



STATEMENT OF

H.E. MR. GEORGES REBELO PINTO CHIKOTI

SECRETARY-GENERAL

**OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN, CARBBEAN AND PACIFIC
STATES (OACPS)**

**AT THE 8TH MEETING OF THE EU-AFRICA ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL STAKEHOLDERS' NETWORK**

WEDNESDAY, 28 JUNE 2023

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

***STATEMENT BY THE OACPS SECRETARY-GENERAL AT THE 8th
MEETING OF THE EU-AFRICA ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
STAKEHOLDERS' NETWORK.***

Wednesday, 28 June 2023

- H.E. Mr. Oliver Ropke, President of the European Economic and Social Committee**
- H.E. Mr. Khalid Boudali, Presiding Officer of the African Union Economic Social and Cultural Council**
- H.E. Mr. Dimitris DIMITRIADIS, President of the External Relations Section of the European Economic and Social Committee**
- H.E. Ms. Josiane WILLEMS, Chairwoman of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee**
- Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly**
- Distinguished guests**
- Ladies and Gentlemen**

Let me start by expressing my appreciation for the opportunity to briefly address the 8th Meeting of the EU-Africa Economic and Social Stakeholders' Network. It is always an honour for me to dialogue with each and every one of you. The OACPS values its longstanding and productive collaboration with the EESC, and I believe we should increase cooperation in the future.

Africa is an important region of the OACPS, and therefore your discussions are of great importance for and value to the OACPS.

The OACPS places great importance on consultations with representatives of civil society and the private sector. These consultations provide a platform to exchange views on many issues of key importance, such as multilateralism; human rights, democracy and governance; peace and security; human and social development; economic growth and inclusive and sustainable development; environmental sustainability and climate change; migration and mobility.

The theme for your 8th Meeting, “**the *AU-EU Partnership for a Sustainable Future***”, is very appropriate given the many geopolitical challenges, and their impact on the developing world.

The subjects under consideration are of utmost importance in the quest by our countries to attain sustainable, inclusive development. This is even more so at a time when our Member States are confronted with the impact of the war in Ukraine, and an uphill battle to harness the necessary resources to fund their economic recovery post COVID-19 pandemic. Simultaneously, our countries are also addressing

underlying development challenges and the increasingly harmful impact of climate change.

Mr. President,

Today, our world is facing major challenges that are interlinked and interconnected. These challenges require urgent and coordinated responses and actions. These global issues – climate change, pandemic preparedness, migration, food and energy security, to name but a few – have an impact on developed and developing countries alike. In our global village no one is immune to these global challenges that impact all societies to varying degrees, and particularly affect the most vulnerable. In this context, it is essential to strengthen collaboration and cooperation with various stakeholders in order to provide appropriate, coordinated responses to these challenges.

It is necessary to engage in dialogue with state and non-state actors at international, continental and regional levels. The New Partnership Agreement, the Samoa Agreement, introduces a new dynamic to our partnership with the EU, emphasising collaboration on the international stage, and a focused cooperation at the regional level. The basis of this new approach is the quest for efficiency and taking into account the specific

realities of regions and even local populations. This new vision is reflected in the Regional Protocols of the Samoa Agreement and gives new impetus and complementarity to the AU-EU Partnership that we are examining today.

To achieve sustainable, inclusive development, there is a need for capacity building and programmes that will benefit all. For this, we need to ensure that the financial instruments in place meet the needs of developing countries. For countries and regions to take full advantage of the Samoa Agreement, there is a need for greater information awareness of the similarities and differences between the NDICI-Global Europe and the former financial instrument, the European Development Fund (EDF). The OACPS Secretariat stands ready to facilitate awareness-raising seminars to provide comparative analysis of these two instruments, and assess the implications of changes and differences.

I am pleased to note that you shall be addressing various global issues that have national and regional characteristics.

Water and nutrition are closely linked, and we note a greater awareness and evidence of this. The same applies to the linkages related to water, sanitation, hygiene and nutrition. The OACPS is committed to ensuring that we meet both water, food

and nutrition security goals. Key to achieving these is the need to make sure that efforts are properly targeted to be relevant, and whenever possible, should be co-developed or solely developed by local communities themselves, drawing on the improving awareness of these linkages.

The Samoa Agreement that was initialed on 15 April 2021 and soon to be signed, paves the way for alliance building and more coordinated actions on the world stage, as well as in our regions. We have begun the process of how we will work with different stakeholders, in a constructive and structured manner. More information on this, will be shared by my Assistant Secretary-General, Dr. Ibrahim Norbert Richard, during one of your sessions today.

Mr. President,

Distinguished partners,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude by reiterating our commitment to continuously engage with Civil Society as key players and partners of development. I strongly believe that exchanges in fora like these are important and should be encouraged.

With these few remarks, I wish to thank you for your indulgence and kind attention, and wish you successful deliberations.