

ACP/28/065/12 [Final]

Sipopo, 14 December 2012

**7th SUMMIT OF ACP HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
SIPOPO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA**

13 - 14 DECEMBER 2012

SIPOPO DECLARATION

*"THE FUTURE OF THE ACP GROUP IN A CHANGING WORLD: CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES"*

**7th SUMMIT OF ACP HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
SIPOPO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA**

13 - 14 DECEMBER 2012

SIPOPO DECLARATION

Preamble

*We, Heads of State and Government of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group), meeting in our 7th Summit in Sipopo, Equatorial Guinea, on 13 and 14 December 2012 under the theme: “**The Future of the ACP Group in a Changing World: Challenges and Opportunities**”;*

- A. **Reaffirming** our deep commitment to the objectives and principles enshrined in the Georgetown Agreement establishing the ACP Group of States, and the Charter of the United Nations;
- B. **Aware** of the unique identity of the ACP Group which, with its seventy-nine Member States that possess common and specific cultural, historical and economic characteristics, is the largest formal and structured organisation for the world’s developing countries, which geographically spans three continents;
- C. **Convinced** that the strength, unity and solidarity among our States will sustain the future of our Group in a changing world of challenges and opportunities, and **determined** to create the necessary conditions to make our Group an influential player in economic governance and global policy;
- D. **Building on** the commitments made at the previous Summits held in Libreville, Santo Domingo, Nadi, Maputo, Khartoum and Accra;
- E. **Recognising** that the ACP States are partners committed to sharing a fundamental responsibility for the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and the smooth and gradual integration of our States into the world economy;
- F. **Mindful of** the political upheavals and geopolitical reconfigurations that have marked the international scene over the past two years and which demonstrate people’s unchanging desire for peace, democracy, justice, freedom and socio-economic well-being;
- G. **Considering** that since our preceding Summit held in Accra, Ghana, on 2 and 3 October 2008, the world has experienced many economic, financial and socio-political crises, which have proved to be obstacles to the economic and social progress of our States;

Hereby declare as follows:

Peace, Security, Stability and Good Governance in ACP States and Regions

1. **We recognize** that sustainable development can only be achieved in an environment of peace, stability, security, good governance and respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law; and the need to address, in the spirit of ACP solidarity, the deep-rooted causes of some of the conflict and instability in our States and regions through intra-ACP political dialogue, in accordance with the principles and objectives of the Georgetown Agreement.
2. In this regard, **we pledge** to actively undertake, in collaboration with the international community, concrete actions to establish peace, security and stability.
3. **We undertake**, furthermore, to improve the workings of the “*Framework and General Principles for an enhanced intra-ACP dialogue*” which the ACP Group has established to help prevent and settle disputes among or within our States.
4. **We welcome** the positive developments that have recently brought an end to long periods of political insecurity and instability in some of our States and **we resolve** to ensure the maintenance and bolstering of the newly restored peace in those States.
5. **We deplore**, however, the emergence or persistence of crises in some of our regions, such as the Sahelo-Saharan area and the Great Lakes region and **we pledge** to take concerted actions wherever terrorism, organised crime or religious fanaticism threaten the sovereignty, authority and territorial integrity of our States.
6. **We are determined** to spare no effort in effectively addressing the threats that transnational organised crime, piracy, terrorism and trafficking, especially of human beings, drugs and arms, pose to peace and security in our and regions. In this regard, **we advocate** for the successful negotiations of a robust Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) within the United Nations System and pledge to actively undertake in collaboration with the international community any actions to establish peace, security and stability.
7. **We strongly condemn** all violence against women and children including in situations of armed conflict and **we undertake** to vigorously combat this phenomenon which we consider to be a war crime and a crime against humanity;
8. **We reject** all forms of intolerance and undertake to promote and protect the rights of the most vulnerable groups in society, and to fight against all forms of discrimination based on race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

9. **We are determined** to consolidate the culture of democracy and the regular holding of free, fair and transparent elections. In that regard, **we recommend** the adoption or consolidation, at regional and continental level, of charters that proclaim the principle of “zero tolerance” in respect of the accession to, or the retention of, power by unconstitutional means.
10. **We reaffirm** the statement of the 6th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government held in Accra, Ghana, on 2 and 3 October 2008 and hereby **condemn** the use of unilateral coercive measures such as illegal sanctions against certain developing countries with a view to preventing these countries from the exercise of their right to determine their own political, economic and social system, and **reject** the application of unilateral and extraterritorial laws and measures contrary to international Law, such as the Helms-Burton Act.

