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Brussels 14 December 2018/ACP/: The ACP countries are very concerned about the unilateral and discriminatory approach observed by the European Union in tax matters, as evidenced by its decision to publish a European list of so-called non-cooperative tax jurisdictions.

The importance of tax matters for ACP countries, in particular their political dimension which affects the sovereignty of States in areas such as economic regulation, resource mobilisation, has led to the creation of an ad-hoc ACP Ministerial Contact Group on Tax Matters to engage in a dialogue with the European Union in order to resolve in a harmonious manner the situation created by the inclusion of certain ACP countries on this EU list.

Following the report from the first meeting of the ad-hoc ACP Ministerial Contact Group, the ACP Council of Ministers emphasised the devastating economic repercussions that the European list of so-called non-cooperative tax jurisdictions has on the image, reputation and economy of those countries listed.

The Council of Ministers also recalled that the ACP countries listed, especially those that have made commitments to the EU to implement tax governance principles, are making considerable efforts. Their slow reform process, which is due to various constraints, especially in terms of capacity, technical assistance, and time frame, is not reason enough to be placed on the EU list.

The Council of Ministers reaffirmed that the ACP Group is not opposed to international tax governance, however it is against the unilateral establishment of a standard for the definition of tax good governance, which is at variance with that of the OECD, and without due consultations with ACP States.

The ACP countries call on the EU to respect and comply with the letter and spirit of the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement and to take immediate steps to refrain from listing the ACP countries, while dialogue is under way.

The Council of Ministers also mandated the Ad-hoc ACP Ministerial Group to engage the EU at the political level as soon as possible, to avoid any further listing of ACP countries.

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