



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

DELEGATION TO THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

**The Head of Delegation**

Kigali, 21/10/2016

### **Inaugural Congress of ACP Press Clubs held in Kigali - 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>th</sup> October**

Extracts from Opening Remarks by Ambassador Michael Ryan, Head of EU Delegation, Rwanda

The ACP - European Union partnership has matured over decades, and is a cornerstone of the EU's relationship with much of the developing world. It is a partnership that is under review, as the Cotonou agreement nears its end, and parties reflect on what sort of future relationship they seek with the EU, and us with them. Our mutual relationship is underpinned by shared respect for human rights, democratic principles, rule of law and good governance. Media space and freedom to write and report professionally and responsibly are key elements to safeguarding the right to free opinion and expression, without interference.

The initiative of the ACP Secretariat to bring together today, here in Kigali, the press clubs of the ACP individual member states is an excellent step towards combining forces and sharing experience. I wish this Congress well in producing a Charter upon which the new federation of ACP press clubs will be founded. The European Union will no doubt give its full consideration to supporting an initiative that champions the principles of freedom of expression and a pluralistic media. Rights come with responsibilities. The world has become an increasingly dangerous place for journalists, due to conflict, crime and the actions of states. I do hope that the ACP press clubs will embrace the objective of protecting its members, protecting journalists.

I congratulate the Rwanda press club for joining this illustrious group, formed only a few months ago, the new kid on the block. Kigali has become one of the most appealing destinations for conferences in this part of the world. Only last week the Montréal Protocol meeting hosted here in this wonderful capital managed to achieve a ground-breaking result of huge importance to our planet. I hope that some of that magic will work on you all to bring about a positive outcome to this Congress.

Michael Ryan