



OPENING STATEMENT

**FOR USE BY H.E UHURU KENYATTA, C.G.H,  
PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE  
DEFENSE FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

DURING THE

**FIRST CELEBRATION OF THE OACPS COMING-  
INTO BEING (VIRTUAL)**

TO BE HELD ON

**8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021**

---

**H.E. Tuilaepa Lufesoliai Neioti Aliono Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of the Independent State of the Samoa and President of the OACPS Council of Ministers;**

**Dr. the Honourable Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and Caricom affairs of Trinidad and Tobago;**

**H.E. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, Secretary General, OACPS;**

**H.E. Daniel Evina Abe's, Dean of the OACPS Committee of Ambassadors,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**1. I am pleased** to join you for this first celebration of the **Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).**

**2. As you recall, during** the 9<sup>th</sup> ACP Summit of Heads of State and Government, which was held from **9-10 December 2019** in Nairobi, the Heads of States and Government took a decisive step in reshaping the OACPS group, through the **endorsement** of the **revised Georgetown Agreement.**

**3. The revised Agreement** included significant changes to the organization including a name change from the **ACP Group of States** to

the **Organization of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (OACPS)**. We are here **to, therefore, celebrate the first anniversary of the revised Georgetown agreement**, which took effect on **1<sup>st</sup> April 2020** during the **9<sup>th</sup> Summit**.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**4.** This is not simply a celebration of a revised agreement or a change of name from the ACP to OACPS. **It is a celebration of survival, resilience and a renewed confidence and boldness to face the future together** as OACPS.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**5.** The past year has been the most challenging for the Member States of the OACPS; as, indeed, for all countries across the world.

**6.** **The Covid-19 pandemic has ravaged our health and economic systems.** Livelihoods have been destroyed rendering hundreds of **millions** of our people into **unemployment** and **poverty**. The services sector, in particular the tourism sector, has been crippled with devastating impacts on coastal and island states.

**7.** **At the same time** the pandemic has created **opportunities** for **innovation** and **economic transformation**. Some countries have found new innovative ways to do things differently such as **relying** on

**domestic** or **regional tourism**, encouraging **eco-tourism**, and diversifying their **products mix**.

**8.** As I said last June during the **1<sup>st</sup> Extraordinary Inter-Sessional Summit of Heads of State and Government**, our **solidarity and commitment to intra-OACPS cooperation has been tested by the pandemic**. A **key lesson** is that we need to **synergize our energies** and use **creativity** and **innovation** to recover together and build back better.

**9.** Given this backdrop what does OACPS of the future look like? It needs to be a future of “***Transition, Solidarity and Unity***” as aptly captured in the theme of this meeting.

**10.** The OACPS of the future needs to operate within new geopolitical realities, growing heterogeneity of the OACPS group, a changing EU, and a development paradigm driven by the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, which transcends the traditional **North-South divide**.

**11.** Let us briefly look at what this would mean in **practical terms**.

**12.** The ACP, the predecessor of OACPS, introduced a new type of relationship between developed and developing countries based on **solidarity and partnership**; and supported the ACP countries to integrate into the global market.

**13.** It also provided **financial support** through the **European Development Fund (EDF)** and made some progress in **liberalizing trade** between economies through the **Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)**.

**14.** The OACPS of the future will **first**, need to build on these gains while at the same time **transition into making the OACPS** a more influential actor in the global economic arena.

**15.** With a combined population of over **1.1 billion people** and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of about US\$ **3.2 trillion**, the transition from ACP to OACPS presents enormous opportunities for **intra-OACPS trade and investments**; and the achievement of **greater shared prosperity** for all our People.

**16.** We should aim for a transition that supports **structural transformation** to foster **industrialization, diversification** of our economies and an **increase in value addition** of our primary products.

**17.** **Secondly, the OACPS of the future should** strengthen our **solidarity and unity**. Underlying the establishment of the ACP Group was our desire to promote **unity and solidarity** of the ACP States.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**18.** **Covid-19** has clearly demonstrated that none of us is strong unless all of us are strong; and none of us is safe unless all of us are safe.

Our recovery critically hinges on our implementing the **shared agenda**, with **unity and solidarity**.

**19.** This includes our **shared agenda** on **environmental sustainability climate change, financing for Development, multilateralism** and **peace and security**.

**20.** Many of our countries are already taking steps to combat climate change and translating the ambitions articulated in the 2030 Agenda, into tangible outcomes for their people. **We** need to create alliances and use forums such as the **Investment Climate Reform Facility** to continue to support the African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries to improve their **investment climate** and **business environment**.

**21.** **Regarding financing**, we need to use the various multilateral platforms to mobilize resources for development. **In** this context, we welcome debt relief measures, which have created the needed fiscal space to reduce the negative effects of the pandemic. **However**, we seek a **continuation of the debt suspension initiative**; and **debt cancellation**, for the most severely affected countries. The prolonged pandemic requires continuous mitigation measures.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**22.** To our partners, the EU members, we appreciate your contributions, especially through initiatives that unlock the potential of **digital finance** to **benefit women, youth**, and **entrepreneurs across African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries**.

**23.** Allow me at this point to appreciate our **negotiators** for **finalizing the agreement between the OACPS and EU.** The initialing of this agreement will take place this month, that is, **April 2021.** This relationship will further enhance our capacity to cooperate and to address issues of common interest, such as **health, education, business,** and **climate change.**

**24.** As I conclude, allow me to mention that through your support, **Kenya now sits at the UN-Security Council,** and, while there, we will strive to work with you in **articulating issues affecting our regions.** I assure you that we will keep working closely by collaborating for the mutual benefit of our countries and our peoples.

**25.** Finally, I once again say **"CONGRATULATIONS"** to all of us for celebrating the 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the coming-into being **of OACPS.**

**I thank you, Asanteni!**

**.....0000000.....0000000.....**