



**EMBASSIES OF THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES  
& MISSIONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**ACP DAY SEMINAR ROUNDTABLE**

**The Challenge of Global Governance in the Emerging World Order  
What Role for the ACP-EU Partnership?**

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**The Context**

Fellow Ambassadors, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is both a pleasure and an honor for me to address you on ACP Day as we gather to reflect on a relationship just shy of its fortieth year, that between the EU and the ACP – a relationship born of a different time – under different circumstances - with an institutional interface and architecture as unique then as it is today grouping as it does the 79 members as the ACP in the largest trans-hemispheric international organization in the world, in a partnership with Europe, long acknowledged as the classic model of north-south cooperation for development.

The ACP framework was established all these decades ago out of the Georgetown Agreement of 1975 to provide the institutional interface and structure within which to manage the relationship between ACP member states and Europe specifically in relation to the implementation and execution of arrangements under the Lome Convention. The impending end of term of Lome's successor, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement in 2020 provides the space within which to raise legitimate questions with respect of the future of the ACP both as an institution and as a group, and the nature of the ACP-EU partnership going forward. These questions will of necessity be contextualized and influenced by the geopolitical realities and evolving world order of today, one that is markedly different – even in its nomenclature - to that which influenced and shaped the contours of the partnership almost four decades ago.

The ability of the ACP-EU partnership to become an effective vehicle for improving global governance also depends on the ability of that partnership to absorb and reflect the dynamism and change taking place in the world today. The global geopolitical landscape is perhaps today more fluid, more turbulent, more exciting and richer with possibilities than at any other time in modern history. Changes in world

view involve all regions of the world - north and south, east and west – cut across all ideologies - and involve all spheres of human interaction and discourse: economic, political and social. Change is perhaps the single most dominant characteristic of the world today. An understanding of both the changes in the world order and challenges in global governance together with a mind set open to change is a pre requisite however, if the ACP-EU Partnership is to play an effective role in global governance.

## **The World in Transition**

How has the world changed? A better question might be: how has it not? Change at almost breathless speed perhaps best describes the world today. While undoubtedly some measure of change on different fronts was proceeding slowly under the radar of mass consciousness, over the last ten years or so the pace and scope of change in the world seems to have taken a quantum leap. New actors and players have emerged on the world stage while others have lost their prominence.

Perhaps nowhere has change been more vividly reflected than in the reality that the so called emerging economies have now arrived and are taking their place on the international stage among the worlds largest economies. New systems of national accounting place several emerging countries: India, Brazil for example - among the top five - ten of the worlds largest economies. The economies of Asia have grown in leaps and bounds; several are among the world's top 15 economies. Reports suggest that China is poised to overtake the USA as the world's largest economy by 2015, far sooner than expected. Millions have been lifted out of poverty in Brazil and China providing new economic models with domestically driven growth replacing old export led models as growth engines.

The last decade has been the decade of the continent of Africa with Chinese investments providing not only successful new models of south south cooperation but also displacing the role of multilaterals in some of the continent's most remarkable successes. The collapse of the international financial capital markets has seen finance move from south to north as countries such as Brazil provided millions to the IMF to rescue countries here in Europe. Labor that moved from south to north in search of jobs is now moving south, from Greece, from Spain, from



Portugal to find jobs in former colonies in Latin America, in Angola and other countries in Africa. The former colonies themselves have made investments in the former empires of Europe. For the first time, recently, the USA lost a vote at the OAS by a margin of 31 to 3.

Along the path of this journey of unprecedented change countries are asking for more of a say in the institutional financial global architecture commensurate with their economic might. New forum such as the G20 have been established to include the voice of those new players. The labels of donor and recipient have been tempered by a new realism as new actors flex economic and political muscles. The old world order has been shaken and is being tested to its core

In this mix are the people of the world demanding to have a greater say in the decisions that affect their lives and shape their future. Gone are the days when governance was viewed as the domain only of governments. We see this in the marches in Brazil even as this country stands on the eve of hosting the World Cup. In the various Arab springs, summers and falls the move towards democracy has been punctuated by elections, "non coups" and new rounds of violence and poverty. All over the world the digital divide is a thing of the past and digital media is now one of the greatest unifying forces among the young through which they ensure that their voices and actions are seen and heard. The young are less concerned about ideology and more concerned about the meaning of democracy, equity and the quality of life. And people the world over have little trust in the financial institutions which seem to betray over and over again with repeated scandals linked to collusion on a number of fronts.

The unipolar world is now a multipolar world; a new world economic order is replacing the old and citizens of the world are raising questions which have at their very core issues of governance.

Here in Europe change is also taking place. Headlines question Europe's ability to shape its neighbors. Questions are asked about its ability to stand as a beacon of prosperity and stability to the unstable and poorer regions around it even as it aspires to play a vital role in spreading peace, prosperity and good government to its wider neighborhood. The biggest success perhaps came in 2004 when the EU went

from 15 to 25 members as its union shifted further east in an exuberant example of the European ideal. It seemed possible for Europe to shape its neighborhood through market access, technical support and aid in exchange for reforms, economic and political in nature. There was a sense until recently that Europe expansion eastwards and the spread of western values was inevitable until recent events in Ukraine brought an abrupt pause if not end to the notion that all the players were on the same stage and the music and the dance was the same. As of now the dancers have frozen in mid flight and the next score remains to be written. With urgent calls for a review of the diminishing budgets given to defense spending in the context of NATO, and the still fragile state of euro zone economies, the EU is itself engaged in introspection regarding its model in its neighborhood, its clout in the world and the future of its relationships, including that with the ACP.

### **What Role for the EU-ACP Partnership in Global Governance?**

What role is there for the EU-ACP Partnership in Global governance? I rather suspect that this question will be answered far less speculatively over time as the terms of engagement post 2020 between the two groups become more visibly articulated. The early ACP-EU relationship marked by dependency, asymmetry and patronage was born of a different time reflective of historical ties between former colonies and former empires. Colonies have matured considerably over the intervening years politically and economically. Some ACP countries have emerged as economic power houses in their own right, and a multiplicity of complex issues come to play in determining the contours of any new relationship especially given the reality of European enlargement which has brought with it countries who have no experience and perhaps little empathy for the conversations which take place between former colonies and their former empires.

The changes in the world order raise compelling questions for the ACP membership as a group, as different regions and as individual members: given the changes around us, and the shifts in economic and political weights - what is the developing world's vision for its future? This is a conversation which spans not just the ACP group but also that of the Nonaligned Movement, the G77 + China and others. A shared vision for the future strengthens the possibility of negotiating a relationship with the EU based on a greater sense of equality and also provides a solid platform



from which to engage in other fora as a respected voice in matters of global governance.

There can be no doubt that the partnership that has developed over the past several decades between the ACP and the EU is one that has been very important to each and rich in experiences. The ACP has provided a platform through which the EU has extended the scope of its geographic, economic and geostrategic reach. And the Partnership has unlocked very important resources - difficult as these are to access – for the development of ACP member states. Today however the developmental model has changed and countries such as China have advanced new and bold responses to the question of underdevelopment.

The extent to which the EU ACP partnership is able to be a credible and important voice in global governance over and above the fashioning of various declarations in different multilateral arenas will very much depend on the future which the ACP sees and wants for itself as a political group, the nature of the relationship between the two partners, the areas around which they agree to cooperate and the sticky issue of financing the institutional aspects of the relationship.

There is every reason to be confident, however, that a partnership that has outlived many marriages will find the way to refashion a strong and durable relationship. Only through forging a relationship based on mutual respect dignity and understanding, however, can it become a credible voice in tackling some of the thorniest of global governance issues, together.