A pivotal year at a time of consolidation

Activities of the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States in 2012 and future perspectives
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above : ACP Council of Ministers, Port Vila, Vanuatu, June 2012
cover : Burundi, Public Awareness campaign on the protection of citizen rights
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Foreword by the Secretary General
H. E. Alhaji Muhammad MUMUNI

2012
Banking on the future for a second time

Shortly before the start of 1975, when three groups of States that were separately negotiating cooperation agreements with the European Commission decided to come together to strengthen their position and to adopt a charter - the Georgetown Agreement - this was a bold venture for the future. It was moreover a question of trusting in themselves and their capacity to overcome the temptation of isolationism.

Despite ups and downs, this solidarity has lasted and, instead of diminishing with the enlargement of the Group, has become stronger and broadened its scope of action. Cooperation between the two parties is no longer limited to development aid; it increasingly concerns political consultation in international organizations.

Then, there is the so-called global financial and economic crisis which began in 2008 and has caused our main partner to limit, if not reduce, its development aid. Doubt has arisen about the future of ACP-EU cooperation beyond 2020. And the ACP States have certainly been apprehensive. However, 2012 was a year for expressing faith in the future. The most edifying symbol was the success of the Summit of the Heads of State held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, at the end of the year, where the ACP leaders affirmed their determination to forge a degree of autonomy for the ACP Group through concrete, enhanced intra-ACP cooperation, a more efficient ACP-EU partnership, and receptiveness to other partners, particularly the BRICS.

1 Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
A “minor” victory over the recession

From the end of 2009, financial analysts considered that the regions of the ACP Group had weathered the crisis pretty well. For example, a specialist like Jacques Attali noted that Africa was posting a growth rate of more than 5% because the continent has largely adopted the rules of economic governance. The World Bank observed that extreme poverty is diminishing on the continent. Michel Camdessus 1, former director of the IMF had already declared in 2011 “After a vigorous recovery and without having a negative effect on growth, unlike the rest of the world, Africa is again at 5.5% and has every potential to do better. It may know the experience that China underwent 30 years ago and India two years ago.” One could add that extreme poverty has decreased in Africa according to World Bank figures published in 2012. The other ACP regions have also withstood the recession well. The Caribbean, for example, boasts an average growth rate of more than 3% according to figures published in 2012.

An agenda based on well-grounded optimism

All of these elements no doubt contributed to the thinking of the ACP Heads of States who met at the end of 2012, and chose well-grounded, realistic optimism based on the Group’s potential in establishing an agenda that they asked the organs of the Group to execute.

A new ACP organ, the “Eminent Persons Group” was created by a decision of the Heads of State, to advise the Group during the anticipated transition. The Chairman, former president of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, after declaring on the day of his investiture that “we must reinvent our group” because the Group has no other choice but to go forward, paraphrased Hamlet when he said: “The world is off kilter. Too bad I’m the one who has been asked to put it back on course”. And he concluded: “That’s our job”.

1 Quoted by Christophe Boisbouvier (RFI)
Introduction –

2012 A pivotal year in the history of the group

The great renewal effort

The last Summit of the ACP Heads of State and Government in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in December 2012 conducted a profound analysis of the global financial and monetary crisis and particularly of the situation in ACP countries. It noted that the crisis has affected all continents and all economies, Europe and the United States being particularly hard hit, with Asia and the emerging countries and several ACP countries more moderately so.

Despite — or because of — this particular context, 2012 will remain the year of a new departure for the ACP, when the Group assessed the extent of transformations in the world and decided that moving forward to better respond to the new reality was crucial. This reality of course includes our traditional partners’ financial difficulties, but also the interest that the ACP countries have sparked in new potential partners, institutions or countries, including some of the BRICS Development Bank, free-trade agreements) that represents an opportunity for economic growth given the potential wealth of the ACP, not only in terms of basic “strategic” products, which are still considerably underexploited, but also from a human standpoint.

The kick-off for the new position of the ACP on the international scene was given in November 2010 when the Council of Ministers began to assess the perspectives for the future of the ACP Group after the Cotonou Agreement, which binds it to the European Union, expires in 2020. Their work was approved by the 7th Summit of the Heads of State and Government in Malabo which officially launched the great renewal by deciding to set up a Group of Eminent Persons which has been asked to present proposals in 2014. This group, consisting of 14 highly-distinguished personalities, was officially inaugurated at an extraordinary Council meeting in Brussels on 25-26 March 2013.

The ACP Group, connecting blocks

The ACP Group, which comprises 79 countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, brings together 48 sub-Saharan, 16 Caribbean and 15 Pacific States with a shared vision. It establishes a link between the populations of the zones and continents that make up the Group. It works to promote diversity and tolerance among peoples of different races and religions. All of this represents a considerable asset.

This reorientation represents a fantastic opportunity for economic development

1. One indication is the increase in the number of ACP embassies in China. This reorientation is also visible in the growing interest in developing more cooperation between ACP States (a proposal for an ACP

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
This is why the ACP political authorities have emphasized the urgency of fostering greater South-South cooperation and developing triangular cooperation as an engine of growth. The memorandum of understanding on South-South cooperation between the ACP Group and Brazil is an illustration of this. Brazil has cooperation projects in several ACP States in the fields of agriculture, health, education and bioenergy, and it offers training programmes in high-level Brazilian institutions.

This policy also took concrete form with the organization in 2011 of a symposium on the theme *Enhancing South-South Cooperation: Challenges and Opportunities for the ACP Group* which was attended by representatives of the ACP Group, Brazil, India, Cuba, Nigeria, South Africa, the European Commission, the United Nations Programme for Development, the Organization of Portuguese-speaking countries and the Commonwealth. *The Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness* in Busan (Korea) in December 2011, including the “Declaration on Partnership” approved by the ACP Council in December 2012, is yet another good example.

