



## Congress of ACP Press Clubs, 20-21 October 2016, Kigali, Rwanda

### Remarks by the Representative of the Secretary General of the ACP Group of States, Amb. Mamour Alieu JAGNE, Chef de Cabinet

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The CEO, Rwanda Governance Board, Professor Anastase SHYAKA

Your Excellency, Ambassador Michael RYAN of the European Union

The Representative of the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Andrew MOLD

The Secretary General of the International Association of Press Clubs, Mr. Jaroslaw WLODARCZK

The President of the Kigali Press Club, Mr. Gaspard SAFARI – our host today

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

All protocols respectfully observed

On behalf of the ACP Group of States, allow me to welcome you to this first Congress of ACP Press Clubs, taking place in this beautiful city of Kigali, with its equally beautiful people and scenery.

May I begin by paying tribute to all those who have contributed to the realisation of this important event today, after several years of planning. I would like to single out our hosts, the Kigali Press Club, who have worked tirelessly together with the Rwanda Governance Board to ensure that the prerequisites for a successful event in Kigali are put in place. In Brussels we worked closely with the International Federation of Journalists, and the Brussels Press Club, in planning the event and making contact with prospective participants. The Embassy of Rwanda in Brussels, led by H.E. Ambassador Olivier NDUHUNGIREHE with close support from Ms. Chouette MWAMIKAZI, was instrumental in obtaining the support of the Government of Rwanda in organising this Congress in Kigali.

I would also like to sincerely thank you the participants for being here with us today, travelling from far and wide, and in some cases taking days to reach here. To us at the ACP, this is certainly a manifestation of your commitment to this noble cause. Thank you for being here.

Honourable Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen

It would however be remiss of me however if I did not pay tribute to my team – Josephine and Catherine – who worked almost singlehandedly from within the ACP Secretariat, consistently finding solutions to all manners of logistical, financial, and programmatic challenges. I am very grateful to them.

Honourable Minister, Excellencies, Distinguished Participants



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Let me quickly turn to why we are here today. As you are probably aware, the Georgetown Agreement which constitutes the founding charter of the ACP Group back in 1975, as well as the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the ACP and the EU, enjoin us to work hand in hand with non-state actors. To this end, the ACP Group has been taking concrete steps to reinforce its working relations with non-state actors. These include establishing a Civil Society Forum from ACP countries, as well as platforms for interface with the private sector. To date however, no comparable forum exists in relation to the press and media from ACP countries; hence the need for a Federation of ACP Press Clubs. Our expectation therefore is that at the end of the Congress a Charter would be agreed upon, establishing the foundation for the Federation of ACP Press Clubs, together with a roadmap that identifies the next steps from here, how to bring on board ACP countries not represented here today, as well as the priority issues and activities of the Federation, going forward. For the ACP Group however, it is envisaged that in the near future the Federation will start to play a crucial role in enhancing visibility and public education regarding the activities of the ACP Group, given your capacity as multipliers of information, outreach to a wide variety of stakeholders, and your potential influence over public opinion.

Given the calibre of representation here today, we are already quite optimistic about the outcomes of your deliberations over the next two days.

In conclusion therefore, please allow me to wish you successful deliberations on behalf of the Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Patrick GOMES, who would have loved to be here today but had to attend to other pressing matters back in Brussels. We look forward to working with you towards implementation of the outcomes of the Congress, in collaboration with our partners, particularly the European Union.

I thank you for your kind attention.