

**Groupe des États d'Afrique
Des Caraïbes et du Pacifique
(Groupe ACP)**



**African, Caribbean and
Pacific Group of States
(ACP Group)**

Inaugural Address

by

**H.E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti
Secretary-General of the ACP Group of States**

**to
the Special Meeting of
the ACP Committee of Ambassadors**

at

ACP House

on

Monday, 02 March 2020

Inaugural address by H.E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, Secretary-General of the ACP Group of States to the Special Meeting of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors at ACP House on Monday, 02 March 2020

Honourable Minister Luis Filipe Lopes TAVARES,

President of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP)

Council of Ministers,

Honourable Tête António, Secretary of State of the Republic of Angola,

H.E. Awad Sakine Amat, Representative of the African Union in Belgium,

Mr. Koen Doens, Director General, International Cooperation and

Development and Representative of the European Union,

H.E. Teneng Mba JAITEH, Chairperson of the Committee of

Ambassadors,

Ambassadors,

Excellencies

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for your kind words. I feel deeply honoured for the trust placed in me by the ACP States to lead our Group over the next five years. I am determined and totally committed to carrying out my duties in accordance with the revised Georgetown Agreement and the directives and guidelines of our leaders.

First of all, I would like to thank the President of the Republic of Angola, H.E. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, and the Government of Angola for their unconditional support and assistance in my election to this eminent post. As a son of Angola and of the ACP's Southern Africa region, I am grateful for the support I received from the region and for its commitment to providing support and guidance during my term as Secretary-General.

Allow me to also (sincerely) pay tribute to my predecessor, Dr Patrick I. Gomes, who led our Group over the last five years. Thanks to his initiatives, the ACP Secretariat's incoming management team has a substantive agenda for implementation and change. Patrick, for us it is an honour to follow in your footsteps. Thank you very much for your years of service to the ACP Group.

At the dawn of a new decade and in the 45th year of its existence, the ACP Group is operating in a multipolar, interconnected, and rapidly changing world. The global population is growing, and we are seeing increasing inequities. We are witnessing a shift in economic and political power towards Asia, complex geopolitical changes, transnational and global crises, attacks on multilateralism, and the emergence of new powers in Africa and Latin America. We are facing challenges such as the

management of scarce resources and the growing vulnerability of the sustainable and equitable development of the global economy.

In response to these challenges, we have noticed an increased interdependence among countries, as well the increased importance and growing role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and digitisation, which are transforming societies. Despite these obstacles and the well-known inadequacies of our global governance systems, the ACP Group has identified the way forward in order to achieve the sustainable development of our countries, namely the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My commitment to you is that the ACP Secretariat and I will dedicate our time and effort to implementing change in order to carry out the processes of reinvention, realignment, and repositioning of the ACP Group. My goal is to build a solid foundation that will allow the Group to effectively utilise its numerical strength and become one of the most important and influential players on the international stage over the next five years.

In pursuing that goal, I will lead the ACP Group in a number of processes:

- i. We will consolidate, conclude and carry out some of the following: the post-Cotonou negotiations; signing and implementation of the provisions of the revised Georgetown Agreement; full implementation of Council and Summit decisions and the operationalisation of new structures and bodies, external partnerships and internal administrative matters;
- ii. We will develop new, strategic, external partnerships with countries and international, continental and regional organisations;
- iii. We will increase the visibility and effectiveness of the Group in ACP States by caucusing among ACP representatives in major capitals, at the UN, and at international conferences;
- iv. We will improve internal and external communication through the development of a comprehensive strategy;
- v. We will ensure that value for membership is provided to Member States of the ACP Group;
- vi. We will secure the financial stability of the ACP Secretariat;
- vii. We will professionalise and transform the ACP Secretariat into a centre of excellence that will focus more on delivery and less on process, and more on people and less on bureaucracy. The need for accountability will be at the heart of this transformation, and through this exercise, we will also promote greater gender equality.

For the ACP Group to be *“fit for purpose,”* means that we will need to reform and be innovative in our approaches and methods. As highlighted before, it is my commitment to provide that strategic change leadership. I have developed a programme for my first 100 days in office, and during this period, the groundwork will be laid for the development of a flagship all-ACP programme focussing on the youth, including girls, and the digital economy.

Honourable Ministers,

Madam Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Be assured that we will be ambitious in our drive for change. We will strive for excellence. We will seek and deliver results. We will serve you better and we will do our utmost to make a meaningful difference to the lives of ACP peoples.

Let me conclude and paraphrase a quote from President Nelson Mandela - *“There is no passion to be found in playing small - settling for a life*

that is less than the one you are capable of living.” Now is the time for the resurgence of the ACP Group of States on the global stage!

I thank you for your attention.