



**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT**

**OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,**

**COMRADE R.G. MUGABE,**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 8<sup>TH</sup> ACP SUMMIT,**

**PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA,**

**31 MAY, 2016.**

Right Honourable, Mr. Peter O'Neill, Prime Minister of the  
Independent State of Papua New Guinea and President of  
the 8th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government,  
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government of the  
African, Caribbean and Pacific countries,  
Honourable Ministers of the ACP Group,  
Distinguished Representative of the United Nations  
Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon,  
Distinguished Representative of the European Union,  
Heads of Regional Economic Communities,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Comrades and Friends.

On behalf of my delegation, and on my own behalf, I wish to  
extend our warmest congratulations to you, Prime Minister  
O'Neill, on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the 8<sup>th</sup>  
Summit of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Heads of State  
and Government. I also wish to express our heartfelt  
appreciation for the warm hospitality that my delegation and I

have enjoyed since our arrival in your friendly city of Port Moresby.

Honourable Prime Minister,

I feel greatly honoured to be amongst distinguished Heads of State and Government gathered here today, to chart a new vision and future for the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States. In December 2012, we met in Equatorial Guinea, for a groundbreaking discussion on the future of the ACP. Then we agreed that the ACP Group should be transformed so as to remain relevant, and continue serving our interests, deepening our solidarity, and enhancing South-South co-operation.

The foremost task of this Summit is to clearly re-define the Group's core principles, and align its objectives and, even, perhaps, arch a new framework altogether. The dramatic, and ever evolving global realities and challenges, dictate that we similarly re-orient our ACP Group. Thus, the theme of our Summit, "*Repositioning the ACP Group to Respond to the Challenges of Sustainable Development*", should, therefore,

give impetus to our deliberations today and the Group's future endeavours.

Honourable Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
This year marks 41 years since the signing of the Georgetown Agreement, by which we committed ourselves to a relationship with the European Union. With the birth of an ACP-EU partnership in 1975, came the evolution of the largest inter-continental body of developing countries, whose vision, then, was to enhance the political identity of the ACP Group, to enable it to act and speak with a united voice in all international fora, and to contribute towards the realisation of a new, fairer, and more equitable world economic order. The question that confronts us today is; "Have we lived up to that vision as an ACP family, and what impact has the ACP-EU partnership had on our well-being?"

As we all witnessed with the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the EU has embarked on fundamental institutional transformation to strengthen its position as a global player. Against a backdrop of enlargement, the EU has shifted its

strategic interests to focus on its immediate neighbours in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean.

Naturally, the ACP has to respond to these dynamics as the Cotonou Partnership Agreement nears its end in 2020. We commend the initiative by our Ministers who established the Ambassadorial Working Group on Future Perspectives and the Eminent Persons Group, to intensify reflections on the future of the Organisation.

We further note, with satisfaction, that the reflections have pointed to the fact that the new ACP needs to concentrate its resources and efforts, on clearly defined parameters and domains, for sustainable development. The new ACP should avoid duplicating activities that are being carried out by other regional and international organizations, which our countries are already party to.

We believe that, focusing on trade, investment, industrialisation, development co-operation, science and technology, and research and innovation, would help the ACP

to capitalise on its numerical strength and geographical spread, in promoting equitable and sustainable development for the benefit of our people. The fight to eradicate poverty remains protracted, daunting, and demanding that we all marshal our actions towards the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030.

Your Excellencies,

The new ACP, post-2020, should buttress our regional integration efforts, by actively recognizing and supporting the roles and objectives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), in the furtherance of sustainable development, co-operation and dialogue. In pursuit of the latter, the ACP should seek to adhere to the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity, and proportionality *vis-à-vis* the RECs, which are the invaluable building blocks towards sustainable development.

Similarly, the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), which we have negotiated with the EU, should reinforce, not negate, regional integration in the ACP. Taking cognizance that the EU

has taken the position that it will use the EPAs as a basis for a future EU-ACP partnership, it therefore becomes most imperative for the ACP to ensure that the EPAs fully embrace the needs and interests of our countries and peoples.

Honourable Prime Minister,

We note that development finance has constituted a critical lifeline of the ACP-EU partnership, for over 40 years, but has, regrettably, created a typical “donor-recipient” relationship, and the reviled dependency syndrome, while we have continued to be producers and exporters of primary products. While we are appreciative of such provided financial support, we have continued to receive from our EU partners, it has increasingly become clear that financial self-sufficiency should be our new *modus operandi*, as we drive our efforts towards the mobilization of our resources, aimed at a more robust and beneficial development thrust, prioritizing our collective interest as developing countries.

Honourable Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Summit should commit itself to gradually weaning the

ACP from development aid. Cognisant of the reflections that have already been done by the Council of Ministers on the funding of the new ACP, I nevertheless believe that Summit should mandate our Ministers of Finance to further reflect and elaborate on funding options for the new organization. Our ACP regions are endowed with a vast array of natural resources - flora and fauna, diamonds, gold, platinum, oil, marine life, land and highly educated citizens, yet we remain on the margins of the value chains. We cannot continue to be spectators while our primary commodities are driving an economic boom in the North and West.

Honourable Prime Minister, Comrades and Friends,  
The hard lessons learnt from the ACP-EU partnership as a North-South development model, require that the ACP's desire to diversify its forms of co-operation and partnership be pursued vigorously within the South-South framework of co-operation, as well as through a deeper economic interface. The emergence of new powerful economic players such as Brazil, India, Russia, China and South Africa (BRICS), and a shift in wealth, has opened up new avenues of co-operation for



developing countries, in particular the ACP Group of States. Fortunately, most, if not all, ACP States have, individually or as regions, collaborated with these emerging economies, thereby setting the basis for sound transcontinental co-operation. It is imperative for the ACP Group to move swiftly to integrate itself into the global arena and safeguard its interests by deepening political dialogue and establishing other viable, strategic, and mutually beneficial partnerships, beyond the traditional relationship with the EU.

Honourable Prime Minister,

The pre-requisite of peace and security in the pursuit of sustainable development, cannot be over-emphasized. I wish to recall the ACP's objectives of securing common peace and security, for present and future generations, as espoused at the establishment of this Group. I am convinced that no meaningful and sustainable development can be achieved by our countries, our regions, and the ACP at large, without sustainable peace and security. We condemn, in the strongest sense terrorism and the untold mayhem and suffering it causes to our countries and people.

In conclusion, I urge our Group, with the rest of humanity, to foster a peaceful and secure environment, that is conducive to the realization of the ideals that ensure the stability, growth and development of our nations.

I thank you.

RGM/gm