The Future of Development Finance and the Post-Busan Global Partnership

11. **We are concerned** about the effects of the global economic and financial crises of 2008, which have severely affected the economies of ACP States, thereby increasing their financing needs.
12. **We note** that beyond their negative impact, the crises have revealed the vulnerability of the economies of the ACP States to shocks and that it is important, in the future, to build their capacities to cope with such situations.
13. **We welcome** the enhanced macroeconomic performances stemming from the improved management of public finances and the consolidation of the quality of institutions in our States and the international community’s support which, together, in the short term, have provided partial solutions to the negative consequences of the crises.
14. Recognising the importance of development finance cooperation throughout the world, **we commend** the European Union and its Member States for the major role that they play in the ACP States through the various ACP-EU cooperation agreements, and **we urge** them, in this context, to strengthen support to ACP States in their efforts to achieve the MDGs in 2015 and beyond.
15. **We take note** of the EU’s new development policy approach entitled, “An Agenda for Change”, which seeks to enhance the impact and effectiveness of development cooperation by supporting good governance and inclusive growth. In this regard, **we express** our concern regarding the notion of differentiation, which if applied as graduation may lead to significant reduction in allocation of EDF resources. **We urge** the EU and its Member States to refrain from taking unilateral measures which are prejudicial to our States, and to adhere to the legal framework of the Cotonou Agreement.

16. **We continue** to attach considerable importance to the EDF, which has been the principal financing instrument for providing development assistance to ACP States. For decades, the EDF has been operated outside the regular EU budget framework, thus providing predictability in the programming of development projects and programmes, and **we urge** that it should continue to remain so.
17. **We believe** that in the area of development finance cooperation, the EU and its Member States have a crucial role to play and a political responsibility to assume, and that together, within the framework of our cooperation, we must ensure that the recent economic and financial crises do not undermine the validity of our commitment.
18. **We encourage** the international community to maintain its commitment to support the Millennium Development Goals and **we reiterate** our commitment to work both individually and collectively to achieve the objectives of the Paris Declaration and the post-Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation by paying special attention to South-South and Triangular cooperation, with the aim of putting an end to aid dependency.
19. **We recognise**, as pointed out by the Busan Global Partnership Agreement for Effective Development Cooperation, that *“South-South and Triangular Cooperation has the potential to transform the policies and approaches of developing countries by providing local solutions that are more suited to the context of each country”* and that **we need to** exploit and strategically translate this potential through tangible measures that are conducive to equitable, sustainable and results-driven development.
20. **We note**, nonetheless, that South-South cooperation and North-South cooperation are complementary and **we emphasize** the need for our Group to strengthen intra-ACP development cooperation and to adapt effectively to the ever-changing global environment so as to overcome new challenges and explore the possibility of better positioning the Group at the international level.
21. **We reaffirm** the commitment of our States to build stable economies, in an open global economic context, by strengthening resilience through greater economic diversification, enhanced mobilisation of domestic and regional resources, diversified financing sources and an improved security and investment climate.
22. **We are concerned** about the negative impact that servicing external and domestic debt has on growth, savings, investment and prosperity in our States, in view of the fact that the unsustainable levels of debt in most of our States undermine investments in physical, human and social infrastructure.

Future ACP Trade and Development

23. **We note** that the present performance of our States in international trade is well below expectation and needs serious attention. With inhabitants exceeding 986 million people or about 15% of world population, it is of great concern that our States together account for a tiny proportion of only 3 per cent of global trade in goods and services. **We recognize** the need to provide more jobs, increase income earning opportunities and provide greater social services to our ever increasing population, and the need to develop more resilient and sustainable bases of production and trade. **We further recognize** that the challenge of enhancing the participation of our States in international trade is formidable in view of the low share of global trade in goods, evidence of our States' marginalization in international trade flows.
24. Therefore, **we commit to take**, individually and collectively, strategic approaches and policy measures at national, regional, intra-ACP and international levels to enhance our participation in international trade and promote more inclusive development by stimulating economic growth, strengthening productive sectors, enhancing employment creation, alleviating poverty and fostering structural transformation with a view to capturing a significant share of global trade.
25. In this regard, **we recognize** the need to diversify our export markets in the light of the low demand stimulus from our traditional markets in developed countries following the current global economic and financial crises. Furthermore, we will consider concluding trade agreements, including preferential schemes coupled with cooperation arrangements in investment, technology transfer and production measures, in order to enter into new markets and to enhance and diversify supply capacities in our States.
26. **We are concerned** that our efforts over the years to reduce commodity dependence and diversify productive capacities including strengthening industrial transformation have achieved limited progress. The production of a narrow range of commodities has constrained the economic stimulus necessary for sustained and higher economic development. The continued dependence on exports of primary agricultural commodities has perpetuated low processing and limited value-addition in our States.

