



**Welcome address by the Secretary-General of the  
Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States  
(OACPS), H. E. Mr. Georges Ribelo Pinto Chikoti**

**for the Special meeting of the Bureau  
of the OACPS Committee of Ambassadors**

**with**

**the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and  
Development**

**OACPS House**

**7 September 2020 from 15:30 to 17:00**

**Herr Minister,  
Mr. Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Guten Nachmittag, Herr Minister. Ich heisse sie zu unserem Hauptsitz herzlich willkommen.

You are the first dignitary that we receive at the new temporary building of the Secretariat of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to receive you during a time that coincides with the German Presidency of the European Union. Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to exchange views with the members of the Bureau of the OACPS Committee of Ambassadors.

We live in extraordinary times. The COVID-19 pandemic is sweeping the world in the same year that the United Nations is commemorating its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. With the pandemic, we have witnessed the acceleration of the current, negative trend towards a more polarized and fragmented world. Apart from its socio-economic impact on all countries, the pandemic

has amplified this geopolitical fragmentation and magnified fault lines between nations. In the era of a globalised, inter-dependent, inter-connected and constant changing world, there is a call for global solidarity. This can be achieved through the promotion of collaborative, transparent and robust coordinated approaches and partnerships.

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the growing importance and role of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), and digitalisation that transform societies. This gives me much hope for the future. Within the COVID-19 context, and despite the many challenges and the well-known inadequacies of our global governance system, there is still a solid pathway to the sustainable development of all countries: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

The OACPS is appreciative of the positive role that the German Development Agency, GiZ, is playing in our countries. Through the European Development Fund (EDF), important projects and programmes are being executed by GiZ to the benefit of our countries and peoples.

At the beginning of a new decade, and in our 45<sup>th</sup> year of existence, the year 2020 brought many changes to the OACPS, but most importantly the implementation of the vision of our Leaders to transform the OACPS into an Organisation that is “fit for purpose”, one that is a valuable, reliable and an important player on the global scene. In pursuit of this objective, we will strengthen our longstanding relationship with the European Union and foster complementary and mutual beneficial partnerships with other countries and Organisations. In partnership, we will promote multilateralism and contribute to the gradual restoration of a fair, just and equal geopolitical landscape.

In the post-Cotonou negotiations with the EU, the OACPS wants to make sure that the new Agreement provides provisions to address, in an adequate manner, the challenges and opportunities of a changing, multi-polar and inter-connected world. During its EU Presidency, the leadership of Germany is crucial for the timely conclusion of the post-Cotonou Agreement. As an Organization, the Member States from Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific are united. A relevant and dynamic new agreement will strengthen not only the

OACPS, but also our longstanding partnership. When we are together, we are stronger.

**Herr Minister,**

As Secretary-General of the OACPS, I would like to assure you that we will further enhance our existing relationship with the EU. Our relationship should be one that is beneficial to both partners, one that is respectful to differences, and one that is built on trust and confidence. The current geopolitical landscape calls for the utilization of our joint numeric strength to drive processes of change, our citizens look towards us to make a difference, to manage resources more effectively, and to provide the leadership for a more strategic management of global affairs. Let us just do it!

I wish you and your country a very successful German Presidency of the European Union, and you can count on our support.