

ACP Private Sector Consultation on Post-Cotonou Negotiations

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Brussels 8 November 2018 /ACP/: On 1st and 2nd November 2018, an ACP Private Sector consultation on the Post-Cotonou negotiations was held in Bridgetown, Barbados. The meeting was organized by the ACP Secretariat with technical support of Business ACP.

The intended objective was to explore, assess and formulate relevant ACP private sector needs, demands and opportunities with a view to providing inputs into the post-Cotonou negotiation process.

The conference brought together over sixty ACP delegates consisting of entrepreneurs, representatives of intermediary organisations such as chambers and industrial associations, trade and investment promotion agencies, financial and non-financial service providers investors and policy and regulatory agencies.

In his welcome remarks, Assistant Secretary General of the ACP Secretariat, Mr. Viwanou Gnessounou, indicated that “if the ACP countries have to achieve the structural transformation they want for their economies, they have to partner with the private sector”.

The Guest of Honour, Minister of Foreign Trade of Barbados, Honorable Sandra Husbands M.P. further indicated that “the future of the ACP and the relationship between the ACP and the European Union cannot be finalised without paying credence to the significant role which must be played by the private sector and civil society.” The private sector must ensure that its voice is heard, since, “the productive sectors are key to securing the sustainable development levels which are designed and required in the ACP” said Ms. Husbands.



Referring to the evolving global context and the challenges that the EU and ACP States are facing, Ambassador of the EU Delegation to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean States, OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM, H.E. Ms. Daniela Tramecere, emphasized the role of the private sector: “You are one of the drivers for implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the key partners in realizing the objectives of this partnership: if you don’t work with us on this, we are not going very far.”

The two-day consultation allowed for candid, concrete and constructive deliberations between stakeholders, who discussed and shared experiences on key domains trade, investment, industrialization, services as well as technology, science, innovation & research.

H.E Colin Michael CONNELLY and H.E. Haymandoyal DILLUM, Chair and Vice-chair of the Technical Negotiating Team on Pillar 1 conveyed this message: "Having the benefit of the practitioners, our senior trade officials a week ago in Brussels, and having you now here in Barbados will enhance our approach in terms of the preparation of our negotiating brief". Recognizing the critical role of the field actors in the negotiation process, they both committed to incorporate the positions and recommendations of the ACP private sector in the Negotiating Brief on Pillar 1, which would allow ACP Negotiators effectively engage on issues of Trade, Investment, Industrialisation and Services with the EU and deliver on the goal of the Post Cotonou Agreement contributing to sustainable development of ACP States.

The key messages from the consultation were that the Post Cotonou Agreement should:

- a) contribute to the Industrial Transformation of ACP Countries through establishment of industrial parks, design studios and excellence centers;
- b) attract domestic and foreign investment in air, sea and land connectivity infrastructures and services that facilitate intra-ACP trade; and
- c) enhance trade by addressing non-tariff measures and promoting value addition.



Photo: (Mr. Vivanou GNASSOUNOU ACP Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department for Sustainable Economic Development and Trade; The Honorable Sandra Husbands Minister of Foreign Trade of Barbados and H.E Mrs. Daniela Tramacere EU's Ambassador to Barbados.)

Photo on top: (H.E. Mr. Colin Michael CONNELLY, Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Vivanou GNASSOUNOU ACP Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department for Sustainable Economic Development and Trade and H.E Mr. Haymandoyal DILLUM, Ambassador of Mauritius)

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