27. Therefore, **we reiterate** our resolve to reduce commodity dependence by making concerted efforts at adding value and higher technological content to our commodity exports and diversifying into industrial and services sectors with potential for dynamic growth, high impact on development and more resilient to price fluctuations. Given the small economic size of many of our States, **we shall pursue** the development of niche products such as organic agricultural products, sustainable or high-value forestry, fishery, tourism, and related transport services, labour services, ICT-related services, and a wide range of creative industries in music, films, and arts. **We need to** also develop our services sector which offers opportunities for diversifying production and trade, and which also has multifaceted linkages with other sectors of the economy, including agriculture and industry.
28. As mineral, oil and gas producing ACP States have benefited from exceptionally high commodity prices, thereby improving their trade balances and providing additional fiscal revenue during times of commodity price booms, these ACP States have however faced challenges related to the issues of exchange rate appreciation that makes other exports uncompetitive. **We therefore undertake** to ensure that the mineral operations develop economic linkages with other sectors, contributing to overall economic development; that windfall revenue realized from these resources is invested into the development of other more sustainable economic sectors such as agriculture and industry, and also held in trust through sovereign wealth funds, for future generations.
29. **We note** the negative consequences that may arise from an upsurge in a country's income arising from a large influx of investments and an increase in revenues from commodity price booms. In this regard, **we reiterate** the need for effective and efficient use and management of these resources with the view of avoiding high inflation, which in turn erodes the purchasing power of incomes, of especially the poor.
30. **We will continue** the development of transport and trade related infrastructure as well as trade facilitation measures which are prerequisites for our States to produce and trade competitively. Our States will utilize the aid for trade initiative under the WTO to channel new and additional funding for trade-related technical assistance and capacity building, into infrastructure development, rehabilitation and upgrading. Furthermore, **we will work towards** developing biodiversity friendly production and trade, and fully exploit the positive nexus between trade, investment and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

31. At the all ACP-level, **we need to fully exploit** the potential of intra-ACP trade to a level that trade constitutes a major force for economic growth and development. There is need to further explore the feasibility of an ACP-wide trade agreement, inter- regional arrangements or economic integration scheme(s) that could provide an enabling framework for facilitating and promoting trade, economic cooperation and integration among our States.
32. **We agree** to the exploration of the feasibility for the establishment of an ACP trade and investment bank building on the preliminary study and work that has been carried out.
33. At the international level, **we support** a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system that contributes to growth, sustainable development and employment, particularly for ACP States. **We strongly emphasize** the need to conclude the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations while fully respecting its development mandate and taking into account the needs and priorities of the economically weaker members, most of them being ACP States. **We believe** that a successful outcome would contribute to growth in global trade, prevent protectionist measures, particularly in the advanced economies, and create new opportunities for our States. In this regard, **we call on** developed countries to desist from all protectionist measures, including tariff, non-tariff, subsidies and other barriers to trade and to rectify any such measures already taken.

ACP-EU Trade Relations including Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)

34. **With regard** to the bilateral ACP-EU trade relations, **we recall** that the key objectives of the trade and economic cooperation is to transform ACP's economies, improve competitiveness, promote sustainable development and thereby reduce poverty with a view to its eradication and to increase our States' share of world trade. It is for this reason that we set out to negotiate EPAs that would be instruments of development by ensuring that agreed provisions take account of the development levels of our States, 40 of which are LDCs, and the remaining have a high poverty index or have vulnerable economies due to being small, island, landlocked, in conflict or post-conflict situations.
35. **We therefore regret** that after 10 years of negotiations, the process has not yielded the desired results. To date only one region has concluded and is implementing a full EPAs. The other regions have interim agreements which they signed or initialled, motivated mainly by the need to avert the risk of trade disruption at the end of 2007, while committing to complete the outstanding areas of the negotiations. **We note** that several contentious issues that severely limit policy space or tilt the balance of rights and

obligations in the EPAs persist and progress in resolving them has not been satisfactory. In order to resolve the issues and facilitate participation in the EPAs for all our States, particularly the LDCs, it is necessary to apply all possible flexibilities that will accommodate our interests and concerns. **We request** that where technical discussions on unresolved issues have been exhausted, issues that are not germane to WTO compatibility, should be removed from the negotiations.

