

# OACPS Hosts First-Ever Inter-Sessional Summit on Transending COVID-19 Pandemic

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Brussels, 29 May 2020/OACPS: The President-in-Office of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, will convene the first-ever Extraordinary Inter-Sessional Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the OACPS on 3 June 2020. The virtual Summit, which is hosted by the OACPS, aims to assess the current global COVID-19 situation, and in particular, the effects and consequences to the members of the OACPS. In addition, members will identify opportunities for global solidarity and action.

Themed, “*Transcending the COVID-19 Pandemic: Building Resilience through Global Solidarity*” the Extraordinary Inter-Sessional Summit will consist of a dialogue by the Heads of State and Government of the OACPS, which will be followed by a high-level exchange with global strategic and development partners, who will be key to achieving the objectives identified by the Heads at the Summit.

The Members of the OACPS share several unique challenges which have been intensified by the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic threatens recent advances in health and progress towards attaining global sustainable development goals. Members of the OACPS figure among some of the poorest countries in the world and are, as a result, more at risk to the devastating socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. It is expected that COVID-19 cases will overwhelm health facilities, leading ultimately to increased morbidity and mortality. There is therefore an urgent need to work with global health leaders, partners and governments, to ensure that the global response to COVID-19 includes lessons learned from other epidemics and communicable diseases, particularly as it concerns the protection of vulnerable populations.

Held simultaneously across the four time zones in which the OACPS operates, the Summit is expected to focus on three pillars: a. Building resilience b. Keeping economies functioning and rebooting for a strong recovery, and c. boosting global solidarity and deepening partnerships. At the conclusion of the Summit, the OACPS leaders are expected to endorse a Communiqué based on the aforementioned three pillars.

President Kenyatta became the OACPS’s President-in-Office following the 9<sup>th</sup> Summit of ACP Heads and State and Government in December 2019. In a recent Communiqué, he said that the Summit will provide the opportunity to, “make specific pronouncements on intended collective and collaborative approaches that will ensure that the effects of the pandemic have minimal disruptions to our economic and social activities and especially our productive sectors.”

This is the first high-level Extraordinary Intersessional Summit in the 45-year history of the OACPS. The Secretary-General of the OACPS, H.E. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, commended the leadership and vision of H.E. President Kenyatta, and stated that, “The COVID-19 pandemic calls for global action and solidarity. Together we can combat this virus and its dire socio-economic consequences, and secure the well-being of our citizens. Now is the time to work on innovative solutions that will also ensure global preparedness for the future.”

The Extraordinary Inter-Sessional Summit is expected to harness international support for Members of the OACPS, enhance multilateralism, and consider coordinated monetary and fiscal policy frameworks to kick-start growth and look at effective and forward-looking policy responses to help those most in need.

The COVID-19 outbreak has affected over 210 countries and territories worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of 28 May 2020, there were 5,593,631 confirmed cases and 353,334 deaths. Of these, Members of the OACPS accounted for over 106,700 infections and 2,719 deaths.

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The Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), formerly known as the ACP Group of States, is an organisation created by the original Georgetown Agreement in 1975, and subsequently revised in 2019. The OACPS’ main goals centre around the sustainable development of its Members and their gradual integration into the global economy; coordination of OACPS activities in the framework of the implementation of the existing Partnership Agreement with the European Union; consolidation of unity and solidarity among Members of the OACPS; and the establishment and strengthening of peace, security and stability in free and democratic societies.

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