**ACP - EU Cotonou Agreement. Sticking to the spirit and the letter of the text**

The Cotonou Agreement, which binds the 79 ACP countries and the 27 Member States of the European Union, is based on three pillars: political dialogue, trade and development financing cooperation. It is managed jointly by the ACP Secretariat and the European Commission. Financial cooperation, organized through the European Development Fund (EDF), has a financial framework (10th EDF) of € 21,966 million for 2008-2013.

In November 2012, the Commission launched procedures for programming the 11th EDF and for the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) for 2014-2020, on the basis of the “Agenda for Change” adopted by the EU in May 2012. The Agenda redefines EU development aid policy which will focus on the 48 least developed countries (LDC), almost all of which are found in sub-Saharan Africa. Emphasis is on improving governance and social protection in the LDCs while supporting agriculture and broadening access to energy to stimulate growth. In addition, it is clear that, given the EU multiannual financial framework for
Activities of the Secretariat of the ACP Group in 2012 and future perspectives

2014-2020, which is now being negotiated, the budget allocated to development will be reduced.

Principal innovation: the “differentiated” approach to aid modalities and partnerships proposed by the Commission. Aid provided in the form of grants will no longer form part of cooperation with the most advanced developing countries. For some, this may mean reduction, or even abolition, of grants, to be replaced by loans, mobilization of internal resources and support for trilateral cooperation. In other words, this differentiation will no longer be applied to the distribution of funds among national indicative programmes (amounts allocated to each country) but to access to financing. This approach is a source of concern for the ACP States which consider that this differentiation runs counter to the assurances given by the EU in the second phase of the negotiations of the Cotonou Agreement. For this reason, at the EU-ACP Council session in June 2012, they asked the EU not to take unilateral measures “detrimental to the interests of ACP States”, and to stick to the legal framework of the Cotonou Agreement for the 11th EDF.

The Joint Parliamentary Assembly

In 2012, the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) which brings together EU representatives (Members of the European Parliament) and elected officials of the ACP Member States twice a year in plenary session, alternately in an ACP country and in an

Necessary adjustments for sound Economic Partnership Agreements

As far as the ACP Group is concerned, the negotiations engaged in by the EU to conclude Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with the ACP countries are not satisfactory. In addition to the slow pace of the process, the Sipopo Declaration identifies several contentious issues that limit the ACP States’ room for manoeuvre or jeopardize the balance of rights and obligations within the EPAs. In addition, establishing different EU/ACP trade regimes in the various regions carries a risk of fragmenting the ACP Group although one of the major objectives of the EPAs is to help strengthen the integration process within the Group.
EU Member State, took place in Horsens (Denmark), in May and in Paramaribo (Suriname), in November. On these occasions, the JPA adopted a position, among other things, on the situation in Somalia, in Mali, and in the Great Lakes region, as well as on more technical issues such as ICT-based entrepreneurship and its impact on the development of ACP countries, or the importance of access to energy for sustainable development and the achievement of the MDGs.

In addition to the two plenary sessions, two regional JPA meetings were held in Apia, Samoa, and in Lusaka, Zambia, respectively, plus two fact-finding missions in Fiji and at the Common Research Centre in Ispra (Italy) along with meetings of the Bureau and the parliamentary standing committees.

**Broadening horizons while consolidating a privileged partnership with the EU**

The last Summit of the ACP Heads of State announced the desire of the ACP Group to continue its privileged partnership with the European Union, while developing new relations with other poles. The world today is characterized by globalization. Political, economic, social and environmental issues are treated in a broader framework in which the ACP Group has its place. In this spirit, it participates and concludes agreements either with other groups, or within the United Nations framework, on general development goals or more targeted objectives such as development of the private sector or the fight against climate change.

This is particularly the case for the protocol signed on 10 May 2012 by the ACP Group and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), by which both parties agreed to support regional integration and to contribute to sustainable development in the Member States by initiatives pertaining, inter alia, to trade, private sector development, renewable energies and climate change. The objective is to strengthen South-South cooperation and to bolster the achievement of the MDGs by sharing information and experiences.

Along the same lines, in September 2012 an ACP-EC delegation visited the UNDP International Centre for the Private Sector in Istanbul (IICPSD) where it met with representatives of Turkish institutions. The parties decided to enhance the role of the private sector in the development of the 40 least developed countries in the ACP regions, while emphasizing the increasingly important role played by the private sector and SMEs in ACP countries.
On the diplomatic battlefields

With 79 Member States, the ACP Group is the largest intergovernmental, trans-regional organization of developing countries. This strength in numbers can serve to defend the collective interests of countries, some of which are among the poorest in the world, by developing alliances on the international scene, with Europe, other developed regions, emerging countries or other developing nations.

An edifying example of the strength drawn from the unity of the ACP Group is the international trade negotiating forum at the World Trade Organization. In 2001, at the WTO ministerial conference in Doha, the sheer numbers of the ACP Group and its alliance with its privileged partner the European Union, as well as with other developing countries, was crucial for the defence of vital interests of certain ACP countries, particularly banana- and sugar-producing countries. In Cancun in 2003, and in Hong Kong in 2005, the ACP Group again fought tooth and nail and succeeded in safeguarding the interests of African cotton producers, particularly preventing the adoption of decisions that would have been very detrimental to them.

During 2012, the ACP organs refined their strategies and considered potential alliances for the next Ministerial Conference to take place in December 2013 in Bali, Indonesia. A recent ACP study points to very unfavourable terms for developing countries which will require them to establish a tough strategy.
In international institutions

In many other institutions where isolated developing countries have trouble defending their interests, the ACP Group helps them or acts on their behalf.

This was particularly the case at the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC) in Istanbul (May 2011), the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development RIO+20 in Rio de Janeiro (June 2012) or the Conferences of Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNCCC) in Doha in 2012, after Copenhagen (2009), Cancun (2010) and Durban (2011).

