



**Statement on the First Anniversary of the OACPS**

**By**

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Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Jamaica**

**8<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

Jamaica is pleased to join in the commemoration of the first anniversary of the establishment of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), an occasion which also recalls the entry into force of the Revised Georgetown Agreement on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020. That occasion heralded the transition of the former African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States into a full-fledged international Organisation, with a membership of seventy-nine (79) developing countries, and having the distinction of being the only transcontinental organization of its kind.

This celebration comes at a time of unprecedented challenges, when the world finds itself in the grip of a deadly global pandemic. Member States are confronted with unimaginable challenges to guaranteeing the economic and social well-being of our peoples. Our individual and collective vulnerabilities have been laid bare. The difficulties imposed on Jamaica and other small island developing Member States are compounded by our particular vulnerabilities to economic shocks and environmental threats.

OACPS Member States must also face the effects of supply and demand shocks brought on by the disruptions to global trade, which include, importantly, access to much-needed vaccines to counter the coronavirus. In the face of these obstacles, we must seize the opportunity to fashion the OACPS we want, into an Organization that seeks to harness our collective potential to pivot in times of crises and support efforts to build resilience to exogenous shocks, despite our vulnerabilities. The theme of the celebration, the *“OACPS of the Future: Transition. Solidarity. Unity.”* is, therefore, most timely, as it fuels our determination to tackle the global challenges with which we are confronted, on the basis of our long-standing solidarity and unity.

A renewed and unified OACPS will further deepen South-South Cooperation among Member States, and with third states and other international and regional organizations. In this regard, we look forward to the full operationalization of the OACPS Information Centre for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. These partnerships will be critical in tackling immediate health, social, and economic challenges, and as we work to rebuild more resilient and sustainable healthcare systems and economies

The commencement of the second year of life of the OACPS fortuitously finds us on the brink of the initialing of the New OACPS-EU Partnership Agreement. We look forward to giving effect to this strengthened partnership with the EU, as we work, collectively, towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Jamaica is committed to multilateralism, a foundational principle of the OACPS. As we did, through active participation in the revision of the Georgetown Agreement and in the negotiation of the post-Cotonou Agreement, we will continue to play a constructive role, along with other OACPS Member States and the Secretary-General and his team, in strengthening the Organization to ensure that its aspirations become a lasting reality.

Happy first anniversary to the OACPS family!