

ACP Group outlines priorities for 2019, calls for a strong UN system

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Port of Spain, Trinidad, 02 January 2019, CMC –The 79-member African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States on Wednesday urged “vigorous support” for the United Nations in what it regards a “turbulent” global environment.

“Vigorous support for the United Nations to advance multilateralism will loom large in all the programmes and projects of the ACP in 2019,” ACP Secretary General, Dr. P. I. Gomes told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC).

The Guyana-born Secretary General said that in a turbulent global environment and increasing violence of regional and civil conflicts, “strong and unequivocal action by the UN system is needed now more than ever.

“This will require multilateral institutions and organisations to put their house in order and have clearly-defined goals that are pursued in strategic and systematic ways,” he added.

The diplomat said that areas such as peace-keeping and the fight against terrorism, for instance, in the Sahel region in Africa, should result in UN efforts geared to engaging in collaborative and complementary actions with regional and national initiatives.

Late last year, the ACP Council of Ministers condemned the growing spread of armed conflict against innocent civilians, especially women and children, in countries such as Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso and Cameroon.

The Council also called for urgent attention to the economic, social and cultural needs of the impoverished communities.

Gomes said that the ACP, with assistance from the European Development Fund (EDF), will mount development finance projects for job creation, skills development and cultural activities of film making and music in the Sahel region that complement military and security interventions.

He said the ACP also intends in 2019, to join forces with like-minded countries in concerted actions at the global level to redress the illicit financial flows from exploitation of commodities and enterprises in developing countries.

He said particularly encouraging for ACP’s actions in the global arena will be the 2019 non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council by five ACP member states – Cote d’Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea and South Africa.

“With these countries coordination of key interventions will be planned to advance reforms of the UN system so as to include wider representation of the world’s population of developing countries till now, after 70 years, denied a permanent seat on the Security Council,” Gomes added.

In the wide-ranging interview, Gomes said that the ACP Group is looking forward to the successful negotiations this year for a new partnership agreement with the European Union.

The existing Cotonou Agreement is a treaty between the two parties that was signed in June 2000 in Cotonou, Benin’s largest city. It entered into force in 2003 and was subsequently revised in 2005 and 2010.

It is regarded as the most comprehensive partnership agreement between developing countries and the EU and in 2010, ACP-EU cooperation has been adapted to new challenges such as climate change, food security, regional integration, state fragility and aid effectiveness.

The fundamental principles of the Cotonou Agreement include equality of partners, global participation, dialogue and regionalisation. The agreement is re-examined every five years.

Gomes said the ACP “will redouble efforts in our special partnership with the European Union (EU) to implement the gains of the common rule book of the recently held Conference of Parties (COP 24) in Poland on the Framework Convention in the fight against Climate Change and to secure financial assistance for ACP member states from the Green Climate Fund”.

Gomes told CMC the Brussels-based ACP Group sees the growing and insidious pursuit of nationalism and racist ideologies as serious threats to the attainment of peace, security and protection of the planet in the interest of common humanity.

“This calls for renewed commitment by all countries to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN’s Agenda 2030,” he added.

Source: Caribbean Media Corporation

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