Vis-à-vis its partners: expertise and cohesion

The negotiations under the Cotonou Agreement take place in an atmosphere that is very different from those of the international institutions mentioned above, but they are not less difficult to conduct without special expertise and without cohesion. This expertise is provided by the ACP General Secretariat to be used for the Group’s political institutions. And cohesion is what unites the Member States of the Group. Both are an asset for negotiating with the European Union, not just on the use of aid, but also on more sensitive questions such as the ACP-EU Dialogue on Migration.

Strengthening intra-ACP Cooperation

In 2008, the ACP Heads of State and Government considered it necessary to strengthen intra-ACP trade cooperation and launched reflections on the possibility of creating an All-ACP free-trade area. It then decided to create a free-trade area bringing together COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), SADC (Southern African Development Community) and the EAC (East African Community) including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi by 2014, and a continental-wide free-trade area in Africa by 2017.

In December 2012, the ACP States decided to continue along this path and to explore the feasibility of an All-ACP trade agreement, and the setting-up of regional, inter-ACP arrangements or mechanisms to facilitate and promote trade, economic cooperation and integration among ACP countries. They also decided to continue work on the creation of an ACP trade and investment bank.

“Promoting the collective cause of some of the poorest countries in the world, by establishing vital alliances on the international scene.”
Towards an equitable world and a sustainable economy

The ACP Group, advocating for a sustainable economy in international fora

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development RIO+20 in June 2012, the ACP countries stressed the need for a more sustainable world to be defended at all levels and in all institutions. They were pleased to note that the Conference took account of many of their concerns and that the Parties renewed their political commitment in favour of sustainable development and a green economy. They also confirmed their determination to create an institutional framework and a framework for action for sustainable development to continue the intergovernmental process intended to concretise the Sustainable Development Objectives (SDO), to facilitate mobilization of resources in this field and to develop a mechanism to simplify technology transfers. The Conference also emphasized...
the importance of building capacities in sustainable development and the role of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as a worldwide authority recognized in the environmental field.

Sustainable development is also what ACP countries advocate in the World Trade Organization (WTO). The ACP Group, with other developing countries, defends the principle of the single undertaking (“Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed”), in other words, no partial agreement can mark the end of negotiations of the Doha Round. They feel that this principle is the only guarantee that all the questions included in the Doha terms of reference will be addressed. At the heart of the negotiations: facilitating trade, agriculture and development issues.

The WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali (December 2013) seems to be a natural timeline, or even a deadline, for concluding an agreement. However, as emphasized by the ACP Group this kind of deadline hinders negotiations more than it promotes them. The Group holds the view that the other development issues included on the Doha agenda must be settled at the same time as agreements on trade facilitation if a balanced result is to be achieved.

**United to be stronger**

You need to have clout and to speak in a single voice to be a force in the global economic system. With this in mind, the ACP Group has decided to strengthen its ties beyond the intra-ACP actions funded by the EU and to create its own free-trade areas. A first zone comprising COMESA, EAC and SADC, should see the light by 2014 and a second, a continent-wide zone in Africa, is planned for 2017. In the meantime, the ACP States can carry out trade promotion activities between regions by concluding preferential trade arrangements in order to enhance intra-ACP trade.

**A helping hand for ACP States**

The WTO, its mechanisms and procedures are hard to understand. To help the ACP countries to navigate them, the EU has set up a programme called “ACP-MTS”. It provides and coordinates technical assistance to ACP countries to develop and consolidate their capacity to negotiate and implement the WTO agreements, to access to the accession process and to improve their capacity to use the Organization’s legal framework.

The EU has also funded the creation of other programmes such as PIP and EDES (also see Topics 4 and 7) which target capacity-building for ACP States and regions to comply with sanitary and phytosanitary standards and to norms pertaining to technical barriers to trade (WTO/TBT). These programmes should also help them influence decisions taken by the international community, and to take part in the definition and smooth implementation of these standards.
EPA ACP/EU: Mixed assessment

Moreover, negotiations on the regional economic partnership agreements (EPA) with the EU have come up against many difficulties and are not progressing fast enough to achieve the target objectives that include sustainable development, regional integration, economic growth and improvement of the competitiveness of ACP countries. CARIFORUM (Caribbean) is the only ACP region to have concluded a full EPA but its implementation is having trouble getting off the ground. Generally speaking, the ACP Council is “dismayed” at certain Commission EPA-related initiatives, and regrets the Commission’s efforts to introduce new issues such as geographic data, public procurement contracts, fiscal governance or its proposal to exclude countries that have not signed and ratified an EPA by a given date (in 2014) from advantages associated with free access to the EU market.

Other new measures adopted by the EU have a negative impact on EU/ACP relations. For example, the conclusion of bilateral agreements between the EU and third countries in competition with ACP States, which lead to an erosion of the EPA-related benefits and could negatively affect ACP exports to the EU. There is also the suspension of customs duties for certain imports from third countries in competition with ACP products. These have led to the desire of the ACP Group to restructure its trade relations with Europe and with other countries on a healthier basis.

Threat to agricultural products

Many changes have been made to the conditions for access to the EU market for agricultural commodities. By and large, they stem from the increased number of negotiations of free-trade agreements between the EU and other States or regional groups to which new concessions are offered, thereby reducing the preferential margins of ACP countries. Provisions stipulated by the Cotonou Agreement have been activated to soften the impact and support mechanisms have been put in place to ensure long-term viability of the sectors affected, such as the accompaniment programme for the former signatories of the Sugar Protocol and for ACP banana producers, as well as the programme envisaged for cotton.

The ACP Group is now closely monitoring the reform of the EU common agricultural policy (CAP), which will have a significant impact on ACP exports, particularly sugar and cotton. The Group is also concerned by the modification of certain phytosanitary rules such as those imposed on cocoa and kava. The Group considers “unjustified” the ban on imports of kava-based products imposed by certain EU Member States. Pacific countries, particularly those affected by this ban, are continuing bilateral negotiations in order to find a solution, and have ordered studies to examine the question from the legal, scientific and commercial standpoint.
Banana plantation, Suriname. The ACP find worrying some initiatives taken by the EU Commission, which could represent a threat to the ACP food products.
Several projects jointly managed by the ACP Secretariat with the EU concern environmental protection, but most of them link this issue with other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) such as poverty reduction, health, and access to water and to education. In this context, there are 7 projects falling under the ACP-EU Water Facility, 12 capacity-building projects associated with multilateral environmental agreements, 14 projects under the ACP-FLEGT Programme for sustainable forestry management, and 13 projects under the framework of environment monitoring in Africa.

