

Special Session of ACP Committee of Ambassadors

Wednesday 15 April, 2014

ACP House

Statement by the Chair of the Committee of Ambassadors

Your Excellency the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Dr. José GRAZIANO DA SILVA

Secretary General of the ACP Secretariat, Ambassador Dr. Patrick I. GOMES

Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

You would recall that in December 2012, the ACP Group, generously hosted by the Government and People of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, organised and successfully held its 7th Summit of Heads of State and Government under the theme: “The Future of the ACP Group in a Changing World: Challenges and Opportunities”.

The main Outcome of the Summit, the Sipopo Declaration, clearly reiterates the unflinching commitment by ACP

Member States to sharing the responsibility for the eradication of poverty and achieving sustainable development, while at the same time ensuring the smooth and gradual integration of ACP States into the world economy.

The Sipopo Declaration, which was signed on the 14th December 2012 by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Dr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, recognizes the role of agriculture as an engine of economic growth and development, and reaffirms the commitment of ACP Member States to increase agricultural production and productivity on a sustainable basis.

In addition, the Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening food security, through improved access and availability of safe and nutritious food for the most vulnerable, particularly women and children, better market information, more open trade, comprehensive rural development and agricultural research and innovation.

Your Excellency the Director General,

The ACP has long regarded the FAO as a valuable partner in its efforts to attain the Group's stated objectives; and in an effort to formalize this partnership, you would recall that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in Malabo on 13th December 2012, by your esteemed self on the one hand, and the former Secretary General of the ACP Group, His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas. The MoU outlines the areas of common interest between our two organisations, one of which is the issue of climate change.

The ACP Countries have over the years suffered from the impacts of climate change, most recently manifested by Cyclone Pam in the Pacific Region, which devastated not only Vanuatu, but also adversely affected neighbouring countries, including Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands and Kiribati.

Climate change poses one of the most serious immediate and long-term threats that undermine the achievements of sustainable development in ACP Countries. The scientific evidence shows that, the adverse impacts of climate change are happening faster and are more extreme than previously. They are affecting livelihoods, peace and

security, causing threats to water and food security and the displacement of peoples in ACP States.

Climate change must therefore be addressed in an urgent and decisive manner in order to ensure the very survival of many ACP States, particularly Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Countries in Africa.

In this regard, the ACP will be working during the next few months to ensure our Member States are well prepared for COP 21, and we would like to seize this opportunity to encourage the FAO to partner with us to ensure the outcome in Paris is a legally binding Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Your Excellency the Director General,

Secretary General

Excellencies, Dear Colleagues

Since signing the Memorandum of Understanding, the ACP Secretariat, through the CTA, has been working closely with the FAO to promote Agriculture and Rural Development in ACP regions and countries, primarily through

- **CTA-led Annual International Conferences**
- **The FAO-led IMARK modules on information and knowledge management tools and practices;**
- **Providing support for the Caribbean Week of Agriculture;**
- **Promoting e-strategies/e-agriculture, and**
- **Participation in CTA-led Brussels Policy briefings.**

Through its Intra-ACP Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) Programme, the ACP is helping ACP Member States to better tackle climate change as a challenge to their development.

One of the priority areas of cooperation identified by the FAO and the ACP speaks to the integration of climate change into development strategies and to this end the Intra-ACP GCCA Programme has supported a number of ACP countries to integrate climate change aspects into land use policy and physical development planning.

As the Intra-ACP GCCA programme is expected to end in June 2016, preparations have already begun to develop a potential second phase of the programme under the 11th EDF. A second phase will provide further opportunity for

collaboration with the FAO to assist ACP countries to adapt to climate change.

Over the last three years, the ACP has also implemented or is implementing projects related to, inter alia, Disaster Risk Reduction, Fisheries, Trade, Science and Technology, Forest Management and Biodiversity Protection – all of which are areas that were identified as priorities with in the MoU to which I earlier referred. The continuation of some of these initiatives will be decided when the Intra-ACP Strategy for the 11th EDF is adopted, hopefully not too long from now.

Looking ahead, Your Excellency Director General

This year there are a number of important global Conferences which must be taken into account, namely:

- The Third Conference on Financing for Development which is scheduled for the 13th–16th July in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;**
- The UN Summit: Delivering on and Implementing a Transformative Post–2015 Development Agenda, which will be convened in New York on the 25th–27th September and**

- **The Twenty-first Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21), to be held in Paris France from the 30th November – 11th December.**

These, in our opinion, provide opportunities for further collaboration between our two organisations.

In conclusion, we are fully cognisant of the fact that the future of the ACP will depend on its ability to establish and strengthen strategic partnerships with other Groups of States and with international organisations such as the FAO, in order to continue the struggle to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development in ACP Member States.

The ACP therefore looks forward to working closely with the FAO to address the challenges to development in ACP Countries.

With these few words I would like to now call on our distinguished Secretary General to present the profile of Dr. Graziano to this august body. Such are Dr Graziano's profile and accomplishments that it would be difficult to present them within such a condensed programme. I wish the Secretary General well with this formidable task.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Secretary General you have the floor.

15th April 2015
