



New Africa-Caribbean-Pacific/EU Partnership: moving forward towards a new partnership fit for the future

Brussels, 14 February 2020

Today, new impetus was given to the post-Cotonou negotiations on a new agreement between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) as the two chief negotiators agreed on the way forward.

Commissioner for International Partnerships and the EU's new chief negotiator, Jutta **Urpilainen**, said: *"I am personally committed to accelerate our talks to try to reach a final agreement soon. We made real progress in today's meeting to move forward to a new partnership fit to address today's realities, meet our mutual needs and champion our common vision of the world, solidarity and progress. I am honoured to take up this function as the chief negotiator for a treaty covering over half of the of the world's nations".*

Robert **Dussey**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Togolese Abroad, the ACP's Chief Negotiator and Chair of the Ministerial Central Negotiating Group, said: *"We are very pleased to have concluded the first working session with the new EU chief negotiator, Ms Urpilainen. The atmosphere was cordial, the meeting was productive and the discussions were frank and direct. The parties noted significant progress made both on the common foundation and on regional protocols."* Minister Robert Dussey continued: *"Regional protocols that focus on the needs and aspirations of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries will ensure that the new agreement is inclusive and at the same time sensitive to the diversity of the ACP group."*

Extending the Cotonou agreement until December 2020

The Cotonou Agreement is a comprehensive association agreement, covering the EU-ACP relations. It is due to expire on 29 February 2020. As negotiations on the future agreement are still under way, parties have agreed on transitional measures to extend, without any change, the application of the current Cotonou Agreement until December 2020. Thus, the legal and political continuity of the ACP-EU Partnership will be ensured.

Progress made and next steps

Meeting with the ACP and EU negotiation teams, the two chief negotiators have made substantial progress in relation to the regional partnerships. Both sides have agreed on key chapters of the regional partnerships within the future ACP-EU agreement. In the weeks to come, EU and ACP teams will carry on the negotiations, merging proposals and fine-tuning the text of the agreement. These include the general provisions, means of cooperation, institutional framework and final provisions.

Background

Negotiations on a new ACP-EU Partnership were launched in September 2018, in New York, in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly.

The initial rounds of talks mainly focused on the "common foundation", which sets out the values and principles that bring the EU and ACP countries together and indicates the strategic priority areas that both sides intend to work on together.

The future agreement is due to include specific, action-oriented regional partnerships focusing on each region's needs. Consultations on the regional partnerships were concluded in spring 2019.

The future ACP-EU Partnership will serve to further cement the close political ties between the EU and ACP countries on the world stage. Together, the ACP countries and the EU represent over 1.5 billion people and more than half of the seats at the United Nations.

For more information

[ACP Negotiating mandate](#)

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