**Satellites serving the environment**

The African monitoring of the environment for sustainable development (AMESD) programme uses technologies and data from land observations of the weather to monitor the environment and the climate. It aims to improve access to these data and to the infrastructure, and to local capacities and services that are indispensable for long-term monitoring of the environment. It supports the creation of regional information services that are needed to take decisions, as well as the creation of processes, frameworks and specialized training programmes at national, regional and continental level that will enable African countries to meet their international obligations in the environmental field.

**“Healthy” exports**

The EU is increasing the number of food safety standards. The PIP programme (Pesticides Initiative) helps ACP companies comply with these requirements and those concerning product traceability, and it consolidates the place of small farmers in the ACP horticultural export sector. A second programme, EDES, helps them reinforce their food safety policies by supporting them in drafting a policy to ensure food safety and in setting up customised information, training and control systems.

As part of the fight against the illegal lumber trade, the ACP-FLEGT programme helps ACP operators implement the EU action plan for sustainable forestry management (application of forestry regulations on governance and trade). The FORENET programme, focusing primarily on research, supports the networking of forestry research organizations in certain ACP countries, and the development of effective management tools for sustainable forestry management (developing criteria and indicators).
Reducing the impact of climate change

To help ACP regions and countries combat climate change, the Global Climate Change Alliance provides them with both financial and technical solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Three information sessions were organised in 2012 to present the major financial instruments: Adaptation Funds (AF), Least Developed Countries (LDC Fund), Special Climate Change Funds (SCCF), Special Allocation Fund for the Global Climate Facility, REDD+ mechanism (reduction of emissions caused by forestry activities), Clean Technologies Fund, the Pilot Programme against Climate Change (PPAC), Programme for large scale valorization of renewable energies in low income countries.

Finally, since prevention is better than cure, the **EU-ACP natural disaster risk reduction** (NDRR) programme, managed by the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (GFDRR), deals with identifying and analyzing risks, setting up early warning systems and including disaster prevention in the post-disaster reconstruction phase.

Funding for the environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Amount (in million)</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEA)</td>
<td>€ 21.45</td>
<td>2009-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring the environment in Africa</td>
<td>€ 21 m.</td>
<td>2008-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety (PIP)</td>
<td>€ 32.5 m.</td>
<td>2008-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety (EDES)</td>
<td>€ 29.5 m.</td>
<td>2010-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forests (FLEGT + FORENET)</td>
<td>€ 16 m.</td>
<td>2008-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate action</td>
<td>€ 40 m.</td>
<td>2010-2017</td>
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Expanding the effects of aid

Aid should target capacity building and resource development

However important development aid may be, it can only enable a country to develop if it is designed to build capacity and, by extension, to develop resources. As the main partner of the ACP Group, the European Union has set up a financial instrument for development cooperation, the European Development Fund (EDF). For the period 2008-2013 (10th EDF), the fund has a budget of €22.682 billion, of which €21.966 billion are reserved for ACP countries (97 % of the total). This amount is to be shared between financing national and regional indicative programmes (€17.766 billion or 81% of the total), funding intra-ACP and inter-regional cooperation (€2.7 billion or 12 %) and financing investment facilities (€1.5 billion or 7 %).

In the negotiations with the European Union for the 10th EDF and ongoing talks...
The Council underscored the importance of the participation of ACP Group in this new global partnership

for management and projects.

By acknowledging the responsibility of partner countries in the definition of their development strategies, EU aid has shifted from a “donor-beneficiary” relationship to a relationship between “partners”.

Innovative incentive mechanisms have also been introduced to facilitate adaptation to changing circumstances by defining new priorities for unallocated resources in the national and regional envelopes, by providing new solutions and strategies to respond to crises associated with sharp hikes in international food prices, by creating the V-FLEX mechanism to help the countries hardest hit by the slowdown in economic activity and by correcting the negative effects of fluctuating export earnings.

Development, not aid, is the most important aspect of development aid

In 2012, and again this year, discussions between the ACP authorities and those of the European Union focused, to a large extent, on the consequences for the ACP of the EU’s redefinition of its development cooperation policy, which is now based on the so-called principle of “differentiation”. The Commission is planning to allocate a larger share of funds to regions and countries that have the greatest needs, including fragile states. This aid will be supplemented by a combination of grants and loans. This is a source of concern to the ACP States which believe that the change could penalize for the 11th EDF (2014-2020), the ACP States have always insisted that, in defining strategies, aid must shift from a “donor-beneficiary” relationship to a relationship between partners. This is the case for EDF.

The EDF is managed by the Secretariat which provides advice to the management units for the formulation and implementation of programmes funded in this framework and oversees compliance with the EDF rules and internationally recognised standards.

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countries which have made a great effort to achieve development and deserve to be encouraged.

The ACP Group is consequently calling for suspension of any decision pending final consultations. In the meantime, the ACP Secretariat has ordered a study on the consequences of “differentiation” from the Institut de Développement d’Outre-Mer (ODI) and the European Centre for Development Policies Management (ECDPM). The conclusions were presented to the ACP Committee of Ambassadors’ Subcommittee on Development Financing Cooperation (DFC) in October 2012. The Commission, for its part, has ordered a study on the allocation criteria of the 11th EDF (ongoing). Discussions between the two parties will continue in 2013.

