

**Address by State Secretary, acting Minister for Development of the
Republic of Slovenia to the Committee of Ambassadors of the OACPS
14 October 2021**

Your Excellency, Secretary General,
Your excellency, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Angola,
Distinguished Ambassadors, members of the Committee of Ambassadors of the
Organisation of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States.

First, I would like to thank you for the invitation to speak in front of this distinguished
Committee of Ambassadors, I am very glad to be here today.

We are at the dawn of a very important step in the history of the EU – ACP relations,
the signing of the new Partnership Agreement.

The future Partnership agreement between the EU and the ACP states will be an
important framework to deepen our relations and an important tool to implement the
2030 Agenda. We look forward to its signature, now foreseen for spring 2022 and then
taking further steps towards its implementation.

As an EU Presidency, Slovenia will put all our efforts towards finalising internal EU
procedures which are still needed before the signing of the agreement. Approval of
the Council decision on signature and provisional application of the Post-Cotonou
agreement in COREPER, which is foreseen at latest in December, is one of our main
objectives.

We are encouraged by your ongoing support of the mixed nature of the agreement.
We understand that also on your side, there are some internal steps to be followed
before accepting the proposed changes related to the EU Party. We are looking
forward to receiving your support in the endeavour for concluding the new partnership
agreement as a mixed agreement.

We strongly support the parliamentary dimension in the EU-ACP relations, which
makes our partnership stronger. By actively involve the voice of the people, our
partnership is one of the kind in the world.

The pursuit of further strengthening cooperation between the EU and OACPS in
international scene will highlight the potential of our cooperation and represents an
important priority for our Presidency.

As a firm supporter of efficient multilateralism, we are actively participating in this
year's key international conferences, including COP 26, UNCTAD 15 and WTO's 12th
Ministerial Conference.

All these events present good opportunities to continue building on international
cooperation between the EU and OACPS.

Slovenia is fully aware that solutions for climate change and economic challenges need to be sought globally and in a participatory manner. Current COVID-pandemic reminded us again of the strong interconnectedness of the world.

We are looking forward to the joint EU-OACPS initiative in the margins of COP 26 on the 9nd November, where I will have the honour to give opening remarks alongside H. E. Secretary General Chikoti and the Commissioner for International Partnerships Urpilainen.

Recent IPCC Climate Report (from 9th August 2021) is warning of increasingly extreme heatwaves, droughts and flooding, and a key temperature limit (1.5C) being broken in just over a decade. The report "is a code red for humanity", as stated by UN SG.

Slovenia, wearing the EU Presidency hat in the run up and during the COP26 will do its utmost to contribute to the success of the COP26 conference in Glasgow.

Regarding WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference Slovenia shares a view that WTO should be rebooted and strengthened in order to face new challenges. A well-functioning multilateral trading system is of key importance to us. The WTO reform is crucial, including a functioning Appellate Body.

Let me now say a few words on the new financial instrument NDICI – Global Europe which will cover also ACP states.

After the adoption of the regulation in June, the implementation started to take place under our Presidency.

Our focus is to ensure that NDICI - Global Europe instrument is implemented in an inclusive and transparent manner.

The new instrument puts ACP region on the equal footing vis-a-vis other regions, since there are all regions under one instrument. This will enable better efficiency, transparency and coherence.

Your Excellency Secretary General, Your Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs, distinguished Ambassadors, allow me to briefly present also our Presidency priorities in the field of development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

Our Presidency programme in the field of development cooperation is focused around two pillars: (i) environment and green transition, and (ii) human development. Water as our main thematic priority connects both pillars.

A cross-cutting priority is gender equality along with women empowerment that remains high on our agenda.

On water: We aim at developing a comprehensive approach to water.

A concrete deliverable of our Presidency would be reaching a unified position of the EU27 in the form of Council Conclusions that would be also discussed and adopted by Development Ministers in the Foreign Affairs Council in November.

A common EU position and coherent action would strengthen the role of the EU in the global water landscape, in light of the UN 2023 Water Conference. There we would like to see Europe confirming its global leadership.

Our focus on human development is closely linked to the pandemic and its impacts. We tend to highlight health as well as food and nutrition security where the situation is worryingly deteriorating. Water, again, is one of the main prerequisites for reversing the trends.

