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STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

Brussels, 15 September 2020/OACPS: On the occasion of the International Day of Democracy, on behalf of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), the Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, underscores the correlation between sustainable development and democracy, as a universal value and system of governance that grants all human beings and peoples the fundamental right to speak freely on the conduct of national affairs and to have a say in economic, political, social, and cultural choices. An inclusive approach to development is the only guarantee of social stability, peace, and security. The entire population – including young people, women, and men – must be involved in decision-making and reap the benefits of development.

In this regard, he reiterated the international commitments made by Member States, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Universal Declaration on Democracy of 16 September 1997, the 2000 Cotonou Agreement, and the revised Georgetown Agreement. Among other things, the latter aims to “consolidate, strengthen, and maintain peace and stability as a precondition for improving the well-being of the peoples of the OACPS, in a democratic and free environment.” This objective is in keeping with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which seeks to promote inclusive societies and responsible institutions that help to improve the quality of life for all.

As such, the Secretary-General welcomes the virtuous circle of democratisation in OACPS Member Countries, brought about by the establishment of mechanisms for promoting a democratic culture. This democratisation takes the form of peaceful transfers of power and the holding of free and fair elections, as well as the work of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly, which strives for and promotes democracy and development. In addition, the development of civil society now makes it possible to hold governments accountable to populations and taxpayers.

The Secretary-General urges all Member States to continue pursuing this democratic approach, in keeping with the OACPS' objectives to strengthen democracies, so as to intensify efforts to ensure inclusive, participatory, and responsible governance.

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