Boosting aid effectiveness: the Busan Conference

The ACP Council of December 2012 noted the outcome of the high-level forum on aid effectiveness (HLFN4), which took place in Busan (Republic of Korea, 2011). The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation which was adopted there, is a multilateral agreement establishing a development cooperation framework. It involves partner governments, traditional donors, South-South cooperators, the BRICS, and private donors, and for the first time, civil society organizations as full-fledged, equal participants. Discussions focused on eight themes: conflicts and fragility; South-South cooperation; the private sector; climate financing; transparency; effective institutions and policies; mutual results and responsibilities; managing diversity and reducing fragmentation of aid. During this session, marked both by the financial and economic crisis that is crippling many traditional donors, and the emergence of new donors from emerging countries, the ACP Group defended the principle of optimized, monitored aid to the poorest.

On this basis, the ACP Council discussed South-South and triangular cooperation, the concept of development effectiveness, as well as the role and responsibility of the private sector in development, and that of the ACP Group in the implementation of the Partnership. The Council underscored the importance of participation of the ACP Group in this new global partnership and the desire of the Group to help define the practical procedures and monitoring of the implementation of the Busan Partnership. An assessment of the provisions on monitoring the commitments
made in Busan is planned for the end of 2015 or the beginning of 2016. The Council has instructed the Secretariat to explore the possibility of becoming a member of the steering committee for the Global Partnership and of having the ACP countries that are members of the Partnership (Nigeria, Samoa, Chad and Timor-Leste) speak for the ACP Group in this forum.

Multiplier programmes

To be effective, aid must propose complete programmes, ranging from building capacities and skills to contributing the necessary technical resources and aid to achieve concrete objectives. The following examples can be cited:

Science and Technology. The ACP Programme for Science and Technology (ACP S&T), which aims to help ACP countries develop and implement science and technology policies with a view to reducing the gap between ACP countries and industrialized countries in the use of STI (sciences, technologies and innovations).

Health. On health issues, the ACP countries have benefited from public-private partnerships in which the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) has a crucial role. In December 2012, the ACP Council decided to support vaccination for the papilloma virus and measles as a priority. It also underscored the need to ensure sufficient supplies of quality vaccines and to reduce the cost of vaccines for GAVI and the countries concerned.

Transport. Africa is particularly vulnerable because of its weakness in the transport sector. Two EDF-funded programmes specifically target this field. The first concerns air transport and the application of satellite services. It aims to harmonize regulations on air transport safety at regional, national and continental level through training programmes, technical assistance, capacity building and the supply of equipment for tests for the development of satellite services (GNSS/EGNOS). The second programme concerns maritime transport. The objectives: improving capacity and the regulatory framework for a continental and regional maritime transport policy. Emphasis is placed on improving maritime administration and strengthening the capacities of Coast Guard services in West and Central Africa and in the regulatory and security fields for the Horn of Africa.
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ACP countries taking ownership of their wealth

An essential lever of lasting economic development and the eradication of poverty is being able to control domestic resources. ACP States possess resources. Mining and fishing resources are two examples with high development potential for which the Group has launched new initiatives in 2012.

Boosting the mining sector

To date, exploitation of mineral resources in ACP has been almost exclusively financed by foreign investments and managed by foreign consortiums and companies of varying sizes. Micro-operations do exist, but most of them are non-industrial and poorly organized. The sector also has major problems at the social and environmental level, lacks infrastructure, and has trouble grappling with the complexity of the regulations. In addition, it is characterized by a lack of planning and reliable data on mining potential, skilled labour, governance and an appropriate legislative framework. To correct these shortcomings and boost local development of the sector, in December 2012, the ACP Council adopted a roadmap and action plan on mineral resources.

Its objective: Maximizing the impact of mining production on social-economic development of ACP countries by encouraging the local private sector to reinforce industrialization and diversification of the value chain and by initiating high value-added projects, whether these include metals, strategic minerals or low-value minerals such as building materials, stone and industrial minerals. The Roadmap identifies six priorities: reinforcing institutional capacities, developing exploratory mining, geo-scientific information systems, assessing the mineral potential of ACP countries, developing the small-scale private sector and small and medium-sized mining operations, reducing environmental and social effects of mining, improving energy infrastructure and transport related to the mining industry, improving mining-based industrialization and diversifying the economies of ACP countries.

To achieve these objectives, the combined support of various national, regional and international financial instruments will be needed. With this in mind, the ACP Secretariat has applied for funding under the 10th EDF for an intra-ACP programme on actions to complete existing national and regional initiatives.

Towards sustainable fishing

In June 2012, the ACP fishing ministries gave new impetus to the ministerial
Fishing mechanism for ACP countries by adopting a five-year (2012-2016) strategic action plan (SAP) that identifies five priority fields of action:
1) Effective management for sustainable fishing;
2) Promotion of optimal returns on the trade in fishing products;
3) Support to food security in ACP countries;
4) Development of aquaculture;
5) Preservation of the environment

The ACP fishing mechanism has been charged with finding financing systems to implement this Plan.

At the same time, the ACP FISH II programme, that is part of intra-ACP cooperation, aims to enhance management of fishing in ACP countries in order to ensure sustainable exploitation of fish resources. Its objectives and the strategic priorities of the SAP converge, particularly regarding support for developing political and legal policies on governance of fishing; support in fighting illegal fishing (INN), management of fishing fleets, small-scale fishing, the development of aquaculture and the strengthening of regional cooperation through specific support for regional fishing bodies and a dialogue with Regional Economic Organizations.
Activities of the Secretariat of the ACP Group in 2012 and future perspectives

Promoting happiness - empowering all ACP citizens and defending their rights

There can be no sustainable development without the defence and promotion of citizens’ rights. These rights, like the alleviation of poverty, are included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and are integrated into the policies of the ACP States and the European Union. In addition, the countries in the ACP Group are still confronted with a chronic deficit in institutional and financial and technical capacities. Several programmes that were implemented in 2012 aimed to overcome this handicap. However, for the most part, they focus on personal needs: capacity building for food security, access to finance, water, energy, education and culture, as well as respect for human rights.

Boosting economic development

The ACP-EU aid programmes concern support for the marketing of food products, training, culture and access to financial mechanisms in general or access and improvement of management in particular sectors such as water and energy.

