Jamaica to steer Committee of Ambassadors in lead up to Post-Cotonou talks

Brussels, 12 February 2018 ACP: The Ambassador of Jamaica to the European Union, H.E. Mrs. Sheila Sealy Monteith has set in motion a rigorous plan of action under Jamaica’s chairmanship of the influential ACP Committee of Ambassadors, made up of envoys from 79 member states who regularly gather to monitor the organisation’s activities and policy implementation.

As Chairperson for the period 1 February – 31 July 2018, Ambassador Monteith will also lead a new Bureau of six regional coordinators, along with the Troika, who are responsible for coordinating the work of the Committee of Ambassadors.

Members include Ambassadors Teshome Toga Chanaka of Ethiopia (East Africa regional coordinator), Jacqueline Marie Zaba Nikiema of Burkina Faso (West Africa), Ammo Aziza Baroud of Chad (Central Africa), Sibusisiwe Mngomezulu of Swaziland (Southern Africa), Dylan Vernon of Belize (Caribbean) and Fatumanava Paó Luteru of Samoa (Pacific), along with a Troika made up of the incumbent Chair from Jamaica, the outgoing Chair Amb. Amadou Diop of Senegal and incoming Amb. Baroud of Chad.

At the first regular session of the Bureau on Tuesday 12 February, the new Chair announced the theme for the Jamaican presidency of the ACP Group: “Common interests; common goals; common destiny”.

Ambassador Monteith highlighted the importance of intensified collaboration amongst member states, in view of forthcoming critical months of preparations for negotiations with the European Union on the future ACP-EU relations, scheduled to commence by August 2018. The European Commission recently published its draft negotiating directives for consideration by the EU Council.

“The ACP must advance its own negotiating mandate,” she told Bureau members, mapping out a redoubled programme of activities for the Committee Ambassadors, aimed and producing a solid draft negotiating directive for adoption at the 107th session of the Council of Ministers set for 28-30 May in Lome, Togo.
A line up of key milestones to be achieved by then include: the completion of a negotiating strategy, the completion and immediate activation of the Central Negotiating Group and Technical Negotiating Teams, revision of the Georgetown Agreement (the founding document of the ACP Group of States), and further implementation of the mandates from the 8th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government.

Ambassador Monteith stressed the commitment of her country to leading the Group as they prepare for talks with the European Union, which will end in a new partnership framework between the powerful 28-member bloc and the ACP Group, to take over when the current agreement expires in 2020. Known as the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, the current framework is an international treaty that governs trade, development cooperation and political dialogue between ACP and EU countries.

(Photos from top: Members of the Incoming and Outgoing Bureaus of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors; Outgoing Chair Ambassador of Senegal H.E. Mr. Amadou Diop (right) hands over the reins to the new Chair, the Ambassador of Jamaica H.E. Mrs. Sheila Sealy Monteith (centre) in the presence of ACP Secretary General H.E. Dr. Patrick I. Gomes (left))

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