

ACP mission secures Nigerian support for Post-Cotonou agenda

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Brussels, 5 October 2017/ ACP: Nigerian authorities conveyed their full support and solidarity with the ACP Group of States in preparations for negotiations for an ACP-EU post-2020 partnership agreement, during an outreach mission to one of the ACP's largest member states in West Africa.

In particular, the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria H.E. Yemi Osinbajo urged fellow ACP member states to remain united in their cause, and indicated his support for the establishment of an ACP Endowment Fund, which would assist in the development agendas of ACP countries.

The mission was undertaken by the Ambassador of Senegal and Chair of the Committee of Ambassadors H.E. Mr. Amadou Diop, the ACP Secretary General Dr. P. I. Gomes, and Food Security and the Environment expert Mr. Olusola Ojo from the 26th to 29th of September.

It is the second in a series of outreach ventures planned by the ACP Group to harness and solicit the support of its member states on the negotiation of future relations with the EU, as well as reinforcing the future of the Group. The first was a meeting with the President of Guinea and President-in-Office of the African Union H.E. Mr. Alpha Condé earlier this year. The ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership treaty, which governs trade, development cooperation and political dialogue between EU and ACP countries, comes to an end in 2020, and negotiations on a follow-up framework are set to kick off in mid-2018.

Discussions during the mission covered the basic principles intended to guide post-Cotonou negotiations, in view of an outcome that fulfils the goals and objectives of the ACP Group as foreseen in the policy framework document – *Towards the ACP We Want*.

Several high level political authorities were engaged, including the Vice President H.E. Professor Yemi Osinbajo, the President of the Senate H.E. Dr. Bukola Saraki, the Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Mr. Geoffrey Oneyama, Minister of Budget and National Planning H.E. Mr. Udoma Udo Udoma, and Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment H.E. Dr. Okechukwu Onelamah.

In a statement released by the Office of the Vice President, Prof. Osinbajo confirmed his “unalloyed support” for the ACP, especially in its agenda on climate change and others.

“Nigeria remains firmly in support of the ACP because we have benefited so much from the organization. But I also want to emphasize the need for us to stay together... The ACP has the potential to achieve a lot, especially in the focal areas of climate change, security and economic emancipation,” he stated.

The Vice President further emphasised the need for the group to review existing international regulations as it strives to address challenges of terrorism and armed conflict within ACP member-nations. He commended the leadership of the ACP for the work done so far and promised to convey the group's message to President Muhammadu Buhari.

On the issue of an ACP Endowment Fund, which has been proposed to assist member states, Prof. Osinbajo called it a “timely initiative” that will put members on the path of sustainable growth and development, as well as guarantee more

independence for the ACP Group.



In a separate statement, following his own meeting with the ACP delegation, the President of the Senate Dr. Bukola Saraki emphasised the importance of ACP activities to the development of Nigeria, as well as Africa as a whole.

“Our meeting centred around the revision of the Cotonou Agreement between African and Caribbean States and the European Union. We also discussed the need for greater collaboration in trade, industrialization, peace, security, migration and climate change between African and Caribbean States,” he stated.

“I emphasized how the work of the ACP impacts our lives, both directly and indirectly. This is because, in the past, the terms of negotiations and treaties have impacted the rate of development of various continents. From migration, climate change, and terrorism, this is an important time to press the rest button on many of these issues around the world. This is why the renegotiation of the Cotonou Agreement can help in getting better terms for Africa and its people.”

Aside from political dialogue, a technical session to interact with other top government officials and private sector stakeholders also enhanced the outcomes of the outreach mission.

Chair of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors, Ambassador Amadou Diop and the ACP Secretary General Dr. Gomes applauded the outcomes of the mission and commended the role played by Nigeria in advancing the cause of ACP both on the African continent and the global stage.

(Photos: ACP Secretary General Dr. Patrick Gomes and Chair of ACP Ambassadors HE Amadou Diop meeting with the Vice President of Nigeria Prof Yemi Osibajo (Credit: Novo Isioro); President of the Senate Dr. Bukola Saraki with Ambassador Diop and ACP delegation (Credit: Senate of Nigeria)

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