Among these, the EDES programme aims to improve the contribution of trade in food products to poverty reduction in ACP countries, in all food sectors. It helps ACP countries to strengthen their national and regional food security policies by supporting and setting up customised policies that are viable and economically affordable for the ACP countries.

The financial schemes are complex and numerous: precisely targeted aid mechanisms are essential. The ACP-EU framework programme for micro-finance is one of these. It aims to develop an inclusive financial system adapted to the needs of the poor in ACP countries. It is present in 48 ACP countries: 28 in sub-Saharan Africa, 13 in the Caribbean and 7 in the Pacific. Several subprograms have been activated in this context including: training in micro-finance (Scholarships Boulder IFC ILO), subsidizing decentralized banking projects, financial literacy and lobbying for responsible finance in the Pacific zone (Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme or PFIP), developing the private sector and supplies of financial services to micro-businesses in the English-speaking Caribbean (CARIB-CAP ID), providing a technical assistance facility in sub-Saharan Africa specialized in small projects for an average of € 47,000 (REGMIFA TE FUND).
Sharing education and culture to serve development

Education, professional training and culture are the keys to balanced, long-term economic development. They entail administrative and academic capacities and appropriate infrastructures corresponding to technological development.

By adopting the “Brussels Resolution”, the ACP Ministers of Culture meeting in October 2012 renewed their commitment to development in the cultural sector. They invited cultural players in ACP countries to recognize the role of the sector in national development by creating networks of local and regional cultural expertise, sharing best practices and creating data collection schemes to illustrate the sector’s contributions to social and economic development in real terms. They argued for the implementation of innovative financial mechanisms given the traditional weak support of national and international partners in this sector. Finally, they undertook to facilitate conditions - including visa facilities - to enable movement of cultural artists, products and services in order to reach regional and international markets. In terms of support to the sector, the ACP Culture+ programme has been set up to support and improve visibility of cultural activities in ACP countries. The funds are shared between the cinema and audiovisual works on one hand and other cultural activities on the other.

The objective of the Edulink programme is to boost the effectiveness and impact of ACP-EU cooperation in higher education. It seeks to build institutional (administration) and academic (teaching, research and technologies) capacities of ACP countries, strengthen cooperation in the field of higher education and to develop networks among institutes of higher education in ACP regions and those of the EU. EDULINK is supplemented by other EU initiatives such as the ACP-EU Programme for Science and Technology, the Erasmus Mundus Programme, the Intra-ACP Academic Mobility and ACP-Connect (bridging the digital divide).

Citizens’ Rights: migrants in turmoil

Discussions concerning migrants’ rights continue in the context of the ACP/EU political dialogue and focus on questions of visas, transfers of funds and readmission agreements.

Discussions pertaining to visas concern legislation and practices as well as the implementation of an EU “Visa Code” that offers applicants from ACP countries a stable, harmonized and transparent framework. Problems pertaining to access to procedures and information on visa applications, expenses associated with these applications, medical and travel insurance, recourse against decisions of refusal and descriptions in the Schengen information systems are considered specially. The ACP States have doubts, however, about the impact that the dialogue could still have on the Visa Code, since this legislation has already been adopted and applied.

As concerns transfers of funds from migrants, whether the movements are South-South, North-South, from countries in the South towards countries in the North, experts have identified priorities: improving the legislative framework, capacity building of competent ACP authorities, developing a reliable data system, getting information
on the cost of transfers and transparency. In addition, the formal channels used to send and receive transfers of funds should be broadened by integrating new technologies, assessing shortcomings and constraints, reducing the cost of transfers and promoting access to financial services, particularly in rural areas. It is indispensable, finally, to develop financial education for migrants and recipients in order to reinforce the management and impact of migrants’ remittances on development.

The ACP Group regrets that the EU limits the dialogue on migration to a narrow context which allows only for a simple exchange of views and information on essential questions. They note the lack of logic in a discussion limited exclusively to short-term visas whereas the question of remittances can only be seen in the context of long-term residence. The ACP countries, for whom migrants’ remittances represent an important source of income, also caution developed countries – and particularly the EU – against the temptation to consider these transfers as public development aid.

Finally, as concerns readmissions, clarifying the terms used by the various parties is urgent. For the ACP Group, return and reintegration policies must be considered in the global context of migrant policy and questions pertaining to legal and illegal migration must be treated simultaneously and coherently. The ACP States are in favour of greater dialogue between host countries and countries of origin of migrants, for a better understanding of the needs of both Parties and for greater cooperation between the players involved in return and reintegration operations (identification, issue of documents, deadlines for responding to applications for readmission) in order to limit the duration of retention.

The question of migrants’ rights is a fundamental element in the recognition process: consequently it is important to oversee the application of policies that guarantee compliance with these rights and the dignity of the person in all stages of the process. Experts underline the importance of assistance for return and reintegration, before and after the return of migrants, to expedite their access to legal assistance in the host country and, if necessary, facilitate successful reintegration in the country of origin. Finally, they underscore the fact that forced return of migrants in an irregular situation should only be a last recourse of a process that includes promoting return on a voluntary basis.

**Intra-ACP Migration Facility**

How can human mobility be effectively integrated into national and regional development plans and strategies to reduce poverty? The lack of reliable data on the interaction between migration and development limits the understanding of the opportunities that migration represents. Consequently, it is essential to do detailed studies of the role of migrants as development agents to respond to unsatisfied, easily fulfilled needs of ACP countries and to increase the effectiveness of their contribution. This is the job that has been given to the **ACP Observatory on Migration**. This reference network, consisting of experts whose work focuses on South-South migration, acts as a hub for research and expertise on South-South migration, data collection and capacity building of researchers on migration in 12 pilot ACP States.
Migration: a global issue

The question of migration goes far beyond the limited context of ACP-EU relations. The ACP Group participated in the sixth Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) organized in Mauritius in November 2012 on the theme of: “Increasing human development of migrants and their contribution to the development of communities and States”. In 2013, the UN General Assembly hosted the “high-level dialogue on international migration and development”; Sweden will chair the GFMD in 2014 followed by Turkey in 2015.

