

ACP SG calls climate change "the most significant challenge to achieving sustainable development" at UN Meeting on Climate Action and Trade

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GENEVA, Sept 9, CMC – The Secretary General of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group, Dr. Patrick Gomes Monday called for increased efforts to deal with the impact of climate change noting that the “painful reality” is that its adverse impacts are more severe in the poorest and most vulnerable countries.

“Droughts, desertification, hurricanes, floods, agricultural losses, reduced water resources and sea level rise are major concerns for the ACP Group of states. Many of these countries continue to face serious impacts on lives and livelihoods,” Gomes told the first ever UN Trade Forum here that is examining the situation through the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Gomes said the devastation caused by Hurricane Dorian when it hit the Bahamas last week, is the latest evidence of the impact of climate change.

He said in the Bahamas more than 80,000 persons are homeless, in need of food and drinking water and there have been more than 40 deaths.

“Such existential encounters reinforce, the Special Report of the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of October 2018, which makes the case for urgent ambitious climate action to halve the amount of global CO₂ emissions from 2010 levels by 2030; and to ensure that CO₂ emissions reach net zero by 2050,” Gomes said, adding this requires rapid reductions in energy demand over the next two decades.

The Guyana-born diplomat said another disturbing report says the Greenland Massive Ice Sheet may have melted by a record amount this year and sea levels could rise up to four metres world-wide.

“In this global context, the ACP Group is committed to supporting member states address the causes of climate change by their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the impacts of climate change by the implementation of both adaptation and mitigation actions.”

He said the efforts of the 79-member countries through the Intra-ACP Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA)+ Programme of 70 million euros (One Euro=US\$1.29 cents) over four years, provides technical assistance and capacity building to ACP countries and regions to build resilience and adapt to the impacts of climate change while at the same time contributing to efforts at the regional and national levels to implement the Paris Agreement.

Specifically, the focus is on supporting national commitments towards low carbon economies by their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

He said under the Intra-ACP GCCA+ Programme, the Climate Support Facility (CSF) provides demand-driven, short-term technical assistance and training on climate change to ACP regional organisations and countries.

“In this effort, the ACP Group has reviewed all 79 NDCs of its member states. The findings show that ACP countries will need at least US\$2,317 billion, as well as support on capacity building and technology transfer, to implement their NDCs and address both mitigation and adaptation challenges.”

Gomes said in addition, the CSF has provided demand-driven technical assistance and capacity building to support several

ACP countries to plan and implement climate actions.

“In the strategic choices guiding our efforts, the ACP has focused on three (3) inter-related and mutually reinforcing levels of action: governance; investment and financing; and productive sectors and livelihoods,” he said.

Gomes said in the Caribbean, the CSF has supported the Commission of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in training 36 instructors in disaster and environmental management, identifying and analysing the links between ecosystems, disaster risk reduction, resilience and climate change.

He said this initiative also looked at mainstreaming eco-based disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation (DDR/CCA) into development policies, plans and strategies.

Gomes told the forum that the ACP Group will continue to place high importance on working with its member states and international stakeholders to address the impacts of climate change, both mitigation and adaptation.

“We sincerely hope that other partners will join forces to increase the ambition and support common efforts to ensure that we meet the global temperature goal of well below 1.5°C for the survival of our planet and people, for present and future generations,” he added.

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