36. **We note** that the EPAs have undermined the regional integration processes with multiple regimes governing trade with the European Union in some of our regions. **We reiterate** that the consolidation of regional integration processes should precede any trade liberalization commitment in the EPA process. Furthermore, **we affirm** that it is necessary to accord regions with a membership, whose majority is LDC states, a status equivalent to that granted to LDC States. In this regard, **we call** for further examination of the proposal for a common and enhanced trade preference system for least developed countries (LDCs) and low income countries (LICs).
37. In order to avoid negative implications for the socio-economic and political fabric of ACP States, **we call for** mitigation provisions to be injected in the EPA process in form of benchmarks, monitoring, and modulation or recalibration of schedules of commitment, as well as accompanying measures. **We request** additional resources and express the need to set up an EPA fund to provide dedicated and predictable resources to address the supply side constraints, build productive capacities, improve competitiveness as well as finance EPA related adjustment costs.
38. **We are concerned** by the proliferation of EU regulations and legislations on non-tariff measures that serve as technical barriers to trade. The conclusion of free trade agreements with third countries where the EU gives concessions that affect the competitiveness in products of export interest to our States is also a matter of concern. The EU must abide by their commitments to preserve current advantages for ACP exports into the EU market when negotiating with third parties. Tangible benefits of the EPAs must be safeguarded in free trade agreements involving ACP competitors. At all times, the EC should consult the ACP before making any concessions in compliance with the relevant articles of the Cotonou Agreement.
39. The demands by the EC to implement interim agreements initialed or signed in 2007 even as negotiations proceed and before certain aspects of the interim agreements are resolved is cause for major concern. **We call on** the European Union not to deny any ACP State market access benefits for whatever reason. In this regard, **we have taken note** of the European Parliament vote on the proposed amendment to the Market Access Regulation 1528/2007. **We call upon** the European Council to take a position that will allow the negotiations to continue without the pressure of time so that the outcome will be an agreement that satisfies all sides, and whose implementation will stand the test of time.

40. **We urge** that binding provisions that will deliver on development be injected into the EPAs so that the implementation of agreements already reached will be beneficial. **We also call** for coherence among the regional integration agenda, Economic Partnership Agreements and Doha Round commitments, by forging greater coordination between the negotiators in the three tracks to ensure consistency.
41. While the EPA negotiations are continuing in some regions, **we note with concern** that the review of the European Union Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) seeks to remove upper middle income countries and those that have signed the EPA from having recourse to the GSP provisions. **We denounce** the use of GNI (Gross National Income) per capita as the only basis of classifying countries to be eligible for benefiting from the GSP regime and **call for** consideration of other economic and social variables such as size of the countries, economies, and populations; level of indebtedness, vulnerability, landlockedness, conflict and post-conflict situations, aridity and proneness to natural disasters. In this regard, **we affirm** that middle income countries continue to need concessional access to financial resources to sustain their level of development.
42. **We consider** that EPAs and other trade arrangements should build on the accomplishments of ACP-EU trade relations and therefore reiterate that no ACP State should remain or be made worse off at the end of the EPA processes than under the previous ACP-EU trade arrangements.
43. **We reaffirm** our commitment to continue to speed up the negotiations to conclude EPAs that will serve to boost the economic and social development of our States and regional integration within the ACP Group, and to accelerate the negotiating process on a consensual basis. To this end, and given the problems encountered in the past, and the considerable time that might be required to organise a special Summit of ACP-EU Heads of State and Government on EPAs, we have decided to set up a high-level panel to handle the dossier. The panel would give political impetus to the negotiations, and to find solutions to the contentious issues, non-resolution of which has stalled the negotiating process. The high-level panel, which will be assisted by seven (7) Experts from the EPA regional configurations, will comprise six (6) Heads of State and Government, drawn from the African Union (1), CARIFORUM (1), and from the Pacific ACP States (1), as well as Members of the Troika of the European Union (3). The panel, whose mission is to end the current impasse, should endeavour to convene its first meeting in Brussels before the end of January 2013. The meeting of the high level panel will be preceded by a preparatory meeting of the seven (7) ACP regional EPA Experts in parity with Experts from the European Commission.

44. **We call upon** the EU to ensure coherence, a basic concept to which they are greatly attached, in their development, agricultural and trade policies, and also ascertain that EU-funded development initiatives and market access opportunities offered to ACP States are not negated, or diluted by measures taken on either the domestic or international fronts.

Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Food Security and Rural Development

45. **We acknowledge** the nexus between sustainable development, climate change, and poverty eradication and endorse the final outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), entitled “The future we want”, which indicates that eradicating poverty is the “greatest global challenge facing the world today” and **we support** efforts towards achieving the MDGs and post-2015 sustainable development in a manner which will not jeopardize the progress made to achieve the MDGs.
46. **We affirm** that climate change poses one of the most serious immediate and long-term threats that undermine the achievement of sustainable development and the very survival of many ACP States, particularly Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries, and countries in Africa.
47. **We note** with great concern that scientific evidence shows the adverse impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise and storm surge, floods, droughts and extreme weather events, coral bleaching, coastal erosion, melting of mountain glaciers and changing precipitation patterns, and that these impacts are happening faster and are more extreme than previously projected, affecting livelihoods, peace and security, causing threats to water and food security and displacement of peoples in our States.
48. In this regard, **we reaffirm** the importance of implementing Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (MSI), as well as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
49. **We support** having a robust second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol and **we emphasize** that the final outcome the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action should be a Protocol under the Convention, that addresses, *inter alia*, mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building.
50. **We reiterate** that implementing climate change policies and actions that protect biodiversity and combat desertification including the use of traditional knowledge, contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

51. **We strongly urge** Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to implement the outcomes of the Doha Climate Change Conference and to continue to work constructively and with a sense of urgency, to address the remaining outstanding issues.
52. **We recognize** the role of agriculture as an engine of economic growth and development. Therefore, **we are committed to** increase agricultural production and productivity on a sustainable basis through better land and water management, improved agricultural technologies, and creating an appropriate and enabling environment for increased investments from both the public and private sector. **We are also committed to** establish well-functioning markets and seek means to mitigate and manage risks associated with food security in our States, which include excessive price volatility of agricultural commodities, climate change, and natural disasters such as droughts, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and tsunamis, especially in the most vulnerable Small Island Developing States, Least Developing Countries and Land Locked Countries.
53. **We reaffirm** the right of every citizen of our States to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, consistent with the progressive realization of the right to land and adequate food in the context of national food security and food sovereignty.
54. In order to strengthen food security, **we are committed to** improve access and availability of safe and nutritious food for the most vulnerable, particularly women and children, through greater and sustainable productivity, better market information, more open trade, comprehensive rural development, agricultural and land policies, and sustained investments in the agricultural sector, strengthened agricultural research and innovation, and support results based agricultural research for development through our national agricultural research systems and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).
55. **We note** with great concern the plight of our small-scale agricultural producers who produce the bulk of food supplies and still represent the majority of the poor and food insecure of the populace. **We strongly commit** ourselves to implementing a broad scope of actions including indigenous knowledge to increase their production and income, which shall directly improve access to food among the most vulnerable, and improve supply for domestic and international market. In this regard, **we call** for stronger support from the international community through strengthened South-South, North-South and Triangular Cooperation.

56. **We recognize** the important role played by the international and donor organizations in ensuring food security in our States. **We call** on these organizations and other partners to pursue and strengthen their efforts in this regard in a more coordinated and effective manner.
57. **We underscore** the importance of culture in sustainable development because there is *“No Future without Culture”*. **We recognize** the importance, the richness and the diversity of the various cultures and traditions of the peoples of ACP States and the enormous economic and political value of cultural exchanges, and their contribution to peace, harmony and stability within and between States in the framework of enhancing South-South cooperation. In this regard, **we reiterate** our determination to promote the cultural industries in our States and **we believe** that they should be an essential component of national and regional development strategies and grounded in the cultural diversity of our Group of States.

Energy and Sustainable Development in ACP States

58. Recognising the importance of energy as a vector for sustainable development, and noting that the enormous potential renewable or non-renewable energy resources that many of our States possess are under-utilized owing to inappropriate exploitation, investment or development policies, **we are determined** to lay the foundation for a more strategic approach to the exploitation of energy resources to create wealth in our States, overcome energy poverty and to promote the necessary dynamic for sustainable economic growth and human development.
59. **We are determined** to find effective solutions to the dual challenge facing our States, namely reducing energy poverty while taking account of the demands of climate change and seizing the opportunities offered by the increased demand for energy.
60. **We are determined** to lay the foundation for intra-ACP cooperation in the field of energy development in order to meet the challenges in terms of availability, distribution and management.
61. **We encourage** ACP States to promote relevant policies and strategies for the development of renewable energies and low-carbon technologies, guaranteeing connectivity in rural areas, as a mechanism to ensure universal access to energy and contribute to social and economic equity. With this in mind, **we envisage** setting up an All-ACP programme for the promotion of investment in the renewable energy sector.
62. **We encourage** the ACP States with vast energy resources to establish platforms for dialogue at ACP level for developing sound legislative, regulatory and institutional practices for the sustainable development and management of those resources, in order to speed up sustainable human development and improve the standard of living of our populations.