Democracy and human rights, essential components of intra-ACP and ACP-EU cooperation

For a long time, the defence of democracy and human rights was considered in many international institutions to be the sole privilege of States, but this attitude has been revised in the context of ACP-EU and intra-ACP cooperation. The concepts of political dialogue, respect of human rights and good governance have become essential components included in the Cotonou Agreement for ACP-EU cooperation and in various binding texts (Decisions and Resolutions of Summit Meetings of the Council of Ministers) for intra-ACP cooperation.

In 2012, the political dialogue between the European authorities, particularly the Parliament, and ACP countries such as Gambia, Suriname and Zambia have promoted understanding between the two parties.

Security and freedom are bound to each other and both have a great impact on development. There can be no real well-being for the citizen without these elements. For this reason, the ACP Group has supported initiatives that could bring security back to countries like South Sudan, Mali or the DRC.

The ACP countries also caution developed countries – and particularly the EU – against the temptation to consider these transfers as public development aid.
Promoting bold, successful ACP entrepreneurship

A strong private sector is crucial to promote sustainable growth and to alleviate poverty. In this context, small and medium-sized businesses (SME) play a fundamental role but they need specific aid to gain access to financing, cooperation schemes, techniques and innovation. But, as the ACP Committee of Ambassadors told to the European Investment Bank (EIB) during a visit to the Bank's headquarters in June 2012, despite the various instruments made available to SMEs and the undeniable role they play in the economic development of their countries, in ACP countries they still face major obstacles in obtaining finance.

SMEs in ACP countries still face major obstacles in obtaining finance.

Stimulating the private sector

Instruments have been created to provide the indispensable support and to stimulate the private sector.

One of the first of these is the Centre for the development of enterprises (CDE) that grants subsidies to SMEs to cover part of the costs of support and consultancy services (diagnostic analyses of businesses, feasibility studies) before, during and after an investment. But since 2011, the CDE has struggled with a major management problem that led to suspension of the management and freezing of the annual credits not associated with normal operating expenditures and ongoing contractual obligations. For the European Commission, until the problem has been solved, the CDE cannot launch any new programmes or projects. This decision completely paralyzes the Centre's activities in the regions, but the EU confirmed it in 2012. In an extraordinary session held on 18 April 2012, the Committee of Ambassadors decided to terminate the services of the Director and the Assistant Director of CDE.

Investing in infrastructure

Under the Cotonou Agreement and the European Development Fund (EDF), the EIB is in charge of managing the “Investment Facility”, a renewable fund that meets needs for financing infrastructure projects by making flexible investments and controlling risks. The EIB focuses its efforts on promoting private initiatives that favour economic growth and induce positive effects for the
community and the region. It also supports projects backed by the public sector, mainly in the field of infrastructures (transport, energy, water and telecommunications).

Limited access to transport, communications, water and energy is a major obstacle to economic growth in Africa. To meet the challenge, the EU and Africa have created an African-EU Partnership for infrastructures whose key instrument is an EU-Africa fiduciary fund for infrastructures. This fund groups, alongside the European Commission, 12 Member States of the EU, their cooperation agencies and the EIB that is responsible for its management. The fund combines non-reimbursable aids awarded by the Commission and the EU Member States and loans or technical assistance operations carried out by the EIB and the EU institutions for development finance, as well as the African Development Bank (ADB). It is active in cross-border and regional projects located in sub-Saharan Africa.

Under this scheme, the EDF Committee then created an Investment Facility for the Pacific (IFP) and a Caribbean Investment Facility. The priority sectors of intervention, in these cases as well, are infrastructure projects in the fields of transport, energy, water, sanitation, telecommunications, promotion of small businesses, social services.

Legal security

Initiatives and financing are not sufficient to ensure indispensable legal security for operators. The ACP BIZCLIM programme was designed to develop a business climate in ACP countries and regions by improving legislation, institutional frameworks and financial measures to make them beneficial for the private sector and to encourage the reform of public enterprises.

Finally, to help ACP countries cope with risks, a reinsurance mechanism was created. The worldwide insurance mechanism based on a Global Index Insurance Facility (GIIF) is used as an instrument for creation, intermediation and subscription of insurance products covering risks associated with the weather, natural disasters and fluctuations in commodity prices.

Examples:

The ACP-EU Water Facility finances projects for providing water supply, improving basic sanitation, improving governance of water, managing the resource and maintaining infrastructures in the water sector. In the context of the third call for proposals launched in 2012, € 13 million (seven projects) were devoted to improving sanitation in poor suburban and urban areas. The first two calls for proposals totalled an amount of € 200 million.

The ACP-EU Energy Facility aims to improve access to modern, affordable and sustainable energy services for populations in rural and periurban zones, focus being on renewable energies and energy efficiency.
The Secretariat: organizing, assembling, unifying, defending

The ACP Secretariat, with headquarters in Brussels (Belgium), is responsible for implementing the Group’s international policy and for moderating and coordinating cooperation policy. It is both the ears and the spokesperson for all the countries and communities of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

The Secretariat ensures the administrative management of the Group, negotiations with the European Union, represented by the European Commission, and management of aid programmes. It also manages programming and coordination of intra-ACP finance and the dialogue with the EU on improving the performance of the European Development Fund (EDF). In addition, the Secretariat monitors the implementation of the 2011-2014 Strategy for transformation and renewal and the 2008-2013 multi-annual intra-ACP indicative programme.

Consisting of a relatively limited number of experts, it can take action on almost every continent and organize meetings there. It acts under the authority of the political organs of the ACP Group (Summit of the Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers, Committee of Ambassadors). Its mission is to execute the tasks entrusted to it by these authorities and by the ACP Parliamentary Assembly, to contribute to the implementation of the decisions of these bodies, to monitor the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement and finally, to assist the ACP bodies and joint institutions created by partnership agreements.

