107 ACP-EU Countries Walk The Talk On Global Governance

Brussels | Lomé – African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union will walk the talk on global governance by organising joint activities during United Nations conferences this year, according to co-presidents of the Joint ACP-EU Council of Ministers.

The Council issued a joint declaration reaffirming its commitment to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [1], and to the attainment of the long-term goals of the Paris Climate Change Agreement [2].

The joint activities ACP and EU have agreed are: the UN high-level political forum (HLPF) [3] on sustainable development in July, the UN Global Compact Leaders Summit in September, and the 24th Conference of Parties (COP24) [4] of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) [5] in December.

Jamaica’s Minister of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade, Kamina Johnson Smith, and Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Ekaterina Zaharieva said the ACP-EU joint activities are part of the plan to pave the way for a post-Cotonou Agreement [6] strengthening partnership between 79 countries of the ACP Group [7] and 28 member states of the EU (European Union).

Smith and Zaharieva were addressing a joint press conference following the closing of the two-day ACP-EU Council of Ministers meeting in Lomé, the capital city of Togo in western Africa, which concluded on June 1.


With this in view, ACP Ministers on May 30 adopted in Lomé a negotiating mandate for post-Cotonou partnership agreement with the European Union. The mandate accentuates that ACP will "engage the European Union Member States and European Commission in a single undertaking for a successor Agreement" as "a unified entity."

The ACP ministers want a comprehensive post-Cotonou agreement to reassess the ACP-EU partnership in the context of today's economic and geopolitical realities, which are significantly different from 1975, when the first Lomé Convention was signed between then 9 EEC States and 46 countries from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

Since then, membership of the ACP Group has expanded to 79 countries, while that of the EU is currently 28, but to become 27 with the withdrawal of Britain (Brexit) by March 2019. Brexit will result in the loss of Britain's contribution to the European Development Fund (EDF).

The expanded ACP Group and the increased number of EU members have their own priorities, thus necessitating the adaptation of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, the ACP ministers underline.

At the same time, many ACP Member States are now categorized as Middle-Income Countries (MICs), while they remain burdened by serious structural challenges of inequality, poverty, underdevelopment and increasing vulnerability that also affect the Less Developed Countries (LDCs). "However, the common thread binding ACP countries is their shared pursuit of sustainable development for their populations."
In Lomé, ACP-EU Council of Ministers deliberated on the situation of Middle-Income Countries addressing the "middle-income trap", implying that when countries have emerged from dire poverty to middle-income status, they can become stuck at that point, and stop making progress toward higher income levels thus jeopardising the realisation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Agenda, which the international community adopted in September 2015, aims at 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. It is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom, thus demonstrating the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda.

The Paris Agreement of December 2015 builds upon the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCC) and for the first time brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so. As such, it charts a new course in the global climate effort.

The joint declaration takes note of the increasing frequency and severity of climate-related disasters that have affected many ACP Countries, such as tropical cyclone Gita in the Pacific, hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean, and the recent drought in the Horn and Southern part of Africa.

With that in view, the joint declaration notes with "serious concern" that the current aggregate effects of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) are not sufficient to bring us on a pathway towards the long-term goal of holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The ACP-EU joint declaration further reaffirms "the existing commitments to strengthen the global response to the threat of Climate Change from all countries." And, it acknowledges the urgent need to create enabling environments through regulatory frameworks and to invest in further transformational changes.

The ministers of two groupings recognise the efforts of many countries towards the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and encourage those countries that have not yet done so, to ratify the Doha Amendment.

The joint declaration welcomes the growing global momentum to accelerate the transition to low greenhouse gas emissions development and climate resilient economies. It supports the continued efforts of the ACP and EU countries in this regard, including regional, national, and non-state actors.

The joint declaration looks forward to further evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and in particular the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and related greenhouse gas emission pathways.

The ACP-EU ministers welcome the launch of the Talanoa Dialogue to take stock of the collective efforts of Parties in relation to progress towards the long-term temperature goal and to inform the preparation of NDCs pursuant to Article 4.8 of the Paris Agreement.

They call on the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement to accelerate the completion of its work programme in order to fulfil its mandate at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 24) in Katowice, Poland, from December 3-14, 2018.

The ministers stress that the agreed rulebook for the implementation of the Paris Agreement should:

Be robust and comprehensive, and preserve the integrity of the Paris Agreement;

Cover all aspects of mitigation, adaptation and the means of implementation and support in a tailored and balanced manner, in accordance with the mandate of the Paris Agreement;

Be applicable to all Parties; and provide a common transparency framework for tracking progress, with built-in flexibility to take into account different capacities and build upon collective experience.

The joint declaration recalls that the Paris Agreement will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.

It welcomes the decision of the COP23, to explore a wide range of information, inputs and views on ways to facilitate the mobilisation and securing of expertise and enhancement of support, including finance, technology and capacity building, for averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events.

ACP-EU ministers welcome the launch of the Intra-ACP Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Programme (2018-2022), an initiative of the ACP Group of States funded with €70 million from the European Development Fund, to support ACP Member States to better address climate change.

They also welcome the Intra-ACP Climate Services Programme, an initiative of the ACP Group of States, funded with €85 million, also from the European Development Fund, to strengthen the capacities of regional hydro-meteorological organisations to take advantage of the full and open access to high-resolution data and value-added information from the EU’s Earth Observation Programme, Copernicus.

They reiterate their commitment to build on joint efforts that support ambitious climate action and to seek further opportunities to work together and mobilise further investment towards the full and effective implementation of the UNFCC and its Paris
Agreement.

The further affirm their intention to intensify their collaborative work in the international arena on specific common interests with particular focus on COP24.

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