63. In this regard, **we welcome** the declaration by the United Nations of 2012 as the “*International Year of Sustainable Energy for All*” and **recognize** the contribution of the ACP-EU Energy Facility to the attainment of the objectives set in this area. Furthermore, **we welcome** the proposal for the United Nations General Assembly to proclaim the ten-year period beginning on 1 January 2014, the “United Nations Decade for Sustainable Energy for All”, in order to continue to build on the momentum created, and promote action at all levels.

Status of the ACP Group towards 2015 and Beyond

64. **We are fully conscious and firmly convinced** that at this historic juncture in the existence of our unique intergovernmental and tri-continental organisation, the demands for fundamental renewal and transformation are no longer mere options but unavoidable imperatives for strategic change.
65. On the basis of the Georgetown Agreement, **we resolutely reaffirm** our determination to stay united as a Group grounded in the values of peace and solidarity, unified action and the identity that characterise us and **we are committed** to continuing and sustaining the relevance and effectiveness of our Group by deepening and enhancing the ACP-EU relationship as a unique North-South Development Cooperation model, while developing diversified South-South and other partnerships, with an aim to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development in our States.
66. **We recognize** the importance and urgent need for a systematic and comprehensive process to shape a more dynamic, innovative and cohesive ACP Group by which to engage the European Union in the 3rd 5-Year review of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement in 2015.
67. In an ever-changing world, **we reaffirm** our determination to strengthen, with the European Union and its Member States, the historic and unique cooperation ties that bind us, through a new and mutually beneficial partnership agreement after 2020, while deepening the initiatives already taken for diversified partnerships across the South.
68. **We note** that the architecture of international development cooperation has undergone a radical change characterised by the development of South-South Cooperation with the emerging economies, which open up new opportunities and areas for trade, investment and technical assistance. And in this respect, **we emphasise** the need for our Group to strengthen Intra-ACP development cooperation, address the necessity to foster financial sustainability, and to adapt effectively to the turbulent global environment and explore the possibility of better positioning the Group at the international level.

69. As we envision a transformed ACP Group to become a major global player in supporting multilateralism that ensures peace, security, and democratic governance, **we are determined** to be a strong advocate within partnerships of developing countries that defend causes common to all humanity, advance the rich cultural heritages of our Member States and accelerate processes for regional integration that realize mutual benefits for our societies.
70. **We undertake** to work collectively and in a concerted manner to ensure optimum use of the considerable natural resources and human capital that our States possess, in order to maintain and further boost their growth and development by joining with our partners to take advantage of the perspectives and new opportunities offered to us, while bearing in mind that our future demands greater responsibility on our part to progressively own and lead our Group.
71. **We welcome** the initiative of the ACP Ministers in guiding the work on the future perspectives of the ACP Group and submitting recommendations to the Summit. **We are pleased** to note that the setting-up of the Ambassadorial Working Group, as well as plans to create a group of eminent persons should enhance reflection on the vision, mission, organisation and response of the ACP Group to ever-changing global challenges. **We appreciate** the ACP Secretariat's support and urge it to continue its efforts. **We also** call for effective coordination with the ACP Parliamentary Assembly.
72. **We also underscore** the importance of intensifying the ACP Group's commitment to strategic partnerships with other groups of States, international organisations and partners in order to promote and realise the objectives and principles of the ACP Group. In addition, **we call for** the establishment of an inclusive South-South economic cooperation organization, in order to rationalize the multiple membership of our States in various regional arrangements.
73. **We instruct** the Secretary-General of the ACP Group to forward this Sipopo Declaration to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the European Council, the President of European Commission, the President of the European Parliament, ACP regional integration organisations as well as relevant international organisations and other development partners.

Done at Sipopo, 14 December 2012

For the Summit

H. E. Mr. Teodoro OBIANG NGUEMA MBASOGO
President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea
President-in-Office of the 7th Summit of
ACP Heads of State and Government