In the context of future restructuring, questions arise regarding the future of its tasks and its premises (changing its location). Among other things, systems, rules and procedures should be developed to allow for management of broad programmes within the Secretariat and capacity building of the Secretariat officials in charge of programmes, with a view to management based on better practices. The study entrusted to an independent consultant will assess the skills and knowledge of the agents and the Secretariat will then propose a concrete programme to reinforce those skills and knowledge where necessary.

A customised service for ACP organs

During 2012, the Secretariat continued its relations with European partners – the European Commission and Parliament – particularly in the context of the Joint ACP-EU Assembly, and organized several ACP ministerial meetings in its premises in Brussels: Council of Ministers of Culture, of Fishing, of Trade, officials working on climate change, as well as meetings for the ACP-EU Committee of Ambassadors and intra-ACP projects.
Moreover, the Secretariat is particularly attentive to the visibility of the ACP by reinforcing its communication and press activities.

In addition to its headquarters in Brussels, the Secretariat has an office in Geneva specializing in World Trade Organization issues. This branch of the Secretariat provides the necessary support to ACP ambassadors accredited to the WTO.

The Secretariat also organized a dozen major events abroad such as: the ACP Parliamentary Assembly and (jointly with the EP) the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Lusaka, the ACP Ministers Meeting and the ACP-EU Council of Ministers in Port Villa (Vanuatu), the ACP Fisheries Ministers Meeting in Fiji, the Regional Meeting of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly and (jointly with the EP) the Joint ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly in Apia (Samoa), the ACP Workshop on Emerging Issues and Challenges in the Multilateral Trading System in Nairobi (Kenya), the session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly and (jointly with the EP) the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Paramaribo (Suriname), the ACP Council of Ministers and the ACP Summit, preceded by several meetings of ministers and experts in Malabo (Equatorial Guinea).

**Impressive numbers of documents and meetings**

The organization of the participation of ACP representatives in conferences all over the world, such as the conference on cocoa in Abidjan or the Forum on Migration and Development, are added to these. For each of these events, the Secretariat organized meetings on the spot with political officials, civil society representatives and experts. On the average, the number of meetings organized abroad represent 20% of the number of major meetings (meetings of several dozen or hundreds of participants) organized by the Secretariat.

During 2012, the Secretariat organized approximately 600 meetings to serve the Group. It prepared and distributed four documents on the average, some of which were very detailed, for each of these meetings, an approximate total of 3000 documents on various subjects were prepared during the year.

**Ambassador for the Group**

Finally, the Secretariat represents the ACP Group in various international meetings including: the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20, the 33rd Summit Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean community, the 19th Summit of African Union Leaders (Addis Ababa), the 43rd meeting of the Pacific Leaders Forum (Cook Islands), the 67th Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (New York).
Although the origin of the ACP Group sprung from its relations with the former colonial powers, it is defined in priority in its founding act, the Georgetown Agreement signed in 1975, as an intergovernmental organization consisting of States bound by a common view of South-South solidarity, the quest for fairness in the world economy and world trade, and of the use of dialogue as the main instrument of international cooperation.

The legal basis and the fundamental principles guiding the action of the ACP group are enshrined in a series of acts, and declarations have been regularly reasserted over time. Once again, they were repeated and updated in the Sipopo Declaration adopted in December 2012 at the 7th Summit of Heads of State and Government in Malabo (Equatorial Guinea).

The Sipopo Declaration recalls the founding principles of the Group: particularly the development and gradual integration of ACP countries in the world economy, alleviation of poverty and the establishment of a new, fairer and more equitable world order, consolidation of unity and solidarity and comprehension between States and between peoples in the ACP Group, united, moreover, by the objective of better coordinating their commercial relations and partnership with the EU. It also noted that progressively, the Group has broadened its scope of action not only with the EU and other partner countries, but also via intra-ACP relations, integrating requirements pertaining to democracy, respect of human rights and new concepts associated with sustainable development in all its dimensions (economic, social and environmental).

**Partners in a new world**

Growing awareness of the evolution of the world and its economic, social and technical transformations has encouraged all the organs of the ACP Group to think about its future, both as an organized Group and in relation to all its international partners. For this purpose, the Heads of State and Government decided at the Summit in Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) in December 2012, to set up a Group
of Eminent Persons, acting independently of their own countries, regions and any other party. Alongside the political bodies (Council of Ministers, Committee of Ambassadors, ACP Members of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly) and the General Secretariat, the Group of Eminent Persons has been asked to help rethink the future of the ACP and their place in the world.

Meeting in an extraordinary session in Brussels on 25 and 26 March 2013, the ACP Council of Ministers inaugurated the Group of Eminent Persons. Its main mission will be to give advice and make concrete recommendations about the future of the ACP Group, its mission, its structures and its operating methods. The 14 members of the Group – which includes personalities such as Dr. Leonel A. Fernandez Reyna, former president of the Dominican Republic, Hon. Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo, former president of Guyana, Mr. Kaliopate Tavola, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Fiji, and Dr. Libertine Amathila, ex-Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia – met at that time and elected former Nigerian President Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as Chairman and adopted the guidelines of their future work in the form of a communication on reforming the vision, the mission and the fundamental values of the ACP Group.

This document underscores the attachment of ACP States to diversity, unity and solidarity in view of the challenges in a world characterized by growing interdependence, their commitment to global peace, security and stability, the fight against all types of discrimination, reinforcement of democracy and the rule of law and the promotion of good governance. It specifies the objective that the Group has set for itself: becoming a leading international organization for the promotion of South-South solidarity and North-South cooperation to foster sustainable development, whose mission is to accelerate the economic and social transformation of ACP countries and populations via partnerships centred on trade and development, mobilization of resources and integration for equitable participation in the global economy. The document further adds that this evolution should take place while respecting the fundamental values of solidarity, non-discrimination, social justice, good governance, rule of law, transparency and efficiency.
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