After a year and a half since the WHO declared a global pandemic, the covid-19 situation is still heavily affecting our lives.

Slovenia strives to take a meaningful part in this global struggle, while ensuring that no one is left behind. In line with global solidarity, we have decided to contribute 500,000 EUR to COVAX AMC for 2021 and 2022.

We are also actively responding to the bilateral requests for vaccine- and medicine donations. We have so far donated 450,000 units of vaccines (and additional donation of more than 100.000 units of Pfizer is currently in the process), which places Slovenia "per capita" among the top donors in the world.

On food and nutrition security, we follow with concern that the COVID-19 pandemic is driving up acute hunger and systemic food insecurity in many countries. The new *Global Report on Food Crisis* [op. published in May] shows a dim and worrying picture. We are particularly aware that globally and in the longer-term, more people could die of hunger as a consequence of the pandemic than of the virus itself.

The two summits this year, in New York [UN Food Systems Summit, 23rd September] and in Tokyo [Nutrition for Growth, December], should be major global milestones to a more sustainable planet. Achieving an ambitious outcome of both Summits depends also on reaffirming that food security remains EU priority.

In the ACP working party we are giving attention also to water by showing examples for cooperation between the EU and ACP in this area through different perspectives. Besides water our main priorities are enhanced cooperation between the EU and ACP in the internationally scene and the Post-Cotonou process.

2021 is a year of increased EU attention to Africa, especially in the view of preparations for the 2nd AU-EU Ministerial Meeting and the 6th AU-EU Summit.

We look forward to the second EU-AU Ministerial (to be held in Kigali, Rwanda on 26 October). This event is also crucial for the preparation of the EU-AU Summit next year (early 2022). Minister dr. Anže Logar will attend the ministerial meeting in Kigali.

Slovenia, as the current Presidency of the Council of the EU, attaches particular importance to the EU-AU partnership. This is reflected also by our priorities in relation to Africa: water, multilateralism, cyberspace and culture.

Last but not least, let me briefly present the main features of Slovenia's development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

Slovenia considers international development cooperation an important facet of its overall international endeavours. Through development co-operation and humanitarian assistance, we support efforts in partner countries to eradicate hunger, lower inequalities, protect the environment and contribute to overall sustainable development.

Our major bilateral partners for development cooperation are the Western Balkans' countries. Other priority areas are the European Neighbourhood and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Slovenia allocates official development assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa mostly through multilateral channels. Bilateral development and humanitarian projects are implemented by Slovenian non-governmental organisations and other Slovenian institutions.

The activities in partner countries are designed to contribute to peaceful and inclusive societies, particularly good governance, and equal opportunities, with special focus on gender equality, quality education, as well as climate change, in particular sustainable management of natural and energy resources.

Regarding humanitarian assistance Slovenia is a strong supporter of the international efforts against famine and highly committed to contributing to global food security. We follow the growth of humanitarian needs in 2021 with deep concern. Since 2014, Slovenia has doubled its contribution for food security. In the recent years, Slovenia allocated humanitarian contributions to the following African countries: Somalia, South Sudan and Madagascar and also to Mali, Niger and Sudan.

Slovenia also contributed humanitarian aid for Haiti after devastating earthquakes - 60.000 EUR in 2021 [and 465.000,00 EUR in 2010 (for reconstruction of Haiti after the earthquake, including building a modular school).]

The biggest project in Sub-Saharan Africa (the Integrated Telemedicine and e-Health Program in Cabo Verde) has been implemented through ITF Enhancing Human Security. Since 2012 Slovenia enabled the instalment of 13 telemedicine centres on all inhabited islands. Slovenia contributed 1.4 million EUR for this purpose.

Our current focus is on Madagascar where due to the worst drought in four decades, there is more than million people exposed to food-insecurity. Madagascar's famine is the first in modern history to be solely caused by global warming.

These are just a few examples of our development cooperation and humanitarian aid activities in ACP countries. We are a small country but we are committed to sustainable development in line with Agenda 2020 and Paris Agreement.

Your Excellency Secretary General, Your Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs,
distinguished Ambassadors,

We all live in times which are unique in history, now is a crucial moment for development issues that we must not miss. As the EU Presidency we will do everything we can to contribute to a better, greener and more sustainable, as well as more just, recovery for all.

I would like to express my gratitude for your invitation and I am very thankful for being here today.