

New presidency for the ACP Group

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On Thursday 21st February, the ACP Committee of Ambassadors officially endorsed the new presidency of the Group for the period February to July 2013. The new President of Council is the Foreign Affairs Minister of Botswana, Mr. Phiso T. SELEMA, while the Chairman of the Committee of Ambassadors in Brussels is Mr. Gaetan O. OULLE. In outlining the priorities for his 6-month term, Ambassador OULLE highlighted a process he considers crucial: defining perspectives for the future of the ACP Group.

After paying tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Daniel Enohe Abie (Cameroon) to whom he attributed the success of the recent Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government, the new chairman of the Committee of Ambassadors, Mr. Gaetan Oulle, outlined the prime objectives for his term of office as, *inter alia*, an effective implementation of the decisions of the governing organs of the ACP, strengthening participation in the work of the Sub-Committees, the Secretariat and the Committee of Ambassadors. One of the most important aims is to define future perspectives for the ACP Group, as recommended by the late Secretary of State and Government (Equatorial Guinea, December 2012). In Ambassador Oulle's opinion, "We have the opportunity in the next five years, to work hard, and strategically on the future and its possible paths."

All "Member States Group" will attend the national ACP governmental organs and institutions in this task. The inaugural meeting of the Group will be held in Brussels on 25 March 2013.

The Council of Ministers scheduled to meet on March 26th will also need to take a decision on the appointment of the new ACP Secretary-General until the incumbent, Dr. Mohamed Elhachemi, was recently appointed UN-AU Joint Special Representative and Chief Mediator for Darfur.

Other priorities of the new ACP presidency include talks with the European Union authorities on the 11th EDF (European Development Fund 2014-2020). As regards the signing of new Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the EU, addressing the supply side and trade-related infrastructure constraints of the ACP countries, with a view to increasing their export capacities, is also considered a priority by the Group's new presidency.

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Press Attaché (Ag)

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