

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC,
NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFO-ADDO,
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 9TH SUMMIT OF THE
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AFRICAN,
CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC GROUP OF STATES (ACP GROUP),
HELD IN NAIROBI, KENYA, ON 9TH DECEMBER, 2019, ON THE
THEME "A TRANSFORMED ACP: COMMITTED TO
MULTILATERALISM".

Chair of the Summit

Excellencies, Heads of State and Governments,

Secretary-General of the ACP,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am honoured by the opportunity to make this statement, on behalf of the forty-eight (48) members of the Africa Region, at this 9th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. We are grateful to the President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency, the renowned Uhuru Kenyatta, Chair of the Summit, for the proverbial African hospitality accorded us and our brothers and sisters from the Caribbean and Pacific Regions, in this famous, vibrant city of Nairobi.

I extend, at the outset, our sympathies to the Government and people of Bahamas on the recent devastation wreaked by Hurricane Dorian. We stand with you in these trying times.

Excellencies, when our forebears created this organization, through the Georgetown Agreement in 1975, they outlined a set of objectives, including the promotion of closer trade and economic relations, and ensuring effective regional and inter-regional co-operation. The overarching aim was to help realise a "new international economic order", in which we would be neither victims nor pawns. They believed that the strength of this Organisation would be determined not just by its numbers, but, more significantly, by the quality of its attachment to these objectives.

This Summit, the last to be held under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA), enables us to re-define and re-dedicate this organisation in the new ordering of global affairs in the post-Cotonou era.

Whilst our numbers may make us a formidable group in the world, the realities confronting our respective countries are those of guaranteeing accelerated, sustainable development, the effective integration of our economies into the high-end of the global value chain, and the eradication of poverty, inequality and marginalisation in our nations. We need to strengthen our co-operation if we are to address these challenges successfully.

The reforms urgently needed in the multilateral arena, whether in trade or in peace and security, can be best effected if we remain united. The oft-cited Ghanaian proverb, "one broom stick, on its own, can be easily broken, but, put together, cannot be broken", should be the guiding principle of this organisation. The threats of climate change, the phenomenon of illegal mass migration, and the scourge of armed conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism can be met head-on and defeated if we act together.

Excellencies, the 2018 Report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development makes for sobering reading, as the ACP Region is described as having a "fractured economic and trade structure", with economies of member states over-reliant on the production and export of raw materials. The time has come for us to turn over a new page in our economic history, commit ourselves to forging more value-added activities, and hinge our relations on a substantial increase in trade and investment co-operation. That is the path to progress and prosperity.

For us, in Africa, we have signaled our intentions to this end through the coming into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), to which fifty-four (54) Member States of the African Union have subscribed. Currently, a market of some 1.2 billion people, with a combined GDP of three trillion dollars (\$3 trillion), the AfCFTA is set to become the fulcrum of Africa's commercial, trade and investment activities. Our brothers and sisters from the Caribbean and Pacific regions should take advantage of this new development to strengthen inter-regional co-operation and trade amongst the partners of the ACP.

The question always remains whether the rich nations are prepared for an equitable and fair-trading order. It appears that, out of the desire for hegemony, they are not, and we have, thus, to depend on ourselves, and continue to fight for a fairer world economic order.

The theme of this Summit, "**A Transformed ACP: Committed To Multilateralism**", should point us to the possibility of a new world, in which collaboration between the nations of the ACP and its peoples is on such a scale that we can dream of and achieve a sustainably prosperous world.

May God bless the ACP Group and Mother Africa, and may God bless us all.

I thank you for the attention.