

**Expression of thanks by H.E. Mr Samuel Outlule, Ambassador of the Republic of Botswana,**

**Interim Dean**

**On the Occasion of the visit to the Committee of Ambassadors by Mr Stefano Manservisi, Director-General of International Cooperation and Development**

**On Thursday 5 September 2019 at 10:00 am**

**Chair of the Committee of Ambassadors,**

**Secretary-General, Dr Patrick Gomes**

**Excellencies and Delegations**

Mr. Stefano Manservisi,

At this time when you are completing your tenure as Director-General for International Cooperation and Development at the European Commission, I would like, on behalf of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors, the ACP Secretariat and of my own country Botswana, to extend to you our sincere congratulations for the work you have done to strengthen the partnership between ACP countries and the States of the European Union.

How can we talk about you? Talking about you is similar to talking about ourselves; our history, our partnership, our successes, our hopes and aspirations for building a more equitable and just economic order. The name Stefano Manservisi is already a legendary and living monument to our collective desire to achieve the goals and objectives to which we have committed ourselves as the ACP and the EU.

I salute you for the solid record of commitment to the partnership between the ACP and the EU. In your engagement with us, you consistently brought to the table – as you did today – a sense and spirit of openness, clarity of thought, honesty and sincerity to our discussions on major issues of interest.

We have witnessed your practical experience as a development expert, academic, diplomat and humanist. You always advocated for the deepening of ACP-EU relations, in all the posts that you have held at the European Commission, especially those of Director-General for Migration and Home Affairs, Director-General for Development and Relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and as Head of Cabinet for the President of the Commission, Mr Romano Prodi; Commissioner Mario Monti and the High Representative of the European Union for foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Federica Mogherini.

In fact, under your leadership, the Directorate-General for Development and the ACP Group have collaborated on the establishment of joint positions on major international issues.

It is with great satisfaction that during your tenure, joint ACP-EU declarations and resolutions were adopted at the last Joint ACP-EU Councils on major issues such as climate change, the economic and financial crisis and aid effectiveness.

We believe and are convinced that when the 28 countries of the EU and the 79 of the ACP join forces to face major international challenges, they collectively represent 107 countries and that is, more than half of the Member States of the United Nations.

This means that we must continue to strengthen and deepen our partnership, whose nature and scope are unique in modern history, in order to make this partnership a true strategic alliance.

The ties that bind the ACP countries and those of the European Union for over 50 years now make us more determined to construct a stronger and better partnership which has the potential to be the only space for international North-South solidarity with substantial and significant scope.

This is a tremendous advantage, which we must safeguard and strengthen, in order to use it to transform this partnership into a strategic alliance that can collectively impact global governance and implement more equitable wealth distribution policies.

It is for all these reasons that under your able leadership the ACP and EU embarked on negotiating a new architecture for future relations post-2020. There can be no doubt that when the history of this period is written it would be recorded that one Stefano Manservigi was the visionary, the architect, the engineer and bricklayer of a magnificent edifice that is home to ACP-EU relations.

**Mr Director General,**

I believe that all my colleagues here present will agree with me that it was a great honour and privilege to work with such a distinguished diplomat, academic, humanist and development expert. We admire your incredible energy and commitment to public service as well as international cooperation and development.

We wish you and your family every success in the years to come and hope that you will continue to closely follow ACP countries and the ACP-EU partnership. In our parting words we say, "An architect never goes away, his works continue to inspire." And we believe that you will continue to inspire, encourage and ennoble with your ideas, your activism and advocacy.

I thank you Mr President.