for the five years to come, that is pragmatic and result-oriented, with a governance and management structure that is accountable for the anticipated results.

I also hope and wish that this exercise is only the beginning of a long series that will allow for better participation in, and contribution to, the ACP private sector development agenda from the beneficiaries, ACP private sector intermediaries, and ACP consultants in order to ensure real ownership of the process.

Finally, I believe tow conditions need to be met for a sustainable implementation of our future Private Sector Strategy:

- First, there will need to be negotiation and compromise to ensure that all stakeholders are satisfied with the outcome; and,
- Second, it is important that the Secretariat is provided with the tools to be able to deliver results.

With that, I wish you a productive and successful Symposium.

Alhaji Muhammad Mumuni
Secretary General

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