

Statement
to be delivered by Senator the Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade
at the Press Conference on the Joint ACP-EU Declaration on SDGs
New York 24th September 2019

*(Mr. Neven Mimica, EU Commissioner for Development
Prime Minister
Colleague Ministers
Secretary General
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen)*

The Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the international community as the blueprint for development. If you will, they are the GPS coordinates which have galvanized efforts at national, regional and global levels, to secure the development of our countries and peoples. We note however, that the reporting mechanisms built into the 2030 Agenda have demonstrated mixed levels of success, indicating the need for us all to drive momentum and intensify efforts to reach our goals. Coming together now at the United Nations, the birthplace of the SDGs, is not only timely, but important to reinforce our aspirations.

The partnership between the ACP Group of States and the European Union, recognizes the need for urgent action to eliminate poverty in all its manifestations and to promote sustainable development through the implementation of 2030 Agenda. This desire lies at the core of the formal relations between our two sides, fortified over four

decades through various mechanisms, and about to take on higher levels of significance in the post-Cotonou dispensation. Our reality is, that in many parts of the world inhabited by ACP populations, poverty and the challenges associated with it, have become exacerbated.

While countries like ours in the Caribbean have been making steady progress in achieving some of the targets set, it is our unfortunate reality that accomplishments are either delayed or completely derailed by developments outside of our control- the devastating effects of climate change being the most prominent and persistent. Raising the bar towards the implementation of the SDGs and the commitments of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change have taken on a level of urgency for SIDS, many of which are ACP members, much as it does for other ACP States.

I salute the European Union for its continued commitment to our partnership. We truly appreciate that together we will re-double our efforts, as there is in fact, no Planet B. The Young people have signaled their impatience with our debates. We must not let them down with weak excuses. We must move beyond committing to actions, and instead ACT as needed to achieve the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. We must acknowledge that while our goals are the same, our resources Vulnerabilities and capacities are unequal. We therefore also have to be pragmatic about the nature

of the partnerships required under Goal 17, in order to achieve Goals 1 to 16. We note Goal 13 as having a special resonance for the Caribbean, which region I represent here today.

In closing, we reiterate our support of multilateralism, the context in which we meet today, and laud the United Nations for the leadership it demonstrates in providing avenues for a range of actors, including governments, international organisations, civil society and the private sector to join hands in this collective effort.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are in truth and in fact, all connected – developed and developing, rich, poor and trying. Our actions and inaction have real consequences on each other. Let us not let down the young people in our respective countries and regions. Let us work in true partnership to deliver on the goals. As the youth have said, **they are watching.**